

dominate

lincoln douglas

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ncfca

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Contents

Read this First	1
Resolutional Analysis	3
Resolutional Analysis	5
Pitfalls to Avoid	17
Strategies	21
Proving Moral Obligation	23
Why do we use values?	27
Argument Exposition	33
“Smash the Aid State!”	35
Thoughts on the Ethics of Aid	39
Christian Social Teaching	49
Rawl’s Borders	53
Hegemony	57
Culture Matters	61
Cases	65
Affirmative	67
Social Christianity	67
Rawl’s Borders	73
Negative	79
Lifeboat Ethics	79
Culture Matters	85
Conclusion	91

Read this First

The 2013 edition you hold in your hands is the culmination of hundreds of hours of work, and it is the best sourcebook we have put out in three years of publication. We are excited to present you with this resource, but in exchange for benefitting from our labor, we only ask for one thing: commit to challenging everything we say.

Here's what that means: make yourself articulate three compelling arguments against any argument you find here. 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. If you cannot make this commitment, I promise, you will absolutely be better off without this book.

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

Dominate LD is not a book; it is a mindset. The articles in this resource didn't make the cut because of their authors' accolades or reputation, but because they demonstrate their author's commitment to constant improvement and to excellence. The materials here have been worked and reworked, because we hold ourselves to an expectation of excellence.

We hope it clarifies the topic, answers some of your questions, and inspires your arguments. We hope the ideas on these pages spark debates in meetings and conversations at tournaments. This is more than a collection of cases and articles on the resolution. It is an opportunity to peer into the minds of not only some of the most successful Lincoln-Douglas competitors, but also arguably, the premier LD thinkers in the nation.

Debate is an incredibly self-reflexive activity: we analyze debate, theorize on what is good and bad, and limit our own options in rounds to make debate a better activity. We hope that the debate community as whole benefits from the proliferation of a desire for constant self-improvement.

Sincerely,

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

Jon Chi Lou

Resolutional Analysis

Resolutioanal Analysis

Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

Introduction

The 2012-2013 Lincoln-Douglas resolution is the latest in the NCFCA's long-running attempts to sate debaters' congenital penchant for talking about government. We hate the way government is run, but boy do we love to talk about what we specifically hate about it and why. The resolution this year allows us to talk about US foreign policy in the context of a value round rather than its usual policy context. In policy, moral considerations are always present, but usually implicit. Though a rarity, policy debaters have the opportunity to discuss morality through the inclusion of values in their cases or through kritiks. However, in LD, the specific wording of our resolution means that we are not merely presented with the option to talk about morality, but are actually required to do so in every round.

The policy at issue? Foreign assistance. The resolution does not specify any single program, agency, or department through which assistance must be given, but it is that vagueness that gives us the flexibility to talk about the gamut of today's foreign aid operations.

While this resolution seems fairly straightforward at first glance, it can become confusing as brainstorming and argumentation progresses if we do not have a firm grasp of what the resolution requires. The purpose of resolutioanal analysis is to break the resolution down into component pieces and to lay out the various options available to debaters in distinct, logical categories. If the resolution is a question, resolutioanal analysis is where we ask, what is the question really asking?

Resolutions are abstract representations of real life conundrums. Rarely in real life do we think about governmental moral obligations to assist other nations, especially in those terms; however, it is on the basis of real life moral quandaries that resolutions are written. It is the job of resolutioanal analysis to peel back the staid layers of language comprising the resolution to reveal the real-world dilemmas that instigated the original query.

As a matter of workflow, analyzing the resolution usually involves the following progression of thought:

- The words in the resolution: creating definitions →
- The resolution as a whole: developing different interpretations of the resolution →
- The debate: determining which interpretations would result in the best debate →
- The burdens: picturing the ideal debate

The thought process involved in creating resolutioanal analysis cannot usually be as clean and organized as described above, but I will make every attempt be as clear and organized as possible.

Initial Questions

Looking at the words in the resolution, I immediately want clarification on a number of things:

- What is a government? What about interim governments or governments in transition? Is “government” whatever entity is in power? Are we talking about all governments, regardless of whether or not they are justified? What about societies with very minimal governments that may not fit our conception of what a government is?
- What is the basis of moral obligation? Is moral obligation separate from practical consideration? Hypothetically, could a government have the *moral obligation* to help the people in another country, but refrain from actually doing so because the foreign government claims doing so violates their sovereignty? Is moral obligation separate from the real world, as in, “ideally things should look like this, but we’ll never see it play out the real world?” Take for example how the government may be obligated to respect property rights, but the US government today will never practically be able to do so.
- What is a nation? Does it refer to the government, the people, or both? If it refers to government, what if we are looking at a Libya-type situation where rebels are about to overthrow the government in power? If it refers to the people, do we look at the people in general or can we narrow it down to a particular segment?
- What does assistance mean? Military? Humanitarian? Financial development? Space exploration? Does assistance have to be effective, or is assistance simply the action of helping without regard to whether the assistance helps in the end?
- What constitutes need? Lack of any capability, or lack of the skills or resources for a specific capacity such as survival or development? Does “need” require the people to have a desire for the need to be fulfilled?

Definitions

Sources

Many debaters think that definitions have to come from sources like dictionaries, encyclopedias, or Ph.D.’s; the truth is that any definition, regardless of source, has to hold up to the same scrutiny a debater-created definition must hold up to. No definition is by default better because it is from a so-called credible source. Even from a single dictionary, less preferable definitions may be chosen out of several options for a given word; lucid definitions per se can be taken out of context and misapplied across fields; even field contextual definitions may be undesirable for specific debates under specific resolutions. This is not to say that dictionaries are not useful in general, but when initially defining terms of the resolution, it is often more helpful, as a matter of exercise, to come up with your own definitions.

Instead of giving you a list of dictionary definitions right now, I’d like you to take a moment to write out the resolution on a piece of paper, circle words you think will be critical, and write out your own understanding of the words in the resolution. By doing this, your understanding of the resolution may be slightly more focused on what is essential for the debate, free of any extraneous words that may come with a textbook definition.

Sample Definitions

Here are definitions of my own fabrication:

Governments: an overarching political entity that wields power over a nation.

Moral obligation: a fundamental duty.

Nations: groups of people organized by geographic, political, geopolitical or cultural boundaries.

Need: a lack of something required for survival.

Assist: to fulfill a need.

Feel free to use them if you like them, but remember, they are not good definitions because you found them in a sourcebook. They are good because of whatever caused you to like the definitions in the first place.

Using Definitions in Competition

Is it advisable to use your own definitions in competition? If they are good enough, there is no reason not to. A simple test for the fairness of any definition is whether you would be comfortable debating a case running that definition and whether you can use that definition for both your affirmative and negative cases. Then, if anyone complains about you using a definition you made up, it is a matter of giving the honest answer that your definition was the most accurate, precise, and concise definition you could find, that you believe is it fair, and that you use the definition on both sides of the debate.

One final word on definitions: they do not really matter that much. If the only way your opponent can win is by hanging on to a hole in your definition for dear life, they do not have much at all. For example, someone might try to argue that by my definition of moral obligation, “a fundamental duty,” I placed on myself the burden of proving that one of the most basic obligations of government was to help other nations, alongside protecting life, liberty, and property. It’s a linguistic argument, one that relies on the way words sound to be valid, and it borders on being a fallacy.

But before I trip over myself defending my definition and delinking myself from this odious burden, I should consider the big picture. Does the burdens argument really matter? Can I still win if I concede the burdens argument? No, and yes. I should just go with it and say that yes, in fact, one of the most basic, nay, the most basic duty of government is to be moral, and it is moral to help others in need. Bit of linguistic trickery to counter linguistic trickery.

The Resolution, Expanded

Plugging the definitions above into the resolution, we have a topic that reads something as follows:

Overarching political entities that wield power over a nation have a fundamental duty to fulfill the needs of other people groups lacking something required for survival.

Definitions: Deeper Analysis

Governments: Does Obligation Rest on Justification?

Do governments have to be morally justified? One argument in favor of such a requirement says that moral obligation rests on justification. A man who pretends to be the CEO of a company has no obligations to the shareholders because he did not have the title of CEO in the first place. The other side of this argument is that regardless of whether the government is justified, it has obligations by nature of it being a government, by nature of its office. In the movie *Catch Me If You Can*, Frank Abagnale, Jr. posed as a doctor in one of his riskier cons; it would have been morally wrong for him to not do his very best to keep people alive while he was pretending to be a doctor, even though he was far from a bona fide practitioner.

Governments: Dealing with Transition

If we look at transition governments, such as the one we saw in Egypt during the Arab Spring, which government should we consider legitimate, the waning government run by Hosni Mubarak, or the likely future government run by the military? An argument for the Mubarak government would be that even though the opposition was in all likelihood going to defeat the existing government, that had not yet occurred. If we start to recognize opposition governments before their victory, how far in advance of the establishment's defeat do we start recognition? An argument for recognizing the rebel forces as the government is that it is disingenuous to pretend a weak establishment has true power when the masses have no regard and provide no support for it.

Highly Decentralized Governments

Finally, do we consider governments that are so decentralized they have no capability provide aid in the modern sense? For example, the tribal governments of Nigeria have little regular connection to the outside world and no knowledge of the needs of other nations, let alone the means to help. It can be argued that moral obligation should be based on ability. Such decentralized governments have no moral obligation because they do not have the capacity to assist. Perhaps a three-year-old who knows nothing of starving children in Africa and has none of the wherewithal to assist, has no moral obligation to help. An argument for the other side is that people may have obligations regardless of whether or not they have the capability to assist, and those obligations simply remain unfulfilled so long as they lack the capacity to assist.

Nations and Governments

"Nations" as a standalone word can refer to a country as a whole, including the government, or simply the people group. I hesitate to endorse the idea that "nation" can refer solely to the government, because "nations" is distinct in the resolution from "governments." A compelling framers' intent argument can be made from the simple fact that the resolution used both "nation" and "government" in the same sentence. If by "nation" the framers meant "government," they would have used "government," since they clearly know how to use the word. Either the Resolution Committee was just itching to break out the new thesaurus or "nation" means something distinct from government.

Nations: Indian Nations

An interesting case that claims the moral high ground is based on interpreting "nations" as the Indian Nations within the US. It argues that because of the way the US Government treated and continues to treat Indian Nations, they live in disproportionate poverty and suffer from

disproportionately high representation in prison populations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is an excellent place to start research. It is necessary to clarify that “assistance” for this affirmative case does not mean writing reparations checks to Indian Nations—such compensation only entrenches their social status.

Defining Assistance

What “assistance” means depends entirely on the definition of “need”; after all, assistance is the fulfillment of a need. If need is defined as the lack of any capability, we can talk about economic development assistance to other countries or our space partnerships with Japan and Russia. If aid is defined as the lack of something necessary for survival, we can be able to talk about the survival of an economy, the existence of a nation, or the survival of individual people. The main types of aid that come to mind are economic, military, and humanitarian aid. Of these, humanitarian and military aid seem to be the most popular among debaters this year.

Economic aid — this involves sending loans or grants to developing nations. This can be practically done through domestic or international bodies, including USAID, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The bailout of Greece can be considered economic aid, as can China’s investments in Africa.

Military aid — also known as military intervention; the philosophy opposing such military assistance is non-intervention. Military aid can take the form of troop deployments, intelligence sharing, weapons sales, and no-fly zones, to name a few.

Humanitarian aid — any type of aid that directly attempts to improve human welfare—whether it be assisting after a natural disaster, sending food aid, sending medical help, or setting up shelters.

Is assistance limited to any specific type of aid? The simple answer is that any type of assistance is kosher. I cannot think of a compelling reason to limit assistance, but feel free to do so if you can.

Is it necessary to specify in your definitions which type of aid you are discussing? I do not feel the need to do so. To me, going to far as to define “assist” as “to provide economic aid” or “to militarily intervene” is too aggressive. I would simply define “assist” generally and note in the resolitional analysis at the top of case that I am focusing on one type of aid. Debaters may be afraid their negative opponents will respond to their military or humanitarian aid cases with arguments against another aid type, but I would argue that every debater has the burden of rejoinder—that clash is not only desirable, but mandatory. If every debater had no burden to respond to opponents’ arguments with at least some form of actual refutation, it is no longer a debate but a persuasive speaking individual event.

Burdens

The resolution broadly asks us about two things: whether aid is moral, and whether it is the moral obligation of the government to provide aid. Simply proving that giving aid is good is not enough; simply proving that aid leads to life or that aid leads to benefits for the country providing aid is not enough. The debater must also prove that it is the government's specific duty to provide aid.

The affirmative has a number of burdens, assumptions that must be proven in order for any affirmative case to be true. Proof can take different forms, but these assumptions should be proven in some way by every affirmative:

Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

Restated: That assisting other nations in need is a moral obligation of governments.

Prove that governments are *ever* justified

Prove that governments have moral obligations

Prove that governments' moral obligations include assisting other nations

Prove that assistance is moral

because assistance is beneficial (teleological argument)

because assistance is itself good (deontological argument)

The debater must link assisting nations in need to moral obligation, and link moral obligation to government.

Some of these assumptions can be safely assumed and accepted by both sides. As a negative debater, I would steer clear of arguing that governments are never justified, so I would concede that assumption.

The affirmative must implicitly or explicitly prove all of the above burdens. Explicit proof would be constructing a logical argument with a claim, warrant, and impact. Implicit proof on the other hand, is to get your opponent to agree to an assumption in your case. This can happen in cross examination, through drops, through outright concessions, or through framing the debate in a way that makes it difficult for the opponent to not concede most of the burdens.

The negative, however, has a very different set of burdens. The negative debater has the job of proving that governments do not have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. In practice, this simply means proving a statement that is mutually exclusive with the resolution:

Governments are fundamentally immoral

Governments do not have moral obligations, only legal obligations

Governments do have moral obligations, but obligations do not include assisting other nations

Foreign assistance is immoral

Governments have a moral obligation to not assist other nations

In other words, while the affirmative must prove all four statements one way or another to win, the negative must only disprove one of them to win.

Teleology and Deontology

Teleology is the idea that an action should be evaluated based on its impact, and that the morality of the action is based on its consequences in a specific instance of its use. Utilitarian philosophies are teleological in nature. One utilitarian variant, hedonistic utilitarianism, advocated by J.S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham, suggests that the better moral choice is determined by whichever choice produces a result with the greatest overall happiness and the least amount of suffering.

Deontology is the idea that actions have morality outside of the immediate situation in which the action takes place. One such philosophy, put forward by Immanuel Kant, is the categorical imperative, the first and most quoted formulation of which is that each action is justified if it could be logically conceived as a universal principle.

For this resolution, aid can be evaluated teleologically and deontologically. The deontological argument is that aid is good or bad because the action of assisting is in itself good or bad, regardless of the end result. The teleological argument is that assistance is good or bad because it has a good or bad result, and it does not matter if assisting other people is in itself a justified action.

Because it is a fundamental burden of every affirmative case to prove that aid is moral, any affirmative based solely around an exposé on the benefits of aid is, to some extent, arguing that beneficial results form the basis of moral policies. The argument is therefore teleological in nature.

This can be used on a broad generic level to argue against any case. For example, if a case says that aid is bad because of its results, a debater can respond both generally and specifically, first by saying that we should not look solely to results to make moral decisions, and then by presenting evidence that aid has good results. On the other hand, if a case says that aid is good because of the golden rule, a debater could respond with a teleological argument that results matter, in addition to link turning the argument and proving that the golden rule is flawed.

One note on running this argument—simply because a case argues that aid is a good principle or brings a good result does not necessarily mean that their case is immediately dependent on deontology or teleology, respectively. In many, I would say most cases, deontology and teleology can come to an agreement on broad moral principles. It is critical to know for sure whether your opponent is defending the principles of teleology or deontology, and cross examination would be a good place to find out. If they do not explicitly support either principle in their case, you can often draw that out with questions.

For example, you may be negative against an affirmative case says that aid is a good principle and that we should do what is right. At this point, arguing teleology against the case would not be sound strategy because the affirmative can still co-opt teleology—they have not established their exclusive support of deontology yet. This gives them room to dispute your claims that aid is ineffective and detrimental. In contrast, consider if in cross examination you had asked, “Is assisting others a principle that should not be compromised? Would you agree that assisting others has value in and of itself? Would you say that value is relative to each situation or does it remain constant?” The framing and wording of the questions makes it easy for your opponents to agree with you and explicitly link themselves to a deontological philosophy, rather than

allowing them to stick with the implied deontology of their case that gives them room to shift out of your arguments in later speeches.

Exceptions

The word “governments” in the resolution is clearly up to interpretation, but this presents an interesting ramification for the debate: does the resolution technically require debaters to prove that *all* governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need?

In favor of a “yes” answer is the fact that the resolution itself provides no exceptions. We have to assume that sans an unambiguous exception, the resolution is a statement of absolute truth. The resolution is a general statement of principle, a question of whether it is a moral principle that all entities that are governments should have a certain obligation.

In favor of a “no” answer is the idea that the resolution’s generality *means* that we can have exceptions. As long as an affirmative debater proves that in general governments should have the moral obligation to assist, she has fulfilled her burden. Weak or inept governments ought not be considered because they do not even come close to the Platonic ideal for government—to even call them governments might even be a stretch at this point. To counter the argument about a lack of specified exception in the resolution, the lack of the “*all* governments...” specification in the resolution means that there can be exceptions to the resolution.

Finally, my personal views on the subject. Personally, I do not think there is ever a resolution that can be proven one hundred percent true in every situation. If any such resolution existed, one of the sides would be ridiculously difficult to defend. There are, at the very least, two sides to every issue, and this topic is no different. This resolution clearly has arguments for either side, so it is not a unicorn resolution that can be proven true without exception. I remember thinking that it would damage my credibility as a debater to not defend every instance of a policy or philosophy, but now that I think about it, it was an unnecessary burden to place on myself.

Morality of Actions of Government

How do we evaluate the morality of the actions of government? What sort of rubric do we use? Is there a set of Ten Commandments for the modern day government? There are two main ways to answer this question.

First is morality from action, the idea that the morality of a governmental action is based on whether those actions themselves are moral. Governmental morality is the same, in this view, as human morality. We first evaluate an action in the context of whether it would be moral for people to take that action, then apply the same standards to government. Government has no special set of ethics apart from what society must already follow.

The first conception says that if killing people is immoral for individual citizens, governments killing people does not become more justified. If stealing is wrong for people, legalized plunder does not lessen the wrong. If unprovoked aggression is wrong for a person, it is all the more wrong for a government representing a multitude of people. The government’s laws are determined by the lawmakers of the day and there is no one specified role that the government

should take. The morality of the government doesn't depend on whether their actions fit a specific mold, but whether the actions taken by the government are themselves justified actions.

The second idea is morality from role, the idea that the government in itself has a predefined role—that instead of just looking to the morality of the action that the government is taking, we also need to look to whether the government itself has the inherent duty to take that course of action. The things a government must do are far different from those individuals must do, and there are things that are justified for government that are not justified for individuals, and vice versa. In this conception, government morality is separate from individual morality. Even if an action is justified for people, the action is not necessarily justified for government, because government has a special role in society and has more, or simply different requirements to live up to. Perhaps the specified role of government is to uphold life, liberty, and property, or to uphold the general welfare. Perhaps it is to uphold the will of the general populace. It does not matter the specific role; the important thing is that as long as a government upholds the duties assigned to it by its role, it has met its obligations.

As you can see, the two types of philosophies are still categories at this point; they do not specify what those societal standards or special governmental standards should be. To summarize the two different philosophies, the first conception says that government should abide by standard individual morality; the second says that government ought to have its own predefined standards.

Of these two ideas, by far the more popular conception is the second, the idea that government has a special set of moral obligations by nature of its being a government, and to some extent, it is the conception implied by the resolution. If most people agree that humans have a moral obligation to assist other humans in need and governments need only follow human standards for morality, then there is not much of a debate to be had.

At the same time, much of the debate is still to be had over the specific philosophies that debaters end up inserting into the blanks: *which* moral rubric do you use to evaluate the actions of government in the first conception, and *what* ideal conception of the role of government do you subscribe to in the second? The debater's choice and defense of those philosophies have far more of an impact on the round than whether they initially choose to ascribe a specific role to the government or not.

Categorizing Cases

The main categories of affirmative cases will probably fall under the different types of aid that exist, which generally speaking, are military, humanitarian, and economic aid.

This is by far not the only way to subdivide the cases this year. You could divide cases by the way they justify the moral obligations of government, such as through Rawls's Veil of Ignorance, Natural Law, or through the Social Contract. You could divide cases by the affirmative burden that the aff case chooses to focus on proving, such as proving that aid is beneficial, that governments have the moral obligation to specifically provide aid, or proving that aid is a good idea. You could divide cases by whether they argue the morality of aid teleologically or deontologically. You could divide cases by whether they argue the morality of governmental actions through morality by actions or morality through role.

The reason I divide the cases by type of aid is because any of the other organizational schemes are interchangeable. Let me explain. Any case this year could use John Rawls or the Golden Rule and talk about teleological or deontological justifications for foreign aid's morality, or any of the other options above and talk about economic or military aid. You can respond to any case by arguing any different philosophy or moral justification. You cannot, however, respond to a case regarding humanitarian aid with arguments against economic aid, or military aid. This is because while issues of philosophy are topical to any case in general, the division of cases by type of aid is a definitional issue that comes before any topical discussion can occur. Thus, while most other ways of subdividing the resolution involve general arguments that apply to all cases, the different types of aid represent divergent paths, different forks in a road, while general arguments are the clouds that hover over all of the roads and apply to all of them.

Conclusion

Predictions - What will people be running?

Types of aid: I think most cases this year will center around humanitarian and military aid. This is merely an observation based on discussions with dozens of current Lincoln-Douglas debaters competing this season. I can provide speculation as to why economic aid is less prevalent, but such speculation would be unhelpful at best. I do think, however, that at some level, economic aid to nations is very similar to humanitarian and military aid: all three deal with national identity and existence, they deal with human survival and quality of life. I would encourage debaters to look more into economic development aid, as I think it would provide a lot of depth to their discussions of humanitarian and military aid even if they do not plan on talking about economic aid per se.

Justifications for morality of aid: Expect to see a lot of teleology-based arguments like "aid is good because natural law holds true universally across boundaries" as well as deontology-based effect arguments like "aid is good because it leads to an improved overall quality of life for all involved."

Homework

As always, I ask that you challenge what I have said throughout this piece of analysis. Often, I have challenged students who were, in fact, correct, using flawed argumentation, but students would retreat from their original position after being challenged. There is an argument for everything. If crazy philosophers can argue that war, famine, and disease are good because they kill people and check overpopulation, which—did I mention, is a crazy idea?—there is definitely an argument for your stance that only a certain type of aid should be discussed or that the resolution should not be parametrized.

Try to develop a preliminary set of resolutorial analysis on your own before even venturing to brainstorm arguments for and against the resolution. How can you begin to answer a question without first knowing what the question is and what it demands of you? It may not be possible to come up with a complete set of resolutorial analysis from the outset; it may be necessary to brainstorm some arguments along the way to act as a springboard for your resolutorial analysis. But know that having your own grounded view of the resolution and the burdens it places on your and your opponent, then writing your case, is preferable to spending days on a case, then finding out that the resolution precludes the premise of the case.

So take a break and block out several hours to type out your thoughts on the resolution. Share it with other people and see what they think; chances are, they'll provide inspiration for you to improve your own analysis as well.

Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Misusing Proof

LDers have always been told that their form of debate is more logical, less tree-based, more ethereal and less grounded. It's time for that to end. First, let's debunk the myth about evidence, and this is true both for LDers and for policy debaters. Evidence is different from cards. Cards are quotes from authorities on the subject, and these quotes are printed on paper and lugged around in suitcases.

Quotes from authorities are a form of evidence, but they are not the only form of evidence. Evidence is proof, something that backs up what you are saying; empirical evidence, analytical evidence, and experimental evidence are all equally valid forms of support. Empirical evidence involves observations about reality. Analytical evidence is applying analysis and logic to the facts gained through observation. Experimental evidence is using the scientific method to test the validity of analysis.

Logical Evidence: Logic cannot prove facts

Evidence is proof. Because arguments involve claims, warrants, and impacts, omitting evidence, or the warrant, creates an invalid argument. Though logic is a type of evidence, however, logic cannot prove everything. There are several type of claims that we make in LD. There are factual claims, like "aid leads to lives saved," and value claims, like "saving lives is a good thing." You cannot with logic prove a factual claim, and you cannot with facts prove a value claim. No amount of experimentation or observation will let you prove a value claim, and no amount of logic will prove an observation about reality. In other words, "I don't have evidence that aid saves lives—it's just logical that it does" needs to stop.

It's not a lot of work to find basic evidence. Take that small extra step to make your argument complete and boost your credibility at the same time. "According to 2012 figures, PEPFAR has treated 4.5 million people to date" is far more credible than "but it just makes sense that aid works."

Anecdotal Evidence: Draw out Principles

LDers love to bring up examples as proof. However, examples alone do not prove. Here's why. If I am trying to prove that aid is effective at improving local economies, and I bring up an example from the Cold War when aid improved a local economy, that does not tell me why aid now will also improve a different economy in a different time for different people in different circumstances. It shows that aid *can* be effective, but it does not show that aid *will* be effective, or even a high probability that aid will be effective. Examples do not sufficiently answer the fundamental question, "why?" Why do you really think we should vote for you? Why do you think you are right? Why do you think assistance is good?

Examples are not bad. A good argument should be littered—overrun, in fact—with real world empirics. However, when anecdotal evidence is used, it must be applied to the situation at hand, and to do so, principles must be drawn out. Principles—warrants—are what allow examples to transcend scenarios to apply to your case.

This resolution, unlike the Stoa resolution about privacy, doesn't have the word "is" or anything that ties it to the present. Our resolution speaks of governments in a general, "all of history, ever" timeframe. This has advantages and disadvantages. An advantage of the generality of the resolution is it allows us to draw out principles and moral guidelines from governments that have existed across eons of time without restriction. The disadvantage of the lack of a "now" timeframe is that it naturally doesn't force debaters to draw out those principles. Think about it: if the resolution had a time restriction like "aid *is* good," you wouldn't be able to bring up examples from the past unless you showed how they related to the present. This resolution *allows* debaters to bring up example after example without forcing them to analyze them. But it doesn't *stop* you from doing that. Be the better debater and force yourself to prove your claims.

Analogical Evidence: Lack of Rigor

Analogy as proof is closely related to anecdotal evidence. The problem with using analogies as proof is that the warrants that they draw out are not rigorous enough. Analogies masquerade as principles and warrants and they do a good job of summarizing advocacies, but they are not warrants or reasons in and of themselves. For example, if I use an analogy of putting on my own life vest before helping a child put on a life vest to argue that America needs to fix its own problems before helping the world, that paints a vivid picture in the judge's mind, but the warrant is not rigorous enough. The principle here might be "if we help others without helping ourselves first, ultimately both parties suffer because the helper will go down first"—a sound warrant, actually. But note that this warrant still does not apply to America and the case about aid until you prove how America is going to go down as a result of providing aid if we do not fix our problems first. Once you provide proof for that as well, your warrant and the chain of logic is complete and your argument is much more rigorous.

General: Fallacies sound good, but can't prove

One of the most popular examples in LD on our circuit is World War II, an example that one way or another can be applied to NCFCA LD topics from the past half a decade. Here's one way you can use it this year: "Intervening militarily in other nations is a good idea for our economy because, look at World War II, after we got involved, the Great Depression ended."

There is a reason informal logical fallacies are so popular: they are reasonable-sounding extensions of common sense. But the problem with common sense is that they are logical constructions that do not compute. Fallacies can be used with examples, analogies, logic, statistics—really, any type of evidence. Be sure to familiarize yourself with fallacies so that you do not commit them. A perennial reading recommendation for fallacies is *The Fallacy Detective* by Hans Bluedorn and Nathaniel Bluedorn.

2. Get tripped up in definitions

Definitions are critical. If two debaters are not on the same page in terms of what words mean, there is no common basis for communication and the debate breaks down; this applies both to real life and to the debate round. Often, protracted debates come down to a misunderstanding of definitions. Thus, establishing a common understanding of language is the first thing that must happen in a debate. But that's just what definitions are—a precursor to the debate.

I was astounded when I first learned about topicality. You can win a debate even without touching the subject of the resolution? Incredible. Topicality, for lack of a better word, is

incredibly cool. And there is a lot to education to be gained from thinking about and discussing debate itself. Debate theory is perspective-altering and, truly, nothing short of life-changing, but when we focus on theory so much that we lose sight of what the rest of debate has to offer and lose sight of all the other topics that we could so profitably discuss, we need to zoom out a bit.

Specifically, this discussion applies to running topicality to limit “assist” to a specific type of aid when a debater is on negative. You have the skill to argue topicality. You can argue that the debate should be about humanitarian aid and not military aid and provide good reasons for it. But it’s just so much simpler, smoother, and friendlier to engage your opponent on whatever front he or she chooses, and ultimately, it’s the mark of a truly experienced debater to be able to relax into whatever discussion their opponents chooses.

The same goes for affirmative debaters. As mentioned before in the resolitional analysis article, there is no real need to skew the definitions to win arguments. The mark of debaters to be reckoned with is their ability to arrive at a win without strategically defining their way there.

3. Lack of conflict

In a resolution that has several main areas of conflict, a scenario that may often rear its ugly head is that of the swing and a miss, the soldier shooting at an imaginary enemy. Some negative debaters may find a rather compelling argument against one type of aid and gravitate towards running that negative case regardless of the affirmative case. If you really want to do that, make sure you present a very compelling reason why your type of aid should be preferred. Each debater has the burden of rejoinder. If you don’t respond to their case, better give a good reason why. Second, it is still preferable to lay down some line-by-line on their case as a backup, in case the critic doesn’t buy your T-press.

I am a lazy debater. If I can get to a W while dealing with as few issues as possible, I will choose that path. It is simply the easier path to debate the case at hand and beat them on their own turf —and it’ll increase your depth of knowledge of a variety of topics. Use the brute power of knowledge to win rounds. All other things equal, the debater with more knowledge will come out on top.

4. Not fully proving moral obligation

As debaters begin research on aid, they will write cases that discuss at length the specific programs that bring aid and the benefits they will bring. They will probably tie it in to a value— life, or national security, or general welfare, or human rights. They will show that it is morally obligatory for anyone with a beating heart to support their case. But the best debaters will often neglect to show how it is the government’s moral obligation to provide aid. The resolution does not stop at asking the debater to prove that assistance is moral or that it is a moral obligation. The resolution requires us to talk about how assistance is the government’s moral obligation.

Strategies

1. Frame the resolution

It is not one type of argument. It is a way of approaching the debate that attempts to twist an unfavorable situation your way. Framing the debate is the process of making an unpalatable position palatable by showing that your position really espouses the values common to everyone in the debate round. Framing the debate can involve mitigation, turns, clever parametricization, strategic positioning of burdens, and rhetorical flourishes.

Aid leads to dependency? Oh heavens no. How can aid lead to dependency when the country we're talking about is at rock bottom? Sure you could call feeding a baby "causing dependency," but when it is a baby *ever* not dependent?

Can parametricization be criticized as cherry picking? Sure, but let's find a way to frame the debate in a way that would make it the only debate possible. The resolution says "nations in need." Now, the least common denominator of what people would agree constitutes need is the idea of "lacking something required for survival." Dependency does occur when we give aid to countries that are poor but can nonetheless survive, but the resolution really only asks us to talk about countries at rock-bottom that have no ability to survive if not for the generosity of the West.

Framing the debate is often more than one single argument. In this case, it is a combination of resolitional analysis, mitigation, and parametricization. Beautiful.

2. Use depth of knowledge

Knowledge has become, unfortunately, underrated. People like to prove everything with logic, but forget that knowledge is not just about being academically rigorous: encyclopedic debaters of times past have always held inordinate advantages over their less well-read peers. But even for those who wish to fully understand and contextualize all of the knowledge involved in any given topic, the task can seem far too overwhelming.

Three things can help make research more manageable:

1. Know that you don't need to know everything

The simple truth is that few high school debaters know a lot. There are a few, but that's exactly what they are—few and far between. Simply knowing the background information on most topics, which just means having enough information to fill the introduction of a Wikipedia page, is more than most people know.

If you can answer three questions about any event or topic, you are golden. What happened? What caused it? And what is its significance?

2. Know that everything you research will be used in the season in some way.

Make sure that everything you research is something that you can incorporate into a brief. This ensures that time spent not only helps your personal database of knowledge, but also helps

your debate season as well. The concept of briefs is about compiling arguments that you will run and cards that you can read in round, and in some cases, pre-scripted speeches that allow you to efficiently compress what you want to say into the shortest time span possible. This allows you to spend most of prep time simply pulling briefs out of your binder rather than fumbling to come up with arguments in one and a half minutes. Prep time before the round is unlimited. Take advantage of it. While you still want to come up with round- and case-specific arguments in prep, most of the heavy lifting should already be done.

3. Know exactly what you're out to research

At all times during the season, you should have a master list of topics that you want to know about. Not a list of everything you don't know, but a list of things that you actually *want* to know. Create a document on your phone that you can update at all times during tournaments, while reading books, or talking to teammates. Do not do any research on anything unless it is on the list, and order the list by priority. This list will feel unmanageably large, but it will focus your research if you stick to it.

3. Know the big picture

The big picture involves thinking about the resolution in its entirety: what kind of cases you can expect, what they have in common, and what broad strategies you can use against them. One way I would simplify every round for myself is to condense the resolution into broad strokes of what every case has to prove—for me, these would comprise the four burdens created by the resolution as laid out in the resolutorial analysis:

1. Proving that governments are justified
2. Proving that governments can have moral obligations
3. Proving that the government's moral obligations involve assisting other nations
4. Proving that assisting other nations in need is a moral option.
 - a. This can be accomplished through a teleological argument (aid is moral because of the results it brings)
 - b. Or a deontological argument (aid is inherently moral)

That's the big picture, and every case will have some explicit or implicit element proving these points. When I hear a case, I'll break it down into these components and run through them as a checklist for potential lines of attack. By breaking down cases into their justifying elements, we can analyze cases at an unprecedented level with ease.

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: 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. There isn't one 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, all the immoral actions of government tip the scale 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, “does assisting other nations comprise the basket of goods 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.

Morality K

If you were around last year, you would've read the language kritik by Patrick Shipsey criticizing debaters for promoting the mindset that governmental legitimacy had nothing to do with morality. The idea that government has no morality goes even further—and even more 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.

That is perhaps one of the most dangerous mindsets ever perpetuated by debaters in this league, and it needs to stop.

Why do we use values?

Values and criteria—the bread and butter, the Virgin Mary and Saint Peter, the 5th Avenue and Sunset Boulevard of value debate. Do we ever take a step back to look at why values debate has these components? Not often.

When I debated in high school LD, there were three different functions for criteria: the means criterion, the weighing criterion, and the limiting criterion. At the time, I questioned the validity of the limiting criterion due to a perceived abusiveness and sense of arbitrariness in its use. This past summer, I discovered an additional type of mechanism used in a case that was also called a criterion: what we would normally call the value was the criterion, and what we know to be the criterion was the value.

I hesitate to call any of these mechanisms and their use as inherently wrong, however, because the truth is, all debate is arbitrary.¹ In fact, the modern value and criterion structure of a standard LD case wasn't developed until the 80s and 90s, often attributed to Patricia Bailey and Marilee Dukes of Homewood High School and Vestavia Hills High School, respectively.² When we refer to a certain practice in debate as wrong, we sometimes mean “What you're doing is abusive,” but more often, we really mean to say, “What you're doing doesn't match what has traditionally been done. The labels for the components of your case are not what I would like to call them.”

If you ask the normal LD debater in the NCFCA today what values are for, they might give you a variety of answers. They might tell you that values are goals, they might tell you values are standards, that values are reasons to vote for your side and that values are principles in conflict. Ask them what goals, standards, voters, and principles mean and how they function, and you might get fewer answers. In other words, it isn't just criteria that are arbitrary—the idea of the value is arbitrary as well.

But there is a reason for criteria and values. The way we derive the use of values and criteria is not merely from tradition—and should not be from tradition. We ought to derive every part of our cases from the necessary logic to prove our cases true. If in our cases, we find that certain traditional components are missing, but that we have logically proven our point, I would suggest that your case need not follow the traditional model.

The idea of values debate and values clash originates from fundamental clashes in principle—justice versus mercy, life versus quality of life, individual good versus collective good, or environmental protection versus economic well-being. Values clash take moral dilemmas that we face and distill them down to two conflicting ideas, the resolution of which helps us answer the original question.

For example, euthanasia is a real life controversy of principle that can get mired in pragmatic or implementation-level questions such as the specific method of assisted suicide or the mental

¹ I would not, however, hesitate to call abusive case elements like “limiting criteria” wrong in the sense that they are bad for debate.

² Their instructional videos are still available online for free, and they are recommended.

state of the person wishing to die. However, if we eliminate the surface questions of brightline and implementation, we can distill the debate down to a value conflict between life and quality of life. On one side, we argue that life is so sacred no one should have the right to terminate it; on the other, we argue that life is no longer life at all if not for some basic level of humanity that we can experience through it. Values help cut through the noise and establish the core of issues.

Another controversy that boils down to value conflicts is that of abortion. For many, abortion boils down to a conflict between life and self-determination. Is the woman's bodily integrity more important, or is the fetus' life more important? We can have long debates over when a fetus truly becomes "human" or when life begins, but even when that question is answered, it comes down to a question of whether the fetus' life or the woman's self-determination is more important. Some abortion advocates, understanding that the core of the issue is not a question of when life begins, but a question of which value is more important, concede that the fetus is alive from the point of conception, and even go so far as to concede that the fetus is human—what else could it be?—but simply argue that the woman's right to bodily integrity is more important. Not every abortion discussion comes down to that core conflict, as some people will concede that life is paramount and simply argue that the fetus is not human or truly living; regardless, the debate ultimately boils down to those core conflicts.

The value clash establishes a values hierarchy. In a perfect world, we would be able to have all of the values in question all the time. But in an imperfect world, if we cannot have every value every time, which ones should we place a priority on?

Thus values and value clash aren't the obligatory tacked-on components of cases that they've become today. Values distilled debates. Values focused conversations. But it is logical that we use values for debates like the ones above, because they perform those valuable functions for us. In those debates, the entire debate can focus solely on values.

Value Clash as Weighing Mechanism

A weighing criterion is something that the judge evaluates each team by to determine who wins the round. For example, in team policy, the most common criterion used is Net Benefits, a broad term used to describe overall benefits after taking into consideration the costs involved. The judge looks at the affirmative plan, compares it with the negative stance, and asks, which world gives me the most benefits after I take into account the advantages of the plan and the disadvantages of the plan?

In value debate, the value clash functions as the criterion. First, we look to the value debate: in the debate between life and quality of life, let's pretend that quality of life won out. The result of the value clash becomes the criterion. We take the winner of the value debate, in this case, quality of life, and use that as the criterion. Next, we take quality of life, now the criterion, and ask, which side best upholds quality of life? That debater wins the round. Thus, in the classic value debate, the value clash produces a criterion.

Fundamental-ness or Supreme-ness

The value chosen to represent each side should be so fundamental that it can, in the debate, be defended against any other value. In other words, each side may have a variety of choices of values or principles that their advocacy can be boiled down to. However, the most fundamental one or the most important one ultimately should be chosen because the value is used to represent the foremost reason that side should be defended or advocated.

No Core Conflict

Consider this resolution, however: That the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism.³ What core values can you find? Perhaps the argument is that we should be less interventionist because it harms our reputation and the national sovereignty of the other nations involved when we intervene. Where is the fundamental value conflict? There wasn't any in the example above. Perhaps we can say that it comes down to valuing one country's citizens, nationalism, over global welfare, or globalism. What irreconcilable principles or values can we boil the two sides down to? There still isn't any. "Big group of people" versus "A group of big groups of people" has as much inherent value conflict as Grande Caffè Latte versus Venti Caffè Latte at Starbucks. Perhaps we can say that the debate is fundamentally a question of numbers—utilitarianism—that globalism versus nationalism is a question of whether we should look to the individual or the collective for answers. But here, we have constructed an artificial construct of conflict, external to the resolution, in order to force a values clash. The nation hardly equates to the individual, and it takes skilled parametricization to focus the debate solely on those conflicts between nation and nations that show a philosophical tussle between individualism and collectivism. I would suggest that this resolution does not come down to a fundamental value clash on the level of euthanasia, or abortion.

In the last decade of NCFCA resolutions, few of them have involved issues that can be better explained using fundamental principles expressed through values. I would venture to say that none of the cases run in the last five years have used values in the sense of the core conflicts described in this article.

Means Resolutions

Or this: In the pursuit of justice, due process ought to be valued above the discovery of fact.⁴ Is there a fundamental principle behind due process that conflicts with the principle behind discovery of fact? If there is one, I cannot find it. Due process as a whole involves discovery of fact, and the fundamental principle behind both is justice. In fact, "in the pursuit of justice" tells us that both due process and discovery of fact are means to a singular end—justice. The debater must dredge up from the cesspool of legal procedures one or two golden scenarios in which due process and discovery of fact disagree on a course of action. Only then is there a disagreement between affirmative and negative. Not only is there no fundamental conflict of values between the two sides, there is no fundamental conflict—of any kind—between the two advocacies.

The core debate is not over principles, but the application of principles. It is no less a valid Lincoln-Douglas value debate; the past several decades of NFL LD resolutions have focused largely on the application of principles, which ultimately require more nuance than the broad values discussions.

Impacts as Values

If that conception of values doesn't work for the debates we're having today, is there a model for values that allows us to broadly evaluate any resolution, regardless of the structure and subject matter of the resolution? Is there a model that allows us to evaluate debates even if there is no inherent value conflict in the resolution?

³ NCFCA, 2007-2008 LD resolution

⁴ NCFCA, 2011-2012 Resolution

The answer is that most debaters on the homeschool circuit are using the values as impact model. Rather than using values to define the core conflict between the two sides, values now serve to define the benefits of each side so that both sides can be weighed against each other. Values are the impact level of the debate. In policy debate, advantages and disadvantages have impacts—articulated consequences of doing or not doing something.

What's different about this model?

If values are not the core conflict that comprises the debate, it is not the first thing you think about when you write a case. You can't talk about the benefits of a car without first knowing what car it is you're selling; you can't talk about the impacts of your case unless you first know what argument you're running. Rather than beginning with a value and working your way to arguments that support that value, you begin with brainstorming arguments and finding the biggest benefit that argument brings.

Is there an element of choice to the value? Sure. After coming up with the argument and seeing the value that naturally comes with the argument, you might find that the value is lacking. That is the cue to come up with a different argument that comes with a stronger value.

Impacts do not fundamentally conflict with each other. Justice and peace and human rights do not at any level disagree with each other. We do not have to make it sound like there is some huge philosophical difference between "life" and "life, liberty, and property." Impacts don't often philosophically conflict. That's okay.

As a result, there should be broad agreement about the values—in a resolution like ours this year, for example—both sides probably agree that life, justice, peace, human rights, and economic security are all good things. Say your value is life and your opponent's value is human rights. Do you two really have some fundamentally different value system or value hierarchy that you're fighting over? Do you two really have two different positions that point down to different principles that help evaluate the round? No. Don't argue it that way.

Jason Baldwin, former ToC LD champion, said "...moral and political philosophers who write about some of the same issues debated in LD never appeal a value premise or criterion (in the LD sense). Instead, their arguments resemble the formally valid sets of premises and conclusions we have examined above. The key point to notice is that there are no missing steps in a formally valid argument—there is nothing left that a value premise or criterion could add."⁵

Baldwin argues that all LD cases should not require the use of a value and I would technically agree, but qualify that with the statement that in some resolutions, the value can clarify. However, in a debate where the only disagreement is over how we should get to a certain point, there is no need for a value. The logic of the resolution does not require it.

Comparing Values

Values should be weighed as impacts are weighed. Which impact has a broader mark on society? Which impact has a more severe consequence? Which impact has more longstanding consequences? All the standard ways of weighing impacts can be applied to values, and provide extremely concrete ways to compare them in a model where we no longer focus on

⁵ <http://www.nflonline.org/Rostrum/Ld1204Baldwin>

nonexistent philosophical differences between values. Just acknowledge the agreement and debate over what you actually disagree on. If both sides agree on the basic value that they're working towards, that is incredibly conducive to debate.

Argument Exposition

“Smash the Aid State!”

Joseph Laughon

Its back. Anarchism. For those who are loyal customers and remember the legitimacy year of Lincoln-Douglas debate (if not you ought to be ashamed of yourself, go back and buy an old sourcebook just for good measure), we discussed how the philosophy of anarchism could interact with claims of governmental legitimacy by arguing that states had no legitimacy. Here we will examine the interaction between anarchism, the aid state and the idea that the government has a moral obligation to provide positive things to people.

First, we need to understand what anarchism is and where it comes from. Anarchism comes from the Greek word *anarchos* meaning without rulers. Think of it this way; aristocracy is the rule of the *aristoi*, the best, democracy is the rule of the *demos*, the people, and anarchy is the rule of no one. The first rumblings of anarchist thought come from early Chinese Taoist philosophers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi. In the ancient period, Stoics like Diogenes of Sinope and Zeno of Citium also presented what today would be called anarchist themes. However the term anarchist becomes a popular term in the early modern period, as it became a pejorative to apply to those who opposed the monarchy. Anarchism as a coherent philosophy becomes more complex as Jean-Jacques Rousseau makes the case for the centrality of freedom in morality. In this time period the English “Diggers” and the French “Enrages” exemplified anarchist themes, especially as the Enrages were opponents of the advocates of centralized government, the Jacobins. They argued that “revolutionary government” was in fact an oxymoron. The poor’s ills could never be solved by government since the poor’s problems were started by the State in the first place.

The pivotal moment in the history of the development of anarchist thought was the failure of the 1848 Year of Revolution in Europe. The problems of nationalism, poverty, authoritarianism, theocratic policies and general oppression bubbled over into multiple rebellions all over Europe from Ireland to Poland. The iconic revolt of 1848 was in Paris and in Germany, where the most radical ideas were implemented in the Paris Commune. However the eventual demise of the revolts led these radicals and intellectuals to examine, for the first time, why their revolts had failed. This coalesced into the 1864 International Workingmen’s Association, which was a forum for discussing ideas that could turn into a more successful movement. Here, modern anarchism was developed by thinkers like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin. The two major strains (I am using that term broadly, anarchists are notoriously difficult to define by nature) could be termed individualist anarchism and collectivist anarchism. Since I think that by nature “collectivist anarchism” is an oxymoron, I will focus on individualist anarchism, specifically the strain called anarcho-capitalism, henceforth referred to as just “anarchism.”

Anarcho-capitalism is usually a uniquely American form of anarchism that, unlike collectivist forms of anarchism, does not reject private property and capitalism but rather embraces it as a means of liberation from the State. American theorists and economists like Lysander Spooner and Murray Rothbard can be considered the premier intellectuals that promoted and promote anarcho-capitalism. Anarcho-capitalists believe there are two different ethical grounds for promoting anarchism, one being utilitarian (as promoted by David Friedman, the son of famous Chicago economist Milton Friedman) and the other being a deontological case based on natural rights (as promoted by Austrian economist Murray Rothbard). This article will focus on the latter as the resolution is discussing moral obligations.

The key moral precept of anarchism in this instance is self-ownership, defined by philosopher William Rees-Mogg as the right to have exclusive control over one's life, body and property. Individuals who practice self-ownership are said to be sovereign individuals. This term is purposefully similar to sovereign nations. Just as a sovereign nation has full control over its borders, resources and people, so a sovereign individual has full and final say over his or her own body, lifestyle and resources. The argument for self-ownership has a few defenses. The first is that it is axiomatic. Self-ownership is a presupposition for argumentation. If you choose to argue against it and try to convince others to see your way, you are implicitly recognizing that others have the right to control themselves, as per the fact you are not forcing them to join your side.

The second justification is moral and relies on arguments from natural rights theory. The argument goes that each of us has a sacred right to our lives, liberty and property. Why? Because to take away any of these would be to act in a coercive manner, violating what philosophers call the non-aggression principle. The non-aggression principle states that the unprovoked initiation of force is inherently immoral. Theft, rape, assault, murder, and most wars are in fact morally wrong, whereas self defense in response to these are not. Murray Rothbard explains it as thus in his 1963 essay *War, Peace and the State*, "No one may threaten or commit violence ('aggress') against another man's person or property. Violence may be employed only against the man who commits such violence; that is, only defensively against the aggressive violence of another. In short, no violence may be employed against a nonaggressor. Here is the fundamental rule from which can be deduced the entire corpus of libertarian theory."

From this standpoint, we can clearly see negative (in terms of the resolution) themes in anarchist thought. The two main anarchist criticisms of this resolution would be that following up on this "moral obligation" would be fundamentally coercive in nature and that this moral obligation creates a dependency on the very organization that violates those rights, the State.

The first criticism is more moral. The anarchist would say that to argue we have a moral obligation to help nations in need, specifically on a governmental level, we would follow up on that obligation like any other. The following up on that obligation would inevitably mean we would have to pay money for it, gathered by the government. Thus humanitarian aid and the like is immoral on the basis that it is extractive and is morally no worse than theft as it violates the non-aggression principle and thus self-ownership. This may puzzle some. How could helping other nations in need be coercive? Frederic Bastiat answers this question by stating, "See if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime. Then abolish this law without delay, for it is not only an evil itself, but also it is a fertile source for further evils because it invites reprisals. If such a law — which may be an isolated case — is not abolished immediately, it will spread, multiply, and develop into a system."

The second main criticism is that it will increase dependence on the State, which is the source of our rights violations. Thus, that dependence increases the State's power. The argument goes that if we follow through on our moral obligations to these "nations in need," then this builds a culture of dependency and authoritarianism. For instance, anthropologist Oscar Lewis examined this in his book *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in Poverty*, which showed that in indigent families in Mexico, welfare had promoted a culture of hopelessness, dependence, cyclical poverty and thus more reliance on the State. This is also promotes a culture of unaccountability

in the government as the recipient government has now more “unearned” money. Andrew Mwenda, political editor for *The Daily Monitor* in Uganda, argues in his study “Foreign Aid and the Weakening of Democratic Accountability in Uganda” for the Cato Institute, that foreign aid has allowed the government to no longer be accountable to its citizens as they are not the source of over one half of the government’s revenues. Combined together, to the anarchist, this is a deadly brew. On the one hand the people become more hopeless and helpless of ever getting a job outside of the State, and thus are reliant upon it. At the same time, the State grows less accountable to its citizens. This is an immense threat to self-ownership and thus the anarchist rejects it.

The great thing about using anarchist themes in your negative is that you have a rich intellectual tradition for finding values and immense resources for research without ever having to specifically label your case or self as an “anarchist” which is an immediately scary word. First, you can find a lot of values and value support from the anarcho-capitalist tradition. Here you can build the moral case for opposing any moral obligation because to follow up on it would be inherently immoral, thus retaking the moral high ground from the negative. By framing self-ownership and natural rights as a positive moral good, it switches the debate from between the moral person and the curmudgeon to a debate between two moral systems, one of coercive ethics and one of non-coercive ethics. Furthermore the writings of anarchist intellectuals provide a rich resource base from which to criticize the notion of governments giving to others in the name of “charity” or “morals.” The Cato Institute, the Von Mises Institute and others are full of resources with which to criticize the idea of governmental aid and US involvement in foreign policy.

I think any negation of the resolution is going to move beyond the simple, “Aid doesn’t work!” style argumentation. It’s faulty because its utilitarian logic assumes the resolution could be true if there were modes of aid that work (the aff can probably find one). Also, it’s a purely defensive argument. In the judge’s mind there is probably a risk that it may not work, which means that there is also a risk it will work. There is no risk that the resolution is immoral but somewhat of a risk that it may not be as effective as possible. Thus, the judge’s mind will balance towards the affirmative. The negative must challenge the moral grounds of helping other nations in need. By using natural rights theory and anarchist themes, you can successfully challenge this notion and regain the moral high ground. Now humanitarian aid is not just “Not as good” but thoroughly bad, thus creating more room for the judge to vote for you. Also it provides a fairly simple syllogism that avoids any problematic ethics that promote a moral system that just won’t work (ex. ethical egoism as promoted by Ayn Rand) for the judges. Lastly, it provides a few comprehensive places with which to research, making your research burden. Even though anarchism looks “scary” in reality it could be a very effective debate strategy this year.

Thoughts on the Ethics of Aid

Trevor Heise

What's a Moral Obligation?

We're in High School – we don't even know what moral means.

'Moral obligation' is a term loaded with undefined meaning. The words bespeak to the importance of the duty, but sadly can't actually tell us much about what that duty is. This category reviews some views of moral obligations, and notes how they fit into the resolution.

Utilitarianism. First thought out by Jeremy Bentham, the philosophy of utilitarianism idolizes exactly what its name implies—utility, or usefulness. You may ask, usefulness in the pursuit of what? Usefulness in the pursuit of happiness, says utilitarianism. Good things are those which tend to expand and deepen human happiness. JS Mill expounded on Bentham's theories, and humanized utilitarianism, giving it a kind lacquer, fit for the public eye. Advantages of utilitarianism as a theory are its obvious simplicity, and the pragmatic way in which it seems to adjudicate ethical dilemmas.

Opponents of utilitarianism are not short in theories about why it's an insufficient motive for moral action.

Calculation of utility has been raised as an objection to the philosophy of utility. It's argued that there's no time to tally up the benefits that would accrue to all persons involved from each possible action. Mill's response is simply that, like with anything, we must form generalizations about what will be the right way to act in a given situation. The more persuasive critique is that utilitarianism doesn't distinguish between people—in other words, that there's no analysis of who must be made happy for a decision to be moral. Can one be harmed for the happiness of many? Can many be harmed for the happiness of one? Can anyone be killed for the happiness of many? All these are more difficult to answer if you don't have a good idea of whose happiness your philosophy promotes.

Marx's argument against utilitarianism is that it's obvious. Marx contended that the only real question is what kind of thing is good. The idea that we ought to do whatever's good is underwhelming and already understood.

It's further argued that utilitarianism asks too much of us. Since utilitarianism advocates only the promotion of happiness – not the happiness of any specific person – we'd have no basis for preferring our own happiness above that of others. This means we have no basis for holding wealth as long as there are those who lack material possessions.

A final response to utilitarianism takes the form of a question of the nature of happiness. What kind of happiness should we seek, if happiness, truly, is the goal of life? The preference of one type of happiness above another is difficult for utilitarian philosophers to demonstrate and or justify.

Deontology provides another account of moral prerogatives. This philosophy of German philosopher Immanuel Kant asserts that people have an obligation, not to act in the way most likely to lead to good, but to intend to act in the way most likely to lead to good. This allows for

human error and makes the point that the more important thing is what people have willed rather than what they've actually succeeded in doing.

Kant thought up two more rules for moral action that specifically govern how we're to act. First, Kant argued, individuals have an obligation to act in such a way that everyone could act in that way and still have a good result. Kant's categorical imperative, as it's called, doesn't answer the central question of what makes a 'good' act and, in that sense, is relative in the same way that Utilitarianism is. Second, that people must always be seen as ends in themselves, and never as means to an end. People are of inherent worth and must not be subjugated in the service of the happiness of another.

Moral obligations in the context of the nation state are a bit different, though. Some argue that nations have a moral obligation to protect rights, and nothing more – an opinion elaborated below. Others contend that the nation ought to redistribute wealth. And still others maintain that nations should promote the general welfare. This final proposition has its roots in the writings of the enlightenment era social contract philosophers. It's also possible that someone could dispense the entire discussion of utilitarianism and deontology, arguing that the real moral obligations of a nation arise from its prerogative to protect the rights of its members. This offers an alternate point of reference for a nation's moral code, and perhaps a different justification for a negative argument, if you'd like to argue that government has no business doing anything other than protecting rights (the refutations of that position are laid out under the refutation of Lockean rights and Bastiat's extreme libertarianism)

The resolution specifies that there's a 'moral obligation to assist other nations in need.' This is definite in the sense that it's an if/then. The resolution states that, if there's a nation in need, then there is a moral obligation to assist that nation. It doesn't specify how much assistance or a type of assistance – just assistance. The affirmative can try to demonstrate that there's an initial moral obligation of the type that arises when one can alleviate pain. The negative could simply argue that the existence of a poor nation somewhere in the world isn't, by itself, enough to go on to prove that there's a moral obligation to assist. Other considerations (the likelihood of assistance working, a receptive culture) may create a moral obligation, but the simple fact that a nation is needy doesn't create a moral obligation.

This particular moral obligation is open to the indictment that it's vague. There's no specification of what a minimum standard of living is, and therefore when someone's in need. Furthermore, there's no cutoff for when developed nations have assisted enough needy nations. This raises inevitable questions about what kind of moral obligation exists. The existence of a moral obligation itself could very easily depend on the definition of need. The very needy perhaps do create a de facto moral obligation. The very mildly needy probably aren't as likely to evoke a feeling that there should be a moral obligation to assist other nations, though. One could question whether a single, definite, obligation could exist for something as complex and multifaceted as international assistance.

Rights, The Social Contract, and Libertarians

Lots of debaters will argue that government has no business engaging in aid or wealth redistribution of any kind. They'll call it 'legal plunder' (a phrase lifted from Bastiat) and say that if government is just a collection of the individual rights of self-defense, government altruism is

no more justified than theft. This argument rests on a rabid Lockean view of natural rights. The theory argues that people have the rights they would have in a state of nature (life, liberty and property) and that the only purpose of government is to protect these rights.

There are several refutations of this thesis. The first argues that when individuals enter the social contract, they forfeit all of their rights. This response relies on the craven arguments of Rousseau and Hobbes. The other, and I think much better, way to respond is to dissociate 'economic' from 'personal' rights. The government may not be competent to legislate morality, but that doesn't preclude economic redistribution.

Rousseau said that the first person to survey land, and draw lines on a map, was the true founder of 'property'. The earth is a shared possession, subject to community division. At any rate, life under a government that does nothing but exercise the right to defense would be awful. We'd have no roads, id cards, public works, schools, etc. Yes, Ayn Rand was an arid and pitiless individual, devoid of compassion and charity.

People are sure to advocate private charity as an alternative to government aid. This argument is not, I think, a good one. Notably, those politicians most clamorous for 'the private charity alternative' frequently give the least. The richest quintile of income earners (at least in the United States), give the least of any income level. Also, most give only to their religious institutions – this goes into proselytizing, which of course has nothing to do with the sick, poor, needy, and 'huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.' So arguments that "Americans gave so and so percent of their income to charity last year..." are of course incorrect in the context of humanitarian aid. Finally, many private charities degrade or harm those they serve, e.g. the Catholic Church in Africa, religious 'charities' in South America, Haiti, etc. Finally, many religious charities require a statement of faith or some sort of listening to a message before they'll help you, and this raises serious freedom of conscience concerns.

One more note on Locke's natural rights: they're bogus. The essence of the popular understanding of his theory is set forth in the American Declaration of Independence with the quite unsupported assertion that "...[we] are endowed by [our] creator with certain unalienable rights..." This begs several obvious questions, namely, why?

Locke's theory relies on a generic deity granting suspiciously specific rights to his or her subjects. There's little basis for why they're a moral must or even actually exist. Furthermore, Locke argues that we have these rights in the state of nature, but doesn't elaborate on why we have these specific rights (the vaguely specific deist's deity strikes again). Lockean rights are further undermined to the extent that biological causes explain our reasons for action and emphasize our interrelatedness with others. For instance, the psychological trauma of living in a repressive social regime (borne of religious conviction, community habit, or otherwise) can be inherently dehumanizing, but isn't accounted for under Locke's justice as being a violation of rights. The impracticality is also overwhelming. Eminent domain and disproportionate taxation illustrate necessities of governance that are impossible to justify as 'self defense.' Finally, property is a farce to the extent that it tries to parcel out possessions that must be shared – air, water, and natural resources.

The better reason for rights is outlined by the Supreme Court: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they

formed under compulsion of the State.” The essence of rights is doubt and the belief that free individuals are better capable of working out their thoughts on matters of ultimate significance than forced political communities.

Persons exist independently, but are, and their souls are, heavily dependent on others. All souls are eclectic – drawing perceptions and ideals from natural phenomena, happenstance, feelings of transcendence, animals, and other people in an endless variety of permutations, and incorporating those inputs into the sense of self. The way we integrate and think of the world around us is what makes us a unique person. To modify Lincoln, all that we are, and at least most that we could ever be or hope to be, we owe to others. Despite this pervading composite, beings are essentially individual in the sense that sentience is enjoyed individually. Kindness and the joy of shared emotions bestow their benefits only on individuals. Though people are entirely influenced, they’re essentially individual.

This individualism wraps itself in another layer of importance as people start forming opinions on matters of ultimate significance – reality, existence, and the nature of the cosmos. Just as everyone has a unique moral code, we all have different views on how the world works, or should work. And so we repudiate any system of government that would standardize one right code of morality, and instead draft a system that protects each individual morality – each individual perception of the world and construct of ethical thinking.

Hopefully that’s not too abstruse. The important thing to realize is that this formulation of rights and interpersonal duties should lead to different policies than a Lockean natural rights view. Once the goal becomes preserving the delicate structures of each person rather than simply leaving people alone, positive rights take on more importance. Society’s obligation to provide a minimum standard of living is more important.

These two views of rights can be used alternately to argue for, and against, government assistance, exaggerated importance of the community, ‘moral revivalism’ (seen as a watchword for evil), etc.

Does International Assistance Work? Problems with International Aid, and Case Studies

A recent study by Nancy Qian of Yale University and Nathan Nunn of Harvard University, both economists, found correlation between food aid to a region, and violence in that region. This was attributed to aid being stolen by corrupt government officials and being used to oppress its intended recipients. Even more disturbing is the US policy of sending more aid in times of agricultural plenty, rather than in times of exaggerated need. Assistance, it appears, more responsive to donor wishes than recipient needs.

This reflects a problem with aid delivery mechanisms more so than with the concept of international aid. Several arguments could be extrapolated from this. The negative could argue that there’s not a moral prerogative to assist nations in need because of the potentiality for aid to be diverted and used by corrupt governments. This argument essentially says that aid is, or at least can be, good, but isn’t required by moral prerogative because it’s not universally good. The affirmative could argue that this is a reason for us to better our delivery infrastructure and doesn’t reflect a problem inherent in international aid.

MIT Economist William Easterly points out what he calls 'development paternalism' – when rich nations try to force prosperity on impoverished nations. There's a legitimate conservative (real historical Burkean conservative, not the modern schmaltzy Americana conservative) argument, that fundamental national change can't really take hold if it's not organic – that is, coming from citizens rather than rich international donors. Take, for example, the US invasion of Iraq: it wasn't until we hit the ground that we found out that there were two types of Muslim – traditional, and zesty. That's the kind of cultural idiosyncrasy that altruistic interveners have a tough time internalizing and incorporating into aid delivery policy. Granted, the example is of an invasion, not aid per se, but who's mincing words? In other words, maybe we should just let 'them' sort it out.

Avoiding intervention for fear of development paternalism and associated phenomena seems like the correct response. But this begs the question of how to best effect changes in other nations. Although the ideal scenario may be organic change, that's not always possible. Continuing the Iraq example, Saddam Hussein committed intentional genocide, used chemical weapons, and practiced the most sadistic form of lawlessness. To argue that these regimes will simply turn over seems to be understating the reality of the situation. However, the noninterventionist negative can strengthen his or her argument by invoking soft power – the idea that non-military international influence is significant. This relates to the arguments regarding cultural backlash and resentment. If these effects occur, they could further elevate the costs of intervention. A good soft power argument coupled with culture backlash and development paternalism could make a promising case against aid.

There's also the opportunity cost argument of Bjørn Lomborg. Foreign aid is often focused on less than maximally beneficial solutions. Clean energy projects in developing countries, for example, save far fewer lives per dollar than other immediate solutions like the provision of food and water.

Oxford-educated contrarian sociologist Tom Bethell makes an interesting argument. Real prosperity is often due to strong underlying economic infrastructure such as a robust structure of property rights, financial regulations and policies, an industrial manufacturing base, etc. Although international assistance may be able to affect temporary changes in the prosperity of a developing nation, it's unlikely that it will have a positive effect on those instruments of long-term prosperity. Moreover, it's possible that international assistance can cause harm to those (reference the earlier arguments about promoting violence and development paternalism). If it can't be administered properly, there's an argument to abstain from aid entirely. The more humanitarian position, though, is probably to simply work towards building those long-term solutions. This could be related to Easterly's paternalism argument by pointing out that where countries are given temporary sustenance, that could weaken motivation to establish domestic infrastructure for the production of food.

A final objection to the practicalities of international assistance can be raised regarding the extensive use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in food aid. GMOs raise religious, cultural, and ecological concerns. A GMO is a food crop (i.e. corn, wheat, soybeans, etc) with an engineered DNA genome. Scientists incorporate animal, fish and other plant DNA into the GMO to give it special resistance to pestilence and other traits of lower water consumption and hardiness. Religions that prohibit the eating of certain animals have voiced concerns with distribution of GMO based food aid. Cultural concerns take the form of support of traditional

heirloom seeds. As GMOs become more prevalent, the chance of them cross-pollinating and ruining the pure heirloom plants, grows greater. The ecology is not exempt from the effects of GMOs, either. Due to their intense water consumption, the introduction of GMOs in India has resulted in broad droughts due to water depletion.

Arguing the practical aspects of international assistance may be one of the more diverting endeavors in the resolution. Debaters' tendency will be to focus too much on the actual resolution, and (unfortunately) neglect to address which side makes the better prima facie case for their side. On a conclusory note, stay focused on what burdens the resolution forces you to uphold. Then keep your applications focused on those particulars.

Moral Obligations in the Context of the Nation State

Political philosophers have recently realized the hypocrisy of fretting about our 'poor' at home while many live on mere dollars a day abroad. Faced with the dilemma of trying to justify massive income inequality, they came up with a couple arguments.

One response is that the nation is a morally important unit. It's tough to 'walk the walk,' and moral behavior needs reinforcement by a community that shares your values, language, prejudices, and morals. This provides a crude rationale for a type of nativism or jingoism. Protection of borders, national culture, even different levels of national wealth might be justified if they're trying to preserve a particular national moral code. Under this rationale, aid isn't as necessary.

This argument is persuasive despite my cynical explanation. It finds its roots in the refutation of Lockean rights outlined above. If people define their concept of existence, and base that off their sense of self, surroundings, experiences, and perceptions, then one would expect moral codes to differ and take different forms in various cultures. These very subjective creeds and ways of acting are the basis for our view of reality, reasons for action, and inferences of meaning. Therefore, preservation of culture is important in maintaining everything from our cultural idiosyncrasies all the way up to our sense of self worth.

Aid factors into this dynamic in the protection and destruction of national culture or local mores. International assistance to indigenous peoples coupled with other types of intervention in the delivery of aid can have devastating effects on the accepted way of life in those groups. Furthermore, the moral prerogative that a nation give assistance implicitly says that nations don't have a right to maintain their preferred level of national wealth. And while the argument may not work as well on the other end – it's less accepted to argue that our moral code demands selfishness – it may still be worth pointing out that not all income inequality is bad.

The response is that ensconcing societies within their cloistered corners of moral prejudice is a form of social repression of those who would break out to a more enlightened genre of thinking. In other words, does society have a right to create creeds? Do they have a right to alter conditions to sustain those widely held opinions? More tellingly, does the creation and sustaining of a national morality necessarily come at the expense of the individual? Also, if morality is more objective than we're assuming, it could be that there's no virtue to distinct pockets of unique opinion.

Switching gears, Mill, Milton, and Paine, famously argued that dissent and freedom of speech were necessary to arrive at correct judgments and truth. This might be extended to the national context. If nations can't maintain distinct culture, it could lead to a dangerous form of international ideological hegemony or blandness. Jefferson made the point when he was propagandizing for the Revolution that smaller communities generally find it easier to get moral consensus. In a world of many distinct nation states, there is likely to be a variety of diverse, strongly held opinions on morality, life, religion, etc. Breaking down the barriers of the nation state, and bringing the world to 'socioeconomic par' could have the effect of forming what Oakeshott might have called 'moral lassitude' – a sort of "aimlessness and an absence of self-discipline... a wayward rather than a listless people... in the manner of spoiled children." The idea is that where there aren't distinct nation states with disparate levels of national wealth and their own distinctive opinions on ethics, it wouldn't be possible to sustain any kind of pious, vigorous morality at all.

Note that this thought relies on a pairing of Jefferson's politics and Milton's *Areopagitica* in a way they didn't anticipate. Rousseau made an argument like this in his *Social Contract* – referencing his hometown of Geneva as the ideal small state with deeply held ideals of mutual commitment. Though, to be fair, that's where Calvin burned his heretics, so maybe that sentiment of attachment could run too deep. On the other hand, if individuals are more important than nations in terms of sustaining belief, it's possible that a strengthening of the consensus building power of the nation state could come at the expense of the individual and harm intellectual diversity. The appeal of the arguments on this point is that they both accept a lively and enthusiastic debate as the goal, but disagree on the size of the opinion holder that will best achieve the goal.

Finally, here's a thought for you nihilists. Not that it means anything (insert Eeyore groan), but here it is anyway. Our lives are extremely contingent. The extent to which we find meaning in any particular thing, symbolism, or purpose, is based very heavily on our upbringing, our experiences, etc. Perhaps there's not a definite 'right' style or culture, but rather, (and this goes back to my 'distinct nation states' motif) having cultures with traditions and definitive 'looks' to them, is itself valuable. International assistance and interference is widely seen as interfering with what National Geographic would call the 'blissful, indigenous beauty' of native peoples. I'm being sardonic, but there's a grain of truth in every joke.

The extent that wide divergences in moral thinking could harm people is important to take into account. Sam Harris' statement that: "It seems to me patently obvious that we can no more respect and tolerate vast differences in notions of human well-being than we can respect or tolerate vast differences in the notions about how disease spreads, or in the safety standards of buildings and airplanes." Rather than my previous attempts to force a morality of amorality of toleration of dissent on a body politic to sustain discourse, it could be that the better approach is to force a very broad morality of human goodness. Where religious values and culture intersect with rights, which ought to be preferred? And at what cost to whose wellbeing?

If you revert back to Lockean rights, you might find it tough to pull together a coherent argument against the neocon's "democratic imperialism." Also, you might have a hard time justifying the existence of the nation state. If all have a right to be free, and government is nothing but one big 'right to self defense,' it's more difficult to come up with a justification for national borders, and it's hard to come up with reasons to not try to force these rights on everyone else. Our political

dialogue puts these ideals at odds (the nativist 'strong borders' party is never the party arguing that we should avoid invading other nations, you'll notice).

All these are reasons why the rich world might not have to pitch in to help out the poor nations. I mostly neglected to brainstorm the converse because no one should have a problem pointing to images of impoverished children in Sub Saharan Africa and saying, "asking you to forego a latte will save their lives." It takes a lot of decadence to value your latte-property-right over someone's life, so that should be a slam-dunk, rhetorically and ethically. The contrarian position is the difficult one.

Reparative Justice and Globalization

It's a hypocrisy of modernity that lots of the burdens the rich world generates are borne by poor nations. This could easily be a justification for a moral prerogative to assist developing nations.

Climate change. The developed world is almost entirely responsible for climate change, simply because it uses the vast majority of fossil fuels. Furthermore, other resource demands of the rich world – in particular the cutting down of Canada's Boreal forest and deforestation in Brazil are resulting in what amounts to Inuit and aborigine genocide, respectively, and feed back into the problem of climate change. Poor nations sustain the collateral damage of our climate change, because they're often the low-lying nations, islands, or dry desert regions (which of course get hurt more by rising seas and droughts than other areas). But even efforts to stop climate change can hurt poor nations. The cheapest energy sources (i.e. coal, fossil fuels, etc.) are unfortunately the dirtiest, so efforts to reduce CO2 emissions can take the form of keeping undeveloped nations without electricity – this in turn hurts education and medicine in those nations. There's a really good argument to be made that rich nations need to pitch in.

Resource Conflict. The Congo is one of the most resource rich regions in the world; it's also one of the poorest and most violent. How can people with so much natural wealth have so little security? Demand for natural resources. Companies like Apple and Microsoft require resources (precious metals, etc) from these war torn regions, boost demand for such materials, and provide financial fuel for conflict. Electronic waste is another hazard. Electronic waste is often shipped to poor regions of India and China where impoverished workers handle carcinogenic materials and chemicals while processing our used electronics. Bottled water companies like Dasani get water from aquifers in India, which lowers the water tables, and can put entire regions into drought (as can water-intensive genetically modified organisms that the developed nations have introduced).

Even particulate pollution can cross borders and pollute adjacent nations. Research of Tibet's Himalaya Mountain regions has directly tied glacier depletion and flooding to the particulate pollution of Thatcher-era Industrial England (a bad time in England in more than one way) that floated across in weather movements and was deposited over the hapless mountains.

Geopolitical conflict. During the Cold War, the US and the USSR (now Russia, et al.) fought proxy wars through a number of small satellite nations. Russia destroyed a lot of culture in Eastern Europe, and Kissinger staged coups, toppled governments, and supported the torture of thousands of people in Argentina's Dirty War, and elsewhere. This has inestimably

destabilizing effects on developing nations, and is another opportunity for the application of retributive justice.

The Least of These: Christian Social Teaching Joseph Laughon

I think this year's resolution can easily involve a philosophy and theology known collectively as "Christian Social Teaching" or "Social Christianity." It deals with how Christian teachings intersect with issues of poverty, wealth, racism, and human dignity. It generally divides into two denominational traditions, though thinkers from all faith traditions have contributed to it. The first is commonly known in America as "Social Gospel," which comes from a Protestant, usually American, tradition. The second is Catholic social teaching, which developed under various papal documents often the Church's history.

This section will delve into Social Christianity, its basic tenets, and arguments in favor of its implementation in government policies. However, first, we must discuss the role of faith, theology, and the Bible in debate. Often you will hear people say, "Don't write that" due to the allegedly over-religious nature of the argument or case. Or perhaps you've heard a debater call for an argument to be struck from the record, as it were, due to the fact that, "I cannot debate against it. To do so would contradict my faith. Thus don't vote on it." This antitheistic trend in debate is nothing more than a glorified cop out that is antieducational and is especially unedifying in the particular league we debate in.

First, we must deal with the obvious. You should argue against things that you believe in. Period. Every major philosopher and thinker will debate against their own points in order to gain a better understanding of what they actually believe. Rene Descartes' (a highly religious man, for the record) Meditations finds the Meditator doubting everything only to come to a secure certainty with regards to his existence, God's existence, God's benevolence and a host of other incredibly important issues. Socrates in Plato's Republic is often seen arguing for a side and then, just as quickly and eloquently, switch sides. Francis Bacon in his Novarum Organum promotes a method in which we propose ideas that are just as quickly brought down upon further examination. This Baconian method is the forerunner to the modern day scientific method. Any intellectual exercise requires us to take opposite sides sometimes. That is the nature. This goes double for debate. Debate is by nature an adversarial system, premised on the notion that if all the sides are heard, the Truth generally wins out. A defense lawyer may feel that her client is totally guilty and a district attorney may feel that his case against the defendant is quite weak, but they do not get to hold a sidebar with the judge and refuse to argue their case.

The above is taken as self-evident in debate today. We argue for a resolution for 45 minutes, then in a few minutes (ha just kidding, it's a debate tournament so more like a few hours) go and debate with all our righteous fury against that very same resolution. We do it over and over (and over) again. No one gets to stand up to a deliver a rebuttal against the affirmative constructive and say, "I don't want to challenge very strongly held beliefs of mine (on taxes, freedom, liberty, etc...) so strike those arguments from the record." That argument would be, and should be, laughed out of the room. But for some reason we grant an exception (a regulatory waiver if you will) to arguments of a religious nature. For a Christian debate league desiring to build up Christian speakers, thinkers and citizens this is utterly odd and counterproductive. Why do we do this? I will examine some of the more common objections and then build the case for theological arguments in debate.

“It’s a very deeply held belief.”

The assumption behind this argument is that due to the deepness with which we hold religious beliefs, we have emotionally invested ourselves in it and thus we cannot attack them for to do so would be to attack ourselves. This is sophist nonsense posing as sensitivity. Socrates said it best, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” To live without ever examining yourself, critiquing yourself and bettering yourself and your beliefs is to go through life with blinders on. Such an attitude has no place in debate. Furthermore, it is wrong because it assumes that theological beliefs are the only deeply emotional issues. For instance, liberty is quite a common value. Why? Because it’s popular and it’s popular because it is a concept that is ingrained in Americans, to the level where it is tattooed on our souls. Americans have a deeply held emotional investment in liberty. I could say the same of nearly every other value. Yet time and time again I see debaters who get up to criticize liberty and natural rights in a round, only to go read Bastiat’s *The Law* (for fun of course) right after.

“It would force me to say things that are immoral.”

Saying something you believe to be immoral isn’t in itself immoral. Debate is a game, and to an extent you are an actor. You are an advocate. There is a level of disconnect between you and your arguments. Furthermore, you don’t have to say immoral things to disprove a case that is built on religious morality. For instance, racism is a hideously immoral ideology by any stretch of the imagination. Arguing that helping people in need due to the lingering effects of racism (say against Irish Catholics in Belfast, Afrikaner farmers on the Velt and recent immigrants in a large city) is a reason to vote aff does not require you to say, “Racism good.” But no one would disqualify applications of racism would they? Or bar a discussion of racism from the debate? Clearly not.

“It may shake someone’s faith.”

I seriously doubt it. If a vigorous discussion leads to someone doubting their faith, then perhaps debate or Christianity isn’t for you. Christianity has an immensely rich heritage and tradition of apologists and thinkers from St. Peter on the Pentecost, St. Paul on Mars Hill, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, John Calvin, Norman Geisler, Dr. William Lane Craig, Ravi Zacharias and others. Furthermore Christ Himself had promised Peter that His Church would prevail against the “...gates of hell...” Pardon me if I’m not worried that the battle for souls will be lost in the broom closet where they stick us LDers. If anything it could be won there. It could easily lead to a rich discussion of faith, apologetics, leading to strengthening of faith for the doubting and even salvation for the nonbelieving (such as a judge or even a competitor). Lastly, shaken faith is a necessary thing from time to time. It may not be fun but that forced introspection and strengthening makes you stronger and more alert to you faith at the end, like that jolt of adrenaline to the heart when you feel like you almost fell. The Blessed Mother Teresa for instance very famously in her diary mentioned her “dark nights.” Martin Luther and Billy Graham both were gripped with doubts. Doubt, handled correctly, does not destroy faith. It builds it. Often we hear the refrain, “Don’t be a Doubting Thomas.” What a sad summary of a great Christian man’s walk. You know what Thomas did after his moment of doubt (I’d like to note that Thomas prior to that was the only one who wanted to go to Jerusalem with Jesus)? He went to India, preached the Word and was a martyred in a brutally violent manner. His moment of doubt solidified a faith that saved thousands if not millions over the years as the tradition of

his preaching created a community of Christians in India that exists today, called St. Thomas Christians.

Now for why we should allow for theological arguments and applications. First off, it's the most consistent. We allow any other kind of argument, why no theological? Secondly, we are a Christian league. To argue that we should enforce a strict policy of "No Jesus allowed" seems quite ridiculous indeed. Thirdly, it is the most educational. The multiplicity of arguments and viewpoints provides for an increase in education and critical thinking, which is the entire purpose of debate and especially the NCFCA. Lastly, it is the most fitting for a value resolution. A value resolution makes an ethical evaluation or comparison. How can we discuss ethics without some sort of theological foundation?

First, what is Social Christianity? We will start with the most common, American form that is the Social Gospel. The Social Gospel was and is a Protestant intellectual movement that attempts to apply Christian ethics to the problems of modern economic life. As the "acids of modernity" did their work during the era of the Industrial Revolution and mass urbanization set in, many people began to wonder what the Church's response to these new social ills should be. Walter Rauschenbusch, a Protestant theologian from New York, witnessed the immense amount of poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, violent crime and general sin that took place in New York City and in 1907 penned *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in which he argued that, "Whoever uncouples the religious and the social life has not understood Jesus. Whoever sets any bounds for the reconstructive power of the religious life over the social relations and institutions of men, to that extent denies the faith of the Master." From here the Social Gospel became immensely powerful in early 20th century American politics from the Prohibition, the women's suffragist movement, the New Deal and all the way to the Civil Rights movement. Social Gospellers argue that the Christian ethic of love towards the weak, the foreigner, the poor should not just infuse our private day to day life our institutional life and our governmental policies. Government is not just an impersonal umpire that ensures follow the rules and don't hurt each other, but rather an institution through which Christians can act to help the least of these. The most recent manifestation of this was the "compassionate conservatism" of the Bush administration, by crafting policy in a manner that could best aid Christian healing and charity in private society, often through government-financed faith based programs.

The Catholic side of this movement is called Catholic social teaching, which begun as a cohesive ideology after Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 on how people, structures and organizations could best implement justice in society. During the Cold War, Pope John XXIII also built upon this in his *Mater et Magistra* subtitled "Christianity and Social Progress." He argued that Christians had a duty to get involved in public life and promote the common good of all as Christians. This has been built upon since by subsequent popes and especially by Pope John Paul II's pontificate. The key tenets of Catholic social teaching are promoting human dignity, solidarity with others, and charity.

So now that we have a sense of what Social Christianity is, one may ask, "Yes this whole charity thing is all good and well and should definitely be promoted by private individuals and private organizations, but governmental policy?" The arguments for Social Christianity come from a few main sources. The first is Abraham Kuyper's "cultural mandate" from Genesis 1:28, where humanity was given dominion over the earth. Kuyper argues that this verse argues that all human activities should be a part of building the Kingdom of God and that the distinction between "secular" and "sacred" is arbitrary. John Calvin also promoted the role of Christianity in

government. He argued to Francis I that the king was a minister of God and thus must be subject to God. Furthermore the laws that govern the polity must be subject the Christian laws of love and ultimately foster the telos - ultimate end or purpose - of humanity, which is the worship of God. However in the modern age, the prominent Protestant thinker for an active role of Christianity has been Francis Schaeffer, author of *How Then Shall We Live?* His argument is that Christianity's retreat from public life has created a post-Christian environment where life is far cheaper, more brutal and cruel. Without religion's civilizing influence in government, society and life ultimately takes a turn for the worse.

So Christianity orders us to help others and Social Christianity (along with other theology such as Dominionism) believes this should be implemented on a governmental level. What does that mean for this year's debate? Inherently, a case that bases itself on Social Christianity would be for the affirmative. We have a moral obligation to help others as Christians, specifically our neighbors. As the rich young ruler asks, "Who is my neighbor?" In the context of this year's resolution, the answer is obvious: those in need overseas, especially the "least of these." This can take many forms. For instance, S.R. Thompson and James K. Wellman, Jr. of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* argued that the philosophical roots of America's desire to promote democracy in the Middle East, and intervening in Iraq is ultimately from a Social Gospel point of view. Those in the Middle East deserve the same rights and democracy as the most privileged of us. In Catholic social teaching, the U.S Conference of Bishops in 1999 called for debt forgiveness, where developed nations forgive and erase the debt that poorer nations owe them, on the basis of the Old Testament Jubilee.

Ultimately, Social Christianity in this year's debate could be quite useful and educational. The case is simple. First and foremost, we should promote and tolerate theological arguments just like we tolerate economic, philosophical or political arguments. Secondly, we have a moral obligation from God, as human beings and as Christians to ameliorate the condition of other people, from a standpoint of love and justice. Lastly, this obligation carries over to governments, especially for the Christian citizen.

Whether or not you choose to write a case that is explicitly taken from the Social Gospel or Catholic social teaching this year, it is clear elements of this can be used to affirm the resolution. Here we see a clear moral obligation and specifically on a governmental level, to help others. Also there are values abundant, especially those which would be quite original to this league. Lastly, it is clear that even if you never use any themes from this philosophy and theology, it is obvious that theological arguments should not just be tolerated but encouraged, especially in a resolution that is of a moral nature.

Rawls's Borders

Trevor Heise

The idea of this affirmative is basically an extension of liberal political philosophy beyond the bounds of the nation state. Traditional liberal political philosophy (the type that arose from the Enlightenment) emphasizes man's 'natural rights' and argues that the purpose of government is, as the declaration puts it, to "secure [those] rights." Other purposes of government, like foreign aid and wealth redistribution, don't fit into this theory since they don't have much to do with protecting negative rights. This view of the purpose of government seems incomplete in light of massive international income inequality, and several severe humanitarian crises. Also, it's not clear why a government's duty is exclusively to its own citizens. Those doubts in traditional theory belie this case. The central affirmative argument is that governments have broader responsibilities than those that might arise from negative rights (life, liberty, property), or, at least, that negative rights entail more moral duties than we may have initially thought.

The case rests on several assumptions, divided by contention. Here they are with possible objections, and their refutation.

Contention 1. Here I make two arguments: that human rights exist, and that they require a basic standard of living to be realized.

The argument that human rights exist is axiomatic, as I note in the case. I don't think we can expect any pushback here. If there is an argument against human rights, it's useful to point out that the fact that we aren't all currently engaged in savagery is a testament to our de facto, if passive, acceptance of the fundamental tenants of human rights doctrine.

The second part of the argument is more open to dispute. I contend that human rights have an economic aspect – that they can't be realized *merely* by not being interfered with. This flies in the face of the libertarian thought that pervades lots of the debate community. I'll call it the "rights plus" theory. The reason listed in the case for the rights plus argument draws on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs – in other words, that people can't realize their rights without some food and shelter and money. Common objections to the rights plus argument are that:

A) If people require a minimum standard of living, this means you'd have to take wealth from someone else, violating her rights, and hence making the idea of human rights contradictory. This argument makes sense, and is the best of the three. The response is two fold. First, taking wealth from the wealthy doesn't dehumanize them in the way that an impoverished person is dehumanized. Second, economic rights are different from personal rights. We have rights not because they derive from a 'state of nature' – whatever that means – but rather for the tangible purpose of being morally autonomous and sentient beings. When moral autonomy and sentience are warped or inhibited by grinding poverty, the larger goal behind rights is failed. Appeal to the deeper purpose behind rights is a persuasive way to discount the importance of economic rights relative to personal rights and support redistribution.

B) People should just take initiative and make some money for themselves. This argument is basically cruel. The world's poor are poor because they *can't*, not because they *won't*, better their situation. Suggesting that more personal initiative is the solution to the

worst types of poverty reflects a holistic misunderstanding of the nature of poverty in today's world.

C) A minimum standard of living is morally elastic – there's no bright line for when you've achieved it. True, and that's precisely why I think they're superior. Because moral "don'ts" are defined and clear, they lead to a binary and absolutist view of the world. It's very Victorian. The subjectivity of moral "dos" like altruism forces us to ask tough questions about welfare, ethics, and good conduct. One view leads to more inquiry and dynamism, the other to self-reinforcing stasis of opinion.

Contention 2 contains three arguments, each organized around the central theme of proving that national borders are morally unimportant. First, that the purpose of government is to promote rights in general, not exclusively *our* rights. Second, other people need our money more than we do. Third, reparative justice requires we pay back some of what we've damaged through globalization.

It can be argued against the first paragraph that the purpose of government is to do more than simply protect rights – that governments have cultural ties. If this argument is made, your opponent has shut off their access to any arguments about how government welfare/foreign aid/redistribution is unjust – they've already accepted that governments have more of a purpose than just promoting rights. Nice concession.

Regarding the cultural ties argument (this is what my whole negative case is based on), point out that government trying to be nationalistic about promoting culture is very dangerous. The Irish Troubles example works for this point; also, you can mention the policy of various Islamic republics around the world enforcing Sharia law and the enormous brutality and sadism involved with that. Governments shouldn't promote culture. Also, it's easy to argue that if they're saying that governments have an obligation only to their own citizens, they're probably engaging in some kind of racism, unless they've got a pretty nuanced non-interventionist or culture imperialist argument, which they probably won't have.

The second paragraph of Contention 2 argues that other people are in dire straights. Again, like with the human rights point, there's not much substantiation needed here. The real point of contention is whether there's a moral obligation to help those people. The moral obligation can be derived (or proved) through reference to the prior arguments A) that human rights are supreme, deserve to be promoted by governments, and can be promoted through economic assistance (Contention 1), and B) that governments have a moral obligation to people more so than to *their* people.

Paragraph three draws attention to a reparative justice argument. It could be argued against this point that A) globalization has brought more benefits than costs to locals, B) as long as there's no intervention or per se rights violation, rich nations haven't done anything technically immoral in exploiting low cost foreign labor C) the main costs of globalization (i.e. security, nuclear weapons, the global financial system) are borne by rich nations, and D) the burdens imposed on poor nations simply aren't that bad.

Argument A is flatly untrue in lots of situations. There's a burgeoning load of emerging research demonstrating that lots of local cultures suffer far more than they gain from globalization. Also, for the absence of a moral infraction to be proven, you can't simply show how *some* people

weren't hurt – you have to show that all weren't hurt. Violence against few isn't justified through benefit to many.

B is invalid in light of a more enlightened, if you will, view of moral obligations. Lots of indigenous peoples enter into agreements with multinational corporations unaware of the full costs to their societies of the agreement. Furthermore, those who benefit from resource depletion in certain cultures are almost always not those who are harmed by such. Therefore, true contractual consideration is absent.

C makes sense but can be outweighed through simple factual analysis. The strain placed on the budgets and resources of wealthy nations by defense requirements and maintaining economic infrastructure don't come anywhere near approximating the complete devastation of, for example, the Congo through resource fights brought about by globalization. The costs to the rich are significant, but so are the benefits. The costs to the poor are overwhelming and the benefits amount to much less.

D is uncharitable and untrue. Simply research several examples of the devastating effect that globalization has had on local dynamics, economies, and cultures. Back that up with quantification of poverty and violence.

One note, globalization and technology has been, on the whole, good. Don't come off as the "indigenous Marxist." The point isn't to disparage progress – but to point out that it must be managed and its collateral damage accounted for.

Contention 3 outlines the benefits of international assistance. Two are mentioned.

The first benefit to international assistance is what I call more "comprehensive moral thinking" – bringing citizens of other nations into the sphere of those for whom we feel responsible.

It could be objected that we shouldn't feel responsible for everybody, or simply that foreign aid doesn't have this magical effect of making us more compassionate.

Regarding the first objection, it's quite obvious (unless you're Ayn Rand, or one of her acolytes, a certain potential Vice President of the United States) that we should care about our fellow man. The question of whether that would work is more debatable.

Foreign assistance is morally important in that it gives nations a vested interest in each other. It's important for domestic politics to have success abroad. Effective aid to other countries is a political win, albeit less significant than domestic or economic victories. Still, this incentive, however initially perverse, can be brought to bear on important problems and morph into an interest in others. This is illustrated (somewhat imperfectly) in the US's assistance to Israel. Without getting into a chicken and egg situation, where it's debatable whether our love for Israel caused our assistance, or our assistance caused our mutual affection, it's clear that United States cooperation with and assistance to Israel, has resulted in a domestic political base very much vested in the success of that nation. They've become a proxy relative for us.

Finally, I argue that a diminution of the moral sanctity of the nation state is essential to developing a correct view of the international landscape in this century. The most likely response to this takes several forms; all inevitably culminating in the opponent saying

something like “Do we want Syria sitting on the UN human rights council? How dare we cede sovereignty to far inferior nations!” This is syllogistic promiscuity and results from conflating sovereignty with inviolability. It’s helpful to bring it back to a few key examples. The Nuremberg Trials, prosecution of the perpetrators of Apartheid in South Africa provide good examples of the kind of people who have been, or need to be, deprived of the benefit of getting to hide behind the veil of national sovereignty. Keeping things grounded by reference to genocide and the extreme situations will help diffuse some of the extremist pro-national sovereignty talk that bubbles up around issues like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Hegemony

Jon Chi Lou

The concept of hegemony is a peculiar one—it is used on every side of every argument. Oil subsidies? Subsidies are bad because they will lead to an increase in US hegemony and an increase in US hegemony is bad. On the other side, US hegemony is actually a good thing, so oil subsidies are bad because they decrease US hegemony. There are also plenty of arguments that any given action would lead to either an increase in hegemony or that it would decrease hegemony.

What is a global hegemon?

A global hegemon is the one country in the world that is the most powerful and most influential, and there can only be one most powerful country in the world at any given time. Right now, most would say that the United States is still clinging on to its role as global hegemon, although, as you've probably guessed, China is threatening its hegemony. The role of hegemon is, itself a binary question—either you are the hegemon, or you are not. There are no co-hegemons or a 75% hegemonic country.

What is hegemony?

Hegemony is influence. Hegemons are powerful because of the economic or military threats that they can level at countries that do not do what they say or do not follow their system. For example, the US dollar is one way the US is exerting its hegemony economically, our presence in the NATO is one way we exert hegemonic power militarily, and the UN Security Council is one way we show our dominance diplomatically. As you might expect, influence is not absolute, and never will be, and is thus measured on a sliding scale. Some countries have more hegemony than others, but no country will have absolute hegemony. The question of whether a country has hegemony, unlike the question of whether a country is the hegemon, is thus not a binary.

As hegemony is not absolute, there are limits to the reach and power of any hegemon's influence. For example, regionally, India, South Africa, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia are all extremely influential, but on a global scale, much less significantly so.

What leads to an increase in hegemonic power?

This is the link that you have to find. There are arguments for almost everything leading to an increase or decrease in hegemony. Several common arguments are military, economic, and cultural in nature.

Military

On a very basic pragmatic level, people can hem and haw all day, but physical force is what matters the most when things get down and dirty. Two cavemen can have a protracted philosophical tussle over whose gets to live in the cave they both found, but in the end, brawn wins the argument. When society progressed a little further, it was less of a question of who was better equipped to physically beat up the opponent, but a question of who was better equipped

to both intellectually beat up the opponent and to influence others who would then physically beat up their opponent. Here we see several elements of modern power at its core: first, civility and rules matter to an extent in civilized society. To prevent needless loss of life, it made sense for both to resolve conflicts on some level before physical skirmishes broke out. If conflict did break out, there was a need to contain it in a way that would make it clear who was winning while still minimizing losses. Two, influence—the ability to convince people to do certain things for you, and also to convince your opponents to comply with what you desire—matters. Three, physical power still matters. If words fail to convince people to do what you want, pain should.

Military hegemony is the main we project hegemony in the modern day. In the Gulf War, we exerted physical influence to convince Saddam Hussein to stop his invasion of Kuwait. In Libya, our time-limited, scope-limited military action on the front end, in concert with our international partners, enabled rebels to overthrow and kill Muammar Gaddafi when he refused to step down voluntarily. Military power is not solely about blowing buildings up; it is perhaps more so about the ability to say with credibility that you *can* blow things up. MAD theory during the Cold War is an example of this in action: simply the threat of mutual destruction was enough to prevent war.

Thus, anything that increases military power, requires the United States to threaten military action, or to actually engage in military action would increase the actual hegemony of the United States.

Response to Military Hegemony

It could just as easily be argued that military action overseas provokes such a strong counter response, a global gag reflex, that wipes out any influence gained by the United States through unilaterally exerting its influence. This response comes from countries completely uninvolved in the conflict, countries threatened, and countries directly involved.

A recent illustration of all of these responses comes from the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, carried out primarily by the United States, but with highly incentivized cooperation from nations allied with the US. Though supported by a number of nations, the war was initiated unilaterally by the United States without broad international support. France, Germany, the entirety of the African Union, the Arab League minus Kuwait, and China, among numerous other nations, expressed reservations for entering Iraq at the time. The refusal of the United States to take into account their concerns led to a global breakdown of the United States' reputation in the post-Iraq invasion era among countries not directly involved in the conflict.

An example of the second type of response occurring is the arms race during the Cold War. Attempts by the United States to increase hegemony through building bigger and better weapons led to responses in-kind from the Soviets. The end result was that the arms race was less of a race than a mutual arms stockpiling activity.

Finally exerting influence over other countries can lead to a strong counter-response from the countries we target. Every example of colonies banding together against colonialism is evidence for this fact. The Mexican revolutionary efforts against Spain, the Filipino revolutionary efforts first against Spain then against the United States, and even the 1953 Iranian coup all show that rather than increasing true complicity, physical force merely increases revulsion for the perpetrator of force.

Economic

But as we've noted above, in a world where conflicts do not come down to your strongest man versus our strongest man, suasion in any form plays a huge role. For example, in the 1953 CIA intervention in Iran, the mission objective was to remove democratically-elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh from power because he was nationalizing oil fields Western oil companies depended on. The execution of the mission involved bribing gangs and spiritual and political leaders to support their puppet dictator of choice, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The mission was successful, and Mossadegh was overthrown. Money is an effective method of persuasion.

China exerts hegemonic control over Africa through trade, providing critical infrastructure in exchange for resources Africa can provide, mostly oil. A region formerly controlled by Western powers had been abandoned by the selfsame powers, and the lack of a hegemon in the region led to the filling of the power vacuum by another major power. The total dollar value of the Chinese-African trade relationship is in the vicinity of the \$100 billion mark.

Economic influence has lasting effects. Because major trade relationships cannot be replaced overnight, and because the economic concerns are often at the top of a country's list of priorities, perhaps second only to physical existence, economic influence tends to have powerful ramifications.

Cultural

The cultural argument is much more philosophical in nature, and it says that through the spreading of our culture, we cause far reaching domination of other countries. American movies, for example, enter the hearts and minds of Middle Eastern and Asian countries, though their people may reject the immediate policies of our government. The entertainment that we put out reflects American values to a certain extent, and through propagation of American culture, we spread our values to the rest of the world.

Cultural hegemony can be furthered a number of ways. The higher education system of the British allowed them to spread their cultural values across the world because they had a monopoly on education. Language can perpetuate cultural hegemony: Western values are present all over the world arguably because the prominence of the English language allows documents and papers reflecting those cultural values to be read all over the world. Military hegemony can further cultural hegemony and economic hegemony: when a nation is colonized, its education system can be changed by force, and the people can be forced to learn the language of the mother country and to give up some of their profits to the motherland.

This is a really unique case in a couple ways. Unlike lots of the arguments you're likely to see, it relies on an inherently subjective value - local culture. You might even say that the value is a meta value, a value that determines and organizes our thinking about other values. The case also has two dimensions in the sense that most of the arguments can draw on the value for moral weight, but there are also practical arguments. In fact, contentions 2 and 3 could be argued without a value - that is - under any value paradigm. It's probably best to decide how you're going to argue the thing and then be coherent about it. The unifying theme of the case is that governments are more than simply abstract rights-protecting institutions. They're expressions of value systems, hierarchies of social organization, power structures, and they reflect how people think about their lives and the purpose of live. Big stuff. Therefore, when other nations intervene, they're disrupting these delicate networks. The rest of the arguments take that point as their implicit assumption to one degree or another.

The value is local culture. Arguments against will probably revolve around the idea that some local culture is bad or that 'local culture' is a subjective ideal.

The point that local culture may be bad is persuasive. After all, what if a local culture practices cannibalism? We wouldn't want to support that, would we? However, the response, I think, is better. Notice the resolution doesn't specify the affirmative support the morality of foreign aid from the United States or another similarly ideologically situated western democracy. So there's no guarantee at all that the values promoted through foreign aid (or the local values that may be destroyed through foreign aid) will be either good or bad. The resolution simply deals with the question of whether there's a moral obligation to send some kind of assistance. So the affirmative saying that you're supporting 'bad local cultures' is counterbalanced by the opposite truth that the affirmative could be supporting 'foreign aid with bad values.' How do you come out ahead, then? The argument seems like a wash. Simply say that, all else being equal, it's better if change and values be organic than imposed. That simple. Don't let the affirmative (or yourself) assume any other variables that aren't specified in the resolution.

The other point is that local culture is subjective. Sure. Values are subjective. That's why there are multiple cultures. The hope is that there's truth in a diversity of opinion. Read JS Mill's chapters on the freedom of thought and discussion in *On Liberty* for an excellent summary of why we need diversity of opinion.

The criterion is simply not recognizing a moral obligation to assist. This criterion isn't a "way to get to the value" in the sense that it's a principle that, if applied, will always get us to a good result. Rather, it's the negative side of the resolution, justified by the value. In other words, the argument of this negative is "because of the importance of local cultures and organic change, there isn't a moral obligation to aid." One important note on resolitional analysis as it applies to this case: the resolution specifies that there's a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. That's an if/then statement. In other words, the resolution says that if there's a nation in need, then there has to be a moral obligation for a capable nation to offer assistance. Understand that you don't have to argue against all foreign aid, or against foreign aid in general. You *only* have to prove that need does not create a moral obligation to get involved. You have to prove the absence of a *default moral obligation*. This is way easier than proving that aid is always bad, or

something extreme like that. Your arguments about the failures of aid and the highly delicate nature of important local culture should be more than enough to prove the minimal assertion that there's not *always* a moral obligation to assist.

The first paragraph of the contention is a subtle chiding of the libertarian argument that nations and governments are merely rights protecting things, and don't or at least ought not affect your morals and associations. If nothing else, it's at least a recognition of the obvious social fact that nations are hugely influential. The affirmative could argue that society shouldn't have this kind of sway on our judgements but that misses the larger point that they *do*. Regardless of the morality of the effect, it exists and spells ruin for international assistance.

Next is the rhetorical question of why we don't invade the world. I say rhetorical, but this is actually a RNC discussion starter. "Hey! Why not invade Cote d'Ivoire? I love the climate there!" Asides aside, the reality is that we can't govern everyone, which means that people have to govern themselves. This results in distinct nations. That's all you have to prove here.

The last point is accountability, and stresses the principle of locality. An interesting dynamic of international assistance is that, since it's definitionally performed by non native governments, the administration of aid isn't politically accountable to those it's serving.

Contention 2 isn't completely in alignment with the idea of the case, but is powerful. You could take this contention wherever you want as I explain at the end of the strategy notes section. I'll outline what I did.

The first point is that humanitarian assistance often prolongs local violence and instability. The contention itself is based on evidence (the study) but also draws on the theoretical reasons mentioned in contention 1 for why aid can fail.

Responses to this could include questioning the study, the universality of its conclusions, arguing that there's some kind of alternate cause, copping out by saying that they're not supporting *that* type of aid, or a humble whimper and concession of the round.

Regarding the study's validity and universality, it's immensely credible and although it only dealt with aid in conflict regions, residents of those regions are 'in need' so the affirmative must argue that there's a moral obligation to assist them. The useful thing about the study is its indictment, not of any particular type of aid, but of the entire concept of pouring money into destabilized conflict regions. Though this may not be enough to discredit all aid (nor should it be) it demonstrates that there's not a moral obligation to assist.

Part two of the second contention draws attention to the United States' proxy wars against the USSR during the Cold War. These took the form of intervention in, and assistance to, fascist governments to help them resist communist rebellions. I don't think you'll get anyone actually arguing that this was good policy, but it does raise interesting questions about what constitutes need. The affirmative is likely to argue that this wasn't assistance to nations in need, and therefore doesn't qualify as the type of aid for which there's a moral prerogative.

Several responses. First, the international assistance involved in the Soviet era Cold war was obviously given for motives ulterior to simply 'providing for the world's poor.' But the existence of other motives doesn't erase the fact that this type of aid was 'assistance to those in need.'

Second, the nations were in need in the sense that they lacked necessary instruments and financing to accomplish totalitarian objectives. The bad purpose of assistance doesn't make it less genuine. This leads to the telling realization that assistance is amoral in the sense that non in-kind aid (cash) can be put to various uses - not all of them good. If this is accepted, it's much more difficult to argue for a moral prerogative to do something that's truly amoral. It's saying 'we have a moral obligation to do we know not what.'

The final contention is also extremely powerful, and forms, with the second, the most persuasive elements of the case.

The first paragraph here deals with the possibility of backlash against the donor culture. US assistance to Egypt indisputably looks bad on the US now, so you won't get much pushback on that point. The better objections are that Egyptians are disposed to view the US unfavorably, anyway, and that it was necessary for the US to support Mubarak because he was secular and powerful, and consolidated power in a way helpful to our interests.

The 'they don't like us anyway' point isn't very powerful. This assumes that North Africans are somehow deeply and unprovokedly racist, and that there's no really good cause for sociological phenomena like anti imperialism. This doesn't make a lot of sense. Furthermore, there's a lot of really good public opinion polling that flatly denies these conclusions. Get some of that research. It's also instructive to note that US interventions and retaliation are generally linked, so the negative argument is good in that it reflects a more general trend to which you can appeal for support.

The necessity argument is more interesting. You'll need some history to refute this but the basic responses center around the fact that converting a country into a bombshell through containment isn't the best way to wage international public policy, and that overtly religious republics can actually work (see the Islamic Republic of Turkey). This point would be really fun to debate because there's great material on both sides.

The final paragraph makes a crucial point—that neglect of local problems is tied to foreign aid. There's really not a response to this other than to say that the existence of a nearby moral obligation doesn't discount our moral obligations abroad. It could be argued that we need to assist the poor abroad because only that brings the advantages of broader human solidarity and expanded moral thinking, but these advantages don't outweigh the efficiency of saving lives here. The one good point against this relies on a closer examination of the literature on this point. According to research, the majority of the world's poor will, over the next few generations, will become increasingly located in poor—not middle income—nations. However, that doesn't demonstrate that there's *currently* a moral obligation. The resolution asks whether a moral obligation is extant, not whether it might arise.

Cases

Social Christianity

Strategy Notes

The strength of this year's affirmative is the moral high ground. To many people (and judges) it is simply intuitive that we should help others in need. This intuitive belief carries over into governmental policy. This affirmative expounds on that intuitive belief with a highly theological argument. The main worry that you will have is people will object to the theological nature of the case, however those answers are in the essay on the use of Social Christianity. Objections aside, the strength of the case is quite simple. We are morally commanded to help others, this would include governmental policy, and thus we should help those in need in other nations.

Social Christianity

“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 and the refusal to accept those who are weak, needy, elderly, or just conceived? 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, instead of communities of ‘people living together.’”-- Pope John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens*, 1981.

It is because of this quotation from the late Pope John Paul II, that I affirm today’s resolution, “Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.” To analyze what this resolution means in depth, I propose the following observation.

Observation: Resolution Analysis

A. Definitions.

Government: the organization, machinery, or agency through which a political unit exercises authority and performs functions and which is usually classified according to the distribution of power within it.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary.

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

Princeton University

Assist: to give support or aid.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary.

Nation: A large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.

Oxford Dictionary.

In Need: A condition of poverty or misfortune.

The Free Dictionary.

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

Duhaime Legal Dictionary

B. The Resolution Restated.

Thus in layperson’s terms the resolution paraphrased is: Political units that exercise authority possess an obligation in consideration to right and wrong to give support or aid to other peoples united by commonalities inhabiting a particular territory in the condition of poverty or misfortune.

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 upheld if governments assist other nations in need. If true, then the resolution is true, since governments assisting other nations in need 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 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."¹

This is evident when the Word proclaims that, "*So God created man in His image...*"² Each person is the very *Imago Dei*, the image of God and thus deserves to be treated as we would treat God.

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, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.*"³

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 and ratified by the United States government. The UN'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...*"⁴ Thus since we

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part One, Section Two, Chapter One, Article I, Paragraph Six.

² The Bible. Genesis 1:27. New International Version.

³ The Bible. Matthew 25:35-36. New International Version.

⁴ The United Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble, 1948.

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, 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 on a governmental level.

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 keeping their people in poverty, ignorance and oppression.

A. God needs to be upheld in all spheres, not just the private.

Abraham Kuyper, Dutch theologian and the Prime Minister of Netherlands in the early 20th century, explained that we should uphold, “...the Sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole Cosmos, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible.”⁵ Why? Because “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; but political life, in its entirety, would have evolved itself, after a patriarchal fashion, from the life of the family. Neither bar of justice nor police, nor army, nor navy, is conceivable in a world without sin; and thus every rule and ordinance and law would drop away, even as all control and assertion of the power of the magistrate would disappear, were life to develop itself, normally and without hindrance, from its own organic impulse. Who binds up, where nothing is broken? Who uses crutches, where the limbs are sound?” If the government is going to address people’s problems we must therefore be guided by biblical principles.

B. Separation is disaster.

Separating our biblical mandates from the political sphere of life has been a disastrous experiment in human history. Philosopher Francis Schaeffer explains that, “Christians, in the last 80 years or so, have only been seeing things as bits and pieces ...instead of understanding that they are the natural outcome of a change from a Christian World View to a Humanistic one; things such as overpermissiveness... the problem of the public schools, the breakdown of the family, abortion, infanticide (the killing of newborn babies), increased emphasis upon the euthanasia of the old and many, many other things.”⁶

⁵ Abraham Kuyper, Lecture on Calvinism.

⁶ Dr. Francis Schaeffer, A Christian Manifesto delivered to Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in 1982.

Contention 3: Obligation carries out to other nations in need.

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 nations in need.

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. Assisting other nations in need upholds human dignity.

B1. Debt is harming human dignity.

The death rates for mothers and children, especially infants, have increased due to Third World nations being held in debt by richer countries. The BBC explains, "As a result, hundreds of millions of people are suffering from ill health, and children are being condemned to a life without schooling, says the annual Progress of Nations report."⁷

B2. Assistance helps human dignity.

Assisting other nations who are clearly in need upholds human dignity. For instance the US Conference of Bishops called for the forgiveness of debt in Africa arguing that it modeled the biblical Jubilee.⁸ This forgiveness of debt as a part of assisting the human dignity of others in need has upheld that same dignity in amazing ways. Debt forgiveness allowed 1.5 million children go back to school in Tanzania, doubled the amount of children attending school in Uganda, added three more years of schooling for children in Honduras and allowed for 500,000 children in Mozambique to get vaccinated against deadly diseases.⁹

Conclusion: Clearly we can see that human dignity deserves our support and thus governments do indeed have a moral obligation to assist those in need, especially the least of us.

⁷ BBC, "Debt 'killing children'. July 22nd, 1999.

⁸ Anthony Lang, Jr. Carnegie Council for Ethics in Foreign Policy, "The Catholic Church and American Foreign Policy", October 11, 2002.

⁹ Jubilee USA Network, "Why Drop the Debt?" last updated 2007.

Rawl's Borders

Strategy Notes

The case is generally appealing. The one possible pitfall that I see is the possibility that an overemphasis of the obligations of nations to each other could result in this affirmative coming off as being either 'anti nation' or too 'pro welfare.' Keep your talk modest, and grounded in discussion of fundamental human rights and moral obligations to avoid this appearance.

The definitions are carefully chosen to outline the debate.

Government is defined generally to allow for multiple levels of government.

Moral obligation is defined very broadly as an obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong. The idea is to emphasize that the debate is about an *ought*. In other words, does our sense of right and wrong require us to give aid? This shifts the focus of the debate to the value, where it's argued that concerns for human rights give rise to such an obligation.

The definition of assistance to other nations in need is very important. The resolution doesn't require the affirmative to advocate every type of aid, or for any particular type of government to engage in aid. Rather, the resolution requires that the affirmative prove that governments in general have some kind of moral obligation to provide assistance to nations in need. It's key to the affirmative argument to define this kind of moral obligation minimalistically. Essentially, I'm not arguing for all kinds of aid, and I'm not arguing for aid in general. I'm arguing that governments have an obligation to send *that type of aid which is necessary to a basic standard of living to promote human dignity*. The preciseness and clear headedness of this statement is what makes it a lot easier to defend than blanket statements about the necessity of aid.

The value is simply the promotion of human rights. The semantics of this are irrelevant. You can do some experimenting with what terms work best. The idea is just that we're trying to give more people their basic dignity.

With a noble value like this, it's important to harp on it. The negative must either prove that human rights don't need to be expanded, or that aid can't possibly expand human rights. Both positions are difficult.

The criterion is unimportant to emphasize. As long as it's understood that you're saying "my side of the rez is good because it gets you to the value," things should be good.

Contention 1. Here two things have to be proven: first, that human rights exist, and second, that they require some basic quality of life (in other words that human rights aren't purely political – that they have an economic dimension). The reasons for this are outlined in the argument exposition page.

Contention 2. This is probably the most difficult to prove. If it's tough to prove that governments have moral obligations to other nations, fall back on the first contention to demonstrate that human rights are paramount and that we should seek to promote them. This gives you the moral high ground as you foray into the debate about who should do the promoting.

In distilling to the voting issues, I'd focus on contentions 1 and 2. The essential talking points of the case are:

1. All humans have rights, and they need a minimum standard of living to realize these.
2. Recognizing and responding to this obligation leads to more empathy—something we desperately need.
3. We must prioritize human rights over the nation state and above economic rights.

Rawl's Borders

Echoing the spirit of the American Revolution, founding father James Wilson wrote that “All men are by nature equal and free.” His words ring true today, and represent one of the major victories of the enlightenment—the idea that all peoples are created equal. In its time, this idea has toppled tyrants, and brought freedom to millions. It’s because of this fundamental belief in human equality and solidarity that I stand Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

To provide clarity, let’s define terms:

Definitions

Government is defined by the New Oxford American Dictionary as *“the governing body of a nation, state, or community.”*¹

A moral obligation is “an obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong” according to Princeton Wordnet.²

Assistance to other nations in need is defined according to the The Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ call for furthering basic rights “indispensable for [human] dignity” through “national effort and international cooperation.”³

With these essential terms defined, let’s review my overall position in the round:

Value

The resolution poses the simple question: is there a moral obligation to assist impoverished nations? To answer this question, it’s crucial that we have some idea of what a nation’s moral obligations actually are. That’s why I propose the value of universal human rights. I believe that the further realization and expansion of human rights represents the highest goal of governments. This central purpose is the source government’s moral prerogative to assist other nations.

Criterion

Governments can promote universal human rights through fulfilling their obligation to assist impoverished nations.

¹ New Oxford American Dictionary 3rd edition © 2010 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

² Princeton University "moral obligation." WordNet. Princeton University. 2010. <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=moral%20obligation>

³ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 22, Adopted 10 December, 1948. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#atop>

Contention 1: Rights Are Fragile

All humans have rights. This axiomatic statement is the basis of our highest moral codes, and best systems of ethics. It gives rise to empathy, compassion, fairness, and standards of right conduct. But human rights are fragile, and don't exist by default. Rather, they require several conditions. For rights to exist, justice must be meted out on a fair and impartial basis and society must respect its members' autonomy, privacy, and culture. Absent these conditions, human rights don't exist.

But it's not enough for society to merely *not intervene* in one's liberty. True universal human rights require a minimum standard of living, and the ability to better one's lot. One would be hard pressed to tell a poor soul enveloped in grinding poverty that he's really free. Psychologist Abraham Maslow calls this a "hierarchy of needs"—arguing that people must have access to basic elements of survival like food, water, and health resources before they can enjoy meaningful rights. Lack of these essentials threatens more than mere quality of life, it's actually dehumanizing. Therefore, human rights require more than a little: they require *both* a basic respect for the rights and values of our fellow man, and a minimum standard of living.

Contention 2: Rights Trump Borders

James Madison in the *Federalist Papers* rightly calls justice the goal of all government, and even of all civil society. Societies are established to protect their members from various threats to their liberties, and to build a framework in which communities can organize and grow. The purpose of government is simply to promote the rights of the individual - responsibilities of nationalism, conquest, or amassing national wealth go beyond this mandate, and hallmark a government that's overstepped its legitimate authority. This leads to the realization that government's purpose isn't to prefer the rights of citizens, but to promote rights impartially.

This is perhaps best explained through taking note of diminishing returns. Rich nations spend inordinate amounts ensuring every last bit of quality of life for their citizens. Simultaneously, people in developing nations finance much of this prosperity through low cost manufacturing, yet live on next to nothing. We're faced with the very real choice of whether to value our happiness above the very lives of others. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy poignantly notes that borders divide the privileged from the oppressed, and rich from poor, leading to the perverse situation where "*Being born on the right side of an arbitrary line can sometimes literally mean the difference between life and death.*"

Reparative justice can also create cross border moral obligations. A key phenomena of globalization is that many of the benefits accrue to wealthy nations, while many of the costs are borne by poor countries. Pollution, resource conflict, and resource depletion all disproportionately harm poor nations. As the rich world benefits financially from globalization, it's almost indisputable to say that we morally must shoulder some of the burden through environmental and humanitarian assistance.

Contention 3: Countries Must Contribute

Given that human rights are of the utmost importance, and aren't diminished by the human construct of national borders, I believe it's evident that governments do have a moral obligation to protect the most vulnerable.

Recognizing this obligation brings different races, and cultures into solidarity. Assistance to those in need broadens our national horizons, and forges ties of understanding between nations. This leads to the very real benefit of expanding our idea of duty beyond our "tribe." The acute need for this sort of comprehensive moral thinking is gruesomely illustrated in the 20th century violence in Northern Ireland. Although the Irish Troubles have their causes in an array of religious, political, and ethnic factors, the defining motif has been nationalism—a sharp and unrelenting policy of using the vehicle of the nation state to advance religious and cultural objectives. Thinking of our moral obligations in a broader context of humanity is imperative to eradicating such racism and nationalism that tells us to confine our sense of duty to self and neighbor.

The other implication of international assistance is projecting the idea that people are more important than nations. As countries like Syria and North Korea try to hide massive human rights abuses behind the facade of "national sovereignty," it's increasingly necessary for nations to prioritize human rights over the nation state. Human progress in this century will be very much tied to our ability to value the dignity of the individual human over the harsh commands of nations and cultures.

John Rawls summed up my position in his statement that "Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override." It's my argument that we ought to recognize this supreme importance of the rights of the individual, and seek to promote it universally—here, and abroad.

Lifeboat Ethics

Strategy Notes

This case is a bit different from all the rest. The affirmative will spend much of their time establishing that they own the moral high ground. Negatives will either spend their time conceding that the high ground by arguing the utility of helping other nations in need (which already makes an affirmative's easy job easier) or by reclaiming the high ground by arguing for a separate hierarchy of ethics.

However this case attacks the very heart of the resolution. In reality there is no high ground. The world is a lifeboat with not enough space and far too many people. The strength of this case is that the affirmative must now defend a set of assumptions that they probably did not prove, which sets them back in the debate. The weakness of this case is the intuitive repugnance folks have towards arguing that we should let people die. However the simple way to argue against that is to argue that we have different moral standards in different situations. This isn't moral relativism, its just true.

For instance, using mass and organized violence to change politics is morally neutral. In a time of peace with effective elections, it's totally immoral to go around killing "enemy" voters. In a time of war (when effective non-violent means have broken down), it is perfectly moral. That is your argument. The resolution assumes a world in which we have the luxury of choice. Ordinary moral discussions for ordinary times. However in reality we live in harsh times and thus require harsh morals.

Lifeboat Ethics

"Every civilization finds it necessary to negotiate compromises with its own values."
– Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir

To analyze what this resolution means in depth, I propose the following observation.

Observation: Resolution Analysis

A. Definitions.

Government: the organization, machinery, or agency through which a political unit exercises authority and performs functions and which is usually classified according to the distribution of power within it.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary.

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

Princeton University

Assist: to give support or aid.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary.

Nation: A large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.

Oxford Dictionary.

In Need: A condition of poverty or misfortune.

The Free Dictionary.

B. The Resolution Restated.

Thus in layperson's terms the resolution paraphrased is: Political units that exercise authority possess an obligation in consideration to right and wrong to give support or aid to other peoples united by commonalities inhabiting a particular territory in the condition of poverty or misfortune.

C. How do we prove who wins?

The job of the affirmative will be to prove to you that their value is best and that their side of the resolution upholds their value. My job is to disprove the affirmative. There are two ways in which I can do this. I can prove that in reality my value is best and resolution clashes with that, warranting a negative vote since the resolution conflicts with the most valuable value. Or I can prove that their own value isn't upheld by the resolution, in which case you should, again, vote against the resolution. Since the burden of proof is upon the affirmative, the presumption of truth goes to the negative. That means if the affirmative can convince you to be more than 50% certain of the resolution, then vote for the affirmative. If I can convince you to be more than 50% certain that the resolution is false, vote for me. However if you are divided equally, then the resolution remains unproven, the affirmative has not upheld their burden and thus you should vote negative. My value today will be Human Survival.

Contention 1: Human Survival is paramount.

When people talk of principles, the assumption is that we are in a situation that calls for such principles. This is not rank moral relativism, but simple fact. For instance, in a time of war we accept violence as a means of change that we would never accept during an election. Charity while your family has plenty is justified. Charity while your family starves to death is unjustified. Charity while you are starving to death is suicidal.

A. Human survival is the most fundamental instinct.

Of all the values we could discuss here, human survival is the only one that is hardwired into our DNA. It is the most natural of all. As living things we struggle to survive. It was what we were born to do. Even today it remains a deep, instinctual desire. According to Jeanne Bryner for LiveScience,

The research, published online this week in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, reveals that humans today are hard-wired to pay attention to other people and animals much more so than non-living things, even if inanimate objects are the primary hazards for modern, urbanized folks.¹

B. It is the foundation of all other values.

Technology, prosperity, justice, comfort, liberty. These are all beneficial things to value and in fact are decent values. However without the condition of being alive, they cannot be enjoyed. For instance, you build a house from the ground up. You don't start with the plumbing, electricity, appliances and comforts. You start with the foundation, four walls and a roof that will protect you. Same goes for life. While each of those prior values have value, when choosing between those values and the ultimate value, there is no choice. You must survive to even start discussing other values.

C. It is irreversible.

The common pithy phrase in the 1990s was, "Extinction is forever." Sadly, this is true now as it was 20 years ago. Unlike the loss of human survival, the loss of other values can be reversed. Technology and the economy can be rebuilt, the poor can become prosperous again, comforts can be regained, justice and liberty protected finally. However we cannot reverse the loss of human survival. For instance, in the Earth's history there have been five mass extinction events, in which 60%-95% of life on earth was destroyed.² When discussing human life and death, clearly we must err on the side of human survival.

Contention 2: We don't have the luxury of international charity.

We must face the sad, grim reality of life. In this day and age, the growing population and the food supply are not matching each other and it becomes grimmer each year. Lester R. Brown for *Foreign Policy* explains that, "...farmers now face clear sources of increasing pressure. The first is population growth. Each year the world's farmers must feed 80 million additional people,

¹ Jeanna Bryner, "Modern humans retain caveman's survival instincts," LiveScience, September 24th 2007.

² John Cook. "Earth's five mass extinction events," Skeptical Science, April 15th 2010.

nearly all of them in developing countries. The world's population has nearly doubled since 1970 and is headed toward 9 billion by midcentury. Some 3 billion people, meanwhile, are also trying to move up the food chain, consuming more meat, milk, and eggs.”³ This is problematic for two separate reasons.

A. The earth naturally is not capable of producing as much food.

James Howard Kunstler argues in his book *The Long Emergency* that we face an immense crisis. Due to environmental changes, we are seeing a declining Gulf Stream wind, which means that Europe will not be capable of producing enough food and that the major food growing regions of the world shall soon become deserts.⁴ This becomes increasingly frightening due to the fact that, “...a billion people is about the limit that the planet Earth can support when it is run on a nonindustrial basis.”⁵

B. Artificially keeping it going cannot last much longer.

For a time though, we defied science and the natural bounds of the earth through the “green revolution” by increasing crop yields on an increasingly overburdened planet. This was due to, “... dumping massive amounts of fertilizers and pesticides made out of fossil fuels onto crops, as well as employing irrigation on a fantastic scale made possible by abundant oil and gas.”⁶ This is all well and good until the supply of fossil fuels, making this extension of food possible, starts to dry up. Kunstler explains that, “...as oil ceases to be cheap and the world reserves arc toward depletion we will indeed be left with an enormous surplus depletion...that the ecology of the earth will not support.”⁷

Contention 3: The Moral Obligation is to stop.

The affirmative got up here and gave you stories of misery across the world and implored us to begin answering to our supposed moral obligation. In a way, they are right. There is misery and we have a moral obligation to ensure human beings survive. However to continue to assist when there is not enough to go around in the first place threatens that survival. Psychologist Garrett Hardin in 1974 posited that the world today is much like a lifeboat, threatening to capsize. Also surrounding this lifeboat there are many humans who would like to get in, other nations in need if you will. However if the lifeboat is near capacity, it would be irresponsible and immoral to let the lifeboat take on others.

The response from many at the time was predictable. They claimed it was in fact morally abhorrent. Why? Because it allowed people to hypothetically die. However which is worse? To allow some to die or all to die? Garrett Hardin answered it when he said,

³ Lester R. Brown, “The New Geopolitics of Food,” *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2011.

⁴ James Howard Kunstler, *The Long Emergency: Surviving the end of oil, climate change and other converging disasters of the twenty-first century*. Grove Press: NY, 2005, page 9.

⁵ *Ibid.* Page 6.

⁶ *Ibid.* Page 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*

To be generous with one's own possessions is quite different from being generous with those of posterity. We should call this point to the attention of those who from a commendable love of justice and equality, would institute a system of the commons...We must convince them if we wish to save at least some parts of the world from ...ruin...the sharing ethic...is impossible. For the foreseeable future, our survival demands that we govern our actions by the ethics of a lifeboat, harsh though they may be. Posterity will be satisfied with nothing less.⁸

Thus it is clear that human survival is the key concept we must cherish. It is instinctual, foundational and utterly irreversible. We can lose other values and regain them. We cannot regain the human species. Furthermore we can see that this philosophy of "Let us assist all" has led to an unsustainable future that threatens us all. In reality, adhering to lifeboat ethics, requires us for the sake of human survival to reject the resolution and it's supposed moral obligation.

⁸ Garrett Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics: The case against helping the poor." Psychology Today, September 1974.

It's key when running a more unique case like this to be very clear about what you're arguing. The central proposition of the case is that local cultures and ideals are important, and that international assistance either hurts these, or fails because it doesn't take them into account.

The case appeals on two major notes: it's not typical and relies on a nuanced value and it contains a strong practical/factual argument. Stress both of these because they're complementary. The theoretical side of things gives it an especially LD feel, and allows you to wax eloquent with a lot of Burkean rhetoric about culture and creed, and the practical arguments allow you to appeal to the down to earth realities of assistance.

The value of culture is important to argue as something that you see as having inherent value. Culture is critical in that it organizes belief and provides meaning. Don't fall into the trap of arguing for every individual culture, lots of cultures have unsavory elements. It's like arguing for international aid. Some aid can cause damage, but that doesn't impeach the inherent goodness or badness of aid itself. Same with culture. It's about whether the idea of culture proper is good, not whether specific instances are always good.

The criterion is simply non aid. You don't have to emphasize this.

Contention 1 details several arguments. Its main propositions are that the nation is a morally important, almost sacrosanct unit, that governments are unique, and that political authority must be accountable. All these unify to the the essential argument that I'm making—building up the importance of the nation. The contention is really useful in that it helps your case by providing background and theoretical explanation for the arguments your case really depends on (foreign aid failing because of the uniqueness of particular cultures and values), but you can still win even if this contention is refuted.

Contention 2. The last paragraph is a knockout. The fact that nations have domestic problems that are implicitly neglected in the process of assisting other nations is one of the more rhetorically appealing points.

For voting issues, I would simply convert the contentions. The VIs would be: 1. Culture matters. 2. Aid hurts getters. 3. Aid hurts the givers. The first point about culture mattering can seem abstract unless you tie it in well as the justification for why the second and third contentions are true. It's *because* of the vast importance of culture that aid is disruptive to both donors and recipients. Contention 1 provides a motif or organizing theme for the rest of the practical assertions. You've also got a ready made trope in the form of the culture arguments.

A general point, contention two focused on the effects of assistance in promoting violence, but there are numerous other ways you could demonstrate international assistance to be harmful. Emphasize the harm to local ecologies, indigenous ways of life, traditional values, etc. All these provide great points to branch off and explore different facets of the case.

Culture Matters

Iconoclasm is in style these days. We're living through a time of overthrowing traditional authorities, and unprecedented individualism. In this context of tearing down edifices, I believe that the institution of the community is that much more important. A community's culture expresses its shared values, commitments, and ideals, and helps to set its moral compass. Because of this belief in the importance of local and national culture, I stand resolved, that governments do not have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

I'd like to redefine a few of the key terms in today's debate.

Definitions

Government is defined by the New Oxford American Dictionary as *"the governing body of a nation, state, or community."*¹

A moral obligation is "an obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong" according to Princeton Wordnet.²

With these phrases properly clarified, I'd like to lay a framework for the round with the Value and Criterion.

Value

In any discussion of moral obligations and nations, the most important factor is local culture—the values, commitments, and ideals of a nation or community. The resolution asks whether nations have a moral obligation to assist each other. I think that they decidedly do not, because foreign assistance tears at, and disrupts, the recipient societies.

Criterion

Nations and communities best develop and improve when change is organic—coming from the inside rather than imposed by the outside. I believe that organic change, not foreign aid, is the best way to improve the lives of ordinary people.

Contention 1: Nations are Morally Important

Philosophers of the enlightenment frequently advanced the argument that nations are established only to promote rights. Securing rights, they argued, was the only reason or purpose for government. However, this crabbed view of the nation misses most of the meaningful reasons we join societies. Citizens of a nation share and are bound together by language,

¹ New Oxford American Dictionary 3rd edition © 2010 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

² Princeton University "moral obligation." WordNet. Princeton University. 2010. <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=moral%20obligation>

values, culture, accountability, ideals, and visions. The importance of this phenomena cannot be understated. These shared understandings impart meaning to the lives of citizens, and provide purpose and context for their lives. Because nations are moral actors, they must be careful and thoughtful in assimilating other values and cultures. Without such consideration, local cultures whither for want of renewal.

A good way to understand my point is to reflect that if the nations and cultures weren't significant, we'd have little basis for not overtaking every nation in the world and policing it according to our values. But we don't. Instead, restraint is prudence, because we respect that we might not have all the answers on how to best govern.

Beloved United States Congressman Tip O'Neill famously said that "all politics is local." His words are especially true on the international scene. Political accountability is an integral aspect of free and functional states. Simply put, governments must be responsive to the concerns and hardships of those they govern. Responsiveness is key to good governance and ought to trump the wisdom of outsiders. This factor throws a major monkey wrench into the efforts of well intentioned foreigners' attempts at assistance.

Contention 2: Aid Hurts Recipient's Culture

Foreign aid often fails precisely because of this effect of local culture. Governments are notoriously bad about not taking cultural differences into account when sending aid. According to a study of the effects of international assistance by Nancy Qian of Yale University and Nathan Nunn of Harvard University, food aid to a region is not only likely to fail, it actually often has the effect of prolonging local conflicts and violence. Qian describes the reality of foreign aid this way: "If you randomly assign aid to countries without considering what's going on, that's going to increase conflict."

The truth of this observation is demonstrated in the failure of US intervention abroad, particularly during the Cold War era. During that time, particularly during the nineteen seventies, the United States supported totalitarian and fascist governments in Argentina and Chile in an effort to block the communist coups that were in fashion then. Unfortunately, due to ideology and a lack of political accountability, our efforts resulted in the support of great brutality. In the case of Argentina, the Dirty War is still remembered for the kidnappings and gratuitous violence. And in Chile, torture and abuse was the norm. These illustrations provide us with a definite picture of the damage that well intentioned outsiders can cause when 'assistance' takes the form of uninformed and insensitive cultural imperialism.

Furthermore, aid weakens the idea of national borders by turning foreign problems into domestic ones. This meddling in the affairs of other countries inevitably leads to diminished national sovereignty.

Contention 3. Aid Hurts Donor's Culture

Nations generally try to assert their values through foreign aid. The United States mandates flamboyant pro-US labeling on all our bags of grain sent abroad, and other nations do the same. This can lead to backlash. Take, for instance, the US assistance to Egypt. For years the United

States provided assistance to the Nation of Egypt, which had the effect of propping up unpopular ruler Hosni Mubarak who was dethroned during the wave of revolts that swept across north Africa in the Arab Spring. Now, the United States has the unfortunate image of being associated with the ruthless and unpopular former government. Regardless of the merit of Western values, or US intervention abroad, Egyptians are now disposed to resent these things simply because of association. Intervention alienates, and is often counterproductive - driving people away from the values you're hoping to promote. Moreover, bitterness borne of intervention can easily roll into stigmas and stereotypes against those who intervened, creating a very unhealthy anti democratic sentiment.

It's often argued that the desperate need of the world's poor justifies assistance regardless of the collateral damage it may have on donor or recipient culture. But this fails to apprehend the real problem. According to Britain's Institute of Development Studies, 80 percent of the world's poorest living on less than two dollars a day live in middle income countries.³ The notion of tired, huddled masses living sequestered in impoverished nations is generally wrong. Those overwhelming majority of those most in need of assistance are in the very nations capable of providing assistance. This supports my premise in two ways: first, assistance harms donor nations by diverting resources from their own poor, and second, it harms the world's poor by diverting resources overseas where they're less effective, away from the real problem.

In sum, my thesis is simply that culture matters. Communities are built through generations of toil and sentiment. They offer us wisdom, and a framework of morality. Though often imperfect, culture is worth fighting for. People understand this and will resist having their way of life changed from the outside, in ways that they may not understand, or believe in. Artificial or imposed change is sure to damage—the best change comes harmoniously, through the changing of hearts and minds. And this is the kind of change that foreign aid can't help us with.

³ Andy Sumner, The Institute for Development Studies, DS IN FOCUS POLICY BRIEFING ISSUE 26, August 2012. <http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/InFocus26-Final2.pdf>.

Conclusion

Thanks for following along—you've reached the end of this edition of Dominate LD. But this is only the start. Hopefully you've gained something from these pages and from challenging the ideas they've been filled with, from asking us questions and sharing your own arguments through the Collective, and from open discussions with like-minded debaters. That is an ongoing process that does not stop here.

Question your own arguments. Make yourself improve. Don't stop after you've created a good argument—challenge it. Challenge yourself. And never stop challenging yourself.