Suicide Mission (Life)  
Negative Case by Joseph Abell



This case is an application centric case with devastating impact. Since preemptive warfare would destroy the modern world, it outweighs any defensive protection we get in the short run.

There are two things to remember in rebuttals. First, moral actions apply to everyone. To affirm is to say that preemptive warfare is morally justified as a general rule – meaning that generally, nations should use it. Second, dual imminence is the norm in the modern age. We can expect the world to destroy itself because both nations are imminent threats to each other. Preemptive warfare isn’t a security check, it’s a suicide mission.

Have fun!

Suicide Mission (Life)

Actions are much easier to justify when we don’t extend them to other people. While preemptive warfare feels like a useful solution to our problems, it is a deadly action to affirm for the world. So in the interest of humanity, I oppose the resolution.

# Value: Life

This means that we vote affirmative if preemptive warfare protects life, and we vote negative if it doesn’t. The reason to choose this value you can write as my…

## Reason to Prefer: Center of Morality

Human life is at the heart of every moral decision. Morality exists out of a respect for life, and following it means honoring the lives of people around us. It is the best determiner of moral justification.

Using it as a value makes our decisions easy. If an action undermines life, then it is wrong. If it protects life, it is good. I have one contention, and it’s simple…

# Contention 1: Preemptive Warfare Destroys Life

Before the analysis, it’s important to be accurate when understanding preemptive warfare. It doesn’t just attack anyone; preemptive warfare only attacks in the case of an imminent threat.

Taken in theory, this seems understandable: no nation wants to sit still and be slaughtered. But apply the resolution to the world at large, and voting affirmative presents some horrifying implications. Since imminent threat is the condition for preemptive war.

Let’s understand this in a subpoint you can remember as…

## Dual Imminence

For most of history, the first nation caught in war was like a deer in the headlights. Communication relied on spies and foot messengers, so getting word of an enemy attack wasn’t easy. Short of hearing the sound of clanking armor on the horizon, an ancient nation would have no way of knowing they were about to be attacked.

This scenario is known as singular imminence: a one-way threat. A nation looks like it’s going to attack, and the other nation won’t know about it until it’s too late.

This prevents them from negotiating or even threatening the other nation in return.

But in modern times, international conflict creates a scenario known as Dual Imminence, where the threat of attack goes both ways.

Think of dual imminence like a Mexican standoff. Both sides have their hands on the holster ready to fire.

This scenario has only existed since the rise of technology. The fact that most nations gather strategic intelligence makes preparation a lot easier. We can detect security threats from a cyber terrorist a thousand miles away, and tell our allies about it instantly.

International conflict is no longer just a bunch of barbarian tribes raiding the castle by nightfall. It is a scene of powerful nations holding each other at an impasse.

With the use of deadly weapons, strategic knowledge, and incredible technology, modern foreign conflict thrives on dual imminence. Let’s observe this through Subpoint…

## The Cold War

The Cold War was a first of its kind. Two world superpowers have the deadliest weapons in human history: nuclear bombs. Both are poised to destroy the other, but neither wants to make the first move.

The Cold War fit every possible justification for preemptive war. The United States had developed an 800-page master plan to nuke Russia.[[1]](#footnote-1) Both nations had weapons locked and loaded with every intention of destroying each other.

On October 27, 1962, this conflict culminated in one of the most perilous moments in human history.

Three Russian officers aboard the B-59 submarine voted unanimously to launch a nuclear torpedo at the United States. Left with the final decision was Russian officer Vasili Arkhipov, who many historians argue was the last man standing in front of WW3.

But in a moment of blind heroism, Arkhipov defied his officer’s orders. He refused to launch the nuclear torpedo, and the submarine’s deadly mission was never carried out.[[2]](#footnote-2)

No serious historian questions the imminence of the Cold War. Noam Chomsky, in his book Hegemony or Survival, cited that we were “one word away from nuclear war.”

This isn’t hyperbole. Preemptive warfare would’ve been the single deadliest mistake in human history. Former President Dwight Eisenhower condemned i: stating that “a major war would destroy the northern hemisphere.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Thanks to a bold act of heroism, Arkhipov denied preemptive warfare and saved a countless number of lives.

Finally, we come to the most recent example of conflict in foreign policy: Subpoint…

## The North Korean Standoff

At the time of this writing, North Korea and the United States are locked in dual imminence. North Korea has threatened to “wipe the United States off the face of the earth”[[4]](#footnote-4) while the US has edged its aircraft carriers closer and closer to the Korean border.[[5]](#footnote-5)

It would be easy to simply repeat what I said before: a nuclear war with a foreign nation is just a bad idea on its face. But that’s not the only reason I want you to vote negative.

I want you to remember that we are already an imminent threat to North Korea. This isn’t just my opinion; it’s shared by geopolitical forecaster and foreign strategist George Friedman.[[6]](#footnote-6) He’s noted that through increased military presence and weapon testing, the threat of war is inevitable.

This is the most sinister part of preemptive warfare: Voting affirmative would justify North Korea attacking us immediately.

We are an imminent threat to North Korea: and voting affirmative encourages either side to strike. It means too that if we ever become an impending threat to other nations, voting affirmative says that there’s nothing wrong with them launching an attack against us. If the resolution is a true statement, then a country that finds us to be an imminent threat gets to attack us without any warning whatsoever.

Preemptive warfare sounds like a nice little narrative from an American-centric perspective, but once you realize that the resolution also permits other countries to attack us, it’s not quite as fun as it used to be.

So yes. I’m first asking you to vote negative because a nuclear war is a bad idea for the world in general. But I’m also asking you to vote negative for a really selfish reason: I happen to enjoy being alive.

And I’d rather not wake up tomorrow to the alarm clock of a nuclear holocaust.

Opposing This Case

This case has a heavy implication: that morality should be judged by its effects on everyone. This argument is completely up for debate. There are plenty of other ways to evaluate morality: through natural obligations (like of the government to protect its citizens), unbending moral rules, etc. You can reject the value and run one of these as your value instead. For example, you could reject the value and say that domestic lives deserve special protection; they’re the ones funding the military and paying taxes. For a government to ignore them in a time of imminent danger would be a total rip-off.

Additionally, you can exploit the fact that this case doesn’t offer an alternative: what are nations supposed to do as the enemy rolls in? Play dead? Preemptive warfare might be complicated internationally, but it’s the best response we have available. Choose it because the alternative to preemption is even worse than the Neg’s applications.

1. Peck, Michael. “America’s Cold War Master Plan to Nuke Russia.” The National Interest, 23 Dec. 2015. Web. 10 July 2017. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/americas-cold-war-master-plan-nuke-russia-14714>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Tavares, Erico. “Vasili Arkhipov: Cold War Russian Hero.” Sott.net. SOTT, 27 Sept. 2015. Web. 10 July 2017. <https://www.sott.net/article/302748-VASILI-Arhipov-cold-war-Russian-hero> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [3] Chomsky, Noah. “Hegemony or Survival.” Google Books. N.p., n.d. P. 74, 107. Web. 10 July 2017. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Xx3ptbzQ8L4C&pg=PA74#v=onepage&q&f=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [4] Howes, Scarlet. “North Korea Warns It Will ‘wipe America off Face of the Earth’.” Mirror. N.p., 01 May 2017. Web. 10 July 2017. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/north-korea-warns-wipe-america-10276331>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [5] Starr, Barbara, Zachary Cohen, and Brad Lendon. “Second Carrier to Join US Ships near Korean Peninsula.” CNN. Cable News Network, 20 May 2017. Web. 10 July 2017. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/05/18/politics/uss-ronald-reagan-duel-carrier-training-korea/index.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [6] Economics, Mauldin. “GEORGE FRIEDMAN: A US Attack on North Korea Is Imminent.” Business Insider. Business Insider, 23 May 2017. Web. 10 July 2017. <http://www.businessinsider.com/us-attack-on-north-korea-is-imminent-george-friedman-says-2017-5>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)