Monument Red

The following are articles, affirmative and negative cases, and opposing arguments is for your study of the Lincoln-Douglas resolution that was debated during the 2012-2013 school year in the NCFCA speech and debate league. Applications and citations may be outdated, so give attention to checking all hyperlinks before attempting to run in competition.

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

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Resolutional Articles

Applications, Philosophies, and Insights on the 2012-2013 LD Resolution

If a man empties his purse into his head,

no man can take it away from him.

An investment in knowledge

always pays the best interest.

~ Benjamin Franklin

Definitions Brief

By Jon Bateman

Power Politics

By Brooke Wade

Private Intervention, Aid, and Charity

By Blaire Bayliss

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By Michael Tcheau

Definitions Brief

by Jon Bateman

Definitions are important. This article is meant to be less of a research paper and more of a list of some of the common definitions for the important terms in the resolution. This list is by no means exhaustive. I encourage you to do your own research and find your own definitions. The purpose of this list, therefore, is to provide a launching pad for your own inquiries into the meanings of the terms in the resolution.

It should be noted that the word “Resolved” does not need to be defined. This is because it has a very specific meaning in the context of debate. It simply means, “This is the statement the affirmative team is obligated to uphold.” However, you won’t find that definition in any dictionary.

The first important term in the resolution is “government.” Note that the resolution does not specify a form of government (e.g. democracy, monarchy etc.). Thus the resolution does not require a definition of the traits of a “good” government; it simply requires a definition of what the institution of government is. It is also important to remember in the context of the resolution, the word “government” can commonly be considered to refer exclusively to national Government. To contend that Local, or state level government have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need would be confusing. Bearing these things in mind, here are some common definitions of government.

Government

The form or system of rule by which a state, community,etc., is governed. ~Dictionary.com[[1]](#footnote-1)

a branch or service of the supreme authority of a state ornation, taken as representing the whole. ~Dictionary.com[[2]](#footnote-2)

a small group of persons holding simultaneously the principal political executive offices of a nation or other political unit and being responsible for the direction and supervision of public affairs. ~Merriam Webster[[3]](#footnote-3)

A body of people that sets and administers public policy, and exercises executive, political, and sovereign power through [customs](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/customs.html), [institutions](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/institution.html), and [laws](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/law.html) within a state. ~Business Dictionary[[4]](#footnote-4)

The next term in the resolution is “moral obligation.” While definitions of the term “moral obligation” exist, there is not much variety between them. Thus, for the sake of clarity or strategic advantage, you may choose to define the terms “moral” and “obligation separately and then form a composite definition. To that end, I have included common definitions of the terms, “moral obligation”, “moral” and “obligation.

Moral Obligation

 A duty which one owes, and which he ought to perform, but which he is not legally bound to fulfill. ~Lectric Law Library[[5]](#footnote-5)

Moral obligation is an obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong. It is an obligation arising from ethical motives, or a mere conscientious duty, unconnected with any legal obligation, perfect or imperfect, or with the receipt of benefit by the promisor of a material or pecuniary nature. Moral obligation springs from a sense of justice and equity that an honorable person would have, and not from a mere sense of doing benevolence or charity. ~US Legal[[6]](#footnote-6)

A duty is an obligation to act in a certain way. When the obligation is based on moral and ethical considerations, it is a moral duty. Often we think about moral duties in terms of rules that restrain us, the “don’ts,” as in don’t lie, cheat, or steal. Such rules comprise the so-called negative dimension of moral duty because they tell us what not to do. Since ethics is concerned with the way we ought to be, however, it also includes an affirmative dimension consisting of things we should do — keep promises, judge others fairly, treat people with respect, kindness and compassion. ~Michael Josephson (President/CEO of Josephson Institute)[[7]](#footnote-7)

Moral

“The term “morality” can be used either:

descriptively to refer to some codes of conduct put forward by a society or,

some other group, such as a religion, or

accepted by an individual for her own behavior or

normatively to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons.” ~ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy[[8]](#footnote-8)

“founded on the fundamental principles of right conduct rather than on legalities, enactment, or custom: *moral obligations.” ~Dictionary.com[[9]](#footnote-9)*

*“*sanctioned by or operative on one's conscience or ethical judgment <a moral obligation>.” ~Merriam Webster[[10]](#footnote-10)

Obligation

“a binding promise, contract, sense of duty, etc.” ~Dictionary.com[[11]](#footnote-11)

“A social, legal, or moral requirement, such as a duty, contract, or promise that compels one to follow or avoid a particular course of action.” ~The Free Dictionary[[12]](#footnote-12)

“something (as a formal contract, a promise, or the demands of conscience or custom) that obligates one to a course of action.” ~Merriam Webster[[13]](#footnote-13)

The term “assist” in the resolution is incredibly important definitionally. However, most dictionary definitions will not actually define how you are using the term “assist” in your case. For instance, “assistance” in your case could be referring to food aid, disaster relief, foreign bailouts, military intervention etc. Thus while you should read a formal definition of what the word “assist” means, know that you must also define throughout your case what type of assistance you are referring to.

Assist

“To give aid or support.” ~The Free Dictionary[[14]](#footnote-14)

“T[o](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=to) [help](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=help) [someone](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=someone) [or](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=or) [something](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/search/british/direct/?q=something).” ~Macmillan Dictonary[[15]](#footnote-15)

How you define the word “nation” in your case has a huge impact on the scope of the resolution. If “nation” refers exclusively to the government of a country, then the meaning of the resolution is incredibly different than if nation is defined to refer exclusively to the people of a given country. What is assisting the people of a country harms the government of that same country? Does a moral obligation exist in that case? How you define nation drastically changes the answers to these questions

Nation

“A large body of people, associated with a particular territory,that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own.” ~Dictionary.com[[16]](#footnote-16)

“A people who share common customs, origins, history, and frequently language; a nationality.” ~The Free Dictionary[[17]](#footnote-17)

 “A territorial division containing a body of people of one or more nationalities and usually characterized by relatively large size and independent status.” ~Merriam Webster[[18]](#footnote-18)

“Nations are culturally homogeneous groups of people, larger than a single tribe or community, which share a common language, institutions, religion, and historical experience. When a nation of people have a State or country of their own, it is called a nation-state. Places like France, Egypt, Germany, and Japan are excellent examples of nation-states. There are some States which have two nations, such as Canada and Belgium. Even with its multicultural society, the United States is also referred to as a nation-state because of the shared American ‘culture.’” ~About.com/Geography[[19]](#footnote-19)

In much the same way as the definition of “assist” won’t define how you are using the term “assist” in the round, the formal definition of “need” won’t touch upon your usage of “need” in the round. For instance, the “need” that you are talking about may be financial, dietary, or related to a lack of protection of human rights. It is your responsibility to reference throughout your case what type of “need” you are addressing.

Need

“A condition or situation in which something is required or wanted.” ~The Free Dictionary[[20]](#footnote-20)

“A condition requiring supply or relief.” ~Merriam Webster[[21]](#footnote-21)

“A motivating force that compels action for its satisfaction. Needs range from basic survival needs (common to all human beings) satisfied by necessities, to cultural, intellectual, and social needs (varying from place to place and age group to age group) satisfied by necessaries. Needs are finite but, in contrast, wants (which spring from desires or wishes) are boundless.” ~Business Dictionary[[22]](#footnote-22)

“[To] require (something) because it is essential or very important rather than just desirable.” ~Oxford Dictionaries[[23]](#footnote-23)

I hope these definitions help you as go forth and debate this resolution. Best of luck to you all.

Power Politics

The Place of Morality on the International Scale

by Brooke Wade

Nation-States. Empires. Imperialism. Colonialism. Trade. Treaties. These are the words that come to mind when one considers the relationships between nations throughout history. There were periods when nations incessantly fought with each other. There were periods when nations tried to dominate each other. There were periods when nations sought to work together in peace and cooperation. From this tangled history have arisen several prominent theories concerning the nature of international relations and questions such as, “How should states act toward one another?” “Why should they act that way?” and “What is the driving force between international actions and policies?” Out of the many theories that now exist, two stand prominent—**realism** and **liberalism**.

In this article, I would like to take a closer look at these two theories and delve into some of the specifics of their assumptions and beliefs. One of the key terms in this year’s resolution is “moral obligation,” and debaters must find a way to define and defend their views. As it relates to the international realm, realism and liberalism offer two well-known and widely accepted views on the concept of moral obligation, and a solid foundation in these philosophies will benefit all debaters. Generally speaking, liberalism aligns more with the affirmative side of the resolution, and realism aligns with the negative. Let’s consider each of these in turn.

LIBERALISM (Affirmative)

1. What is it?

Before we proceed any further, I want to clarify that by the term “liberalism,” I do not mean the modern “Liberal” philosophy of enlarging government, increasing welfare programs, and handing power to the state. Rather, liberalism in the sense of international relations means something entirely different. It is

“A paradigm predicated on the hope that the application of reason and universal ethics to international relations can lead to a more orderly, just, and cooperative world, and that international anarchy and war can be policed by institutional reforms that empower international organizations and laws.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

Let’s break down that definition a little bit more. First, “paradigm” simply means a system of thought or a philosophy. So liberalism is a way of viewing international relations.

Second, “The application of reason and universal ethics to international relations.” Liberalism believes very strongly that nations have a common moral bond or “universal ethics” which should govern their actions. As such, this philosophy places a higher emphasis on liberty, human rights, and peace. That is the basis for Immanuel Kant’s concept of “perpetual peace.”[[25]](#footnote-25) Kant envisioned a world where nations laid aside war and conflict and upheld the higher virtues of justice and freedom. In this way, a system of “perpetual peace” could be established upon the earth. Such a system, however, rested on international recognition and acceptance of these universal values and a sense of moral compulsion to uphold said virtues.

Third, “a more orderly, just, and cooperative world.” This, then, is the ultimate goal of liberalism: interdependent nations promoting a shared sense of ethical responsibility and working together to tackle the world’s problems.

Fourth, “international anarchy.” The idea of international anarchy essentially expands the Hobbesian concept of a state of nature to the international scale. In his book *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes describes the state of nature as, “such a war as is of every man against every man,” and where, “The life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”[[26]](#footnote-26) Although Hobbes uses these phrases to describe the rampant anarchy among *men* without a government, theorists apply this same concept to *nations*. Without a global government, nations are in a state of “international anarchy” in that they are not subject to the same rules, regulations, and requirements.

According to liberalists, the best way to deal with international anarchy and avoid continuous war and struggle is to establish international organizations and implement international laws that will be better able to control and restrain certain state actions. In this way, liberalism seeks to foster cooperation and interdependence between the various states.[[27]](#footnote-27) It believes that by promoting these goals, all nations will be better off.

In short, liberalism upholds an optimistic view of the world with its hope in overcoming war and possibly establishing a time of perpetual peace. It combats the natural warlike inclinations of states by promoting a universal ethical bond.

2. How does it apply?

For the affirmative, an understanding of liberalism offers a clear argument for defining and defending the relationship between nations on a moral basis. Liberalists believe that international reforms must stem from a universal “ethical concern for the welfare and security of all people” and that global problems like war, human rights abuses, and poverty can only be tackled through collective international efforts.[[28]](#footnote-28) Thus, the universal values that all people and all nations share oblige one nation to help another for the betterment of all.

Affirmatives will be running numerous liberalist values this year, such as justice, human rights, peace, fairness, and equality. One might even see anti-values of genocide, war, and tyranny. The main point is that these values are only possible when states work together out of concern for others’ welfare.

REALISM (Negative)

1. What is it?

Realism offers a system of thought entirely antithetical to liberalism. Instead of relying upon universal morals, realism tends to be somewhat more amoral. Instead of striving for peace, realism acknowledges the reality and presence of war. Instead of believing that men and nations have an innate desire to help one another, realism proposes that individuals and nations naturally think of their own welfare first. Let’s take a look at a formal definition:

“A paradigm based on the premise that world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle among self-interested states for power and position under anarchy, with each competing states pursuing its own national interests.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

Like we did with the liberalism definition, let’s dissect this definition of realism and examine its components a little more carefully.

First, “self-interested states.” I mentioned this belief in the first paragraph of this section: realism assumes that the driving force behind state actions is the promotion of national interests as opposed to human rights or other ideological views. Under the realist viewpoint, one nation should not and will not decide to help another nation if it receives nothing in return. Everything is very much focused on the wellbeing of each individual state rather than the collective.

Second, “world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle.” This one phrase encapsulates the core of realist thought: **war is inevitable**. Realists adhere quite strongly to the Hobbesian depiction of the state of nature and argue that there is no way to avoid the war Hobbes describes in his work. Without an international governing body, nations must sometimes use force to resolve disputes. World politics, therefore, revolves around this never-ending struggle.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Third, a “struggle… for power and position under anarchy.” In the midst of this struggle, nations are constantly clamoring for more power and more authority. As Ray and Kaarbo note, “it is the maximization of power that is in a state’s interest. Thus, everything a state does can be explained by its desire to maintain, safeguard, or increase its power in relation to other states.”[[31]](#footnote-31) Not only do states wage war to defend their own interests, but they also wage war to gain power.

Thus, realists view the liberalist thought process with contempt as it seeks to overcome and deny that which realism deems inevitable: war. To realists, the proposals of liberalists are more idealistic and utopian than practical and will bring no resolution to the conflict.

Realists also believe that “the possibility of cooperation and change is limited, that world politics is not primarily about good and evil, that power trumps justice, and that the road to order lies through the balance of power.”[[32]](#footnote-32) As far as morality is concerned, while realists do not deny its importance or its place, they do disagree that it is the motivating reason behind state actions and policies. Further, they refute the idea that world politics is based primarily on universal and ethical values, claiming that a closer analysis of world relations would prove that they are based on a power struggle: nothing more, nothing less. For this reason, realists are especially distrustful of international organizations and international law because such ideas seem contrary to the very nature of national interests and global politics.

2. How does it apply?

Traditional negatives can argue from a realist perspective in one of two ways: (1) governments have no moral obligations to each other because world politics is not concerned with morality; or (2) governments’ only moral obligations are to its own people and its own national interests, not the interests and needs of other nations. Keep in mind that both of these arguments stem from the fundamental realist perspective that nations are self-interested and power-hungry.

Negative values could include national security, sovereignty, power, and self-interest. One might also see anti-values of international cooperation, idealism, or utopianism. Ultimately, however, realism and the negative position will come down to pointing out all the reasons why helping another nation will cause detrimental ramifications to one’s own country.

CONCLUSION

The year will bring many fascinating and nuanced discussions of international relations theories as we discuss the proper relationship between nations and the place of morality in the global context. Liberalism and realism are only two of the possible theories, but they are by far the largest and most well-known ones. I would strongly encourage each and every debater to get a strong grasp of the assumptions and applications of these two positions and be able to use and refute such arguments quickly. An easy way to remember the basics is to remember a couple key words or phrases for each. For instance, liberalism is “ethics and cooperation,” while realism is “war and power.” Obviously, the wording will change depending on the side one debates, but the concept remains the same. Do some of your own research. Live, eat, and breathe international relations theory. If you do so, you’ll be better prepared to face debate rounds this year and better equipped to do well.

FURTHER READING

Here are some extra resources for those who want to learn more:

Burchill, S. Realism and Liberalism: Theories of International Relations.

Milner, H. & Moravcsik, A. Power, Interdependence, and Nonstate Actors in World Politics.

Morgenthau, H. Politics Among Nations.

Rawls, John. The Law of Peoples.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Articles on “Realism,” “Liberalism,” and “Political Realism.” – Be sure to look at the bibliographies for even more resources.

Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. – Helpful for understanding first hand his views.

Waltz, K. Theory of International Politics.

Private Intervention, Aid, and Charity

by Blaire Bayliss

Should your government assist other nations in need? Or should your local Wal-mart? What about your church or the nearest food bank?

The resolution states that governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. One basic assumption the resolution makes is that governments should be the ones assisting other nations in need, and not private charities. It could definitely become common for the negative to agree with the affirmative value/logic… but argue that private charities and not government should assist other nations in need. So which one really is better- government or private aid?

So what are some of the advantages on using private aid instead of governmental aid? One surprising fact about private aid is that private foreign aid is already bigger than United States foreign aid. In a recent article titled ‘Private Charity Outpaces, Outperforms Foreign Aid’, the Washington Times reported, “In 2005, Americans donated more than $95 billion to the developing world. That is almost four times what the U.S. government gives in foreign aid and many times more than what Europeans give in public and private donations, according to a study by the Hudson Institute, to be released next month. […] This makes U.S. food aid far more expensive than if it were bought in the region, and in the event of a drought, it takes much longer to reach those in need.”[[33]](#footnote-33)

Unlike governmental aid, private aid is specifically designed to help people get started on their own feet. Instead of simply giving citizens money and food, most private aid programs “teach a man how to fish”, so to speak, by getting people involved in their work and their community. Harvard University Press talked about this when they said, “Symbolic issues as well as material outcomes are relevant, as access to public services generates a sense of inclusion and provision of basic rights to historically excluded populations. The expansion of service that has accompanied privatizations in Latin America not only provides the less well-off with the opportunity to use those services, but also offers the possibly more important benefit of a sense of inclusion in society. Increased access to services further allows Latin Americans to enjoy a higher quality of life and provides the opportunity to generate more stable sources of income.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

Since private aid is already more efficient and more widely supported than US governmental aid, it could easily serve as a reason why governments do not have a moral obligation to assist other nations- governments could just rely on private industries! Private foreign aid has long proven itself to be efficient and useful. Privatization of aid programs often leads to expanded coverage, greatly benefiting all who truly need such assistance. The clear triumph of private aid was really seen in the recent uprising in Syria. For the most part, governments did not know how to assist Syria without picking sides in the revolution. There were many arguments over whether rebels have a right to be armed, whether or not foreign governments had a right to intervene and how to give aid without retaliation from one group or the other. One example of this conflict was described by author Michael Rozeff, as he argued against John McCain’s stance on Syrian intervention. “Yes, persons being massacred are worthy of having arms to defend themselves, if they choose to. But that does not mean that anyone else must supply them with arms, and it does not mean that the U.S. government has a moral obligation to do so, or that the U.S. government has any right on behalf of all Americans to do so.”[[35]](#footnote-35)

While the United Nations was still discussing whether or not to arm Syrian rebels, private aid groups were helping to give food, shelter and medical attention to civilians. Local charities, sympathizers and even neighbors helped to supply Syrians with the basic food and shelter they needed to survive during the revolution.[[36]](#footnote-36) Since private industries had the resources, time and ability to help, the job got done.

One significant advantage of using private aid instead of government aid is that private aid is mainly free from ‘political correctness’ and the barriers of diplomacy. Ron Paul once explained, “Government-to-government assistance seldom helps those really in need. First, because it comes from governments it usually has political strings attached to it, and as such is really a cover for political interventionism. Take our own National Endowment for Democracy for example. The “aid” money it spends is usually spent trying to manipulate elections overseas so that a favored foreign political party wins “democratic” elections. This does not favor to citizens of foreign countries, who vote in the hope that they may choose their own leaders without outside interference.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

On the flip side, it’s important to note that private aid isn’t a completely perfect remedy. As was discussed recently in an article by the New York Times, private aid is subject to a lot of the same problems as governmental aid regarding corruption, inefficiency, funding, and effective use of resources.[[38]](#footnote-38) Another significant disadvantage is the lack of political influence. When one government sends aid to another government, it’s seen as a political “I owe you one.” That helps in bargaining, diplomacy and actually helps to keep international peace. Besides that, it is a show of that government’s prosperity and political importance.[[39]](#footnote-39) By privatizing aid, or by relying on private companies to help other nations in need, a government would lose a lot of political influence.

But perhaps the biggest argument currently used against the concept of privatization is that the layman American seldom truly understands foreign affairs. If private industries are used in place of the government to intervene into other nations in need, many mistakes will be made due to public ignorance. One classic example of this concept was seen during the War in Mozambique. In this conflict, a group that called itself Renamo rose up to overthrow the government. Its cover image promoted the idea that they stood for freedom, peace and democracy and only wanted to overthrow a dictatorial government. However, those who lived in Mozambique knew the truth: Renamo was less of a serious political movement, and a lot more like a gang. It mainly worked by frightening school children and terrorizing journalists- violent crime significantly increased every time Renamo felt more empowered.[[40]](#footnote-40) The problem was that one group of Americans were fooled by Renamo’s public image, and was uninformed of the truth about this movement. Americans donated to a private organization. This organization then intervened into Mozambique by actively funding and arming Renamo. This lead to increased violence, and it prolonged a conflict that Mozambique officials had long been trying to overcome.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Philosophically speaking, there are things the government can do that private organizations don’t have the authority to try. Since governments traditionally have a monopoly on the use of force, it has a greater ability to conduct humanitarian intervention. Government’s use of humanitarian intervention is often legitimized by international organizations such as the UN or the EU, whereas private organizations do not receive that sort of legitimization for their actions. Both those facts make government intervention and aid more meaningful (and thus, more intimidating) than private aid; oftentimes that intimidation is exactly what is needed to help create change in the target country/government.

Since the resolution specifies that governments have a moral obligation to assist, you should make sure you understand the pros and cons of governmental aid and intervention, as compared to private aid and intervention. I would recommend looking up all of the examples you use in your aff or neg cases to see whether or not they would be better as a government program, or a private charity project. For best results, you should put your opponent’s examples through the same process, since the difference between government and private aid could be an unexpectedly large hole in any case you come up against. Wash, rinse and repeat.

Introducing the Meta Framework

by Travis Herche

The Problem

Most value resolutions create conflicts that boil down to a question of which value to use. For instance, the judge might vote based on whether he thinks Life is higher or lower than Liberty.

This year, normal value clash will take the back seat to a new battleground. A host of basic questions must be answered, such as:

- Should a government care what happens outside its own borders?

- In moral terms, what is a government? Can it have moral obligations?

- If so, are the moral obligations of government unique from those of individuals?

The answers to such questions come before any understanding of the value. Many debaters this year will choose to run a traditional value structure, but this compromises a chance to get a head start on the real issues. If an affirmative just implies his answers to these questions and waits for the negative to attack, he's on the defensive for the rest of the debate. These issues cannot be ignored.

Resolutional Analyses are Insufficient

Traditional value theory is very robust. Whatever argument you want to make in the context of a value resolution, established theory can probably take care of you. This year, things are a little different.

Resolutional analyses are for clarifying the meaning and scope of the resolution. Example Res As might include:

* The resolution is absolute.
* The resolution is specific to the US federal government.
* The resolution must be proven using real-world examples.

In other words, a Resolutional Analysis helps us understand the resolution: what it means, the burdens it creates, etc. A piece of advocacy that is not directly tied to the resolution doesn’t make sense as a resolutional analysis.

Contentions are Insufficient

Contentions serve a very specific and important function in a value case. They apply the resolution to the framework. Contentions can be written using the following formula:

(Thing in the Resolution)

(Connecting Verb)

(Bottom of Framework)

For instance, if your value is Liberty and you have no Criterion, an affirmative contention would read:

(Thing in the Resolution): International Assistance

(Connecting Verb) Promotes

(Bottom of Framework) Liberty

I say “Bottom of Framework” because contentions should connect to criteria if you have them - not your value. If your contentions bypass your criterion, you might as well remove the criterion from the case and save yourself some time.

Contentions complete the logical syllogism of your case: Framework, Contention, therefore Resolution.

Liberty is a Moral Obligation.

International Assistance Promotes Liberty.

Therefore, International Assistance is a Moral Obligation.

Or, expressed in value case terms:

Value: Liberty

Contention: International Assistance Promotes Liberty.

Resolution: Governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

Contentions aren’t just a catch-all for any argument you want to run. They are a well-established argument class with a specific and vital function. Diluting this purpose by tossing other arguments in doesn’t destroy your case completely, but it does make it more confusing. And that’s the last thing you want.

Meta-Frameworks are the Solution

A meta-framework establishes an element of advocacy that is needed to understand the framework. It provides both a place and an argument class for getting a headstart on the real debate.

Run meta-frameworks between your definitions and your value. Word them with a simple and direct tag. Applications can be appropriate in your meta-framework. Perhaps most important, don’t impact your meta-framework to your value - that reverses the relationship you’re trying to establish. Your value lives in the protective shadow of the meta-framework.

By running the meta-framework in your constructive, you seize the high ground on what will likely be one of the key issues at the end of the round. It’s a happy alternative to using more traditional/confusing case structure or just waiting for your opponent to attack you and then fighting on the defensive in the precious seconds of your rebuttals.

The meta-framework asserts something that prepares us for the value. For instance:

Governments should care about what happens across the globe. Their top priority should be Liberty

**Meta-framework: Morality is Borderless.** Moral obligation does not change based on borders; we have the same obligations to all human beings.

**Value: Liberty.** The obligation of government is to advance Liberty. By extension of the meta-framework, we see that this means spreading Liberty to the far corners of the globe.

The sole responsibility of a government is the welfare of its citizens.

**Meta-framework: By and For the People.** Government was created by the people, and its sole responsibility is to serve them.

**Value: Protection of Citizens.** The people created government for their own protection, so that is the measure of a government’s moral obligation.

You can’t fully understand the meaning and justification of the value without hearing the meta-framework first. As it should be! While most value resolutions don’t need them, this year’s NCFCA topic screams for this powerful new argument class.

For examples of how to run meta-frameworks well, check out the sample cases in this book written by myself or the brilliant Caleb DeLon.

Philosophical Obligations of Governments

By Tyler Burton

Throughout the course of history, governments have repeatedly assisted other nations in need. That assistance however has resulted in many different outcomes. From significantly reducing mortality rates in Africa, to completely failing during the 1880’s in Somalia, to helping cause genocide in Cambodia; the results of governments assisting other nations are mixed to say the least. Now, before I continue any further, I bet that a few of you are already thinking about using these examples, and statistics to bolster your ideas. However, I would urge you not to fall into that trap. Remember the resolution does not at all ask any of the following questions. Is it a good idea for governments to assist other nations? Is it moral for a government to assist another nation? Or if a government assists another nation would it be beneficial. The resolution only asks if governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. With this foundation established, let’s move into the meat of the argument; the application, and the “why” behind the principles at hand.

To begin, the affirmative case presented is based on what is called Virtue Ethics. Virtue Ethics is defined by the Farlex Online Encyclopedia as, “primarily concerned with traits of character that are essential to human flourishing, not with the enumeration of duties. It agrees with consequentialism that the criterion of an action's being morally right or wrong lies in its relation to an end that has intrinsic value, but more closely resembles deontological ethics in its view that morally right actions are constitutive of the end itself and not mere instrumental means to the end.”[[42]](#footnote-42) Now yes, this definition is quite lengthy, and wordy, however it sums up the entire point of the affirmative case. First off, everyone would agree that you have to begin with preserving life, in order for that life to flourish (“human flourishing”). Next, the call to assist other nations in not written up in the documents, or laws of a country, that call, is spurred by a moral obligation (“not with the enumeration of duties”). Finally, preserving life as explained in the affirmative case’s first contention is the highest intrinsic value, and is also an essential end to assisting other nations (“morally right or wrong lies in its relation to an end that has intrinsic value” and “morally right actions are constitutive of the end itself”) With this explanation, I hope you can see the direct link between the affirmative case, and the principle of virtue ethics.

To further expound on this background information, we have to go all the way back ancient Greece; the empire where the system of virtue ethics first aspired. It is believed that Socrates founded this principle of this moral rightness, and obligation. However, this simply has not been proven because of the “Socrates Problem.”[[43]](#footnote-43) This problem originates from the fact that Socrates did not write down his philosophies. Rather, the only accreditation or verification of his existence is from the writing of his students. From these second, and third hand writings, it is very difficult to place the pieces together of who Socrates really was or what he really believed. Conversely though, his students did continue with great accuracy on his belief about virtue ethics. Aristotle, wrote a work named “Nichomachean Ethics” which described what virtue ethics was. And Plato, a predecessor to Aristotle, fused the principle of virtue ethics into almost every work that he wrote. Also and even more closely aligned with the affirmative case, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy pointed out that, “Like all ancient philosophers, Plato maintains a virtue-based eudemonistic ethics. That is to say, human well-being is the highest aim of moral thought and conduct; the virtues are the requisite skills and character-traits.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

To close on the affirmative principle for now, this philosophy is based on an inherent obligation in every person, and every entity to follow a moral conduct. As described, the preservation of human life (“human flourishing,” “highest intrinsic value,” and “human well-being”) is the highest moral value that one can strive to achieve. This is an obligation, because it is simply the correct, right, and moral thing to do. It is not a written requirement, it is not merely a means, and it is not what we can receive, but it is an innate part of human nature, a true moral obligation which is based on the ancient principles of virtue based ethics.

Following the affirmative case explanation, it is only fair to do so for the negative. The negative position does not have a set name like “virtue ethics” however to be concise, I will call it an enlightenment social obligation. What this really means, is that a governments only obligation is to the people that the government is bound over. The Enlightenment, was a philosophical advance that occurred during the 18th century which spurred many different ideas on government, and primarily advocated the negative position. Next, social refers to the people of a society, and the link between them, and the government (like a “social” contract). Finally, an obligation, as defined in the negative case is that of a duty, or something that is the responsibility of an entity. The negative philosophy therefore advocates that while it might be a good or even moral thing to help other nations, it is not the duty, or responsibility of the government to do so. The government only has an obligation to the people, whereas anything else is secondary, and a free willed choice.

On this philosophy, there are many people who did in fact advocate it, but two emerge as really shaping, and producing this philosophy: Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson. Adam Smith began the philosophy in his famous book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* which outlined the duties of government.

“When writing about government, Smith set forth his position clearly and directly: According to the system of natural liberty, the sovereign has only three duties to attend to; three duties of great importance, indeed, but plain and intelligible to common understanding: first the duty of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies; secondly, the duty of protecting, as far as possible, every member of society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice; and, thirdly, the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions.”**[[45]](#footnote-45)**

This excerpt, taken from the Independence Institute’s review journal, clearly sums up the point that Smith advocated. A government’s duty or moral obligation is only to its people. Another material on the resolution that I would strongly encourage for each of you read, would be the book *Poverty, Justice, and Western Political Thought* by Sharon K. Vaughan. This book points out Smith’s philosophy on helping other nations when it is quoted as saying, “No one has a more positive view of the poor than Adam Smith, yet he does not believe that a government has a moral obligation to help poor people. In fact to do so would be unjust.”**[[46]](#footnote-46)**

Alongside Smith’s philosophy, comes the similar philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson also believed that a government’s only obligation was to the people. The reason for this though, had to do with the will of the people. In a 1792 letter from Thomas Jefferson to G. Morris, Jefferson furthers this principle:

"It accords with our principles to acknowledge any government to be rightful which is formed by the will of the nation substantially declared. Thus, the decision to provide government assistance of any kind is a matter of rational choice by the citizens collectively, and cannot be founded on some obligation which government is assumed, by its very nature, to have. The only obligation of government is that it serves its people. Therefore, whatever justification there may be for government assistance programs, it cannot be founded on a theoretical obligation of government. Such programs can only be established as a result of the will of the nation as expressed through its majority.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

Jefferson expounds on the philosophy of Adam Smith, not only advocating that the duty of government is to the people, but also adding the “why”. It is because the will of the people determines the government’s moral obligation, not the other way around that truly explains what this enlightenment social obligation exactly means.

Now, with the application and philosophy explained, you might be asking yourself, “How can I use this in a debate round?” or, “What is the impact of all this information?” Let’s answer this question by starting with the affirmative side of the resolution, and then work back towards the negative side. To begin though, I would like to go over some tips and tricks on how to, and how not to, apply these principles in the debate round. As I pointed out earlier, I would advocate not relying on the examples and statistics not only for the reason of what the resolution really asks, but also the inability to prove your side. Using examples and applications do clarify the point you are trying to make, but because there are always counter examples, conflicting statistics, an ever changing world, and arguments for both sides, I would advocate that you not try and base your cases off these, but rather base them off of true and universally applied principles. On top of that, take each principle in each of these cases (and cases you choose as well) to their logical extremes, and always ask why something is either right or wrong. When you come to that final conclusion, instead of being confusing, or very wordy/technical, be as clear, and concise as possible. This will make for a much better debate round, because you and your opponent can really understand the arguments, advocate your side, and bring your judge along, rather than leaving them confused, and annoyed.

With the way to debate set, let’s move on to how you should apply the affirmative philosophy in a debate round. I will do this by section; those sections being: links, how to use in a round, and outside material.

Links: There are many logical links that you have to convey throughout the affirmative case. The first logical link is between virtue ethics, and the preservation of human life. As the affirmative you should easily be able to show that preserving human life is both virtuous, ethical, and aligns with the principle of virtue ethics. Not only that, but you also have to show that preserving life is an actual moral obligation of the government. The way you should do this is by advocating that all life is equally valuable, and showing that governments Have a responsibility to protect life. By proving these two links, you have first shown that if governments have a moral obligation to their people, and all life is valuable, then governments have a moral obligation to preserve life, or assist other nations. Secondly, you have shown that if governments have the ability to assist other nations, then it is their moral obligation to do so. Finally, the last link that you have to prove (for some aff cases) that governments are the only entity that can stop oppression. This is a clutch point of the affirmative. Showing that people being oppressed are in need, and that only governments have to power to save them, solves the last link to why governments do have a moral obligation.

How to use in a round: The way this affirmative case is built, you should easily be able to use it in a round, but how? The most effective method to using this case would be to stick with moral obligation. The negative will advocate that yes, it might be moral for a government to help, but it is not an obligation. You as the affirmative have to use the case in the round to display in every instance why the government has a moral obligation. Using the preservation of human life and the highest moral act, it will be easy to show that it is therefore an obligation. However, be wary of the fact that most governments do not act in this manner. So you as the affirmative have to be on your toes about pointing out what the resolution actually asks. Show that the resolution is a “should” question, not a “do” question. Your response is that while many countries do not act according to their moral obligation, they still have a moral obligation. This argumentation should be prevalent throughout the round, and as clear as possible.

Outside materials:

“National sovereignty is an obligation as well as an entitlement. A government that will not perform the role of a government forfeits the rights of a government.”[[48]](#footnote-48) - Richard Perle

“No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.”[[49]](#footnote-49) - Abraham Lincoln

“We ought to consider what is the end of government, before we determine which is the best form. Upon this point all speculative politicians will agree, that the happiness of society is the end of government, as all Divines and moral Philosophers will agree that the happiness of the individual is the end of man. From this principle it will follow, that the form of government which communicates ease, comfort, security, or, in one word, happiness, to the greatest number of persons, and in the greatest degree, is the best.”[[50]](#footnote-50) - John Adams

Examples of moral obligations:

* Japan earthquakes and tsunamis
* World War 2
* Africa Mortality

Finally, let me explain the negative case as well. This will be broken up into the same three sections.

Links: There are again many important links that have to be proved throughout the negative case. The first link that you have to prove is that a government’s ONLY moral obligation is to its people. The way you should do this, is by explaining the will of the people argument. By showing that a government violating the will of the people violates its moral obligation it sets up a conflict with the affirmative position. Is it always the Government’s moral obligation to assist other nations in need when it violates the will of the people? This should be your argument, since the affirmative has to prove the resolution true. Next, you have to prove the link that governments should operate in their own self interests. If helping other nations in need leads a country to go bankrupt, is that really the right thing to do; as negative show that there is not an OBLIGATION within the case of the affirmative. Lastly, another link that you have to show as true is that people do a better job than the government as assisting other nations. By showing less corruption, more actual involvement, and direct links to the people of a country rather than the government, you support your case, and take out a leg of the affirmative.

How to use in a round: I would advocate that you press the purpose of a government in the round. Show exactly what an obligation is, disprove all the links with the affirmative, and show that governments are only responsible to their people. In addition, you should make the argument that what the affirmative is advocating is a moral obligation to save every life in the world. Point out that one person dying in another country does not mean we have failed our entire moral obligation. Most importantly though, use the negative case in the round as clear as possible. What you are advocating may potentially come across as selfish if you do not. Don’t argue that it is a bad thing to help other nations, and that we should be isolationists, and just care about ourselves. What you should argue is that while all of those things are good, and it is for our self-interest to do so, it is not a moral obligation.

Outside materials:

“Governments have a tendency not to solve problems, only to rearrange them.”[[51]](#footnote-51) -Ronald Reagan

"It is the highest impertinence and presumption, therefore, in kings and ministers to pretend to watch over the economy of private people, and to restrain their expense.... They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in society. Let them look well after their own expense, and they may safely trust private people with theirs."[[52]](#footnote-52) - **Adam Smith**

Moral Obligations to Distant Others by Bob Corbett Fall, 1995[[53]](#footnote-53)

(<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/moral/others/distant.html>)

Examples of not having moral obligations:

* Afghanistan Government to the United States People
* Cambodia Genocide
* United States constitutional obligations

Isolationism: Punishment or Blessing?

Understanding, Upholding, Undermining, and Using Isolationism

By Caleb Delon

“I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon the sufferers; and in guessing at it myself, and in reasoning from what I have seen written upon their faces, and what to my certain knowledge they feel within, I am only the more convinced that there is a depth of terrible endurance in which none but the sufferers themselves can fathom, and which no man has a right to inflict upon his fellow creature.”[[54]](#footnote-54)

The “dreadful punishment” Charles Dickens is describing is solitary confinement. Humans are created for community, so they naturally dread seclusion for extended periods of time. Governments, however, are quite different. Should governments have close alliances with other countries and show a “favoritism” of sorts? Should they spend billions of dollars a year on various foreign aid projects? Or should they isolate themselves to a degree, and focus on their own improvement? These questions are at the center of the debate over isolationism.

This article will have four main parts. First, in *Understanding Isolationism*, I will provide a few definitions and explain the concept of “degrees of isolation”. Next, in *Upholding Isolationism*, I’ll explain how isolationism can be a powerful weapon for negating this year’s resolution. Third, I’ll offer several responses to isolationism in *Undermining Isolationism*. Finally, I’ll discuss how to apply your newfound knowledge to a debate case in *Using Isolationism*.

I. Understanding Isolationism

Isolationism sometimes carries a negative connotation. It is often associated with certain individuals in politics who get called “extremists” for their views. For these reasons, any debater wishing to discuss isolationism must both understand it and define it carefully.

Here are a few definitions of isolationism. The first is the shortest, but the third is my personal favorite because it lists some of the benefits of isolationism.

Isolationism – “A policy of nonparticipation in or withdrawal from international affairs.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

Isolationism – “The doctrine that a nation should stay out of the disputes and affairs of other nations. The United States practiced a policy of isolationism until World War I and did not pursue an active international policy until after World War II.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

Isolationism – “the policy or doctrine of isolating one's country from the affairs of other nations by declining to enter into alliances, foreign economic commitments, international agreements, etc., seeking to devote the entire efforts of one's country to its own advancement and remain at peace by avoiding foreign entanglements and responsibilities.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

There are differing degrees of isolationism. The most extreme degree of isolationism is exemplified by Japan from 1633 to 1853. During this period, Japan forbade traveling abroad, banned all foreign books, and reduced contact with the outside world to very limited trade with China, Korea, and the Netherlands in the port of Nagasaki.[[58]](#footnote-58)

There are other countries, such as Switzerland, that are less restrictive in their isolationism. Switzerland still carries on trade and allows travel to and from other countries. The main feature of Switzerland’s isolationism is its perpetual political neutrality. Switzerland has not been involved in an official foreign war since 1515.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Other countries have been or currently are at least partially isolationist. For example, Sweden has not participated in any war for almost two centuries, not since the Napoleonic wars in 1814.[[60]](#footnote-60) Many more examples can be found with a tad of research.

II. Upholding Isolationism

Isolationism’s main benefit is that it greatly increases a country’s safety from external invasion. One of the central facets of isolationism is neutrality, i.e. a country refuses to participate in wars not directly related to self-defense and also declines to form wartime alliances. Belligerent countries will typically refrain from invading neutral countries. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences states, “While neutrality seems to carry no guarantees, it should be noted that the territories of most neutral countries have been respected through time. Even in cases where neutrality has been compromised, the offending party often incurs widespread international condemnation for such a violation, as Germany did following the invasion of then-neutral Belgium in 1914.”[[61]](#footnote-61)

Another benefit is self-advancement. The United States spends 4% of its Gross Domestic Product each year on military expenditures, about $661 billion. However, Sweden spends 1.5% of its GDP on military expenditures and Switzerland spends only 1% of its GDP on military expenditures. Japan is also politically neutral, and spends a mere 0.5% of its GDP on military expenditures.[[62]](#footnote-62) Many neutral countries have similar percentages. Warfare is expensive, and countries that are not planning to invade other nations can invest more of their resources in their own development.

During Japan’s period of extreme isolation, domestic trade and agricultural production continued to improve. Popular culture also flourished.[[63]](#footnote-63)

The CIA World Factbook states, “Aided by peace and neutrality for the whole of the 20th century, Sweden has achieved an enviable standard of living….”[[64]](#footnote-64)

By eschewing violence against other nations, isolationism ensures that countries will be able to focus on their own domestic advancement.

III. Undermining Isolationism

One of my all-time favorite historical figures, Sir Winston Churchill, once said: “However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

Like any political theory, isolationism certainly has its opponents, who contend that the results of isolationism are less than ideal.

I’ve laid out five arguments against isolationism. I definitely don’t recommend using all of these at once—pick one or two at the most. Better yet, find an even stronger argument and use that instead. Do some research! Several of the arguments below are from www.debatecoaches.org/files/download/659, which is actually a Team Policy brief against isolationism. It’s a phenomenal resource and well worth the 5 minutes it would take you to download and read it.

1. Isolationism is selfish

This most basic response to isolationism is elaborated upon by Eleanor Roosevelt.

“...The trouble is that most people in this country think that we can stay out of wars in other parts of the world. Even if we stay out of it and save our own skins, we cannot escape the conditions which will undoubtedly exist in other parts of the world and which will react against us.... We are all of us selfish ... and if we can save our own skins, the rest of the world can go. The best we can do is to realize nobody can save his own skin alone. We must all hang together.”[[66]](#footnote-66)

2. Isolationist nations have little influence

If you were going to choose an ally, why on earth would you choose Switzerland? It has virtually no international clout. In contrast, the United States is the world’s leading superpower and has an enormous amount of influence in world affairs. That influence can be used to benefit the citizens of the United States.

3. Pulling back from defense commitments would harm soft power (soft power – diplomacy, non-military pressure on other countries to act)

Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said: “A reduction in defense spending this year would unnerve American allies and undercut efforts to gain greater cooperation. There is already a sense around the world, fed by irresponsible pundits here at home, that the United States is in terminal decline. Many fear that the economic crisis will cause the United States to pull back from overseas commitments. The announcement of a defense cutback would be taken by the world as evidence that the American retreat has begun. This would make it harder to press allies to do more. The Obama administration rightly plans to encourage European allies to increase defense capabilities so they can more equitably share the burden of global commitments. This will be a tough sell if the United States is cutting its own defense budget. In Afghanistan, there are already concerns that the United States may be "short of breath." In Pakistan, the military may be tempted to wait out what its members perceive as America's flagging commitment to the region. A reduction in defense funding would feed these perceptions and make it harder for Obama's newly appointed special envoy, Richard Holbrooke, to press for necessary changes in both countries.”[[67]](#footnote-67)

4. Pulling back from foreign aid commitments would increase human suffering and death

Just one example:

“IF you worry that foreign aid is an utter waste, just chat with some mortality experts here in southern Africa — the coffin makers. They’re miserable. These coffin makers in the street markets are idle partly because **American spending** on programs to fight AIDS around the world means that **vast numbers** of people are **no longer dying at a young age**. So coffin makers sit dejectedly beside stacks of lumber, waiting for business.”

Nicholas D. Kristof, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize (for International Reporting and Commentary)[[68]](#footnote-68)

5. Pulling back from international cooperation would not solve our problems.

“Kagan writes as if the Obama administration is engaging with re-emerging powers to prove an ideological point that great power strife is a relic of history. Yet no staffer that I have ever spoken with would suggest that these relationships are beyond rivalry. More importantly, Kagan does not reveal the Obama administration’s reasons for pursuing strategic collaborations with China, Russia, India, and other pivotal powers. In fact, **these partnerships are necessary to protect Americans** from common threats in terrorists, global warming, economic crises, nuclear proliferation, and pandemics such as swine flu—**the forces of disorder** that can and do affect Americans right here at home.”

Nina Hachigian, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress[[69]](#footnote-69)

IV. Using Isolationism

Isolationism is purely Negative ground. If a country should not intervene in other nation’s affairs, they definitely do not have a moral obligation to assist.

Isolationism could be used as a value. A value is an external standard for the resolution, i.e. “If governments assisting other nations in need *furthers* my value, then governments have a moral obligation to do so”. So, with isolationism as the value, the argument would be: “If governments assisting other nations *violates* the principles of isolationism, then governments do *not* have a moral obligation to assist.”

This is a perfectly sound argument. However, when possible, I prefer to have an intrinsic good as my value. Thus, in my case I use the value of “Domestic Protection” and place isolationism as the criterion (my extrinsically good method of achieving my intrinsically good value). In my experience, it is easier to win the value debate when your value is intrinsically rather than extrinsically good. If your value is intrinsic, your criterion is mainly extrinsic: you are claiming it is good because it achieves your value. (See footnote.)[[70]](#footnote-70) If you can win the issue of isolationism, the Affirmative has automatically lost. You can read my Negative case for a more specific look at how to use isolationism.

In summary, isolationism is a controversial foreign policy with both supporters and detractors. If you debate it, be sure to define it precisely and explain it clearly so as to dispel any misconceptions the judge or other debater may hold. For various nations, a policy of isolationism has kept their citizens safe and furthered their advancement. However, some contend that isolationism is overly self-centered, harms those in need, and ultimately damages a nation by reducing its international influence. Isolationism can be a powerful weapon when argued correctly, negating the resolution in one fell swoop.

One final though: Research! I knew only a little about isolationism before I started researching this article. Some LDers, including myself, have been guilty of ignoring evidence altogether in favor of “logical argumentation”. However, as LD Champion Jason Baldwin has said, “Logic tells us what propositions (conclusions) follow from the propositions (premises) we already believe, but it cannot tell us which propositions to accept as premises in the first place.”[[71]](#footnote-71) That is, it’s fine and dandy to say, “Isolationism helps nations prosper”, but logic alone is not enough to prove that conclusion. You need concrete evidence, which requires research. When a point is in dispute, the debater with credible and applicable evidence will always win.

Solitary confinement of an individual can be a dreadful punishment. But is isolation a dreadful punishment for a nation? Or is it rather a blessing, a beneficial policy that furthers a nation’s safety and interests? The answer is for us to determine.

Further Reading:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isolationism> (Basic introduction to isolationism)

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3045301744.html> (Political Neutrality)

<http://usforeignpolicy.about.com/od/introtoforeignpolicy/a/Us-Isolationism-Is-An-Antiquated-Foreign-Policy.htm> (A brief history and criticism of US isolationism.)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> (The CIA World Factbook -- Much of the information about the countries I referenced came from here.)

[www.debatecoaches.org/files/download/659](http://www.debatecoaches.org/files/download/659) (A wonderful brief against isolationism. A good deal of my third point was based on this resource.)

<http://www.nflonline.org/Rostrum/LDBaldwin1004> <http://www.nflonline.org/Rostrum/Ld1104Baldwin>

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

<http://www.nflonline.org/Rostrum/Ld0105Baldwin>

(Jason Baldwin’s series on logic in LD. It has some good thoughts on values for more advanced debaters. I quoted from the first article in the series.)

Food, Water and Starbucks

The Meaning of Need

by Alex sargent

From an early age, we are taught that there are 3 necessities for life: food, water, and shelter. In recent years, people have added other things to the list of things that they “need”, including access to Starbucks and a reliable Wi-Fi connection. However, while these things are great, they are not, in the strictest sense, needed.

This year’s resolution says, “Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.” In order to understand the resolution, we have to clarify the term “need.” What does it mean to be in need? What does it mean for a nation to be in need? These are both fundamental questions in this year’s resolution.

I: Clarifying Need

Before we get into specific types of need, we “need” to define the word need [pun intended]. There are many very good, yet very different definitions. The first definition of need, provided by Princeton University, is “a condition requiring relief.”[[72]](#footnote-72) For example, someone with a broken arm would “need” medical attention, since their condition requires that their arm be healed. This would be a good definition for the Affirmative side. With this definition, it could be argued that if countries have conditions that require relief, governments have a moral obligation to relieve those conditions.

Another definition of need comes from Dictionary.com (which is based on the Random House Dictionary). It defines need as, “a lack of something wanted or deemed necessary.”[[73]](#footnote-73) This would be a much more negative-leaning definition. Anything can be wanted or deemed necessary, but is not necessarily “needed.” Thus, do governments have the moral obligation to fulfill a foreign countries’ every whim? Probably not.

One thing that is important to note about the definitions is the presence of the word “obligation” in many definitions. Affirmative speakers should not use the following as an argument for their side, “Need is defined as obligation, so governments have an obligation to meet needs.” Firstly, this argument is inherently circular. It would be like saying that cars have tires, therefore a tire is a car. Secondly, it simply makes for bad debate. Using definitions to prevent your opponent from negating the resolution is unfair and unjust. You have a moral obligation to not use arguments like this.

Now that we have general ideas as to how need is defined, we will look at two significant types of need, and the circumstances under which they arise, as well as the forms that those take. We will primarily examine Humanitarian Aid and Military Aid, and their relationship to this year’s resolution.

II: Humanitarian Need:

The most obvious forms of governmental assisting those in need is often humanitarian aid. Be it the response to the genocide in Rwanda to the rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina, humanitarian aid is both helpful and frequent. There are often two circumstances in which humanitarian aid is needed; after natural disasters and during times of civil unrest.

Natural Disasters

Countries often need humanitarian aid after natural disasters. Two of the greatest outpourings of aid, both from private and public sources, were after two disasters on opposite ends of the earth.

Tsunami in Indonesia

On the day after Christmas 2004, most people here in the United States were probably sleeping in or enjoying their newly received Christmas presents. However, on the other side of the world, people were facing a very different reality. On December 26, 2004, a 9.1 magnitude earthquake occurred just off the coast of Indonesia. In the hours after the quake, a massive tsunami occurred, that struck 11 countries, including India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Somalia, and even South Africa.[[74]](#footnote-74) Around 200,000 people died in the tsunami .[[75]](#footnote-75) However, Indonesia was struck the hardest, with around 120,000 deaths.[[76]](#footnote-76) Very shortly after the disaster, governments from every continent contributed aid to the countries affected by the tsunami. Governments as varied as Latvia, North Korea, Senegal, and others all contributed to the Indonesian relief effort.[[77]](#footnote-77) All of these foreign countries felt that they had an obligation to help the tsunami recovery effort.

Earthquake in Haiti

In January of 2010, a massive earthquake hit the already impoverished nation of Haiti. The 7.0 magnitude killed roughly 85,000 people, and left nearly one million Haitians homeless .[[78]](#footnote-78) In addition to the death toll, most of the already weak infrastructure of Haiti was destroyed. According to Encyclopedia Brittanica, “In Port-au-Prince the cathedral and the National Palace were both heavily damaged, as were the United Nations headquarters, national penitentiary, and parliament building. In the aftermath of the quake, efforts by citizens and international aid organizations to provide medical assistance, food, and water to survivors were hampered by the failure of the electric power system (which already was unreliable), loss of communication lines, and roads blocked with debris.”[[79]](#footnote-79) In response to the difficulties facing the people of Haiti, governments around the world sprang to aid the island nation. Nations ranging from Israel[[80]](#footnote-80) to Japan[[81]](#footnote-81) to Belgium[[82]](#footnote-82) provided manpower, food, water, and health services to the refugees of the earthquake. Each of these countries felt that it was right for them to deliver aid to this country in need.

The first example brings an interesting question that deals with the parameters of this resolution. Each of these 11 countries affected by the tsunami had their own relief effort to oversee. They had to ensure the welfare of their own citizens. The resolutional question that could be provided is whether they had an obligation to help each other in spite of their own problems. For example, did the government of Indonesia act immorally by using the money it was given to rebuild Indonesia, rather than giving that money to Bangladesh, which was a country in need as well? Does the resolution mandate that nations in need also help other nations in need?

Civil Unrest

In addition to natural disasters, humanitarian aid is often needed during times of civil unrest. Many times when civil unrest begins, innocent bystanders are caught in the cross fire. In these circumstances, governments often intervene to help those in need in other countries.

Syrian Civil War

One of the most pressing international stories of the past year is the civil war in Syria. Since March of 2011, the administration of Bashar al-Assad has been fighting various opposition groups in order to keep control of the government. As the civil war continues, however, people inside of Syria have begun to need aid. Many different countries have stepped up to fulfill this need. For example, since the revolution began, the United States government has provided $76 million in aid.[[83]](#footnote-83) In addition to financial aid, nations such as Turkey, Jordan, and Iraqi Kurdistan have received 112,000 refugees who have fled the violence in Syria.[[84]](#footnote-84) However, not only national governments have been involved in the humanitarian effort. The French delegation to the United Nations has said that when they assume the Presidency of the UN Security Council in the next session, they will push the body to provide aid for Syria.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Resolutional Analysis

In all of the above circumstances, need has been evident. Be it through war, genocide, or natural disaster, people in foreign countries have been in circumstances where assistance was required. Additionally, in each of these situations, foreign countries have provided aid, be it financial aid, providing food and water, or by bringing in medical teams. Each of these countries has done so because they believe it to be the right thing to do. However, this resolution doesn’t simply ask if these governments acted morally. Rather, it asks whether these governments had the moral *obligation* to act the way that they did. Clearly, the governments involved acted morally by doing what they did. But would it have been immoral to not contribute to the relief efforts? For example, if Iraq chose to not send aid to Haiti after their devastating earthquake, choosing to instead use the funds to suppress al-Qaeda within its own borders, would this decision be immoral?

III: Military Need:

Military Funding

In addition to helping the victims of violence, countries often use military strength to help countries in need. They can do this in two different ways. The first is to help fund the militaries of countries in need. In Fiscal Year 2010, the United States spent $15 Billion in funding the militaries of other nations, according to the United States Agency for International Development.[[86]](#footnote-86) Some of the largest beneficiaries of this aid are nations such as Afghanistan, Egypt, and Israel.[[87]](#footnote-87) The United States relies on these countries to help preserve stability in the Middle East, but these countries cannot always fund their militaries as much as would be necessary to do this. As a result, the United States provides them with the funding that these countries need to be able to perform this role. However, the United States is not the only country who helps to fund foreign militaries. In the conflict in Syria, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have both provided economic support to the Syrian Free Army. Some sources have even reported that these nations might be providing actual weapons to the opposition.[[88]](#footnote-88) Many times, country’s militaries are in need, and countries are often more than willing to meet that need.

Military Intervention

The second type of military aid is military intervention. Instead of funding the military of a country, many times countries intervene with their own military in order to achieve a certain end, which is often to help countries in need. For example, in 2008, tensions between the nations of Russia and the much smaller nation of Georgia flared to the point that a very short war, called the South Ossetia war, was fought from August 7th to 16th, 2008. The tension was regarding a small separatist region of Georgia called South Ossetia, which is seeking recognition as an independent nation. On August 7, 2008, the nation of Georgia sent troops into South Ossetia, in order to re-assert Georgian sovereignty over the region.[[89]](#footnote-89) The next day, Russia intervened on behalf of South Ossetia, sending troops into the region, as well as Georgia itself. A 9-day long war ensued. In the end, the Georgians were defeated.[[90]](#footnote-90) Other notable examples of foreign military intervention include the United States’ involvement in nations such as Iraq, Libya, and Korea.

Resolutional Analysis

The realm of Military need has a strong tie to this year’s resolution. Do governments have a moral obligation to help other countries in need of a stronger military? If a small country was facing military annihilation, would stronger countries be obligated to intervene on this countries behalf? It would certainly seem moral to stick up for those nations that are less strong. But what if stronger nations intervene in order to help these weaker nations by overtaking the nation? Is this moral? Additionally, there are many circumstances under which a country could need military intervention on their behalf. Should countries be obligated to intervene in all of these circumstances, or just certain times? If only certain times, which ones?

Secondly, do countries have a moral obligation in any form to fund foreign militaries? Iran currently needs enriched uranium in order for its nuclear program to function properly. Do nations with uranium have the moral obligation to contribute to the government of Iran? On the other hand, do countries have an obligation to intervene in countries if the people of that country are being oppressed, like the United States did in Libya? These are all questions that the debaters themselves will have to determine in each round.

IV: Conclusion

We have examined Humanitarian Aid and Military Aid in the context of the resolution. Both of them are often needed, and both of them are often provided by foreign governments to countries in need. In most circumstances, it is obvious that the provision of such aid would be moral, with notable exceptions being providing military supplies to unstable regimes.

In order to affirm or negate this year’s resolution, it is imperative to have a clear definition of need. From the affirmative side, this will help to prevent arguments regarding “need” including things that are simply wanted. From the negative side, it will help move the debate into more contentious parts of the resolution, like the concept of obligation. Regardless, though, the word “need,” as small and often used as it is, will be an incredibly important term in this year’s resolution.

4 Ways You’re Tagging Wrong

By Travis Herche

An argument tag is a short phrase that functions as the name and summary of an argument.

In your head, you know you’re supposed to tag. You heard something about it when you were a novice. There are big bold portions of your case and you try to be organized when you speak. But if you’re like 95% of debaters, you’re still tagging wrong. Here are the most common tagging mistakes, and how to fix them:

1) Missing Tags

Imagine that you went car shopping (wouldn’t that be awesome) at a local dealership. The salesman asked you what you were looking for, and you said: “I want it to have good gas mileage; that’s my top priority.” The salesman took you to the first car on the lot and showed you the leather seats, subwoofer, and ice-cold AC. The whole time, you’d be wondering: does this car have good fuel efficiency? You wouldn’t care about anything else he said, because you wouldn’t even know if this car was an option. On the other hand, if the salesman began by saying: “Here’s a car that gets 40 miles to the gallon,” then you’d listen with rapt attention to everything else.

All judges are flow judges - even the community ones. They all write something down on paper to consult later. When listening to your speech, they are always listening for things to write down. And if you don’t give it to them, they’ll be trying to decode your argument into a tag instead of truly listening. That wreaks havoc on a judge’s comprehension.

If you don’t tag it, it doesn’t count. You just added a little carbon dioxide to the room.

Solution: Tag every single argument. If you successfully incorporate tags, judges will actively listen to every word you say as you say it. That’s huge.

2) Lengthening Tags

Flowing the first one and a half speeches is easy because they come with pre-scripted tags. The moment the NC switches into affirmative territory, things go downhill. Instead of “Contention 2: Subjective Obligation,” which is easy to write, we have: “Another thing about this contention is that it assumes every government is able to help other countries, but most of them can’t.”

Tags aren’t just hard to think of at the podium; they are almost impossible. You have too much going on up there. You are thinking about your time, delivery dynamics, future arguments, reasoning through the logic of what you just said; you can’t possibly think up good tags on the fly.

Solution: Train yourself to pre-flow effectively. That means you write down all your tags on the flow before you get up to speak. You should be writing something down on your flow anyway; why not make it a tag? If you want to write anything else, like pre-scripted rhetoric, be my guest. But do not neglect tags.

Tags should be flowable in about three and a half seconds or less. Depending on what abbreviations are available, that’s about four words. Anything more than that and the judge has to break down your tag into his own tag, which defeats the entire purpose.

Tags don’t have to be a complete assertion. Just find the key aspect of it that makes the argument unique. Use context for the rest. Instead of a value link of “Liberty is the highest possible good of society,” - which is much too long to flow - make it “Societal Good.” You can follow up with rhetoric to fill in the gaps. Instead of “This definition is from a more credible source,” say “Credibility.” And instead of “another thing about this contention is that it assumes every government is able to help other countries, but most of them can’t,” say “Most Can’t Help.”

If you wouldn’t write your tag verbatim, you can be sure that your judge won’t either.

3) Concealing Tags

“I want to be a smooth, eloquent orator. Tags just get in the way.”

Too many debaters deliberately cushion their tags, almost as if they’re ashamed of running them. They’ll say a nice short tag, but then continue the sentence so it doesn’t sound “jerky.” This nullifies the benefits of tags.

Again, every judge is a flow judge. If your community judge couldn’t figure out what to write, he either won’t write anything at all or he’ll write down something inaccurate. And because he was busy figuring that out, he doesn’t understand your argument anyway. When he goes back to the judge’s lounge, he’ll look at his jumbled, mostly-blank flow and try to come up with a decision. Anything that isn’t on there is forgotten forever.

Is it any surprise that so many decisions don’t make any sense? It’s not the judge’s fault! It is 100% your fault for making your poor judge’s job so difficult.

Solution: use verbal underlining. That means you make tags very clear. Pause a little before and after. Say the tags slower and more loudly. Repeat the tag to make sure people catch it. There should never be any doubt where you are on the flow, when a judge needs to write something, and what he needs to write. If you finish your speech and the judge has a neat, complete flow of the speech, I guarantee you will come away with very high speaker points.

Eloquence is about effective communication - not an unbroken stream of words. In fact, constant chatter is hard for the judge not to tune out of. By breaking your speech into bite-sized portions, you’re becoming much easier to listen to and understand; and therefore you are becoming more eloquent.

4) Wasting Tags

Tags are the currency of logical argumentation. They serve a dozen incredible functions. They’re incredibly powerful in the hands of a skilled debater. But many will use a tag once and forget then about it. They’ll never use that tag again. It seems to have served its purpose, but in reality only a fraction of its potential has been realized. Consider all the things tags could do for you if you let them:

- Summarize. Judges often understand what you mean instantly when you give the tag, meaning all your delivery is about persuasion rather than explanation, and you can move on to the next argument faster if you’re in a rush.

- Title. The argument now has a name, so it can easily be referred to in the future. “Under the negative meta-framework, I said Morality is Universal. My opponent said Governments are not People, and my response is Made of Individuals.” That kind of language is a breath of fresh air to judges. For once, they can follow along!

- Affirm. Propaganda experts know that it takes as little as three exposures for a brain to begin accepting a foreign idea. You can make your arguments more familiar in seconds by repeating their tags.

- Provide Flow. The judge doesn’t have to waste effort coming up with his own tag, which means he can relax and listen to your awesome rhetoric.

- Control the Pen. This one is critical. When you get a ballot describing an argument that was never run in the round, chances are good the judge misunderstood and mis-tagged an argument. You need the judge to be crystal clear on your arguments, and that means controlling his pen.

Solution: don’t miss out on the benefits of tags. If you use a tag, commit to it. Think of your speech as a transfer of words from your flow to his. If it’s a perfect transfer and you use your tags repeatedly and clearly, you have succeeded. If anything gets lost along the way, you need to keep practicing.

Don’t be shy with tags. They don’t bite! They’re sitting in the wings waiting for you to master them. And when you do, your win rate will skyrocket.

Good Debaters Tag. Write that down.

Genocide

A Brief History of Genocide and its Application to the Resolution

by Cynthia Jeub

Since the early days of Lincoln-Douglas debate in NCFCA competition, bringing up sticky issues like genocide has been a problem. Students aren’t quite sure how to use it without forcing their opponents into a corner of debating against their own consciences. Worse, the facts get mixed up easily in the debate. How many people actually were killed in Rwanda during the late 90s, and who killed who, and why didn’t we intervene? The purpose of this article is to be a reference for you. I’ll give you the facts students tend to get wrong about the details of historical accounts, so you can get them right. Print the pages containing the applications so you can use them in-round, and read the discussion on how to argue for and against them.

Your main issue in defining genocide and relating it to the resolution will be the definition of “other nations,” because if justice is not being upheld *in* a nation, this doesn’t necessarily mean the nation as a whole is in need. For instance, if a foreign country legalizes slavery, and the slaves are defined as a lower class or not at all citizens of that country, assisting the slaves may not count as assisting that “nation,” as the slaves are not part of the “nation.” Genocide can be broken up into two points, which form the correct definition of genocide. First, it is focused on a specific category of people, specifically a certain race or ethnic group. Second, it’s the mass killing of people. The combination of these two looks like this: the mass killing of a specific group of people of the same race. I split it up for the purpose of clarity because this resolution rules out the first one for the affirmative side.

While slavery prior to the emancipation of slaves in both Britain and the US was targeted at a certain race, it doesn’t count as genocide. It also would be difficult to tie into the resolution (on affirmative, at least. Negatives, have at it) because slaves are not defined as part of the country, or in the resolution’s term, “nation.” This does raise an interesting question, however. If victims of genocide (or any injustice) are not defined as citizens, would foreign intervention really be “assisting another nation in need”? The answers you find to this question will be topical ones for you to use when arguing these examples on both affirmative and negative this year.

Examples of genocide

A quick note should be given to help with historical accuracy: rarely are actual numbers known in the cases of genocide. The number of victims of the holocaust, Rwanda, and the trail of tears varies by historian, and all numbers are estimates. Another complicating detail is the grouping of victims. While it’s easy to see genocide as a tragedy, it’s often difficult to determine who is at fault, for both sides kill. Only when the genocide is over and the body count estimate begins can the culprit group be identified. Keep this in mind as you use these examples in your debates.

a) The Holocaust

Known as the event of the mass extermination of Jews by the Nazis, the Holocaust is also responsible for the brutal murder of political dissenters, religious dissidents, prisoners of war, the mentally retarded, the physically disabled, homosexuals, gypsies, and all people who were non-Aryan. Adolf Hitler’s goal in exterminating these people was to create a supreme “Aryan” race. His view of German, white, and Caucasian people as superior to all other races was fueled by the eugenic solution of murdering the unwanted. While it must be listed to complete a list of genocides in history, the holocaust is avoided as a general rule in LD debate. There are plenty of other instances of mass killing to get the point across, and it’s disliked due to overuse. Nevertheless, here is the information you’ll need.

*Get your facts right*: The estimated number of Jews killed is between 5 and 6 million. Including the other victims, the total count comes to about 11 million. The largest number of victims includes 6 million Soviets, bringing the number to 17 million.[[91]](#footnote-91)

b) Rwanda

Perhaps the most well-known case of genocide in recent history, the Rwandan mass murder of Hutus and Tutsis was a sticky situation. In 1994, the president of Rwanda was assassinated when his plane was shot down. While nobody really knows who was behind the assassination by plane crash, it was a clear beginning for the extermination of the Tutsi race. The president who was killed, Juvénal Habyarimana, was a politically moderate Hutu, meaning he supported negotiations with the Tutsi minority, whom the country had been engaged in civil war against since 1990. After his death, Hutu militias from around the country took advantage of the leaderless confusion to gain control of Rwanda. While these Hutus had the same title as the former president, they hated him and his moderate followers for their support of reconciliation with the Tutsis. Almost immediately following the collapse of the Rwandan government, these Hutus began encouraging the murder of all Hutu moderates and Tutsis. Enforcement was through propaganda on the radio programs they broadcasted throughout the country declaring Hutu supremacy, and the threat to kill any Hutus who were unwilling to participate in the murder of their Tutsi neighbors. As expected, mayhem broke out against the Tutsis. The Tutsis ran counter-campaigns and killed many Hutus, making neither side innocent of the blood of thousands of men, women and children.

*Get your facts right*: The total number of those killed in Rwanda is most often estimated at 800,000. Of these, around 500,000 were Tutsis and 300,000 were Hutus (the latter group including both moderates killed by supremacist Hutus and those killed by retaliating Tutsis).

*Why the US didn’t get involved*: The massacre was ongoing for 100 days, and there are several popular speculations for why the US didn’t get involved, including the ignorance of President Clinton and the fear of a repeat of the mess of invading Somalia in 1993. Though the Somalian intervention wasn’t a case of genocide, the phrase “Black Hawk Down” still haunted the minds of American politicians and militants alike. Less than a year had passed since then—to be brief: ongoing civil war between multiple groups in the nearly anarchic region of Somalia in the early 90s led to the deaths of thousands and the destruction of Somalian agriculture. The damage of the land led to famine, and approximately 300,000 Somalian civilians died of starvation. Humanitarian aid from other countries was seized and stockpiled by the militia leaders, preventing food, supplies, and other resources from reaching their intended destination. The United States tried to intervene in October 1993, but was defeated in less than an hour due to complications in communication and equipment. 18 US soldiers were killed, and 73 were wounded in action.[[92]](#footnote-92)

c) Trail of Tears

One of the black stains on the face of American history, the Trail of Tears’ genocide was a side effect of the attempt to remove the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee-Creek, and Seminole Indians from their homeland so colonists could take it. While the intention was not to systematically exterminate the Indians, prejudice against the tribal people kept the perpetrators from taking care to preserve their lives on the journey ahead of them. The message from the US government was for the natives to leave, and no destination for where they would live was specified. President Andrew Jackson made this official in 1830 when he passed the Indian Removal Act. The Indians’ land consisted of around 25 million acres of open land, able to be settled by colonists in the modern-day Deep South.

*Get your facts right*: Between 1831 and 1838, 46,000 Indians were relocated, and the total death count is unknown. Most references to the example zero in on the Cherokee Indians. 17,000 Cherokees were evacuated, and 4,000 of them died on the trail of tears.[[93]](#footnote-93)

A note on hypotheticals

This is Lincoln-Douglas debate, and we LDers love to use hypothetical situations all the time. From analogies about cake and ice cream to the claim of what would have happened under different circumstances in history, hypothesizing is necessary for the comparison of values and the discussion of philosophy. Genocide as an example is more hypothetical than most applications you’ll see during your LD career because it is on such a large scale. Usually referring to the deaths *of* thousands executed *by* thousands, it’s harder to determine what would have happened under different circumstances than, say, the use of a nuclear weapon or the effect saving the Titanic would have on history. It’s downright dangerous to assume people are being saved if intervention is valued, because if the people of a nation are prejudiced enough to kill their own neighbors, the tragedy may be merely delayed or, worse, heightened by intervention. At the same time, one of the main reasons I didn’t support Ron Paul in the primaries this year is because I cannot conscientiously vote for the [in my opinion] apathy of isolationism.

In Team-Policy debate, we have a term for disadvantages called “brink.” Vance Trefethen, who writes for Blue Book, describes *brink* as the hypothetical proof for what will push someone “over the brink,” or will guarantee an expected disastrous action. It’s common to claim the use of nuclear warheads in the case of harmed relations. Coach Vance reasons, though, that even if the US angered another nuclear nation’s leader, it would take a lot to get that country to attack us. It’s extreme, and it’s hard to prove because there are few examples of nuclear attack happening in the past. Genocide is the same way: there are few ways to find out exactly what will cause a genocidal event, so preventative action is nearly impossible. Responsive action is complicated if the reason *why* the genocide is occurring is unclear, as was the case in Rwanda. But it’s a philosophically fascinating question, forcing the discovery of what causes genocide. Explore the brink for genocide, and you’ll have a strong hypothesis for how to stop it and intervene.

Interestingly, the strongest cause of genocide is the dehumanization of victims, and our response to genocide is to dehumanize the perpetrators of genocide. This makes us, every one of us as normal human beings, likely to commit genocide. It’s only when we stop making the mistake of dehumanizing people (both the victims and the perpetrators) that genocide will become less likely. As a whole, the mindset of humanity must stop distancing itself from groups seen as inferior. Inferiority, as we saw with the examples of the Jews, Hutus and Tutsis, and the Cherokee Indians, is what causes people to harden their hearts against showing mercy to victims.

Has genocide ever been thwarted in history? Well, that’s like asking if nuclear war has been thwarted. Without seeing into parallel universes, it’s hard to say. What we can do is look at the *threat of genocide* being prevented in history, which did happen once. In the book of Esther, which is confirmed as historically accurate, the extermination of the Jewish people was threatened. It would have been carried out similarly to the Rwandan genocide, with those who were on the side of the king pressured into killing their own neighbors and friends. Whether the people would have carried out the orders or protected the Jews, there is no way of knowing. What we do know is what worked: the king was unable, after realizing his wife was Jewish and killing the man behind the scheme against the Jewish nation, to repeal the act. It had been signed with his royal seal, and could not be revoked even by another act passed with the same seal. The solution was devised by Mordecai the Jew: offering the right to self-defense to all Jews. While extermination of the Jews was ordered, they now had legal protection to band together and fight back. This counter-threat, or mutually assured destruction, helped preserve the nation and bloodshed was minimal.

For the sake of debate, do not use the Bible in your argumentation. Just be aware that Esther prevented genocide, and think about how this success would apply to the resolution. Is the lawful right to self-defense an isolationist, or interventionist value? Neither one. If the negative chooses to uphold isolationism, negating the resolution can be declared as *resolved: Governments do not have the moral obligation to assist other nations in need, but must assist their own citizens by granting the lawful right to self-defense.* This will bring clash against an affirmative in support of intervention, but an affirmative can use the same argument as well. By upholding interventionism, supporting the targets of genocide and aiding them in defense against their attackers could just as well avert genocide. Which would work better to prevent genocide? The resolution simply says “governments,” and doesn’t specify any government in particular, so both arguments would be effective. Try them out on both sides as you write your cases, and the debates may help you refine an answer.

One last thing to be discussed regarding genocide and intervention is information. In nearly all of the examples we’ve seen of genocide, foreign governments were unaware of what was taking place in other countries. If a government is morally obligated to “assist” another nation by intervening in the case of genocide, how is that government able to react quickly? The answer would be to either set up information sharing with other governments and have strong, fast communication, or to spy on this other country to discover the existence of genocide. Had the American government been aware of the holocaust taking place, it may have gotten involved at an earlier time. Those wars took place in a world where instant alerts were unfathomable, but today we can contact each other fast enough to avert long-range missiles scheduled to land in minutes. The question of spying on another nation is very topical for negatives: if the affirmative says governments should assist others, this would require information. Should governments spy on each other for the purpose of assisting foreign civilians? If not, plenty of clash has been given to a negative stance against foreign intervention.

Arguing Against Genocide Examples

When Jon asked me to write an article about genocide with this resolution, I was in the process of reading a book on the subject. It’s called *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*, and has the goal of offering “a psychological explanation of how ordinary people commit extraordinary evil.” The fascinating note made in the book, which was recommended by two of my former-debater friends, is how average people—not those with mental disorders or sadistic tendencies—are those who perpetrate the evils of genocide. In other words, the average Nazi was just like you and me. We cannot distance ourselves from the foot soldiers of mass murder by categorizing them as less human than ourselves. To do so would make us guilty of the same thing the killers used to justify their own actions: dehumanization. For them, it was dehumanization of the victims; for us, dehumanizing the killers makes us ready to become just like them. As Jack Sparrow so aptly put it, if you despise a certain kind of person, “you are well on your way to becoming one.”

While those who enjoy philosophy would love to run in circles on why humans are capable of extraordinary evil, this is not my goal with this article. I open with telling you about the exploration of *why* people commit genocide because it is largely connected with *how* to stop genocide. The question of why people carry out massive atrocities against humanity is not even vaguely part of the resolution you’ll be debating this year. Almost every time an LD student comes to me with a problem in debating, the mistake they’re making is losing sight of the resolution. Do not make this mistake; avoid it by remaining focused on the topic link while researching genocide. If a government is to “assist other nations in need,” as the resolution states, the goal of that government is not to find out why people are committing genocide. The goal must be to stop the genocide. The only reason understanding why people commit genocide might help is if it sheds light on how to stop the action. It’s like catching a murderer—the psychological buildup to the murder is of little importance unless it helps track him down.

I stress the importance of *why* genocide is committed because in LD, we’re necessarily dealing with hypotheticals. Had the US intervened in Rwanda, would the genocide have been averted? Had we stayed out of Libya or Iraq, would those situations have stabilized? Because we haven’t yet invented a way to jump from one parallel universe to another, it’s hard to say what sort of action would have effectively thwarted the triumph of evil in a given situation from history. When you’re arguing for or against what should be valued in the case of future threatened genocide, your preventative or responsive action ought to be justified. The justification for your *how* to stop genocide will be greatly strengthened if its prerequisite is a *why* genocide takes place, for it gives basis to whether your value will work. Here’s my advice and warning: investigate why genocide takes place and it will help you to be more logical and knowledgeable than your opponent. Do not make the entire debate about why genocide takes place, for if at the end of your round you have successfully convinced the judge that you have an explanation for why people commit genocide, the judge won’t know whether to vote for or against the resolution. To remain topical, cover the *why* quickly and get right to the *how*, for *why* is simply a means to your end, and *how* links directly to the topic and your value.

This differentiation will help you whether you are on the affirmative or negative side. Often, LD rounds come down to a face-off between who knows the other person’s application better. The affirmative debater will use an example to back up his point, and the negative will read a quotation showing how the affirmative’s application simplification has ignored another aspect. There is a better way to bring clash into the round than to turn the application by adding a new detail to the story: give a different *why* to the application. With this little trick, you can turn an application you are unfamiliar with and avoid the trap of letting a contention response deteriorate into an application knowledge battle. It works like this: your opponent gives an example of genocide from history. The normal response would be to give new information on the example, but you are a clever debater, so you will come back with your *why*: “Judge, my opponent assumes his value would have solved for this case of genocide because people who commit genocide respect authority. In fact, those who commit genocide don’t have an abnormal respect for authority; those who commit genocide do so because they’ve dehumanized their victims.” Then tie back to the topic and your case with the *how*: “The real response to genocide is my value, which, if it is upheld, would keep people from dehumanizing the victims of genocide.”

Nobody wants to argue that genocide is impossible to stop, or is permissible. As soon as someone brings genocide into the round, she gains the upper hand emotionally and morally unless her opponent can prove his value is better at solving the problem. Differentiating the *why* from the *how* will help you to do this efficiently. The advantages to using the application this way are many, but let me give you a few: first, you gain credibility by adding a dimension to the premise behind your opponent’s logic. Second, you have managed to completely avoid the pitfall of the emotional appeal behind genocide. Third, this will work on both the affirmative and negative side of this resolution. Perhaps you’ll come up with a different *why* for each side, but you can easily turn a genocide argument for or against the intervention of foreign governments.

The Alliance

An Examination of Foreign Policy Through Famous International Alliances

By Michael Tcheau

One of my favorite movie series ever is *The Lord of the Rings*. Every time I watch it, some of the battle scenes make me want to jump up on my feet and cheer. One such scene occurs in the third installment of the series, when Rohan’s cavalry charges in to save their ally, Gondor, from a massive army of orcs. While *The Lord of the Rings* is simply a fantasy story, the image of an ally charging in to save an afflicted friend is a powerful image.

This year’s resolution requires us to examine the importance of aiding other nations in need. Perhaps some of the strongest examples exist through the creation and keeping of alliances throughout ancient history, and even today. If you can prove to the judge that nations have a moral obligation to keep their promises, then the affirmative can win. Likewise, if you can also prove the disasters that have come about through bad alliances, then the negative will gain the upper hand. I intend to use this article to help educate you about some of the more relevant applications based on alliances. At the end I hope that you are armed to the teeth and can give the judge an amazing round about the importance of alliances.

We’ll start first by linking alliances to the resolution and seeing how the applications support relevancy. Then we’ll learn about each individual application. Lastly, we’ll take a look at the positive and non-positive implications of national alliances. Ready? Set? Go!

Definitions of Important Terms:

**Nation** – A relatively large group of people organized under a single, usually independent government; a country. (American Heritage Dictionary)[[94]](#footnote-94)

**Moral** – Of or relating to the ethical principals of right or wrong behavior. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)[[95]](#footnote-95)

**Assist** – To give support or aid. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)[[96]](#footnote-96)

**Détente** – The relaxation of strained relations or tensions. Usually between sovereignties. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)[[97]](#footnote-97)

**Alliance** – A group of countries, political parties, or people who have agreed to work together due to shared interest or aims. (Cambridge dictionary)[[98]](#footnote-98)

**Nuclear Umbrella Agreement** – A protective alliance extended from one nation to another that vows nuclear retaliation if the latter nation were to be attacked by weapons of mass destruction. (Operational)

**Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)** – The principle that if both nations were to engage in nuclear warfare with each other, neither would survive. (Operational)

Linking Alliances to the resolution.

1. Moral obligation to assist.

]The resolution reads “Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.” The first part of the resolution implies the question of whether or not governments have a moral obligation to assist. Consider the example of the US alliance with Israel. Whenever Israel requires extra military funding, the US sends it. If the US needed help moving oil through Israel due to increased Al Qaeda attacks, Israel would guarantee the safety of the convoy. Alliances likewise imply that one nation pledges to assist another if the need arises. Therefore, alliances fit into the first part of the resolution.

2. Other nations in need.

The second part of the resolution asks us whether or not governments are specifically to aid other nations in need. Once again, the purpose of an alliance is mutually assured support. If one nation were to require the assistance of the other, aid would arrive. The catalyst for sending support appears when an ally nation comes under distress. Therefore, alliances also fit into the second part of the resolution; making them one of the most relevant applications to run this year.

Now that we understand how alliances relate to the resolution, let’s take a look at the individual applications. Then we’ll take a look at the positive impacts before we switch to the non-positive ones.

Positive Implications and Applications of Historical Alliances

1. US and Israeli Alliance

Perhaps one of the most well-known alliances in modern history is the example of the US and Israeli relations. From the creation of the Israeli state to 2004, Israel was the largest recipient of US aid. But more notable, is the military tie that both these nations have. US Operation Nickel Grass conducted during the Yom Kippur war cemented an alliance forged in blood that will most likely continue for years to come. On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Though greatly outnumbered by tanks, aircraft, and missiles, Israel, with the help of the US managed to defeat the Arab forces, and pushed them back as far as Cairo.[[99]](#footnote-99) Operation Nickel Grass was instrumental in aiding Israeli forces in the defense. On October 14th, the US landed a battalion of tanks to repel the Arab assault. Functioning on the western border of Jerusalem, they aided in shoving Egyptian forces into a retreat near Damascus.

Additionally, the US recently added Israel to their “Nuclear Umbrella Agreement”[[100]](#footnote-100) (see definition 6). The extension of the agreement has perhaps one of the greatest effects on MAD (see definition 7). With the deterrence presented by the US, Israeli enemies will think twice before attacking. Without the US support [and divine intervention] the history of the world could be very different. As general Colin Powell said on November 19, 2011, “Since Israel's establishment over 50 years ago, the United States has had an enduring, and ironclad commitment, to Israel's security. The United States-Israeli relationship is based on the broadest conception of American national interest in which our two nations are bound forever together by common democratic values and traditions. This will never change."[[101]](#footnote-101)

2. United Nation’s World Alliance

This application can be turned for either side. For now, let’s just take a look at the positive implications; later we’ll see how to turn them. The United Nations was created in 1945 to prevent war on a global scale from ever happening again. Its purpose was to create a world alliance that solved global problems while still keeping national sovereignty. Keep in mind the fact that one of the UN’s primary objectives is to assist other nations in need. The following examples can be run on either side:

a. Operation Desert Storm

The atrocities that Iraqi president Saddam Hussein committed up till 1990 spurred UN forces to approve a US invasion to curb Hussein’s power. [[102]](#footnote-102) The first major sign of necessary intervention occurred on March 16, 1988 when Hussein ordered genocidal gas strikes against a small Kurdish town. The event, later known as the “Halabja Gas Massacre,” killed over 15,000 non-combatant civilians through mustard gas and nerve agents.[[103]](#footnote-103) The second, more catalytic event was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Though Hussein accused the Kuwaiti government of stealing oil, it was suspected that Iraq’s motives behind the attack were to capture the lucrative oil fields Kuwait owned. Either way, the US and UN deemed their action unacceptable, and rushed to the defense of Kuwait, an ally nation that sold thousands of barrels of oil to the US and the western world. On August 2, 1990, the US and the UN sent a force of close to one million to defend Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. Though the Kuwait was saved, Saddam Hussein was not removed from power like he should have been. The 2003 invasion of Iraq would later accomplish that.

b. UNSTAMIH (United Nations Stabilizing Mission in Haiti)

In 2004, United Nations forces, established a military presence in the nation of Haiti to aid stabilization and quell political tension. Haiti, still recovering from the tyrannical reign of dictator Papa Doc, seemed in dire aid of support from the international community. To make matters worse, in 2010, one of the most destructive earthquakes devastated Haiti causing over 316,000 deaths, and displacing close to one million individuals.[[104]](#footnote-104) The world response was immense. The US alone donated over 376 million dollars to a Haiti relief effort.[[105]](#footnote-105)

The affirmative should argue that the alliance created through the United Nations allowed the international community to aid Haiti in their time of distress. This, I think is one of the most convincing applications for the affirmative to run. Paint a picture of the scene of distress, then argue that because of people who believed in the resolution that governments had a moral obligation to assist other nations in need, thousands of lives were saved through medication. Additionally, mass starvation was avoided through the distribution of food. Lastly, disease was not as prevalent as it would have been due to the distribution of clean water. Although this is a powerful affirmative application, beware: it can be easily turned. We’ll see how in the negative implications section.

3. The Triple Entente

This application is not possible to turn, which is why it’s so strong. The Triple Entente was an alliance formed in 1914 during World War I. The three members, France, Britain, and Russia swore to provide military support to each other whenever it could be spared. This is a prime example of governments assisting others in need. For the sake of national interest, these three nations banded together to oppose German dominance of Western Europe. According to a BBC article entitled, *The Road to War: The Triple Entente*, “An alliance was formed between Russia and France in 1894. By 1904, Britain began talks with Russia and decided that it should come out of isolation, joining the Entente Cordiale (‘Friendly Agreement’). By 1907, Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey negotiated Britain into the Triple Entente, and united three old enemies. In contrast to the Triple Alliance, the terms of the Entente did not require each country to go to war on behalf of the others, but stated that they had a ‘moral obligation’ to support each other.”[[106]](#footnote-106) The impact of the Triple Entente is clear. The shared support of these nations allowed them to resist the spread of German expansion through their own Triple Alliance consisting of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy. Without the Triple Entente, it is likely to say that WWI would have been won by the Triple Alliance.

4. USFK (United States Forces in South Korea)

Although it is a controversial topic in conservative circles, the positives of the U.S. alliance with South Korea are worthy of examination. After the Korean War of 1954, the US signed a treaty with the Republic of South Korea (ROK) pledging to maintain a military base close to the 38th Parallel (the line that separates North from South Korea) consisting of close to 30,000 soldiers. The intended objective of the base was to deter North Korean aggression towards South Korea. It has been working. According to Sergeant 1st Class Michael Carden of the American Forces Press service, “To preserve our security commitment to the ROK, the US must maintain a forward military posture. Having 28,500 troops stationed somewhere in the US does not have the same deterrent effect as the same number stationed in Korea. It is our forward presence that most effectively communicates our resolve to defend our allies and preserve our vital interests in Asia. Successful deterrence relies on credibility as much, if not more than, capability.”[[107]](#footnote-107) Because of the US’ promise to defend South Korea, a nation in need, political stability in the Korean region has been improved. Army General Walter “Skip” Sharp, commander of the US forces in Korea said the following, “[The] Strategic Alliance 2015 will enable the Republic of Korea and U.S. forces to successfully confront future security challenges and set the conditions for lasting peace in the Korean peninsula and the region. The ROK and the US are more strongly united than ever before to deter North Korean provocations and aggression, and to defeat them if necessary.”[[108]](#footnote-108)

Now that you’ve seen several instances of when alliances have been beneficial to both sides, let’s now take a look at several alliance failures. This will cover most non-positive implications, and will focus on turning several of the aforementioned applications.

Non-Positive Implications and Impacts of World Alliances

a. The Turns

1. Operation Desert Storm (Negative)

Although the operation was widely considered a success by the US government and the media, many forget the many failures of the operation and execution. Firstly, according to author J. Matthews in his award winning book *So Many, So Much, So Far, So Fast*, published in 1991, “It did not occur to most Americans, that in relentlessly bombing an entire country ‘back to the preindustrial age,’ we were creating a situation which would necessarily lead to decades of suffering for the Iraqi people. The effects of the bombing are already being felt. The international Committee of the Red Cross has recently warned of the beginnings of a ‘public health catastrophe of immense proportions’ in Iraq. They were referring to the situation of fourteen million Iraqis, and not that of the 1.5 million Kurdish refugees. With electricity and sanitation systems virtually destroyed by the bombing, infectious and deadly diseases such as cholera and typhoid inevitably follow, bringing widespread suffering and death.”[[109]](#footnote-109) The impact of Operation Desert Storm did not punish a tyrannical dictator. Instead, they left him in power, and took it out on his tyranny-enslaved people.

2. UNSTAMIH (United Nations Stabilizing Mission in Haiti) (Negative)

This is probably one of the easier applications to turn. Although foreign aid was sent by the US government, according to BBC, much money was wasted by bureaucrats on both sides who largely prevented most of the money from ever reaching the Haitian civilians. Additionally, according to the Economist, “The UN’s negligent sanitation caused sewage pipes flow to flow into a tributary of Haiti’s largest river. The first cholera cases appeared near the base, and the bacteria quickly spread along the river and its network of canals, which Haitians use for bathing, drinking, irrigating crops, and washing clothes.”[[110]](#footnote-110) The cholera strain proceeded to kill hundreds of individuals who used those water sources for every day needs. Even former US President Clinton, the UN’s own special envoy for Haiti stated “It was the proximate cause of Cholera from the UNSTAMIH strain from waste into the water and into the body of Haitians.”[[111]](#footnote-111) Unfortunately, the complications never ended there. UN forces were accused repeatedly of rape and sexual abuse on many civilians and even some cases of murder. The presence of the UN has done little to stabilize Haiti, only to spread disease, hatred, and bloodshed.

3. USFK (Negative)

This turn is based on a comparison of impacts. A. Money saved vs. B. Potential stability. Although it will be difficult to convince the judge that deterring North Korean aggression is not worth the money spent, we can take a crack at it. I would highly recommend quoting some of the evidence cards below if you are going to try this elegant and complex turn.

The estimated budget of the DOD spent on maintaining the Korean base is about 3.3 billion dollars annually. Additionally, recent spending increases were proposed that would spend 11.3 billion dollars on base improvements over the next ten years. The negative can make an argument that this money is being wasted. According to CBS News, “The South Korean people do not appreciate the security our soldiers provide. [The way some of them treat our soldiers](http://freekorea.us/2005/08/07/signs-of-the-times-so-this-is-why-i-spent-four-years-in-korea/) ought to be a national scandal. Many off-post businesses don't even let Americans through their front doors. The degree of anti-Americanism in South Korea is sufficient to be a significant force protection issue in the event of hostilities.”[[112]](#footnote-112) Not only are the Koreans ungrateful for American support, but according to the *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis Volume 6, Issue 1* “The ROK’s status as a US dependent is not healthy for either Koreans or Americans. It encourages Seoul to rely heavily on the US for crucial portions of its defense (including night fighting technology, attack helicopters, tanks, artillery, reserves of munitions, even some air power components). That reliance could prove fatal in a crisis if the US response was tardy or insufficient.”[[113]](#footnote-113)

Combining both of these evidence cards and hashing out two separate angle turns could definitely help you wash, if not outright win the application.

b. Straight Negative Applications

1. Iran-Contra Affair

In 1985, the Reagan administration facilitated the sale of ballistics to Iran in order to counter Soviet conflict in the Middle East. Although the Reagan administration’s intentions were to provide Iran with a missile system adequate enough to cause damage to the Soviet forces, their lack of foresight created a disaster. In assisting a nation in need, the US government supplied Iran with enough ballistics to not only use in the Cold War, but enough to kill thousands of Iraqi’s, and even American targets. Additionally, the sale of arms to Iran directly countered a US policy regarding above board arms dealing. The trade of weapons to Iran was done in secret. According to PBS, “In 1985, while Iran and Iraq were at war, Iran made a secret request to buy weapons from the United States. McFarlane sought Reagan's approval, in spite of the embargo against selling arms to Iran. McFarlane explained that the sale of arms would not only improve U.S. relations with Iran, but might in turn lead to improved relations with Lebanon, increasing U.S. influence in the troubled Middle East.”[[114]](#footnote-114) The Reagan administration had previously been praised for running an above board system. The Iran-Contra affair cost Reagan much credibility, and continues to plague US efforts in the Middle East to this very day.

2. The War in Vietnam

This is probably going to be one of the most popular applications to run on the negative side. Let’s take a look.

In the early 1960’s, communist expansion reached Vietnam. The Vietnamese nation became divided into two distinct parts. South Vietnam opposed communism, and sought US military aid. North Vietnam was controlled by two primary factions: the Viet Minh, and the Viet Cong. Both latter factions supported communism, and were the main combatants on the communist side during the Vietnamese war. During the administration of US president John F. Kennedy, the US passively supported South Vietnam and their president, Ngo Dinh Diem. President Kennedy had repeatedly issued statements claiming that the US would have no further involvement militarily in Vietnam.[[115]](#footnote-115) However, when Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson accepted the desperate cry for help from President Diem who was also assassinated a few days later. On November 24, 1963, Johnson said, "the battle against communism... must be joined... with strength and determination."[[116]](#footnote-116) On November 26, Johnson reversed Kennedy’s order to withdraw the US few troops in Vietnam and instead ordered a troop surge over the years of 1964 and 1965. Thus began one of the most bloody and unnecessary wars in US history. The American soldiers coupled with the poorly trained South Vietnamese, could not withstand the “Tet Offensive” launched by the Viet Cong.[[117]](#footnote-117) Thousands of American soldiers were either shot, blown to pieces by booby traps, or tortured to death in prisoner camps. The war in Vietnam failed to stem the tide of communism. South Vietnam was soon captured by the communists, and the US army withdrew in 1970 under the order of US president Nixon.

The impacts of this application are clear. Through an alliance with a weak and feeble nation, the US sacrificed the lives of 58,000 soldiers. Although we tried to help a “nation in need” the result was one of the most useless wastes of life, considering the US never accomplished their objective of stemming the tide of communism in Vietnam.

Conclusion:

So after about ten different angles of analysis on applications, what have we learned? Well we’ve taken a look at the ways that alliances have shaped the world. We’ve given the affirmative five applications they can use, and similarly five applications the negative can use. Whatever you believe about alliances, interventionism, or isolationism at the end of the day is up to you. I simply wish to equip you with the knowledge you need to fight a successful war against an opponent in a room. So whether you agree or disagree with alliances is completely your choice. However, know that just as a heroic Lord of the Rings scene can inspire me, the images you can paint through the knowledge of alliances can inspire your judge. Go. Debate. Win!

Affirmative Cases

In making a speech one must study three points:

first, the means of producing persuasion;

second, the language;

third the proper arrangement

of the various parts of the speech.

~ Aristotle

Words AND Deeds

By Brooke Wade

The Samaritan Principle

By Travis Herche

Stopping Genocide

By Jon Bateman

Protection of Human Life

By Tyler Burton

Safety First

By Michael Tcheau

Angry Birds and Aiding Nations

By Alex Sargent

Words AND Deeds

A Core Value Affirmative Case

by Brooke Wade

INTRO

“Human rights are the birthright of all human beings. The protection and promotion of these rights is the first responsibility of every government.” So spoke Liz O’Donnell, former Minister of State at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. Minister O’Donnell’s words embody the central concepts of political theory—that governments must primarily safeguard the rights of their citizens. We see this sentiment expressed in many documents, from our own U.S. Constitution (“that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men”) to the UN Declaration of Human Rights (“That human rights should be protected by the rule of law”) to other countries’ constitutions, declarations, and governing documents. It is because I wholeheartedly agree with this focus on human rights that I stand **Resolved:** That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

DEFINITIONS

Moral Obligation – “An obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong”[[118]](#footnote-118)

Obligation – “A course of action imposed by society, law, or conscience by which one is bound or restricted”[[119]](#footnote-119)

Assist – “To give help or support to”[[120]](#footnote-120)

Need – “A condition or situation in which something is required”[[121]](#footnote-121)

VALUE

The value I present today is that of the **Protection of Human Rights**. Human Rights are defined as “the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.”[[122]](#footnote-122) Every person on this earth possesses these basic rights, and no one can take them away. By protecting human rights, we ensure that no government infringes upon these rights and attempts to “play God” over other men.

CONTENTIONS

Contention 1: The Protection of Human Rights Justifies Moral Obligation

A country that claims to respect and protect human rights within its own boundaries must help protect human rights outside its borders or become a hypocrite. A belief in certain moral values (such as human rights) should result in action on all fronts, not just action in areas of immediate interest. Protection of one’s own liberty requires protection of others’ liberty. Protection of one’s human rights requires protection of others’ human rights. To defend one’s own rights to the utmost and then passively watch as others’ rights are trampled is to be a hypocrite of the worst kind. As philosopher Ayn Rand aptly stated,

“In no case and in no situation may one permit one’s own values to be attacked…and keep silent. There is no escape from the fact that men have to make choices; so long as men have to make choices, there is no escape from moral values; so long as moral values are at stake, no moral neutrality is possible. To abstain from condemning a torturer is to become an accessory to the torture and murder of his victims.:”[[123]](#footnote-123)

Rand proposes here the issue of tacit consent—the idea that silence equals acceptance or even endorsement. A government that fails to speak out against human rights abuses is on the same level, from a moral perspective, as a government that actively engages in such violence. Further, a government that speaks out but fails to act is, at best, a coward and, at worst, a traitor and hypocrite.

As Carla Bagnoli, Professor of Philosophy at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, argued: “Resisting the violation of basic human rights is not simply a duty of charity, or something that one may or may not choose to perform. It is a perfect duty… that proceeds from respect for humanity.”[[124]](#footnote-124)

Contention 2: International Fulfillment of this Duty Leads to Further Protection of Rights

When countries acknowledge and fulfill this moral obligation, their actions help to ensure that human rights are further protected. Sometimes, this necessitates intervention in the affairs of another sovereign state—and sometimes not. Such intervention, if necessary, is nevertheless justified because, as Immanuel Kant recognized, coercion may be authorized against someone who infringes upon the liberties of another.[[125]](#footnote-125)

Consider, for instance, the tragedy of the Rwandan genocide. After 100 days of slaughter, nearly three-quarters of the Tutsi population and thousands of the Hutus had died.[[126]](#footnote-126) France, Belgium, the United States, and the United Nations all knew about the genocide yet failed to act.[[127]](#footnote-127)

Later, policymakers from these countries and organizations lamented their failure to act because they realized they had abandoned their moral obligation to the Rwandan people. Then U.S. President Clinton mourned, “The international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy, as well. We did not act quickly enough after the killing began.”[[128]](#footnote-128)

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan also apologized, “The world must deeply repent this failure. Rwanda’s tragedy was the world’s tragedy….We will not deny that, in their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people of Rwanda.”[[129]](#footnote-129)

In this situation, the international community had the moral obligation and justification to intervene and stop the mass murder and genocide of the Rwandan people. Yet they failed to act, and their actions cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Rwandans.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, any nation or any government that cherishes human rights has an unshakeable moral obligation to assist other nations in the protection of those rights. They must follow through with their proclamations of liberty, equality, and justice. They must intervene in situations where another government oppresses the rights of its people. They must work to ensure a better future for themselves and the world.

Negative Brief against Aff Case “Words and Deeds”

by Brooke Wade

DEFINITIONS

My all-time favorite method of attack is to pick apart and destroy the definitions of a case. As any debater should know, a case fundamentally rests upon the definitions of the key terms in the resolution. Different definitions yield different interpretations. If you can win the definitional battle and get your opponent playing on your field according to your terms, then you’re that much closer to clinching the judge’s ballot. With that in mind, let’s analyze these definitions.

*Moral Obligation* – Make the point very clearly that the standard of right and wrong will differ from country to country. No matter what sort of shared universal ethics (natural law, conscience, human rights, etc.) you uphold to justify the concept of moral obligation, you will always have differences in interpretation, whether due to historic background, ethnic influences, religious traditions, or philosophical divergences.

One caveat with this argument: please, please, please do NOT get into an argument over the Bible and different religions. Yes, we know the Bible is ultimately true; yes, we know IT has the final say on what is right and wrong. The point, though, is that other governments are not necessarily going to accept that.

Affirmatives: don’t try and argue that according to a biblical standard of morality, government has a moral obligation to assist others. The resolution specifically says “governments.” Not Christian nations. Not governments that believe in biblical morality. Just “governments”: Christian or secular. It’s just a fact of life that some governments are not going to accept biblical morality. You cannot defend a resolution that applies to every government if you try to talk strictly about the Bible. So don’t. Pick an idea that fits within a host of ethical systems, such as natural law or human rights or justice.

Negatives: Because these universals are by nature somewhat vague and flexible in definition, tear apart the affirmative’s underlying standard for moral obligation.

*Need* – “a condition or situation is which something is required.” What’s “something”? Could you have a vaguer word in an already vague definition? Hammer home the aff on this point. What does “something” include? Food? Money? Military might? Boost of self-esteem? If a nation is feeling depressed, does that mean other nations have to help pull it out of the blues with a little song, a lively gig, and a load of presents? Umm… I don’t think so. Pin down the affirmative in cross-X and get him to narrow “need” to one particular area, then attack that area with all your logic. Or if he refuses to narrow the definition, simply talk about how broad and all-encompassing such a definition is.

PHILOSOPHY

In this case’s discussion of the value and Contention 1, there is a lot of explanation and defense of philosophical ideas and theories. The best way to attack the particular philosophy espoused in Contention 1 (dealing with Ayn Rand and tacit consent) is to question the affirmative on moral dilemmas. Rand’s quote and the aff’s further explanation specifically state that anytime a violation of human rights and moral values occur, those who hold those values dear must intervene. Is that really all there is?

For instance, what about the feasibility of a situation? Let’s say we agree with the aff that governments do have a moral obligation to assist other nations. Let’s hypothesize further that Country Z has freely spent its money on social programs over the course of many years. Countries A, B, and C, however, have frugally managed their money over time. Are Countries A, B, and C really supposed to try to help others when they properly managed the public funds?

What about priorities? Does a government have priority first to its citizens or to some abstract concept of moral obligation it supposedly owes to other nations? If a government spends its money and resources aiding another nation, is it worth the cost to its nation? That money and those resources could have gone to certain needs within the original country, but now those needs have been neglected for the sake of another.

How about practicality? While the aff along with Rand might claim that failure to act makes one as bad as the criminal, is there a limit to government involvement? How involved should a government be in a particular conflict? Do we disregard national sovereignty entirely? Do we entangle ourselves in every possible human rights violation out there? When, if ever, does it end?

These are the types of questions that should come to your mind as you listen to this aff case. Question every logical link. Question its place in the larger picture. Don’t ever forget the larger picture. While the small leaps might make sense individually, sometimes the larger picture just doesn’t fit. Or the larger picture seems all right, but the smaller steps don’t add up. If you have a gut instinct that something doesn’t sound right, think about it more and odds are you’ll find the missing link.

APPLICATION

As a last note, I want to briefly touch on the Rwanda application. Some of you negatives may agree with the affirmative that France, Belgium, the U.S. and the U.N. should have been involved; some of you may not think that way. Either way, make your position clear and argue strongly. If you agree with the aff, don’t be afraid to admit it, but then clarify that this was one tragic incident and certainly not the norm. If you believe those nations/organizations were right in abstaining from involvement, make sure to explain why—it avoided another world war…we had no place getting involved in a civil war…while the situation was lamentable, involvement would only have made matters worse. Whatever your reason, explain it.

The Samaritan Principle

A Value-Centric Affirmative Case

By Travis Herche

The defining adage of the amazing Spiderman is: “with great power comes great responsibility.” No ordinary person is expected to do what Spiderman does - stopping criminals and protecting the innocent as he swings through the air at the end of a web, but this comic book hero teaches us all an important lesson: that if you can help, you must help. That’s the basic idea behind the current resolution: “Resolved: that governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.”

I will prove the resolution true by using a series of points, the first of which is a

Meta-Framework: Morality is Borderless.

There is nothing magical about a national border. There is no ethical charge associated with it. It is simply a line drawn across a map by politicians and diplomats. People should be treated as human beings no matter which side of the arbitrary line they’re standing on. Whatever arguments the affirmative and negative make in this round need to stem from this core moral idea. Consider the application of the **Red Cross.** This humanitarian group has become a symbol of charity around the world. The volunteers of the Red Cross alleviate the suffering of 233 million people every year.[[130]](#footnote-130) They help because they don’t care whether they are needed in Georgia, Haiti, or Japan. Wherever people suffer, they go. We can all benefit from their example.

Let’s move now to my…

Value: The Samaritan Principle

A value is an external measure for the resolution. In this case, we need a value that measures moral obligation. That’s a profound concept, and one that requires a profound value framework. The Samaritan Principle is an elegant answer to this question. It has two parts, both of which must be met to create a moral obligation:

**Part A) Help is needed.** You have no moral obligation to help someone who doesn’t need you. But if a need exists, it must be filled.

**Part B) Help is possible.** You have no moral obligation to help someone if you need help just as badly. But if you are positioned to fill a need, you must do so.

So the Samaritan Principle can be defined as follows: “Moral obligation exists where help is both needed and possible.”

The reason you should use my value is the

**Value Link: Exhaustive Moral Standard.** The two-part Samaritan Principle describes all of moral obligation, omitting nothing. That makes it the only suitable value for this resolution.

The resolution is one expression of the Samaritan Principle, as demonstrated in my two contentions.

Contention 1: International Help is Needed

Though the human race has advanced tremendously in terms of technology and social complexity, we are far from a solution to our biggest problem: human suffering. That’s an easy thing to forget here in America. Standing in line for a Grande Frappuccino, the last thing on our minds is that one of every 5 humans is living in extreme poverty.[[131]](#footnote-131)

Help is desperately needed on every continent. Consider the application of **Child Starvation.** Picture 16,000 children - that’s the entire student population of 36 schools[[132]](#footnote-132). That’s enough kids to fill half a baseball stadium. That’s a vast amount of vibrant life and potential. Today, 16,000 children will starve to death, according to the Bread for the World organization[[133]](#footnote-133).

I repeat: 16,000 children will starve to death today. Tomorrow, that will happen again. That’s one every 5 seconds. That’s 500 dead kids before we even finish this debate round. The tragedy is absolutely staggering.

It is quite evident that help is desperately needed.

Contention 2: International Help is Possible

Starvation would be tragic enough if the entire planet were running out of food. But it’s even more shocking in light of the fact that the human race easily produces enough food to feed itself.[[134]](#footnote-134) Developed nations like the United States have way too much food. We don’t know what to do with it all.

My application is **Food Waste.** Live Science reported in 2009 that Americans toss out 40 percent of their food. That’s 150 trillion calories wasted every year[[135]](#footnote-135) - enough to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of starving kids.[[136]](#footnote-136)

The problem is not that we don’t have enough food. The problem is that we prefer a lifestyle that lets us live as we please. Developed nations are capable of help. We have no excuse. We are in defiance of our moral obligations.

Fortunately, the news is not all bleak. Governments are regularly working to meet their moral obligation to assist other nations. This is proven in my final point, a

Case Study: Malaria Prevention in Ghana

Malaria is a preventable and treatable disease that causes more than a million deaths per year, according to US News & World Report.[[137]](#footnote-137)

The United States Agency for International Development - or USAID - is specifically created for the purpose of assisting nations in need. In 2011, USAID spent $27 million dollars on combating malaria in the African nation of Ghana. Almost 200,000 homes were sprayed for malaria-carrying insects, and thousands of people were trained to treat or prevent the disease.[[138]](#footnote-138) While results are still preliminary, experts are optimistic that malaria deaths in Ghana have been cut in half[[139]](#footnote-139).

So let’s recap: for the cost of an iced coffee per taxpayer[[140]](#footnote-140), Americans were able to save thousands of human lives. They weren’t American lives, but that means nothing when it comes to our moral obligation.

4 bucks. Thousands of lives. That’s something to feel good about. And it’s a big reason to support this resolution. Spiderman would be proud.

Addendum for Aff Case “The Samaritan principle”

by Travis Herche

A case study is just another word for application. In this case, applications are used as sub-points to prove a certain point. The case study doesn’t specifically apply to any point; it’s a broad application of the case logic to the resolution. The term “case study” helps make that clear.

Negative Brief Against Aff Case “The Samaritan principle”

by Travis Herche

Avoid the contentions like the plague! If you debate them, you will lose. They’re easily proven and they tap into powerful emotions like protectiveness and guilt.

To beat this case, you must defeat one or both of the following: the meta-framework and the value. Examine your own case to see what you can cross-apply most effectively. For instance, if governments are only to pursue their own interests, hit the meta-framework. If the moral obligations of governments and individuals are different, hit the value. Make your own framework as strong and appealing as possible. Then dismiss the affirmative contentions and case study with a group response of No Impact.

Work your thematic core - the primary persuasive element of your position. Get some negative momentum going. The judge shouldn’t feel like he’s voting for child starvation. It’s okay to vote negative!

Stopping Genocide

An Anti-Value-Centric Affirmative Case

By Jon Bateman

U.S. Congressman Jerry Costello once wisely stated, “Mr. Speaker, genocide is the most potent of all crimes against humanity because it is an effort to systematically wipe out a people and a culture as well as individual lives.”[[141]](#footnote-141) It is because I believe that genocide is an intolerable evil that I stand **Resolved**: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

The core idea of this resolution is the belief that the government of one country has a duty to help the people of another country in certain situations. But before we explore this topic further, we need to define some terms.

Moral obligation is defined as, “An obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong.” The definition continues on to state, “Moral obligation springs from a sense of justice and equity that an honorable person would have, and not from a mere sense of doing benevolence or charity.”[[142]](#footnote-142)

Need is defined as, “a condition requiring supply or relief.”[[143]](#footnote-143)

With this definition of need in mind, what condition could require relief more than genocide: the systematic elimination of an entire people group? It is for this reason that I present the **anti-value of genocide**. The term anti-value may sound complicated but it just means a undesirable idea that must be prevented and stopped at all cost. By presenting the anti-value of genocide, I am affirming the idea that genocide in one country must be stopped, no matter what the cost: even if it requires the government of another country to intervene. It is for these reasons that I present the following contentions.

Contention 1: Governments are historically complicit in genocide

I think we can all agree that genocide is wrong, but let’s step back and examine how genocide occurs by looking at three case studies.

Case study 1: The holocaust

In WWII the Nazi government implemented the “final solution” and began the systematic eradication of not just Jews but also, Gypsies, homosexuals, and other undesirable people groups. This killing continued until the allies liberated the concentration camps where these victims were sent for extermination.

Case Study 2: Rwandan Genocide

In 1994, ethnic tensions between the Hutus and the Tutsis boiled over and radical Hutu militias began killing Tutsis en mass. They were aided and supported by many members of the Rwandan military and government. The Genocide was finally ended when Tutsi rebels from Uganda seized control of the country and ended the violence.

Case Study 3: Darfur Genocide

Darfur is a region of Sudan where, in 2003, Sudanese Arab militias, called the Janjaweed, began raiding the villages of Sudanese, black Africans. The violence intensified as the government of Sudan, which was controlled by the Arab majority in the north, began funding and arming the militias. The violence continued without intervention until a cease fire was finally called in 2010 after international pressure continued to mount.

What is important to realize is that in all three of these examples, the government of the country in which genocide occurred not only allowed the genocide to happen, but actively supported the killings. This leads to contention 2.

Contention 2: Governments have a moral obligation to stop genocide

Human Rights activist Bianca Jagger stated, “I believe the only time when we can call for intervention is when there is an ongoing genocide.”[[144]](#footnote-144) But why is foreign intervention justified in cases of genocide? As we established in contention 1, genocides occur when the government of a country not only fails to stop ethnic violence, but actively participates in the violence. When this happens, nothing will stop the violence unless an outside force restores peace to the region. This is because the government of that nation is actively failing in its duty to protect the people of its nation.

It is for this reason that the governments of the world are not only justified in intervening, but have a moral obligation to intervene.

When the governments of the world fail to intervene to stop Genocide, the unthinkable occurs. These governments defend their actions by stating that they were respecting national sovereignty or an ideal of non-intervention, but while they sit idly by, millions of people die; Deaths that could be prevented if only the nations of the world had the courage to stand up and defend the defenseless.

Consider this statement from former United Nations Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, “In Rwanda that genocide happened because the international community and the Security Council refused to give, again, another 5000 troops which would have cost, I don't know, maybe fifty, a hundred, million dollars.”

In short, when governments fail to assist nations in need in cases of genocide, it is a moral failing on the part of those governments.

I would like to leave you with the often repeated warning of Edmund Burke, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”[[145]](#footnote-145) It is for this reason that I urge you to affirm the resolution and vote that in the case of genocide, governments do indeed have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. Thank you.

Negative Brief against Aff Case “Stopping Genocide”

By Jon Bateman

The strength of this case is the emotional connection it creates with the judge. In order to beat it, you must break that connection. This can be primarily done by showing how hard genocide is to identify. Point out that the affirmative didn’t define it in their case, and gave no method for identifying future genocides, just listed examples of past genocides. Throw doubt on the definition of genocide by pointing out the blurry line between genocide and civil war. It is much easier to contend that governments don’t have a moral obligation to “assist” in civil wars than in genocide.

Cynthia wrote a great article on the nature of genocide, in which she describes a multitude of negative arguments against genocide cases. Rather than restate what has already been so eloquently written, I’d like to direct your attention to that article for more negative arguments against this case.

Protection of Human Life

by Tyler Burton

In 1809 to the senate judiciary committee meeting, Thomas Jefferson wrote "The chief purpose of government is to protect life. Abandon that and you have abandoned all."..."The care of human life, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government."[[146]](#footnote-146) It is because I agree governments must protect life, I advocate in favor of the resolution that governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

To provide clarity in today’s debate round, a few fundamental definitions are necessary starting with,

**National Government:** Any political organization that is put in place to maintain control of a nation.[[147]](#footnote-147)

(Dictionary.com)

**Moral:** Of, pertaining to, or concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or distinction between right and wrong.[[148]](#footnote-148)

(Dictionary.com)

**In Need:** Not having enough food, money, clothing, or other things that are necessary for life [including protection][[149]](#footnote-149)

(Macmillan Dictionary)

**Nation:** A territorial division containing a body of people of one or more nationalities and usually characterized by relatively large size and independent status.[[150]](#footnote-150)

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

With the definitions for the round set, let’s move on to my value and criterion. The value or goal that I would like to establish for today’s round is: **The Preservation of Human Life,** And the criterion, or means to attaining my value is: **National Government Assistance**

Now with my stance on the resolution outlined, allow us to take a look at my three contentions, or reasons why the resolution is true, starting off with,

Contention 1) Preserving Life is the Highest Moral Obligation

As defined, a moral obligation, is an obligation to discern right from wrong, and choose the right conduct. Applying this to life, it is not morally right to take arbitrarily away someone’s life or let someone die at the hands of what you can prevent. However it is also not morally right to deprive and innocent person of liberty through torture, or take away an innocent person property without just cause. Although why is it that a robbing of someone’s life more dramatic than that of their liberty, or property? The reason is that life is irreplaceable and sacred. Stealing from someone their liberty or property can be reversed, by freeing oppressed people, and granting back property. On the other hand, when life is taken away it is final, and can never be restored on this earth. By preserving life, a government can fulfill its highest moral obligation. Following with the words of Thomas Jefferson, violating human life, or allowing this violation to happen demonstrates an abandonment of all moral principles. When a government preserves human life, it achieves the resolution at hand. This moves me along to my second contention;

Contention 2) Governments Preserve Life Best

There are two ways for a government to preserve life. This first is to free people from murderous oppression, and the second is to send aid in the form of essentials such as food, clothing, vaccinations etc. First, if a government helps a nation escape from a dictator who violates human life every day, then that government has done the right thing, met its moral obligation, and preserved life. The reason this is a governments moral obligation, is because no other entity has the ability to preserve human life in this manner. Individual people, groups, or even NGO’s have no power to stop oppressive murder inside a country. Therefore it is a government’s moral obligation to preserve human life, since it is the only body that has the power to do so. Think of the analogy of a school setting. A child is being picked on by a bully. This child has no way to overcome the bully. On top of that, all the child’s friends have no way to overcome the bully either. In this situation, it is the moral obligation of the teacher to step in, and stop the bullying since she is the only one with the power to do so. Sitting by and watching the child get picked on would not be the right thing to do, thus preventing the abuse would be morally upright. Next, the second thing governments can do to preserve life is to provide aid through the form of essentials. The reason this is the moral obligation of the government is because governments have the most resources to preserve the maximum amout of life. To back this up, the Global Malaria Action Plan released a financing report in the summer of 2011 paraphrased as saying, “Money spent on malaria in 2007 amounted to an estimated total of ~US$ 1.5 billion. 20% of these funds came principally through the private sector. Approximately 34% of funds came from [domestic] national government expenditures and the remaining funding came from international donors [external governments], which disbursed an estimated US$ 701 million (46%).”[[151]](#footnote-151) When governments have the resources and funding to preserve human life where nations are in need, it is their moral obligation to do so. This leads me directly to my third contention,

Contention 3) Governments Have a Moral Obligation to Assist other Nations in Need

To fulfill a governments only goal towards legitimacy, that government has to preserve life foremost. The preservation of life is the highest value that can be achieved, it is the right thing to do, and it is the loftiest moral obligation of a government. If we are to believe that all life is equally valuable, then a government cannot be restricted to its people alone. To preserve life, governments do have a moral obligation to help those in need in other nations. Governments are morally obligated to preserve the lives of the oppressed. Governments are morally obligated to preserve the lives of those who are needy of essential life sustaining aid. By preserving human life in this way, governments are doing the right thing, and therefore are upholding their moral obligation; and on top of that, in situations of need in other nations, governments are the best instruments to use when preserving life. Governments are able to stop murderous oppression, and governments are able to provide the most resources to those who are dying. When governments can preserve life in other nations, they have a moral obligation to do so.

Negative Brief against Aff Case “Protection of Human Life”

by Tyler Burton

Opening Quote- [Turn] Thomas Jefferson was an isolationist; he did not believe it was the government’s job to assist other nations.

Definitions

National Government- A true national government is representative of the nation.

Moral- The negative definition is superior because

1. Defines the whole phrase “moral obligation”
2. What is right and wrong is very subjective
3. Negative definition provides objective standards such as duty, owe, law.

Value-

1. Governments should preserve life in their own countries foremost
2. Preservation of life is a good goal; however the negative goal follows better with the resolution

Criterion-

1. Representation of the people is more important that government assistance. If a government contradicts the will of the people, it has lost its legitimacy
2. Government assistance doesn’t work as well as what the affirmative would have you believe. Governments become corrupt with money
3. Haiti Example: BILL QUIGLEY (Bill is legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights and a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans.)**“**It turns out that almost none of the money that the general public thought was going to Haiti actually went directly to Haiti. The international community chose to bypass the Haitian people, Haitian non-governmental organizations and the government of Haiti. Less than a penny of each dollar of US aid went to the government of Haiti, according to the Associated Press. The same is true with other international donors. The Haitian government was completely bypassed in the relief effort by the US and the international community. Yet Haiti looks like the earthquake happened two months ago, not two years. Over half a million people remain homeless in hundreds of informal camps, most of the tons of debris from destroyed buildings still lays where it fell, and cholera, a preventable disease, was introduced into the country and is now an epidemic killing thousands and sickening hundreds of thousands more.”[[152]](#footnote-152)

Contention 1

1. Agree, preserving life is the highest moral obligation on a personal level, however it is not the inherent duty of a national government.

2. Governments do not act on a moral obligation, they act in their own self interests

Contention 2

1. A foreign government is still part of the nation; therefore toppling it would not be assisting the entire nation- helping a few people that are being oppressed while good, does not mean the nation is in need.

2. NGO’s and groups usually operate in the country and take better more efficient hands on approach

3. Stanford Journal of International Relations- “The literature also suggests that aid indirectly harms governance by inducing an increase in the size of the government sector, which in turn increases opportunities for corruption. Studies show that ODA transfers in a corrupt setting ultimately end up funding wasteful government spending that is falsely labeled as “development expenditures. ”Boone shows that while aid does increase government consumption, this does not typically benefit the poor because money is wasted on white elephant projects, military equipment, fraudulent procurement, and other expenditures that provide ample opportunities for graft, but do not typically generate any meaningful income to service the loan or to bolster growth.”[[153]](#footnote-153)

4. More money does not mean more preservation of life

Contention 3

1. More often people are dying and in need of aid, rather than an oppressive dictator

2. Private organizations do have a moral obligation, and are more successfully at helping people in need.

3. Kiel Institute for the World Economy Report- “NGOs often circumvent governments in the recipient country and deal directly with target groups organized by local NGOs. This may reduce leakage and result in better alignment with recipient needs. Moreover, after the World Bank posited in the late 1990s that government-to-government transfers do not work when governance is particularly bad in the recipient country, it was sometimes argued that NGOs have “competitive advantages of working in difficult environments. Various aid items are unlikely to have short-term effects on economic outcomes). As concerns the impact on democratic institutions, short-term effects are still more unlikely.”[[154]](#footnote-154)

Safety First

by Michael Tcheau

The year is 2010. The dust settles around a grim sight. Hundreds of buildings have toppled to the ground. The screams of the wounded and dying can be heard begging for help. The nation of Haiti has just been struck by one of the largest recorded earthquakes. You now have a decision to make. Do you have a moral obligation to help those people in any way you can? It is because I believe that we cannot stand around and selfishly forget about the dead and the dying, that I stand emphatically Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

(*American Heritage Dictionary*) **Nation**: A group of people in an organized country.[[155]](#footnote-155)

(*Oxford’s English Dictionary*) **Need**: To require something because it is essential, rather than just desirable.[[156]](#footnote-156)

Before we dive straight in, I’d like to shed some light on the meaning of this resolution with my:

Resolutional Analysis: Nation refers to people.

The word “nation,” as defined, denotes that the resolution is talking about people. The resolution is asking us whether or not governments have a moral obligation to assist the people of a country, not necessarily the government of a country. For example, foreign intervention to topple a tyrannical government may oppose the government of a nation, but it protects the nation and its people as a whole. For this reason, we are not discussing whether governments should support each other, but rather whether governments should protect the citizens of other nations.

Today, I champion the **value of Safety**, operationally defined as, “The enforcement of defensive measures necessary to protect the life, liberty, and property of citizens in a nation.”[[157]](#footnote-157) Safety is the highest value because it is the balance between the national defense and the human rights, necessary to protect innocent citizens. As President John Adams once said, “Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men; therefore, the people alone have an incontestable, unalienable, and indefeasible right to institute government; and to reform, alter, or totally change the same, when their protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness require it.”[[158]](#footnote-158) If governments promote safety, their citizens will be protected and allowed to pursue happiness to a greater degree.

The value of safety is best upheld through my **criterion of International Affinity**. Though it sounds complicated, Intentional Affinity is simply defined as “The creation and maintenance of international alliances for the mutual benefit of citizens.”[[159]](#footnote-159) This is the best means to achieve the value for the following reason:

Link 1: International Affinity promotes safety.

International affinity promotes safety by providing strength in numbers. A nation by itself can be easily overrun, but if a nation has allies, it makes it very hard to beat. Consider the example of the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement. In 1994, the governments of Israel and Jordan signed an agreement that detailed the sharing of information to stop domestic and international terrorist threats. According to the Middle Eastern Quarterly, “The Jordan-Israel treaty also contains commitments ‘to take necessary and effective measures to prevent the entry, presence and operation . . . of any group or organization, and their infrastructure, which threatens the security of the other Party by the use or incitement to the use of violent means.’” BBC reported that the alliance between Israel and Jordan has prevented numerous terrorist attacks, and resulted in improved rights protection and national security.[[160]](#footnote-160) Through international affinity, Jordan and Israel are able to fight off threats that would otherwise claim the lives of many innocents.

Contention 1: Government assistance creates international affinity.

Government assistance of other nations creates international affinity for three reasons.

a. Government assistance aids militarily.

Government assistance aids militarily by providing a system of mutual defense. Consider the example of the operation American Aegis, which was a plan passed in 2009 that established a missile defense shield over most of central Europe and Spain. Increased terrorist activities in Spain from the ETA, a Basque Separatist group, forced the Spanish government to strengthen their national security policies. However, the increased missile attacks on civilian targets called for action of a higher level. When the US passed operation American Aegis, one of their stated objectives was to protect Spain, an ally nation, from missile threats against civilians.[[161]](#footnote-161) Through establishing military trust, the US was able to save lives and increase relationships through European nations.

b. Government assistance aids economically.

Government’s assistance of other nations can influence economies for the better. Consider the example of the international foreign aid given to Haiti in 2010. A fund set up by the World Bank and the US was able to lower the impact of a massive 7.0 magnitude earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010. The foreign aid programs helped establish triage centers, hospitals, food centers, and shelter for the thousands of people made homeless or injured by the earthquake.[[162]](#footnote-162) Through assisting a nation in need, the US and other nations around the world were able to save human lives.

c. Government assistance protects human rights.

Government intervention protects human rights by safeguarding the people of a nation. Consider the US intervention in the Sudanese conflict. In 2003, an anti-government group known as the Sudanese Liberation Movement began a genocide fueled by ethnic tensions. The clash and bloodshed lead directly to the displacement of over 450,000 civilians, and 461,000 civilian casualties. However, instead of allowing this blatant violation of human rights to continue, NATO and the US decided that something had to be done to save lives. So, in 2006, a peacekeeping force was sent to the Darfur region to protect civilians and stop the fighting.[[163]](#footnote-163) Even though the operation cost the US government millions of dollars, the lives of thousands of innocent people were saved through US intervention.

It is because of the hundreds of people that foreign intervention, aid, and alliances have saved in Spain, Israel, Haiti, and Sudan, that I support this resolution. For the safety of humanity and the preservation of life, governments have a moral obligation to help nations in dire need. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Negative Brief against Aff Case “Safety First”

by Michael Tcheau

This case is pretty sneaky, but it isn’t invincible. Let’s see how to take it down.

1. The Resolutional Analysis

This resolutional analysis cannot be ignored. With this interpretation, the case is saying “Governments have a moral obligation to help people of a nation in need.” Take it down by saying that nation does not only refer to the people of a nation, but also the government.

2. The Value

a. Self-conflicting

The definition of safety self-conflicts. Many times, defensive measures necessarily violate human rights. Taxation to fund the military violates property rights as it forces people to pay. During times of martial law, safety is promoted at the expense of human rights.

b. Worst of two choices.

This is a complicated argument.

In order for everyone’s human rights to be protected, that means that individuals can’t be allowed to harm each other’s human rights. This means that in order to maximize safety, you must have a government strong enough to prevent people from harming each other’s rights in every scenario. The only government powerful enough to do this is a totalitarian government.

However, totalitarian governments ALSO harm safety and rights. In fact, government inherently will violate rights (see examples of drug restrictions and taxation). Therefore, to maximize safety, you must remove governments. Which leaves you with two logical implications and links: Totalitarianism, or Anarchy.

c. Self-destructive.

This is a similar argument to “self-conflicting,” but it is different on the angle approach. Human rights definitely can harm safety. Drug trade technically should be allowed under the human rights of property and liberty. Yet nations like Mexico who fails to control drug trade end in chaos. Ultimately, the rampant allowance of human rights leads to the demise of safety.

2. The Criterion

This criterion is so ripe for impact turns. Refer frequently to the negative section of my article “The Alliance.”

a. Destroys National Security

Run the application of the Iran-Contra affair that’s described in the article. Through creating an alliance with Iran, we gave them weapons that threaten our national security today.

b. Sacrifices Innocent Life

Run the application of the Vietnamese war. Once again, refer to the article.

c. Value link turn

Argue alternate causality. Say that the Israeli Jordanian alliance has nothing to do with assisting a nation in need. They provide information for mutual benefit for stopping terrorism in both their nations.

3. The Contention

a. The Missile Shield

I recommend mitigating against this application. Argue that the impact is low, and focus on turning the other applications. It might be better to straight up concede this application and use impact calculus to win on turns on applications b and c.

b. Haiti

Refer to the negative angled application turn in my article to run a straight up impact turn. American involvement in Haiti is a failure. Cite both evidence cards.

c. Darfur

Impact turn once again. Improvement in Darfur is nonexistent. Today, yet another civil war threatens South Sudan’s secession. Innocent people are still murdered. The US operation did nothing except put American soldiers at risk.

Angry Birds and Aiding Nations

by Alex Sargent

Introduction:

When the iPhone was released a few years ago, it was hailed as a game-changer in the cell-phone market. But, a few years later, another change was made to the cell-phone market. This time, the game-changer was an actual game: Angry Birds. The game pits a flock of birds with various powers and abilities against a herd of green pigs. Why are the two groups fighting? The pigs stole the birds’ eggs. This angered the birds, hence the title “Angry Birds”. The birds were outraged that their eggs were taken, and fought to get them back.

In real life, many times, people’s human rights are threatened. But, unlike the Angry Birds, these people are often unable to act on their own behalf to regain these rights. These people often depend on aid from foreign countries for the protection of their basic human rights. It is because I believe that these rights must be respected, and that governmental aid to foreign countries helps to uphold these rights, that I stand **Resolved:** That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

Definitions:

Moral: founded on the fundamental principles of right conduct rather than on legalities, enactment, or custom – Dictionary.com[[164]](#footnote-164)

Obligation: something by which a person is bound or obliged to do certain things, and which arises out of a sense of duty. – Dictionary.com2

Need: a condition requiring relief –Princeton University3

Value: Human Rights

In today’s debate round, there is one idea that must be held as most valuable. That idea is the concept of **Human Rights**. The Random House Dictionary defines human rights as “fundamental rights, especially those believed to belong to an individual and in whose exercise a government may not interfere.”4 These rights are often held to be life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When governments provide aid to nations in need, human rights are upheld for the citizens of those nations.

Criterion: Humanitarianism

In the context of today’s resolution, the best means of upholding these fundamental human rights is through the concept of Humanitarianism. Princeton University defines Humanitarianism as “the doctrine that people's duty is to promote human welfare.”5 Humanitarianism says that governments, which are made up of people, have the duty to uphold the welfare of mankind. It can do this by providing aid to nations in need. Humanitarianism will serve as the affirmative criterion, or means of achieving the value of human rights.

Contentions:

1: Humanitarianism Upholds Human Rights

Humanitarianism is defined as “the doctrine that people's duty is to promote human welfare.”5 The question is, how do we uphold human welfare? The answer is by upholding human rights. When governments assist nations in need, human rights are respected. For example, by providing food and water to refugees, life is upheld. Or, when militaries intervene in countries with despotic governments, liberty is upheld. In the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, governments from around the world sent rescue workers, food, and water for displaced citizens of Haiti. The government of Belguim sent a medical intervention team with a field hospital, a 30-person search and rescue team and four sniffer dogs, along with a drinking-water purification facility with two technicians.6 This humanitarian aid undoubtedly saved countless lives, which helped to uphold the human rights of the people of Haiti.

2: Governments have a Moral Obligation to Uphold Human Rights

In the most often quoted line of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men.”7 Clearly, our founding fathers believed that a government’s foremost responsibility is to uphold human rights. The question is, should countries only uphold human rights for their own country? Should the United States government only uphold human rights for Americans? Should the French Government only uphold human rights for the people of France? No. These rights are not French rights or American rights. They are human rights, and governments have an obligation to uphold life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all people.

3: Governments have a Moral Obligation to Help Needy Countries

Because providing aid to countries in need upholds human rights upholds human rights, and governments are obliged to uphold human rights, governments have a moral obligation to assist nations in need. Take for instance the United States’ intervention in Libya. The nation of Libya had already been plunged into a civil war between the oppressive government of Muammar Gaddafi and various opposition groups. Many people were dying in the conflict, and many more were being displaced. In March of 2011, the United States began carrying out airstrikes in Libya, in coordination with NATO airstrikes going on at the same time. Many Americans criticized the mission, saying that the US had no interests in the conflict, and therefore should not be involved. However, as President Obama said at the time “To brush aside America’s responsibility as a leader and — more profoundly — our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are. Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different.”8 President Obama recognized that the United States had a moral obligation to uphold the human rights of the people of Libya. In the end, the people of Libya established their own government, and were able to achieve these fundamental rights.

Conclusion:

Governments have a moral obligation to uphold human rights. It is because the humanitarian aid that governments provide helps to uphold human rights that I stand Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

Negative Brief against Aff Case “Angry Birds and Aiding Nations”

by Alex Sargent

Value: Human Rights

Agree that Human Rights is a good value, but that foreign intervention cannot always uphold this value, using the arguments below.

Criterion: Humanitarianism

1. Humanitarianism is Too Vague
   1. Human Welfare

Humanitarianism Claims to uphold human welfare, but what exactly is human welfare? If we’re going to uphold something, we need to know what it is that we’re promoting.

* 1. Implementation of Humanitarianism

It may be a government’s duty to uphold human welfare, but how do they do that?

1. As defined, Humanitarianism Doesn’t Necessarily Apply to the Resolution

Argue that the definitions states that humanitarianism holds that it is a *person’s* responsibility to uphold human welfare, not the government’s.

Contention 1: Humanitarianism Upholds Human Rights

- Humanitarian Aid is Often Ineffective

Humanitarian aid can often be either defrauded or stolen and used for other purposes.

a. Somalia:

In the Somalian famine of 1991-1992, warlords routinely stole whole shipments of food aid in order to keep themselves alive. In recent years, food aid in Somalia has been stolen to be sold at market. However, most people who need the aid cannot afford to pay for it, and therefore die without it.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/17/world/africa/17somalia.html>

b. Liberia:

Two Liberian aid workers were convicted of stealing almost $1 Million in food aid sent by the United States Government

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11772875>

In both of these instances, it is evident that humanitarian aid did not help to uphold the human rights of the people it was designated to help.

Contention 2: Governments have a Moral Obligation to Uphold Human Rights

Agree with this contention. It merely states a concept that is “self-evident.” Once again reiterate that intervention often fails to uphold these fundamental rights.

Contention 3: Governments have a Moral Obligation to Help Needy Countries

- Military Intervention Harms Human Rights

In the example of Libya, the oppressive government of Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown, which clearly upholds human rights. However, in the airstrikes performed by the United States and NATO forces, Libyan citizens, both soldiers and civilians were killed. According to Human Rights Watch, 72 Libyan civilians, including 44 women and children, were killed in NATO airstrikes. Is this upholding human rights?

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/14/nato-investigate-civilian-deaths-libya>

Negative Cases

“The more we disagree,

the more chance there is that

at least one of us is right.”

~ Unknown

The Government Can’t

By Travis Herche

Mind Your own Business

By Caleb Delon

Oh the Irony

By Blaire Bayliss

The Purpose of Government

By Tyler Burton

Moral Obligation vs. Praiseworthiness

By Elizabeth Ertle

Private Sector Military Intervention

By Cynthia Jeub

The Government Can’t

by Travis Herche

The world is full of hurt. We all wish we could snap our fingers and alleviate all human suffering, but that is something only God can do. The question for us mortals is: how should we respond to need? The affirmative wants you to think that governments should levy taxes by the billions of dollars and send them overseas. Fortunately, there is a better way. I’ll prove this using a series of points, beginning with my

Meta-Framework: Individual Morality is Separate

It is impossible to discuss the moral obligation of government without this idea. Without it, one could erroneously claim that governments ought to act like individual people, and vise versa. This is an idea that the affirmative case strongly and incorrectly suggested. Consider the application of **SWAT Teams**. SWAT stands for Special Weapons and Tactics. SWAT teams are brought in when normal police action is not sufficient - for example, when taking on armed bank robbers.

If you heard that a SWAT team entered the home of a violent criminal last night, shot him with pepper pellets, handcuffed him, and hauled him away, you’d be relieved. However, if you heard that I did that, you would be mortified, and rightly so. Individuals should not sneak into people’s houses in the night and attack them - but sometimes, governments should. This proves that the moral requirements of governments and individuals are different.

Therefore, any arguments about this resolution must be specific to government morality. Any that are about individual morality should be disregarded. This is a basic logical standard to which I will closely adhere. I will hold my opponent to the same standard. Let’s turn to my

Value: Protection of Citizens

To be clear, Protection of Citizens is operationally defined as “Minimizing the risk of human rights violations to citizens of a nation.” This is the only value appropriate to this resolution, as proven in my reasons to prefer.

Reason to Prefer: Purpose of Government.

Former Senator Arlen Specter said: “The fundamental purpose of government is to protect its citizens.”[[165]](#footnote-165) That is the singular reason that government exists. If it does that, it is legitimate; if not, it is a failure. No other pursuit is an appropriate use of taxpayer money.

Reason to Prefer 2: No Other Obligations

Let me be clear. I acknowledge that there are many nations who badly need help. I simply contend that the government should not be the one to provide it. Award-winning investigative journalist Mark Landsbaum once wrote: “Government has no money. It takes other peoples’ money and it always takes it by force. Always. Charity is what happens when someone who owns something of value voluntarily gives it to another in need. Government, which owns nothing, redistributes what it doesn’t own. It does not engage in charity.”[[166]](#footnote-166) Let’s get the government out of the way, give the money back to the individuals, and see what they can do.

Government’s sole obligation is to protect its own citizens. When it meddles in the affairs of other nations, the consequences are dire, as seen in my

Contention: International Assistance does not Protect Citizens

Almost by definition, assisting other nations does nothing to protect citizens. This is the job of private groups - charities and individuals. When governments get involved, they are more likely to hurt than help. This is proven in my applications.

**Application: Egyptian Arms Aid.** The United States pours $1.3 billion of military assistance into Egypt every year.[[167]](#footnote-167) The official reason is that we’re promoting democracy in the middle east. The unofficial reason is that arms lobbyists like Lockheed Martin have lucrative contracts with Egypt. General Dynamics is making hundreds of millions of dollars off a plant in Egypt that makes fully functional Abrams tanks. Is this doing anything to protect American citizens? Is it even spreading democracy? Not surprisingly, the answer is no. Here’s a status update from Reuters July 2012: “All in the span of one very bad week this [last] June [in Egypt], the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and its allies dissolved parliament, reinstated martial law, and decreed a constitutional addendum stripping the presidency of many of its powers.”

Meanwhile, Egypt recently arrested 19 American citizens whose only crime was promoting democracy in Egypt. When the Obama administration tried to free them, the Egyptian prime minister said: “Egypt will not kneel.”[[168]](#footnote-168) Those words put the nail in the coffin of any hope we have that our involvement in Egypt is helping.

Senator Rand Paul said: “U.S. military aid to Egypt goes beyond the pale. Not only does this action condone the human rights abuses Egypt committed against American pro-democracy workers earlier this year, it sets a precedent that America will not punish its aggressors, but instead, give them billions of our taxpayers’ dollars.”[[169]](#footnote-169)

This is the kind of train-wreck foreign policy we get when the resolution is affirmed.

Application: Vietnam War

Every year, three million Americans visit a long black wall sunken into the ground. It is engraved with the names of fifty-eight thousand Americans who died honorably in the service of their country. Two million Vietnamese also perished in the war. The tragedy of their loss is tremendous, but it is aggravated further by the fact that those deaths were not necessary.

The interests of the United States were not jeopardized when the Vietnamese declared independence from France. But even when the French had sailed away, American troops were still landing to step up the fight and prop up a Southern Vietnamese faction that simply could not survive. President Johnson said “I just don’t think it’s worth fighting for.” So why did we stay? Because Johnson didn’t want to look like a weakling in the face of communism. The more desperate the war grew, the harder it was for him to admit his mistake. Thousands of soldiers died on the altar of the Great Society and one man’s reelection campaign.[[170]](#footnote-170)

Johnson claimed that the South Vietnamese were in need of help, and that we had a moral obligation to assist them. But he was wrong - his only moral obligation was to protect American citizens, not send them into harm’s way.

The notion that governments must engage in charity is oxymoronic and dangerous. Please vote against it.

Addendum for Neg Case “The Government Can’t”

by Travis Herche

This case was written as a counter-pick for affirmative cases that equate government and individual morality. That assumption is very difficult to defend, and your meta-framework should blow it away easily.

This case is fairly wordy; unless you have very little else to say, you should run just one of the contention applications. Choose the one you’re most familiar with.

The Egyptian Arms Trade application is currently in the news, which means there could be important updates at any time. Do a quick internet check to make sure your facts are right before running it.

The Vietnam War application should be run with great care and gentleness, and should probably be avoided altogether if there’s a risk that your judge is a Vietnam veteran.

This case rises and falls on your meta-framework and reasons to prefer. Fight for them! If you can carry them with momentum, the affirmative case will collapse with minimum extra effort on your part.

Affirmative Brief against Neg Case “The Government Can’t”

by Travis Herche

Your case probably conflicts directly with the meta-framework. Do whatever it takes to make sure the judge doesn’t vote on it. For instance: Governments are People is a good response. What’s so magical about a government that absolves it of moral obligation? It’s just a lot of people who need to be held to the same standard as everyone else. Presumably, that standard is the affirmative value.

To avoid getting tangled up in the reasons to prefer - which can easily devolve into a yes-it-is-no-it’s-not debate - cross-apply your own applications to them. “Judge, the negative says that we have no moral obligation to the major suffering in this application. He wants to turn a blind eye to these people who badly need our help! But I think we both know in our hearts that that is morally wrong. We have a moral obligation to assist.”

The applications can be defeated with a No Conflict response: if the negative is right, neither Egypt or Vietnam was being assisted. We got involved to pursue our own selfish interests. That means these applications are non-resolutional.

Mind Your Own Business

by Caleb Delon

The Swiss Saint Nicholas of Flüe once wisely stated, “Don't get involved in other people's affairs.” (<http://www.swissworld.org/en/politics/foreign_policy/neutrality_and_isolationism/>)

It is because the Affirmative position ignores this wisdom and advocates intervention in other nations’ affairs, affairs that we have no business getting involved in, that I stand most emphatically “Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to NOT assist other nations in need.”

|  |
| --- |
| I agree with all of my opponent’s definitions, except for [*Insert definitions as needed*]  § Government: “the governing body of a nation, state, or community” (Oxford Dictionaries,<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/government?q=government>)  0  § Moral Obligation: “an act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment” (Oxford Dictionaries,<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/obligation>)  § Assist: “to give support or aid to; help” (The Random House Dictionary,<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/assist?s=t>)  § Nation: “an aggregation of people or peoples of one or more cultures, races, etc., organized into a single state” (World English Dictionary,<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nation?s=t>)  § Need: “a lack of something wanted or deemed necessary” (The Random House Dictionary,<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/need?s=ts)>  I ask my opponent to accept this definition so we can go forward with this debate round. |

Before we discuss my framework, my value and criterion, we need to address one *meta-framework* point. This **Meta-Framework Point** is that: *Governmental Obligations Differ From Individual Obligations*

Government imprisoning criminals is good, but individuals imprisoning people is kidnapping. Governments collect taxes, but individuals taking money is stealing. It is obvious that governmental obligations differ from individual obligations.

[To avoid confusion, know that my case is organized differently than most. Rather than running contentions, I will focus entirely on a framework that proves my case.]

Let’s first look at my value. A value is an external measure for the resolution. Under this resolution, we need a value that measures moral obligation. The moral obligation all governments have, my **Value**, is **Domestic Protection**, defined as *minimizing the risk of harm to citizens of a nation*.

You should vote Affirmative or Negative based upon which side best upholds Domestic Protection because of two *reasons to prefer* my value.

**Reason to Prefer 1:** [Domestic Protection is the] Highest Moral Obligation

If a “moral obligation” harms domestic protection, it would actually be immoral to act upon it. Thus, it would not be a moral obligation at all.

**Reason to Prefer 2:** [Domestic Protection is the] Duty of Government

President George W. Bush said, “The most solemn duty of [our] government is to protect [the] American people.” The same holds true for all other governments: their duty is domestic protection.

Domestic Protection is upheld through the method, or **Criterion**, of **Isolationism**, which is “the policy or doctrine of isolating one's country from the affairs of other nations by declining to enter into alliances, foreign economic commitments, international agreements, etc., seeking to devote the entire efforts of one's country to its own advancement and remain at peace by avoiding foreign entanglements and responsibilities.”

I know isolationism sometimes carries a negative connotation, but isolationism was embraced by the founders of our country and was the Golden Rule of our foreign policy until at least the 1930s (<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1601.html>). You should accept this method for two reasons, or criterion links.

Criterion Link 1: Isolationism Achieves Domestic Protection

**Switzerland** is probably the most well-known isolationist country. No Swiss citizen has died in an official foreign war since 1515 (<http://www.strike-the-root.com/51/walker/walker1.html>).

Switzerland is also one of the top 10 safest countries in the world (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-12-006/EN/KS-SF-12-006-EN.PDF>). Switzerland has truly achieved domestic protection due to its practice of isolationism.

Criterion Link 2: Interventionism Destroys Domestic Protection

“Interventionism” is isolationism’s evil counterpart and the root cause of thousands of **unnecessary US military deaths**. For example, in contrast to Switzerland, 365 United States citizens were killed in Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom during 2011 (<http://icasualties.org/OEF/ByMonth.aspx>). That’s only one operation in one country in one year. … And yet on average, one US citizen died *every single day*.

Another example is **foreign aid waste**. According to Professor Wolfgang Kasper, “[Foreign] Aid rarely reaches the poor and is rarely cost-effective”. (<http://policynetwork.net/development/media/foreign-aid-funds-corruption-new-study-reveals>). That’s right: the $53 *billion* dollars the United States spent on foreign aid last year was vastly ineffective (U.S. Representative Dan Boren,<http://pryordailytimes.com/local/x928073713/Boren-breaks-down-budget>).

This is clearly seen in the **War on Drugs**. According to the Los Angeles Times, “As drug cartels wreak murderous havoc from Mexico to Panama, the Obama administration is unable to show that the billions of dollars spent in the war on drugs have significantly stemmed the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States, according to two government reports and outside experts” (Brian Bennett, Los Angeles Times, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/09/world/la-fg-narco-contract-20110609>).

Billions of dollars – no significant results. Governmental intervention just doesn’t work and wastes money that could be better put to use to further domestic protection.

Over the past few minutes, we’ve seen that governmental obligations differ from individual obligations. Ultimately, we must evaluate all proposed moral obligations based on whether they further domestic protection. Only isolationism can achieve domestic protection, as illustrated by the applications of Switzerland, American casualties due to interventionism, and foreign aid waste.

Governments are morally obligated to their people NOT to intervene in other nations’ affairs. This is why the resolution is false, and why I strongly urge a Negative ballot.

Addendum for Neg Case “Mind Your own Business”

by Caleb Delon

I’ve been wanting to write this style of case for a while: no contentions whatsoever. In my opinion, there are very few arguments that cannot be placed under a meta-framework, Reason to Prefer, or link.

The advantage of running links is that it places all relevant information together. Why should your value be paramount? Don’t put it way down in a contention, put it right underneath the value! Why should we use your method? Tell us right away!

The disadvantage of running links is that they aren’t as common as I wish they were. That’s why I include the brief note in the case about my not having contentions. However, I didn’t receive a single comment from any the six tournaments I attended last year saying that a judge was confused by the links. To the contrary, I usually received a 5 in speaker points for organization. In my experience, as long as you explain the terminology, judges will be fine with them. Hopefully, they’ll be as common as values themselves soon. (For more information on links, read Travis Herche’s article in the 2011-2012 NCFCA Red Book. It’s available online at [**http://traviscoaching.blogspot.com/**](http://traviscoaching.blogspot.com/). Just search for “links”.)

I enjoy running cases like this. Taking an uncommon position and convincing judges of its worth is a wonderful experience. If you’re up to the challenge, supporting Isolationism could be a ton of fun.

This case runs a bit long, even at my speaking speed (a bit faster than average). You won’t have as much time to address the Affirmative case while running this case, but that’s okay: if you prove your position, it is logically impossible for the Affirmative position to be correct. No matter what so-called “moral obligation” they propose, if it doesn’t line up with Isolationism and thus further Domestic Protection, it’s actually immoral (see value link 1). Once you’ve established your case, the Affirmative case should fall with a minimum of effort on your part.

Have fun!

Affirmative Brief against Neg Case “Mind Your own Business”

by Caleb Delon

Meta-Framework:

[A meta-framework is a fundamental point that, if not agreed upon, renders all discussion of frameworks (and everything else) moot. The Affirmative and Negative likely disagree on this point, so in order to prevent confusion it must be discussed. It needs to be addressed first and is way too important to be stuck inside a contention, so it gets its own section. For more detail on meta-frameworks, go read Travis Herche’s article.]

In my opinion, the crux of the Affirmative position under this year’s resolution is proving that individual morality can be directly applied to governments. If that point can be established, the resolution is basically unassailable.

In syllogism form:

Premise A: Governments have the same moral obligations as individuals.

Premise B: Individuals have a moral obligation to assist others in need.

Conclusion: Therefore, governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

Virtually everyone would agree with Premise B. However, the truth of Premise A is not so apparent. If that premise falls, so goes the Affirmative position, as my meta-framework attempts to establish. If you cannot show that governments should be held to the same moral standards as individuals, then the simplest reason to vote Affirmative is gone.

Ideally, you have a meta-framework of your own in your Affirmative case, something like Morality is Universal. Just because a bunch of people come together doesn’t mean they get to do immoral things or ignore others in need. Adding the name “government” to that bunch of people doesn’t change morality either. The whole is the sum of its parts, so the moral standards we apply to people are directly applicable to governments.

Value:

If you’ve established the above point, then you can say something to the effect of: “Therefore, the Negative value is selfish and immoral when taken as the end-all-be-all of governmental obligations. Sure, governments should protect their people, but they should also be concerned about the welfare of needy people in other nations”.

The key is to minimize the importance of Domestic Protection in comparison to the other moral obligation(s) you presented. It may be as important or less important, but it should not be grounds for ignoring other moral obligations.

Reasons to Prefer:

RTP 1: Should we really focus *all* of our resources on minimizing the danger to the citizens of our country? Can’t we do a fine job upholding Domestic Protection with some of our resources and do some good in the world with the rest of them?

RTP 2: Argue that governments have other duties as well. If you’ve established the government morality/individual morality link, this should be simple.

Criterion:

Here’s the fun part of the case. Every resolution has its extremes, and this case represents the Negative extreme of the current resolution. If you notice, my wording of the resolution is not “governments do not have a moral obligation to assist” but rather “governments have a moral obligation NOT to assist”, i.e. it is immoral for governments to assist.

There are a couple different ways to address the criterion.

1. If you’ve successfully destroyed the value, then you can say that although the criterion may uphold the value, it doesn’t uphold YOUR more important value. Therefore, it has no impact.

2. There’s a reason I had to admit isolationism sometimes carries a negative connotation: it does! There are plenty of philosophers out there who support “alliances, foreign economic commitments, international agreements, etc.” (see the definition of isolationism). If you take a bit of time, you should be able to find some strong arguments against isolationism. Plus, you’ll look really intelligent!

Criterion Links:

CL1: Cross-apply previous arguments.

Switzerland -- I heard it said once that the Swiss aren’t good at anything but making knives. Sure, there are benefits to being reclusive. But isn’t helping people worth abandoning life as a hermit nation?

CL2: Cross-apply previous arguments.

One response to the “unnecessary US military deaths” application is: It Was Worth It. The deaths in Operation Enduring Freedom were most definitely necessary. They helped fight terrorism, avenged the deaths on 9/11, and furthered democracy in the Middle East.

But did they really? Go do some research and find a couple of experts who agree with you.

Two responses to the War on Drugs.

1. Outweigh -- You had better have some Affirmative example where foreign aid prevented a nuclear holocaust or saved a bus of children from flying of a cliff...or perhaps just saved a few lives. How valuable is life? If we’re helping to save lives, is that worth a few billion dollars wasted in the process?

2. The War on Drugs has been successful -- Go check out the Los Angeles Times article I got my information from. It’s really a goldmine. You’ll want to do some more research before arguing that the billions of dollars actually did provide benefit, but here’s a start (from that same article):

“But James Gregory, a Pentagon spokesman, said the Defense Department's efforts against the drug trade ‘have been among the most successful and cost-effective programs’ in decades. He cited the U.S. success in the 1980s in stopping cocaine shipments from Colombia that had been inundating Florida, and the efforts in the 1990s at helping Colombia overcome a drug-fueled insurgency.

‘By any reasonable assessment, the U.S. has received ample strategic national security benefits in return for its investments in this area,’ he said.

Administration officials say that the counter-narcotics program is producing more recent benefits as well.”

Brian Bennett, Los Angeles Times

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jun/09/world/la-fg-narco-contract-20110609/2>

It all comes back to the meta-framework. If you can establish that governments are bound by the same moral laws that apply to all individuals, the entire Negative case collapses. Mind your own business, but don’t use that as an excuse to avoid helping your neighbors.

Oh, the Irony

by Blaire Bayliss

American political advisor Richard Perle once stated, “National sovereignty is an obligation as well as an entitlement.” [6] It is because of these words that I negate the resolution, and stand Resolved that governments do NOT have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

The negative value that I will be upholding is that of National Sovereignty. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines national sovereignty as “Supreme authority within a territory.” [1] In the context of today’s debate round, the value of National Sovereignty meant that if ever intervention becomes necessary, the intervention should be carried out in a manner that respects the other nation and that nation’s leaders. In my two contentions, I’m going to be showing you how National sovereignty must be upheld, and how only the negative position today can uphold National sovereignty, starting off with:

Contention One: Government Intervention Often Shatters National Sovereignty

When foreign governments compromise another nation’s sovereignty, assistance begins to look less like intervention and a lot more like invasion. This was seen recently in the case of United Nations peacekeeping troops in Haiti. The Economist reported October 15th, 2011 that when Jean-Bertrand Aristdride left the presidency in 2004, the United Nations deployed peacekeeping troops into Haiti to help stabilize the situation. However, the UN peacekeeping troops have since done anything but keep the peace.

In overly-zealous attempts to uphold law and order, peacekeeping troops started assaulting citizen protestors. Later, insufficient sanitation practices by UN peacekeeping troops lead to a cholera outbreak that killed more than 6, 400 people. [3] Protests against peacekeeping troops have grown and public unrest has intensified as Haitians see armed military assaulting their fellow citizens without any form of approval from the Haitian government. Virtually none of the peacekeeping officers speak the Haitian language. The Haitian president has gone on record stating that national sovereignty and recovery would be better handled by civilians or private organizations, but the UN has yet to make any response to the president’s concerns. All of this would be bad enough… but worse yet, UN peacekeeping troops do not fully understand what Haiti needs. The Economist stated,

“Its main role in public security is as a deterrent; even on the quietest days, its troops patrol in armoured personnel carriers, pointing automatic weapons out of the windows. Haitians do not need more of that- even if it were to come from their own army.” [2]

UN peacekeeping officials fully believe that Haiti is a nation in need, and that they are assisting Haiti to become economically and politically stable.[4] However, Haiti can really only regain stability when UN peacekeeping troops leave the country. If we say that these peacekeeping troops have some kind of moral obligation to stay and assist Haiti until it is no longer ‘in need’, then we are sentencing Haiti to a future of continual instability. This brings me to:

Contention Two: Assistance Can Backfire

When foreign governments do not have a full understanding of another country’s needs, yet they jump in to help regardless, the results can be disastrous. Look at the example of food aid.

In July 2012, Foreign Policy magazine did a report on food aid. [5] The results were shocking. Food aid often disrupts the home country’s economy, causing severe unemployment and perpetuating poverty in the area. Thus, we force citizens to become reliant upon food aid, creating a vicious cycle and destroying that country’s sovereign ability to grow economically.

Food aid can also perpetuate violence. Foreign Policy saw that for every 10% increase in food aid, home countries saw a 1% increase in violent crime. That came from civilians fighting over food and from criminal violence when food aid was sold on the black market. In some cases, food aid even found its way into the hands of the Taliban.

When foreign governments are ignorant of a country’s true needs, but still push their own agendas outside of what that country’s governing body would normally allow, it should be no surprise that huge mistakes are made.

To say that governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need is to say that in every single circumstance where a country is in need, governments have a duty to assist… even if that assistance violates other nation’s national sovereignty, abuses citizens and perpetuates the problems at hand. Even if the problem would be better handles by civilians or private organizations, the government has an obligation to take care of the problem itself. As we’ve seen, this mindset fails to look at morality as it unjustly deprives nations of their sovereignty, and it fails to look at reality as so-called assistance ends up hurting the very people it was supposed to protect.

Affirmative Brief against Neg Case “Oh the Irony”

by Blaire Bayliss

This negative case is exceptionally strong- it has well-supported, specific examples and clear logical links. With some more work, this case could be incredibly good. However, just like any other case, it has its weaknesses.

Starting with the value, it should be fairly easy for you to win value clash. Within this negative case, the value of National Sovereignty was supposed to convey the idea that the leader/members of a country know what is best for their country. However, the case makes one huge assumption: it assumes that leaders will always do what is best for their country. Read over the case again and you’ll see that it relies upon the idea that misinformed governments don’t know how to assist, and it would be better to leave it to citizens or the governments themselves to take care of the problems. However, as we all know, governments do not always do what is best for their own people. In those cases where government officials actually encourage racism and genocide, the only way to save human life and liberty is to violate National Sovereignty and to stop these leaders from carrying out their sick plans for the citizens of ‘their’ country.

Further, this value assumes that there even IS a government. Without a government to back up national sovereignty, this value is meaningless. For example, think about anarchic countries such as Somalia. Somalia has no government, no Rule of Law… nothing but religious extremists attempting to enforce Sharia upon citizens of Somalia. When the United States stepped in to try to create a transitional government in Somalia, it was not in any way violating National Sovereignty, since there was originally no sovereign force in Somalia.

Moving into the first contention, the negative case argues the example of United Nations peacekeeping officials and talks about how officials need to get out of the way in order for Haiti to truly find stability. The error in this is clear- the UN peacekeeping officials were not assisting Haiti. They believed they were assisting of course, but the reality is that they were not. By stating that peacekeeping officials were actually hurting Haiti, and thus, had an \*obligation\* to remove themselves, your opponent is actually affirming the resolution!

Another thing you could point out is that in general, peacekeeping operations by the UN are actually quite successful- the instance in Haiti is extremely rare. One example you could bring up is the classic 2004 Darfur conflict, where peacekeeping officials actually helped to stop a genocide. Point out how even though some cases of aid/assistance might fail, that doesn’t necessarily negate the resolution. It shows that we should reform, but it doesn’t necessarily show that the assistance itself was inherently a bad idea.

You could argue the same thing against the food aid example in the second contention: your opponent is arguing that it’s bad that foreign governments are harming other nations. Furthermore, your opponent is arguing that we should take the opportunity to assist this nation by cutting food aid. That is inherently affirming the resolution! But additionally, food aid does work in a lot of cases. Look up Dhagahley village in Somalia, and all the good that food aid has done to the people living there. Food aid really can make a difference for the better.

The Purpose of Government

by Tyler Burton

Harvard business graduate, and governor of New Hampshire, John Lynch said, “We have a responsibility as a state to protect our most vulnerable citizens: our children, seniors, and people with disabilities. That is our moral obligation.”[[171]](#footnote-171) It is because I agree with the notion that a governments only moral responsibility is to its own citizens, that I negate the resolution.

To bring to light the negative side of the resolution, I would like to provide clarifying definitions.

**Governments:** A branch or service of the supreme authority of a nation, taken as representing the whole.[[172]](#footnote-172)

(Dictionary.com)

**Moral Obligation:** A duty which one owes, and which he ought to perform, but which he is not legally bound to fulfill.[[173]](#footnote-173)

(Law Library Dictionary)

**Nation:** A relatively large group of people organized under a single, usually independent government; a country.[[174]](#footnote-174)

(Farlex Dictionary)

With the definitions for the round set, let’s move on to my value and criterion.

The value or goal that I would like to establish for today’s round is: **The Original Purpose of Government,** And the criterion, or means to attaining my value is: **Representation of the People.**

Now with my stance on the resolution outlined, allow us to take a look at my two contentions, or reasons why the resolution is false, starting off with,

Contention 1) A Governments only moral obligation is to its citizens

As defined, a moral obligation is a duty that is owed, should be performed out of correctness, but has no legal binging. This describes exactly the relationship between a government and its people. A government has the duty to protects and represent its citizens. A government also has an obligation to do the right thing towards it people, however none of this is bound by law. A government inherently has a moral obligation to its people, because the people placed and keep the government in power. However, governments do not inherently have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. The relationship between a government and another country is completely different. A government does not have a duty to other nations. A government certainly does not owe other nations, and governments should not assist other nations if it is lacking resources or support from its own citizens. If there is ever a conflict between the citizens of a country and assistance to another, it is the government’s moral obligation to side with its citizens. To support this statement, The Hegeler Institute Philosophy Journal wrote “We need rather to formulate principles of organization that will enable each country to fulfill its obligations towards its own people. Each nation has its own history, customs, and priorities. No matter how strange and ungrounded these may seem to outsiders, they will be the sorts of things nations will want to develop in their own way. Each nation has a prima facie obligation to care for its own people, and in a well-ordered system of divided responsibility it will then have no further obligations.”[[175]](#footnote-175) By protecting, and representing the citizens of a government, the original purpose of government can be achieved. Assisting other nations is not an inherent moral obligation, because a government’s only moral obligation is to its citizens.

Contention 2) Governments assist other nations to advance their self-interests

Even when governments do assist other nations; it is not out of moral obligation. Mainly, there are two reasons that governments assist other nations. First, governments assist other nations because the citizens of that government support it, and second governments assist other nations for their own self interests. A perfect example of this would be of the 2003 Iraq invasion. The United States initiative was geared towards finding nuclear weapons, and punishing 9/11 contributors.[[176]](#footnote-176) Although the United States did assist people in need, they did not have a moral obligation to do so.The United States acted because 72% of its citizens supported the measure, and advanced its own self-interest by attempting to spread democracy.[[177]](#footnote-177) The United States had a moral obligation to its citizen’s wishes, and an obligation to advance its own interests. Now none of these things are bad, they are simply a reference to show that governments do not have a moral obligation to assist other nations. When a government meets the obligations of its citizens and self-interests, it is truly representative, and fulfills its original purpose.

Affirmative Brief against Neg Case “The Purpose of Government”

by Tyler Burton

Opening Quote- Opening quotes are about the principles behind the words, thus all life is still equal, and not protecting it fails a moral obligation.

Definitions

National Government- Agree

Moral- Disagree because duties are not always actually moral, owing someone is not a true obligation, and the phrase “ought to preform” is the same thing as “right conduct.”

Value- Preserving human life is a better goal than the original purpose of government because it is a better moral standard

Criterion-

1. If the people do not want to preserve human life, then that is a stronger argument for why the government must step in, take up its moral obligation, and help other nations in need.

2. Helping other nations in need, means that we give them essentials and things to sustain their life (un-refuted definition)

3. [Turn] Private organizations donated more money than national governments in Haiti.

Affirmative Contention 1

1. Preserving life is the only legitimate goal of government

2. Just because governments act in their own self-interest doesn’t mean they don’t still have a moral obligation to help those in need

Affirmative Contention 2

1. When a foreign government starts to oppress people within the nation, it is done on a large scale, and also if a government does that is has forsaken the nation and its principle.

2. Governments work directly with other governments to stop oppression and implement aid

3. Example- Allies working with other governments and saving people in need of protection.[[178]](#footnote-178)

Affirmative Contention 3

Saying that governments do not have a moral obligation to help other countries in need neglects the fact that all human life is invaluable and equal.

Negative Contention 1

1. Society Expects that governments protect life

2. Spectrum News- “In turn, society expects that governments will use the necessary resources to aid those in emergency need. The provision of emergency services extends beyond the social contract and invokes a moral obligation to protect life.”[[179]](#footnote-179)

Negative Contention 2

1. It is in a government’s self-interest to protect life in other nations so that life can be protected at home

2. What government’s motives are, and what their motives should be are different

3. Whether or not they recognize it, governments do have a moral obligation to help other nations in need

4. American Thinker- (Representative governments can be isolationist) Before World War I, America was allegedly isolationist, heeding George Washington's warning not to become involved in European wars. And having established our unique representative democracy against the British empire, there has always been a strong anti-imperialist attitude in these United States. President Woodrow Wilson pushed for a new League of Nations only to have the Senate reject U.S. participation -- again displaying our isolationist attitudes. Franklin Roosevelt left Britain swinging in the wind when they were the only hold-out against Hitler's sweep of Europe for fear of isolationist attitudes by voters and members of Congress.[[180]](#footnote-180)

Moral Obligation vs. Praiseworthiness

by Elizabeth Ertle

Almost all of us, at some point, have gone out of our way to do something good for someone else. From picking up a hitchhiker to helping someone carry their groceries, there are opportunities every day to, as some people say, “pay it forward.” However, just because we think these things are *good* things to do, that doesn’t make them morally *obligatory* for us to do, or that we even have the right to take these actions in the first place. It is for this reason that I negate a resolution, and in fact assert that governments do *not* have an obligation to help other nations in need.

Definitions

Moral obligation—An obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong.[[181]](#footnote-181)

Need—A condition requiring supply or relief.[[182]](#footnote-182)

Value

My value in today’s debate round, or the most important thing that I think a government ought to seek to attain, is **fulfilling obligations.** I agree with the affirmative speaker that, first and foremost, a government ought to be fulfilling its duties. The question is, what are its duties, and how does it fulfill them? This leads me to my criterion.

Criterion

My criterion, or the means by which the government fulfills its obligations, is by respecting the **will of the people.** I assert that a government’s primary obligation is serving its people. Because governments are given their right to make decisions from their people, a government ought to ultimately listen to what the people, the source of its authority, want and need their government to do.

Contention 1: There is a Difference between Morally Good and Morally Obligatory

There are lots of things that we can do in this world that are *good* things to do, but that are not necessarily binding; we don’t have a duty to do them. For example, if a particularly wealthy and well-known celebrity were to donate their entire fortune to charity, he would be hailed for his morally good deed. However, no one would assert that every rich person is required to give away everything that they have. If the fortune is earned and well-deserved, it is theirs to do with what they will. So while the act is laudable, it is not one which is a moral obligation. John Stuart Mill affirms this assertion, stating, “There are other things, on the contrary, which we wish that people should do, which we like or admire them for doing, perhaps dislike or despise them for not doing, but yet admit that they are not bound to do; it is not a case of moral obligation; we do not blame them, that is, we do not think that they are proper objects of punishment.”[[183]](#footnote-183)

Contention 2: A Government’s People are the Source of All of its Obligations

A government is no more than a smaller collection of people who have been selected by the rest of the people of a country to carry out the will of the populace as a whole. Inasmuch as this smaller collection of people is merely a representation of the other citizens of the country, their authority is limited to that which is granted to them by the people. As Ayn Rand wrote on the subject, “The source of the government’s authority is “the consent of the governed.” This means that the government is not the *ruler,* but the servant or *agent* of the citizens; it means that the government as such has no rights except the rights *delegated* to it by the citizens for a specific purpose.”[[184]](#footnote-184) The most important job of any government is to listen to what its people need. They are its first and primary obligation. But more importantly, no obligation exists outside what the people give their government leave to do. The only right that a government has to act stems directly from the wishes of its people.

Contention 3: A Government Does Not Have an Inherent Moral Obligation to Other Countries

Now, it’s obvious that it’s morally laudable if the people of a country direct their government to help other nations in need. No one would assert otherwise. And if the people of a government direct their government to do so, the government absolutely has an obligation to do so. But without that directive from the people, the government has no moral obligation to any other nation.

Think of it this way. Suppose a friend asked you to pick up some groceries for them, and so they gave you money to make the purchase. You agree, but on the way, you come across a homeless person who looks like they could use a good meal. Feeling compelled to help this person, you reach into your pocket, only to discover that the only money you have is that which your friend gave you. Now, while it would be a morally good thing to help the homeless person, you don’t have an obligation to help without explicit assent from the person whose resources you’re actually using. In fact, you don’t even have the right to use that money, regardless of whether it is in a good way, unless your friend permits is. This is the same way that a government’s power works. All of a government’s power and resources come from its people. Even if the government wants to do good things, it has no right to do so unless the people condone it.

In conclusion, the affirmative speaker and I agree that a government ought to fulfill its duties. However, it is clear that a government’s obligations are to its people, and that the actions they can take are limited by its people. Because of these reasons, I’d urge you to cast a negative ballot at the end of the round. Thank you.

Private Sector Military Intervention

by Cynthia Jeub

Note about this case: This is specifically written in response to an affirmative military intervention case, so don’t use it against a case defining “assist” as philanthropy or another form of foreign aid.

The most successful of Marvel superheroes have a problem with popularity. Spider-man has a warrant out for his arrest half the time, and the X-men spent their high school days being called vigilantes whenever they were caught using their powers without permission. But those with the ability to bring an end to evil shouldn’t be afraid of the government if they are doing what’s right. A government may attempt to administer justice, but those in the government are just as flawed as everyday citizens. The government alone should not have moral obligation to foreign countries in need instead of ordinary citizens, which is why I stand resolved: that governments do not have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

For clarity in this round, I will be arguing from the viewpoint of the following definitions:

**Government** – a group of people who conduct the policy, action, and affairs of a country (from the definition of “govern” from the New Oxford American Dictionary)

**Moral obligation** – Acting on the responsibility to help those one has the power to help.

**Assist** – to give military help to those unable to defend themselves.

**Need** – the state of being threatened with loss of life and livelihood.

The **value** I present today in support of the negative side of the resolution is the **Right to Moral Obligation**. A right is something a citizen of a country is entitled to, and I believe governments should value the rights citizens have to act on their consciences. If someone is in need, there ought not be a law preventing the citizen from helping his brother in need. This includes not only financial help, but offering defense for the defenseless. I contend that a government, being an organized system instead of a human with a conscience, is incapable of fulfilling moral obligation to assist other nations. A government cannot claim a moral high ground, for justice must be blind and the government must be limited to the strict keeping of the law. Therefore, the *right* to moral obligation belongs to individual humans with the capability for compassion, and moral obligation does not belong to the government.

To enable my value, I offer the **criterion** of **Limited Government**. I define limited government as “a government whose only duty is to its own citizens’ preservation of justice.” This means that, while the government of any given country ought to preserve justice, it ought to be limited enough to not only be chosen by the people for the people, but a government not to intervene in the affairs of foreign countries. By this, I negate the resolution, for governments are not morally obligated to help other countries in need. However, while moral obligation exists for the individual, the government must be limited in order to preserve the right to moral obligation for its citizens. If a citizen cannot exercise the right to help a defenseless person in need, the government is too large.

Now let’s look at three contentions to back up my value and criterion.

Contention 1. Government Intervention is Inadequate

One of the main reasons government intervention fails to help the citizens of foreign countries is because government militaries are driven by power. Governments, because they represent a country, must keep their own interests in mind when participating in international affairs. A government that directs its military to intervene in the affairs of another country has its own interests in mind. Even if the intentions are good, this government necessarily takes its own concerns into account. A government is an organized entity, not a human being with a conscience, so to call government-initiated military intervention a moral obligation is inconsistent with what a government is capable of.

This is shown in the different attitude toward intervention the United States had in Rwanda and Iraq. While both countries had problems with human rights abuses, the US chose only to intervene in the case where its own interests were benefitted. In 1994, following the destabilization of the Rwandan government, the atrocious genocide of 800,000 mostly Tutsi Rwandans took place. Though the US had plenty of time to intervene and put a stop to the violent chaos, it did nothing to protect the people of Rwanda because the interests of the US would not have been helped by the compassion expressed by military aid. Less than ten years later, in 2003, the United States chose to intervene in Iraq in the name of human rights. I don’t seek to belittle the human rights abuses under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, the late president of Iraq who was removed from power thanks to US intervention. However, it is worth noting that the abuse in Iraq was far less than that of Rwanda in 1994, yet the intervention of Iraq took place due to the alleged threat of Iraq’s possession of nuclear weapons. This shows that while the leaders of the country had good intentions, the government’s connection to military intervention keeps the intervention from being morally obligatory. As before mentioned, the government has its own interests and moral obligation is secondary.

Contention 2. Citizen Intervention is Effective

While intervention for a country’s government necessitates factoring homeland interest, a citizen intervention team doesn’t represent a country’s government and can rely on the moral obligation of citizens. Ordinary people have compassion and can reach out to those in need without the burden of placing a country’s policies and foreign relations at risk. This idea is a fascinating one, and it is unfortunately untried. While there has been a great deal of successful military force without the structure of government behind it such as the Minutemen and any government overthrow by the force of the people, foreign intervention for moral obligation is a relatively new idea. Intervening on the side of the defenseless with military power was unheard of until recent history. Separating military moral obligation from the government is the stuff of legends, making for great stories about those who are outcast heroes. From Robin Hood and his merry men to the selfless heroism of Spider-man and the X-men, it’s hard not to love those who have managed to alienate the government and use their power to fulfill moral obligation.

Because the examples are limited to fiction, however, the best line of reasoning is this: *the private sector is better at achieving its goals than the government*. This is shown in the recent de-funding of NASA. With millions of taxpayer dollars being passed through the hands of the US government to the National Aeronautics and Space Association, its funding took up less than 1% of government spending. The Obama administration found it was too costly to continue funding, so it cut off funds for space exploration. This led to an overhaul in NASA leadership and structure in the repositioning from a government-run organization to a business in the private sector. Less than a year from being cut off from its main life support, NASA made one of the fastest advances in technological experimentation in its history and sent a camera-equipped robot to Mars. Interestingly, while those who thought the US government was necessary to the success of the program, it thrived when finally free from government control. I contend that the military of any country would do the same, and reiterate my criterion: government ought to be limited, meaning it merely keeps justice and allows freedom to reign, freedom enough for NASA to land a robot on Mars, and for people to be morally obligated to help others.

It was Frederic Bastiat who said, “[legal plunder occurs when] the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime.” He was saying a government official is just as human as an ordinary citizen, so there shouldn’t be things the government is allowed to do which the citizens are not allowed to do. This includes the military. If it is illegal for a citizen of a country to exercise his right to moral obligation by defending a defenseless person, it shouldn’t be legal for the government to do so. Yet so often throughout world history, this is exactly how military is viewed. Rather than a moral agent, the military has been an extension of government. In negating the resolution, I insist on valuing the Right to Moral Obligation for the citizens instead of having the government claim something it has no jurisdiction over. Upholding my value empowers citizens because it keeps the government from criminalizing them for helping others in need. We’ve already seen that the citizenry is better at accomplishing tasks than the government, and that the government cannot uphold moral obligation as an individual can, so I strongly urge a negative ballot for the pursuit of a freer, more just world.

Affirmative Brief against “Private Sector Military Intervention”

by Cynthia Jeub

First of all, the elephant in the room: this idea is more extreme than Ron Paul himself. Sure, a government may not have the right to intervene in the affairs of another country, but giving that right to the citizenry sounds crazy. Affirmatives, when you run against this case, play off the unfamiliarity of the concept. It is likely new to the judge and will sound absurd, so making it sound absurd and downright silly shouldn’t be too hard. Your real problem in defeating this case isn’t the believability of it. It’s the logic of it. If you can win on logic, you’ve beaten your opponent running this case.

As noted prior to the introduction of the case, this is written in response to an affirmative case focusing on the necessity of foreign intervention. If your case isn’t about foreign intervention, you can easily place it on the back burner in the mind of the judge by pointing out your opponent’s failure to abide by your definitions. Give a few reasons why your parameters make sense, and why defining the resolution as military aid (which you didn’t do in your case) leads to the absurdity of case ideas like this one.

If you did define the resolution as military intervention, here’s line-by-line discussion:

*Doing what’s right*: a huge hole in this case is how flowery the language of the negative is. “Helping others in need,” “doing what’s right,” and “defending the defenseless,” all sound well and good until you realize the government has no way to check whether the citizens are doing good things or not. Helping someone could have a lot of different meanings for a lot of different people, so drive this point hard. What if a gang decides to attack a gang in another country for drugs? If we uphold the “right to moral obligation,” how can a government keep this from happening? Say in the round, “judge, don’t let my opponent fool you with their choice words to make this sound good. Freedom means the power to good or to do evil, which is what this value advocates.”

*Government moral high ground*: The idea of the government being the instigator of blind justice and blind justice only can be easily refuted logically: First we’re told the government ought to be blind justice. Then we’re told that members of government are just as liable to do wrong as ordinary citizens, being human. It seems government and the citizenry are equal, but then the negative insists on making the citizenry superior to the government. Force your opponent to choose one or the other—government and citizen equality, or citizens over government, and attack the case accordingly.

*Contention 1. Inadequate Government*: It ought to be noted here that the negative example doesn’t prove the inadequacy of government intervention. It only shows a flaw in the motivation behind government intervention. Any ordinary person can have flawed motivation for doing things, too. People do the right things for the wrong reasons and the wrong things for the right reasons, so the citizenry doesn’t have superiority to government here. Also point out that comparing Rwanda to Iraq belongs to the affirmative side, not the negative side. The US Government should have intervened in Rwanda, as the affirmative advocates government military intervention. The negative case is structured on the hope that people have the compassion and resources to intervene, with no guarantee a military will even be formed from the private sector. Therefore, the negative side of the resolution advocates intervention in *neither* Iraq or Rwanda.

*Contention 2. Effective Private Sector*: The obvious flaw with this contention is the lack of proof of the success of government-separate military. The X-men and Robin Hood aren’t good enough for a serious round of philosophical questioning, you can argue (though it’s a gamble as to whether your judges agree with you on that one). Nevertheless, look at the countless (go ahead and try counting them) examples from history where government-linked intervention was effective and beautiful and heroic. The logic is pretty solid, though, so attack it by going back to the freedom-allows-for-both-good-and-evil line. Also, break down that point about the government being terrible at everything. If structurally sound, the government can be wonderful at what it does. The founding fathers thought the government should uphold justice, and that’s what they designed the US government to do. If justice were left to the discretion of the people, injustice would reign, so justice must belong to the government. Even the most extreme libertarians agree the government can manage as long as it’s blindfolded.

You’re Not a Bad Person

By Matthew Erickson

We’ve all heard the guilt trips. A child dies of hunger every five seconds[[185]](#footnote-185); money for a single coffee could feed hundreds of dying people, etc. The message is always the same: there is a need and you have an obligation to meet it. If we accept this as true, even a simple act like going to Starbucks is a sin. However, we all know intuitively that this is simply not the case. While it’s morally good to help others, not helping others doesn’t make you a bad person. It is because I believe that not assisting other nations is not immoral, that I stand opposed to the resolution: that governments have a moral obligation to assist nations in need.

Definitions:

**Moral**: “Of, pertaining to, or concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong.” [[186]](#footnote-186)

**Obligation**: ”something by which a person is bound or obliged to do certain things, and which arises out of a sense of duty or results from custom, law”[[187]](#footnote-187)

Resolution Analysis: A moral obligation is morally binding

When we speak of moral obligations, we aren’t asking if something is a good idea. We aren’t even asking if it’s morally good. We’re asking if someone has a duty to act. Morality is not a question of nice and not nice. It’s a question of right vs. wrong. By affirming the resolution we are saying that governments that do not assist others in need are immoral, because they are not fulfilling the dictates of their moral obligations.

V: Satisfying Commitments

The idea of living up to your commitments, or doing what you said you would do, is one of the most widely accepted and important moral principles. On the national level, this usually involves both commitments to its people, and guarantees a nation has made to other nations in the form of treaties or pieces of legislation.

Link: Provides measure for the resolution

The resolution asks us a question about what obligations a government has. Fulfilling commitments, as I will prove in my second contention, is an obligation that both individuals and governments have a duty to uphold.

C1: Need does not create obligation

Just because there is a need does not mean we are bound by obligation to provide for it. This does not mean helping those in need isn’t important; we’re simply not immoral if we choose not to do so. Take for example homeless people. We see it all the time: people holding up signs asking for money. If we affirmed this resolution on the personal level, we would have to say that we have a duty, a moral obligation to help them. Not just them, but every other person in need. This begs a simple question: “does not assisting every need make you immoral?” Reason tells us the simple answer is no.

C2: Government’s only obligation is fulfilling promises

There are many things governments are obligated to do. Provide for National Security, ensure domestic tranquility, protect freedom, etc. But all of these have one thing in common: they are “promises” or commitments the government has made to its people. Government does not, however, have an innate commitment or obligation to other nations, unless it has made one through a promise of aid, alliance, treaty, etc.

Example: Switzerland

For literally hundreds of years Switzerland has remained neutral, neither helping nor hindering any other nation in a war. Now, there were certainly many times other nations were in need, World War II being foremost among them. They have remained isolationists to this day. Did their inaction make them bad people? Did they break any moral obligations by not assisting nations in need? Of course not. It would have been nice for the Allies to have a Switzerland as a friend, but their inaction did not make them immoral people.

In conclusion, this resolution is not simply a question of whether assisting other nations is a good idea. It is a question of whether offering assistance is a matter of right and wrong, good and evil. Instead we have seen that the only true moral obligation governments have is to fulfill promises they have made, regardless of the need involved. It is for that reason that I urge you to stand with me in negating the resolution.

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