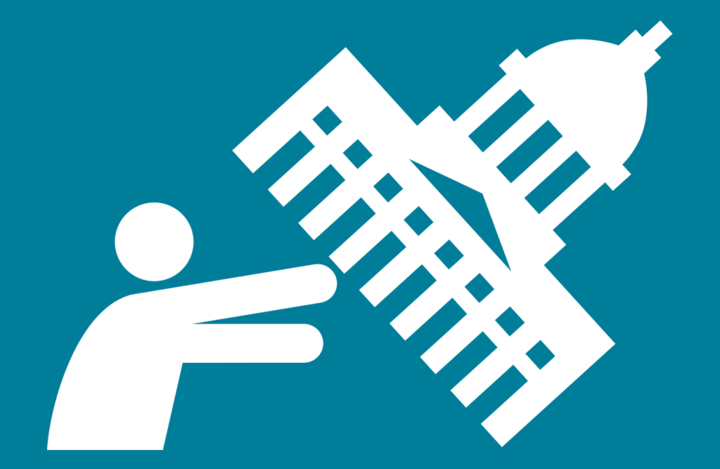
National Sovereignty  
Affirmative Case by Aaron Clendenen



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The issue of ethics and war is a complex issue. Many different ethicists have different definitions of ethics, and among each of those definitions there are even more interpretations. Because ethicists rarely agree on what is ethical, this case all but takes the debate round out of a discussion of ethics.

You can think about it like steps; basically, this case takes an ethical dilemma (the choice between action and inaction) and says that the lesser of two evils is the ethical decision. If you are in a situation where you have only two choices, the least unethical decision is the ethical decision. It’s like steps. On a staircase, you have your first step, and THEN your second step, and in order to reach the second step you have to pass the first.

What this case does is take the debate round and says, in cases of war, your national sovereignty (your nations right to control its own government) is at risk. Because of this, preventive war is BETTER than allowing your nation to lose its sovereignty, because a sovereign nation is an absolute necessary prerequisite to any form of government action. Basically, this case says that if your government is not sovereign, it cannot make any ethical, or unethical decision. Because of that, the defense of national sovereignty is ethical. From there, this case takes the act of preventive war and says ‘ideally, preventive war defends national sovereignty, and is therefore ethical.’

A good place to address this case is that it does not define ethics. It stipulates that the defense of national sovereignty, because it is necessary, is ethical. All the negative has to do is address this assumption, and stipulate an ACTUAL definition. Beyond that, the case is based on the assumption that preventive war is used to defend national sovereignty, if the neg can disprove either of these assumptions, the case has very little ground in the debate.

Overall, this resolution is a complex issue, so what this case attempts to do is simplify it through two assumptions and builds the case from there. While it does simplify the resolution, if those assumptions are disproved, the case has almost no basis in the round. The affirmative who runs this case has to be prepared to back up the assertions, and also be prepared to defend them, rather than having a debate on the actual argumentation of either side. This case puts the affirmative on the defensive from the beginning, so the affirmative has to be prepared to defend every and all of the assertions that they make.

National Sovereignty

Can you imagine being a puppet? Every action you take would be controlled by another person. You would have no free will; you couldn’t own anything; you really would have *nothing*. But everyone agrees that you *should* be able to make choices. You should be able to control your own actions. That’s not something that is good. I don’t want you to be a puppet, and likewise, a government should not be a puppet either. That is exactly why I stand before you

RESOLVED: That Preventive War Is Ethical.

# DEFINITIONS:

## DEFINITION 1: National Sovereignty:

Cambridge Dictionary of English defines Sovereignty as[[1]](#footnote-1)

**“the power of a country to control its own government”**

National Sovereignty is the idea that a government has the power and the right to control its self. A nation is not sovereign if it cannot keep that control over its own government’s actions.

## DEFINITION 2: Preventive War:

Americans at War defines Preventive War as:[[2]](#footnote-2)

**“Preventive war** **occurs when a state launches a military conflict to prevent another state or other international actor from becoming a threat.** This type of war differs from the more typical situation in which states go to war after a period of crisis or as a reaction to a particular event. **Preventive wars are** not **in response** to a specific crisis or direct threat to security, but rather **to a perception of a potential change in the future balance of power between a state and its likely adversaries.**”

This definition tells us two things. First, Preventive War is a war concerned with keeping the balance of power in the world; and second, Preventive War is a defensive war. It seeks to KEEP the current balance of power, not to shift it.

Now that we understand what we are discussing, it is important for us to look at specific words, of phrases in this resolution. We need to hold them up to the light of clarity; that can be done through what we debaters like to call, Resolutional Analysis, starting with;

# RESOLUTIONAL ANALYSIS:

## RESOLUTIONAL ANALYSIS 1: Ethical:

This resolution clearly reads, Preventive War is Ethical; in order to look at this resolution, we have to define the word ethical. When doing this, it is important that we keep in mind the context of war. War is declared. Merriam Webster’s online dictionary defines a declaration of war as;[[3]](#footnote-3)

“**a formal announcement by a sovereign or state of the beginning of hostilities against another**”

This means that a war can only be fought by sovereign states. This means that there is a prerequisite to war; your nation’s sovereignty is defended. If your nation is not sovereign, it might as well be a puppet. If your nation is not sovereign, it cannot uphold its responsibility to defend its people; it doesn’t have any free will. The defense of National Sovereignty is a necessary prerequisite to any government action.

# VALUE: National Sovereignty:

Because the government has to be sovereign in order to defend its people, we can find no higher value in today’s debate round then National Sovereignty. If a government is not sovereign, it CANNOT uphold any other value, because it can’t really do anything. That means that National Sovereignty is the highest value we can find in today’s debate round. If a nation does not control its own government, then that government is over its people, *without* the consent of its people. It is government without representation. The government that has lost its sovereignty is a puppet for another nation.

# CONTENTIONS:

Now that we know the value we should use in today’s round, we can address the actual arguments for either side, or what we debaters like to call contentions.

Starting with,

# CONTENTION 1: Delay Costs Sovereignty:

You know the saying, ‘to each their own?’ When we are discussing governments this saying rings perfectly true. To each nation, their own government. Saying that seems pretty straightforward, so we should ask the question, when is a nation’s government NOT its own? A nation does not have its own government when another nation controls that government. This can be seen through;

## APPLICATION 1: OPEC Oil In The Yom Kippur War:[[4]](#footnote-4);[[5]](#footnote-5);[[6]](#footnote-6);

In 1973, Israel, America’s ally, was forced into the Arab-Israeli war, or the Yom Kippur war. During the Yom Kippur War, America decided to send military aid to Israel, rather than to directly engage in the war. Because of this, the Arab nations of the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OPEC for short, decided to cut off America’s oil supply. America was forced to back out of the conflict. In less than 3 months, America went from providing aid to its allies to negotiating peace with its enemies. It is important to note that America did not lose sovereignty when it lost its oil. America lost its sovereignty when it bowed to the will of enemy nations, rather than entering into a Preventive War.

That brings me to;

# CONTENTION 2: Preventive War Protects Sovereignty:

As we can see through the actions of OPEC, choosing to delay conflict costs national sovereignty. In the case of the oil embargo, had America chosen to engage in the conflict, to defend its allies, rather than attempting to avoid the conflict, it would not have lost its national sovereignty. The logic is simple. Not attacking harms national sovereignty, harming national sovereignty is not ethical, therefore, not attacking is not ethical. Attacking now benefits national security, benefiting national security is ethical, therefore, attacking now is ethical. OPEC can illustrate for us the fact that not attacking is not ethical, but what about attacking now? You can see that Preventive War, attacking now, is ethical through;

## APPLICATION 2: Cuba in the Missile Crises: [[7]](#footnote-7)

According to Encyclopedia Britannica;

“After carefully considering the alternatives of an immediate U.S. invasion of Cuba (or air strikes of the missile sites), a blockade of the island, or further diplomatic maneuvers, Pres. John F. Kennedy decided to place a naval ‘quarantine,’ or blockade, on Cuba to prevent further Soviet shipments of missiles. Kennedy announced the quarantine on October 22 and warned that U.S. forces would seize ‘offensive weapons and associated material’ that Soviet vessels might attempt to deliver to Cuba. During the following days, Soviet ships bound for Cuba altered course away from the quarantined zone.”

Any country that threatens to use Nuclear Weapons threatens National Sovereignty. Because of this, America chose to utilize Preventive War through a military blockade, which is considered an act of war. Because of that, America’s National Sovereignty was protected.

To Conclude:

I want to state for you very clearly what I have said. Not waging Preventive War harms National Sovereignty, our value for today’s round. Beyond that, harming national sovereignty is not, by any standard, ethical. That means that refusing to engage in Preventive War is unethical. However, attacking now, waging a preventive war, benefits national sovereignty, benefiting national sovereignty is paramount to the survival of a nation, and is therefore ethical. That’s why I would ask you to cast an affirmative Ballot; our nation must be sovereign if it is to defend us. It is because I don’t believe that a government should not be a puppet, that I stand before you **RESOLVED: That Preventive War Is Ethical**.

Unread Quotes: National Sovereignty

# Application: OPEC:

Summary: (NOT A QUOTE)

During the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (Yom-Kippur War) America provided $2.2 billion worth of emergency military aid to the Israeli government. OPEC, a group of 12 oil producing countries in the middle east that held a near monopoly on oil production, didn’t like this and in retaliation they took advantage of their position. They put an embargo on oil exports to America from 1973-1974. This resulted in a gas shortage. At gas stations colored signs were hung to represent gas availability. Green meant gas was available, yellow meant gas was rationed to 10 gallons per car, and red meant gas was gone. (The Balance) Although the Arab-Israeli War was not concluded with a finalized peace deal the First Egyptian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement signed on January 18th, 1974 convinced OPEC to lift the embargo starting in March of 1974.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Lasting Effect: (NOT A QUOTE)

Although the Embargo didn’t last forever the effects are still felt today. The crisis exacerbated inflation, which was at %10 for some markets. Higher gas prices caused consumers to have less money to put into other markets, thus weakening them too. During the embargo inflation-adjusted oil prices rose from $25.97-46.35 per barrel. To this day OPEC constantly tries to keep the price of oil between $70-80 per barrel.[[9]](#footnote-9)

General Quotes:

“During the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed an embargo against the United States in retaliation for the U.S. decision to re-supply the Israeli military and to gain leverage in the post-war peace negotiations. Arab OPEC members also extended the embargo to other countries that supported Israel including the Netherlands, Portugal, and South Africa. The embargo both banned petroleum exports to the targeted nations and introduced cuts in oil production. Several years of negotiations between oil-producing nations and oil companies had already destabilized a decades-old pricing system, which exacerbated the embargo’s effects.

The 1973 Oil Embargo acutely strained a U.S. economy that had grown increasingly dependent on foreign oil. The efforts of President Richard M. Nixon’s administration to end the embargo signaled a complex shift in the global financial balance of power to oil-producing states and triggered a slew of U.S. attempts to address the foreign policy challenges emanating from long-term dependence on foreign oil.

By 1973, OPEC had demanded that foreign oil corporations increase prices and cede greater shares of revenue to their local subsidiaries. In April, the Nixon administration announced a new energy strategy to boost domestic production to reduce U.S. vulnerability to oil imports and ease the strain of nationwide fuel shortages. That vulnerability would become overtly clear in the fall of that year.

The onset of the embargo contributed to an upward spiral in oil prices with global implications. The price of oil per barrel first doubled, then quadrupled, imposing skyrocketing costs on consumers and structural challenges to the stability of whole national economies. Since the embargo coincided with a devaluation of the dollar, a global recession seemed imminent. U.S. allies in Europe and Japan had stockpiled oil supplies, and thereby secured for themselves a short-term cushion, but the long-term possibility of high oil prices and recession precipitated a rift within the Atlantic Alliance. European nations and Japan found themselves in the uncomfortable position of needing U.S. assistance to secure energy sources, even as they sought to disassociate themselves from U.S. Middle East policy. The United States, which faced a growing dependence on oil consumption and dwindling domestic reserves, found itself more reliant on imported oil than ever before, having to negotiate an end to the embargo under harsh domestic economic circumstances that served to diminish its international leverage. To complicate matters, the embargo’s organizers linked its end to successful U.S. efforts to bring about peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors.”

Opposition Brief: National Sovereignty

# Ethics:

Definition of Utilitarianism:

Miriam Webster’s online dictionary: No date given: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/utilitarianism> Accessed 11/27/2019:

“a doctrine that the useful is the good and that the determining consideration of right conduct should be the usefulness of its consequences”

Definition of Teleological ethics:

Miriam Webster’s online dictionary: No date given: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/teleological%20ethics> Accessed 11/27/2019:

“a theory of ethics (as utilitarianism or ethical egoism) according to which the rightness of an act is determined by its end”

Definition of Consequentialism:

Miriam Webster’s online dictionary: No date given: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consequentialism> Accessed 11/27/2019:

“the theory that the value and especially the moral value of an act should be judged by the value of its consequences:”

Definition of Deontology:

Miriam Webster’s online dictionary: No date given: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deontology> Accessed 11/27/2019:

“the theory or study of moral obligation”

# Purpose of Preventive War:

Foolish to look at intentions:

Milton Friedman was an American economist who received the 1976 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his research on consumption analysis, monetary history and theory and the complexity of stabilization, taken from "Milton Friedman, R.I.P.”, Houston’s Clear Thinkers, Nov16, 2006, <https://blog.kir.com/?p=3552>, accessed 11/27/2019:

“One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results. We all know a famous road that is paved with good intentions. The people who go around talking about their soft heart — I share their — I admire them for the softness of their heart, but unfortunately, it very often extends to their head as well, because the fact is that the programs that are labeled as being for the poor, for the needy, almost always have effects exactly the opposite of those which their well-intentioned sponsors intend them to have.”

The ends have NEVER justified the means:

The statement that the ends justify the means can be traced back to Niccolo Machiavelli, in chapter 18 of his book The Prince. Machiavelli is teaching the Prince, and he says,

Do the Ends Justify the Means? Ethics Sage No date given: (Ethics sage is an award winning blog on philosophy.) <https://www.ethicssage.com/2018/04/do-the-ends-justify-the-means.html> Accessed 11/27/2019:

“There is nothing more necessary to appear to have than this last quality (appearing to be religious), inasmuch as men judge generally more by the eye than by the hand, because it belongs to everybody to see you, to few to come in touch with you.”

What he is discussing with the prince is that it is important for him to look like a good person, and Machiavelli says the prince also needs to be willing to act in contradiction to this appearance. The saying that the ends justify the means is a perversion of this quote. I bring this up because no philosopher whom we consider reasonable has ever said that the ends justify the means. We have to recognize this fact, and apply it to this debate.

Aside from that,

The prince is satirical. Machiavelli does not actually wish to praise murder and tyranny.

Katherine Zuckert is the Nancy Reeves Dreux professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. She is the author of, most recently, Machiavelli's Politics (2017) and Leo Strauss on Political Philosophy: Responding to the Challenge of Positivism and Historicism (2018)

“Despite his reputation as a teacher of tyrants, if not a teacher of evil per se, a thoughtful reader recognises immediately that this could not have been Machiavelli’s intention. Who would need to learn ‘to be able not to be good’? Clearly not the likes of Borgia or the harsh and duplicitous Roman emperor Severus, whom Machiavelli also praises. By deceiving and killing their competitors, such men proved that they were ‘able not to be good’ without his help. However, they might not have known how to use and not use that knowledge according to necessity.”

Security and Victory require different action:

Sun Tzu on the art of war, Allandale online publishing, Sun Tzu was one of the greatest military generals of all time. Date not given: <https://sites.ualberta.ca/~enoch/Readings/The_Art_Of_War.pdf> Accessed 11/27/2019

“Security against defeat implies defensive tactics, ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.”

Never a clear intention of war: (subjectivity)

Sun Tzu on the art of war, Allandale online publishing, Sun Tzu was one of the greatest military generals of all time. Date not given: https://sites.ualberta.ca/~enoch/Readings/The\_Art\_Of\_War.pdf Accessed 11/27/2019

“Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing. Therefore, just as the water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.”

1. *Cambridge Dictionary of English, “Sovereignty”,* [*https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/sovereignty*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/sovereignty)*, Accessed April 2019* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *"Preventive War." Americans at War. Encyclopedia.com. 9 Sep. 2019 <https://www.encyclopedia.com/defense/energy-government-and-defense-magazines/preventive-war>. Accessed 12 Sept. 2019. Note: Americans at War is the source, sponsored by Encyclopedia.com* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Merriam Webster’s online dictionary, ‘declaration of war’ DATE UNKNOWN,* [*https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/declaration%20of%20war*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/declaration%20of%20war) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *The United States Office of The Historian, Milestones in The History of US Foreign Relations, “Oil Embargo, 1973–1974”, State Department,* [*https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo*](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo)*, Accessed December 2018.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Kimberley Amadeo, (20 years of senior-level corporate management, M.S. in Management from the Sloan School at M.I.T., US economy expert for The Balance since 2006, President of WolrdMoneyWatch.com), “OPEC Oil Embargo, Its Causes, and the Effects of the Crisis”, The Balance, 2018,* [*https://www.thebalance.com/opec-oil-embargo-causes-and-effects-of-the-crisis-3305806*](https://www.thebalance.com/opec-oil-embargo-causes-and-effects-of-the-crisis-3305806)*, Accessed December 2018.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *David E. Sanger, (36 year career reporter, has been on 3 Pulitzer Prize winning reporting teams, former NYT Tokyo Bureau Chief, and Whitehouse correspondent during the Clinton and Bush administrations), “JAPAN CHIP 'DUMPING' IS FOUND “August 3rd 1985,* [*https://www.nytimes.com/1985/08/03/business/japan-chip-dumping-is-found.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/1985/08/03/business/japan-chip-dumping-is-found.html)*, Accessed January 2019* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *“Cuban Missile Crisis.” Encyclopedia Britannica, 21 June 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-missile-crisis. Accessed 11/6/2019* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *[Information from The United States Office of The Historian, Milestones in The History of US Foreign Relations, “Oil Embargo, 1973–1974”, State Department, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo, Accessed December 2018].* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *(The Balance) [Information from Kimberley Amadeo, (20 years of senior-level corporate management, M.S. in Managament from the Sloan School at M.I.T., US economy expert for The Balance since 2006, President of WolrdMoneyWatch.com), “OPEC Oil Embargo, Its Causes, and the Effects of the Crisis”, The Balance, 2018, https://www.thebalance.com/opec-oil-embargo-causes-and-effects-of-the-crisis-3305806, Accessed December 2018.]* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)