

Breaking Down Barriers: How to Debate SAMPLE Debating Parli



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with thanks to Andrew Stokes
for his assistance

Breaking Down Barriers: How to Debate

SAMPLE Debating Parli Section

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SAMPLE INCLUDES CHAPTER 1 ONLY

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Parli Chapter 1

Preparing & Defending a Government Case

Pretend you are the manager of a car dealership. You want to see which person on your sales staff gives the best pitch. You disguise yourself and tell each of your salespeople that you want to buy a new car because you are tired of your current car's lousy gas mileage. Here are each of your salespeople's pitches:

- **Edna: I've got a deal for you. These old SUVs are cheap and can haul eight people plus camping gear!**
- **Durwood: I hate high gas prices too! I wonder whether they'll ever go back down?**
- **Stevie: I don't know, maybe you should take the bus. It's probably cheaper and maybe you'd make friends.**
- **Lyanda: I just traded in my SUV for a hybrid, so I know just the car. Great gas mileage and for a good price. Follow me.**

Which one do you think is best? For me, Lyanda's pitch works best. Edna needs to learn a bit more about the car business. Durwood understands the problem, but can't really help customers. Stevie's response sounds like he's trying to drive business away. Maybe he's working for your competition. Lyanda, on the other hand, does a fine job. She understands the problem (high gas prices), and knows a solution that works. If you chose Lyanda's pitch, you might make a good car dealership manager. If you choose to make the kind of pitches Lyanda made in your debates, you will make a good debater.

So, how do you make a pitch that will sell in parliamentary debate? In this chapter, we will discuss a step by step process for making a good government pitch. Specifically, we will discuss a step by step process to prepare your case.



Talking about arguments to prepare for an upcoming Parli tournament.

STEP 1. PREPARE BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

Preparing to write a good case before the tournament is essential to success. But since you don't receive the resolution until just a few minutes before the debate begins, how do you know what you should research? Generally, tournaments provide you with some amount of information a few days or weeks before the tournament begins, so you'll have some idea of what to do. Here are four situations you might find yourself in.

Resolutions

Some tournaments provide you with the resolutions you will be debating in advance. For example, these may be "The United States should reduce its dependence on fossil fuels." In this situation, you have all the information you need to prep a great government case well in advance of the tournament, so you should try to prepare an outline of a government case for each resolution. You will also have time to brainstorm possible opposition attacks on your cases and prepare responses to those attacks.

Controversy Statements

Other tournaments don't give you specific resolutions, but will instead give you controversial statements that the resolutions are drawn from. For example, a tournament may give you "The United States should change course in Afghanistan." Resolutions under this controversy statement may be "The United States should increase the number of troops in Afghanistan," or "The United States should increase efforts to combat opium trafficking." If you find yourself in this situation, you know that your case will focus around the flaws in the current US policy in Afghanistan, so you can prepare ideas for cases that fix these problems. You won't know the exact resolutions, so unlike the situation above you will have less ability to prepare one specific case. If you're given a controversy statement before the tournament, do enough research about the area of controversy so that you can prepare a case for any resolution that comes up. Try to brainstorm a few possible case ideas and prepare outlines for those cases. You could even predict and prepare outlines for various arguments that you think will be useful under any specific resolution. For example, if you are given the Afghanistan statement above, you know that you will need to prove the significance argument that current US policy in Afghanistan is not working, so prepare outlines that will help you win this argument.

Topic Areas

Another possibility is that you will be given topic areas. For example, the tournament may tell you that you are debating 'Israel'. In this case, much like with controversy statements, you don't know exactly what you will be debating, so do enough research that you can prepare a case for any resolution dealing with Israel. For example, you should research US military aid to Israel, Israeli policy toward the Palestinians, Israel's relationship with Iran and anything else you can think of. Again, try to prepare outlines of cases or arguments you think may be useful. Remember, if you do research and preparation on Israel you may not use it all for this tournament. However, if you receive a US foreign aid topic at a different tournament, your research on foreign aid to Israel will give you a leg up on your competition.

No Information

Finally, some tournaments give you no information about what you will debate at all. Preparing to debate before the tournament is, obviously, harder with less information. However, here are a couple of tips that will help you do effective preparation and be ahead of the competition. Make sure you're up to date on current events before the tournament. Resolutions could easily be drawn from a recent incident or upcoming event. Additionally, make sure you're prepared to debate "big issues" that are likely to come up. Issues like capital punishment, abortion or the war in Iraq/the war on terrorism are big areas of debate in our society, with good arguments for many different perspectives. Even if you don't use your research immediately, knowing about and even having cases prepared for some of these areas will likely help you in the future.

STEP 2. ANALYZE THE RESOLUTION

So you've done your pre-tournament research, and you've just been given the resolution for this debate. What should you do? Before you write a government case, you must first understand what precisely you are debating about. For example, suppose the resolution were "The United States should reverse course in the Middle East." That's a pretty broad statement. How do you know what is up for debate under this resolution? To narrow this broad area down for debate, you look to each major word in the resolution. For example, you might want to define "United States," "reverse," "course," and "Middle East." Let's say you take "United States" to mean the government of the United States of America, "reverse course" to mean a significant change of policy, and "Middle East" to be the region in southwest Asia commonly known as the Middle East. Thus, the resolution as a whole could be defined as "The government of the United States of America should enact a significant change of policy in the Middle East." In this example, the government would defend such a policy shift, and the opposition would oppose it.

STEP 3. WRITE AN ADVOCACY STATEMENT

Now that you've determined precisely what your government case is supposed to support, it is time to decide what your case is going to be about. A government could not defend our Middle East resolution above, because there are too many possible policies to reverse. Debating about shifting every single US policy toward the Middle East would be impossible, because we have thousands or millions of policies in the Middle East. Instead, the government selects one policy that supports the resolution. For example, the government could support withdrawing all US troops from Iraq, for ending all US aid to Israel, for negotiating with Iran about their nuclear program, or ending oil purchases from Saudi Arabia. All of these specific policies probably support the resolution.

Once you think of your own specific way of supporting the resolution, turn it into your advocacy statement (frequently called a plan). This will be the center of your case, because the rest of the case will be supporting this specific plan. If you support a specific plan, you will not need to support other

plans or cases that would also uphold the resolution. To write your advocacy statement, state your way of supporting the resolution in a succinct but thorough fashion. For example, plans for the example cases above could be written as “The United States should withdraw all combat troops from Iraq within sixteen months,” or “The United States should end all economic and military aid to Israel.” You want to make your plan or advocacy statement short and simple, but you want to make it detailed enough to withstand the opposition’s attacks.

STEP 4. OUTLINE YOUR CASE

When you are writing your case in preparation time before a debate, you should keep the outlines you made before the tournament handy to refer to. Using these outlines and notes, separate your arguments into three categories and organize the relevant case arguments into an outline.

FOR POLICY TOPICS

E.G. “The US should . . .”

E.G. “This house would . . .”

POLICY STEP 1: Write the Plan.

Writing your plan is somewhat like writing a bill for congress. You need to include what you want done. So state it. For example, “We will support a withdrawal of troops from Iraq within one year’s time except those needed to provide immediate protection for our facilities and government workers.”

POLICY STEP 2: SHOW YOUR ADVANTAGE

Show the Significance—Problems and Harms Exist

Put arguments here that show there is a problem and that the problem is harmful. Your goal is to show the problem is widespread and that it is harmful (that it causes death, illness, discrimination, loss of rights, etc.). Examples:

Current military aid to Israel contributes to human rights violations

US aid to Israel spurs terrorism

Aid to Israel is diverted to enemies like China

Inherency—Current Policy is Bad

Put arguments here that show what the current government policy is, that the current government policy causes a problem, and that the current government policy can’t solve a problem. Examples:

The powerful Israel lobby will prevent any reduction in foreign aid

Foreign aid to Israel is incredibly popular

Solvency—Your New Policy will solve the Problems

Put arguments here that show a new policy would solve the problem and the harms. Examples:

Ending aid to Israel would reduce terrorism

Cutting aid to Israel would resolve the Israel/Palestine dispute

An end to military aid wouldn’t jeopardize Israel’s security

Once you’ve identified significance, inherency, and solvency arguments it’s time to organize your case. Put your arguments into an outline like the one

below.

I. WE SOLVE _____

Thesis: The case will solve a serious problem because . . .

A. A PROBLEM IS EXTENSIVE

(followed by reasons)

B. THE PROBLEM IS HARMFUL

1. ARGUMENT SHOWING A HARM

(followed by reasons)

2. ARGUMENT SHOWING A SECOND HARM

(followed by reasons)

C. THE PRESENT SYSTEM FAILS TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM

1. ARGUMENT SHOWING THE SYSTEM FAILS

(followed by reasons)

2. ARGUMENT SHOWING THE SYSTEM FAILS

(followed by reasons)

D. OUR PLAN WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM

1. ARGUMENT SHOWING THE PLAN SOLVES

(followed by reasons)

2. ARGUMENT SHOWING THE PLAN SOLVES

(followed by reasons)



Social Security Reform is a frequent, good parliamentary topic

Note: Title the advantage

Give your advantage a two to five word title that you write at the very beginning of your advantage like "We Prevent War" or "We Reduce Poverty."

Note: Give your advantage a thesis

Right after your advantage title and before the A subpoint, you should explain your advantage in a thesis statement. Your thesis should explain how your case will achieve the advantage and why the advantage is important. So, for example, a thesis might be "Our plan to introduce school vouchers will enable students to choose the best possible school, which accesses our advantage of providing quality education for all."

TIP: Start your thesis statement with "Our plan will . . ."

FOR VALUE AND FACT TOPICS

E.G. "Liberty is more important than security."

E.G. "This house believes a Republican will win the 2012 election."

VALUE CASE STEP 1. IDENTIFY YOUR CASE ARGUMENTS**Identify the value object or value example.**

I would focus on "reducing crime" though I would research definitions of both. For crime, I'd examine efforts to reduce crime, particularly those that might infringe on civil liberties.

Identify and research your value.

Since my argument is that crime hurts people, I would research a value focused on why personal safety from crime is important.

Identify and research your contentions.

I would look for arguments on how crime reduction achieves the value of personal safety. I would also look for arguments that show civil liberties often interfere with efforts to achieve personal safety.

EXAMPLE

THE TOPIC: "Resolved: THAT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ONLY INITIATIVES ARE HARMFUL TO AMERICA"

YOUR VALUE SUPPORT FOR THE TOPIC: English language only initiatives cause violence against minorities.

SO YOUR VALUE IS: violence against minorities is harmful to America.

YOUR CONTENTION IS: English language only initiatives lead to violence against minorities.

VALUE STEP 2. PREPARE YOUR EVALUATION OBSERVATION

After an introduction, you begin your case with an "EVALUATION OF THE TOPIC." This observation should include the following:

- I. EVALUATION OF THE TOPIC
 - A. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS IN THE TOPIC
 - B. THE VALUE YOU SUPPORT AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT
 - C. A STATEMENT OF YOUR CRITERION

Definitions

Include definitions of the key words in the topic. These key terms include the value object and any words important to evaluating the value object. So, for example, with the topic "Resolved: That Capitalism is a harmful economic system," you should define "Capitalism" (the value object), "harmful" and "economic system." You should also offer explanations of what is and is not relevant based on your definitions. For example, if your definition of "Capitalism" is a "free market where goods are exchanged without government ownership though there may be regulation," you can argue that any negative positions supporting regulations are irrelevant because capitalism can include regulations.

EXAMPLE DEFINITIONS SECTION OF THE CASE

A. DEFINITIONS OF KEY RESOLUTIONAL TERMS

1. CIVIL LIBERTIES

Since the topic concerns a comparison between civil liberties and crime reduction, I will define civil liberties as the rights of those accused of crime.

2. MORE IMPORTANT

More important means of greater worth.

3. REDUCING CRIME

Reducing crime refers to reducing violations of the law.

Value

The value you identify is the one that you identified in the position that you support. The value for the English language topic noted previously would be "violence against minorities is wrong." Be sure to explain what your value is, why it is important to the criterion phrase in the topic, and why it is an important value. So, for example, you should explain what you mean by "violence against minorities." Then, you should explain how it is relevant to the topic. For example, you could argue that "violence against minorities is harmful to America." Then, you should argue why this value is important. Usually, you offer documentation to support this aspect of your value. So, you would include evidence on how terrible violence against minorities is.

EXAMPLE VALUE SECTION OF THE CASE

B. PERSONAL SAFETY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUE

1. PERSONAL SAFETY IS INVIOABLE

Personal safety involves each human's ability to avoid being attacked violently.

2. PERSONAL SAFETY IS KEY FOR PROGRESS

(evidence)

3. PERSONAL SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CIVIL LIBERTIES

(evidence)

Criterion

To state the criterion, you state how the judge should decide who wins the debate. For example, your criterion might be "Whichever side can reduce attacks against minorities most demonstrates less harm to America."

EXAMPLE CRITERION SECTION OF THE CASE

C. IF CRIME REDUCES PERSONAL SAFETY MORE THAN CIVIL LIBERTIES, THE AFFIRMATIVE WINS. IF CIVIL LIBERTIES ENHANCE PERSONAL SAFETY MORE THAN REDUCING CRIME, THE NEGATIVE WINS.

Note: Some LD debaters use criterion to discuss a general, philosophical weighing mechanism. For example, they argue that utilitarianism should be used as a criterion (as a way to decide who wins the debate).

VALUE STEP 3. PREPARE YOUR CONTENTION(S)

YOUR CONTENTIONS SHOULD SHOW THAT THE VALUE OBJECT/EXAMPLE DOES MEET THE CRITERION. For example, “national security” (value object) is vital to “preventing war” (your criterion). To do this effectively, you usually need to show the ways in which the value object or your value example(s) meets the criterion. How do you do that? Just show how it logically does meet the criterion. On the topic, “Resolved: That a parliamentary system of government would be superior to the United States executive system,” you might support the criterion of avoiding the risk of constitutional crises. You could argue that the parliamentary system would be better for dealing with incompetent presidents because it does not require an impeachment trial, just a vote of no confidence. You can and should show examples where the criterion support occurs or has occurred. So, for this parliamentary example, you could show that the Watergate scandal pushed us close to a constitutional crisis because it was so hard to push president Richard Nixon to leave office. In the parliamentary system, Congress would have had a quick vote of no confidence and Nixon’s fate would have been decided by new public elections.

For most topics, you will have one contention where you argue that the value object meets your criterion. For example, your contention might argue that “English language only initiatives increase racially motivated attacks.” If your topic involves a comparison, you have two contentions. One contention shows that the value object meets your criterion and the other contention shows that the other concept in the topic fails your criterion. Here is an example of two contentions based on the crime versus civil liberties topic.

EXAMPLE VALUE SECTION OF THE CASE**I. REDUCING CRIME ENHANCES PERSONAL SAFETY**

**A. REDUCING CRIME STOPS ATTACKS ON PEOPLE
(evidence)**

B. CRIME REDUCTION ENHANCES FREEDOM

People are able to come out of their homes at night. Homes no longer need bars over the windows. In short, crime reduction is a way of giving people freedom.

**C. CRIME REDUCTION MAKES PEOPLE FEEL SAFE
(evidence)**

II. CIVIL LIBERTIES HARM PERSONAL SAFETY

**A. CIVIL LIBERTIES GIVE CRIMINALS FREE REIGN
(evidence)**

**B. CIVIL LIBERTIES HARM CRIME REDUCTION
(evidence)**

STEP 7. AFTER FINISHING THE CASE OUTLINE—DO THE INTRO AND CONCLUSION.

Your introduction should be just like the one you wrote for your mini-case. It

should include an attention getter and the resolution.

Write a conclusion that includes a brief summary and a final statement urging the judge to vote affirmative.

GIVE THE CASE ANOTHER LOOK

Take a look at your case. Does it read well? Is it as persuasive as it could be? Is there something missing or that could be deleted? Just as you did with your mini-debate government cases, hone your case till its beauty shines like the hair of a thoroughbred horse after careful grooming.

GOVERNMENT: PREPARE MG RESPONSES

When you finish your government case, your work has just begun. You need to prepare responses to opposition arguments.

PREPARE ANSWERS TO OPPOSITION ARGUMENTS

Case Defense

For every point in your government case, consider the arguments the opposition will make. It's hard to predict everything that the opposition might argue, but the more accurate your predictions are, the better defended your case will be. Prepare briefs that answer the opposition attacks and that you can use as further support for your case, arguments that will add fresh insight and support for your government case arguments. You should have supporting outlines that show the problem is increasing, that the harms are very serious, that the present system will not solve the problem, that the plan will solve, and that the plan will work.

Disadvantages

You will need to consider each and every disadvantage that opposition teams might run against your case. Be ready with answers to each disadvantage. There are at least four basic types of responses to disadvantages, including:

1. **NOT UNIQUE.** The problem will exist with or without the government plan.
2. **NO LINK.** The plan will not cause the problem.
3. **TURN.** The plan actually decreases the problem OR The problem cited in the disadvantage is actually good.
4. **THE ADVANTAGE OUTWEIGHS.** The benefits of the plan are more critical than the harms of the disadvantage.

Example of disadvantage responses:

RESPONSES TO THE HIGH OIL PRICES BAD DISAD.

- 1. NOT UNIQUE.** There are very high oil prices in the status quo
- 2. NO LINK.** The plan has no effect on oil consumption, which means it won't affect oil prices.
- 3. TURN.** High oil prices are essential to propping up the weak economies of Russia and Saudi Arabia, because they export lots of oil.
- 4. THE ADVANTAGE OUTWEIGHS.** Preventing global warming by banning SUVs is more important than the risk of high oil prices. Our case shows . . .

Counterplans

Government's need to be ready to answer counterplans. Here are the four key responses you should prepare against a counterplan.

1. The plan solves better than the counterplan.

Think about each of the advantages in your case. Does the counterplan solve each of those advantages? If not, point it out. For example, let's say your school vouchers plan improves public education. If the opposition presents an increase teacher pay counterplan, you can argue that increasing teacher pay won't help education as much as giving students a choice by implementing school vouchers.

2. Perm the counterplan; show that the counterplan and the government plan can coexist.

Point out that the counterplan is not competitive. One of the best ways to do this is to permute the counterplan. A PERMUTATION IS A COMBINATION OF THE PLAN AND THE NON-COMPETITIVE PARTS OF THE COUNTERPLAN. You permute the counterplan by saying: "Perm—do both the plan and counterplan" and explain that the plan and part or all of the counterplan could be done at the same time. By doing this, you make the permed portion of the counterplan irrelevant to the debate. For example, let's say you are supporting school vouchers and the opposition counterplan supports increasing teacher pay. You can do both of those, so you can permute the counterplan: "Do school vouchers and increase teacher pay". If the opposition can't show school vouchers are bad, they won't win.

3. The counterplan would cause disadvantages.

Present a disadvantage against the counterplan just as an opposition team would against a government plan. For example, against a teacher pay counterplan, I would argue disadvantages that increasing teacher pay is incredibly expensive, and would require deficit spending that would harm our economy. I'd also be on the watch for opposition teams who accidentally present disadvantages that apply to their own counterplans! If an opposition argued that improving education is incredibly costly, I'd point out that that disadvantage would apply much more to the teacher pay counterplan than to the school vouchers plan.

4. Answer disadvantages to your plan.

Don't let the opposition argue your plan is harmful. Show the disadvantage is not-unique, has no link, turn it, or outweigh it. If the opposition argues that your school vouchers plan is costly, I would argue that education costs are going up already (non-unique); school vouchers are cheap (no-link); school vouchers will weed out inefficient schools and save money (turn); and improving education is a bigger priority than worrying about a small risk of economic harm. I'd also show the counterplan causes the disadvantage: increasing teacher pay will be very expensive.



Get ready to debate counterplans.

Kritiks

There are many ways to answer a kritik. What follows are several successful ways to defeat a kritik.

1. Show there is no link to the kritik.

The best argument against a kritik is to disprove the link. Argue that your plan, case, approach, and arguments are NOT racist, sexist, etc. Think up every reason you can of why you do not link. If the link can be questioned, your chances of defeating the kritik are increased immensely.

2. Permute the kritik.

To permute the kritik, you combine your government advocacy with the advocacy of the kritik. This shows that the kritik is irrelevant; it is not linked to your government case. For example, if your case argues that we should help poor people and the negative kritik argues that the state is bad, you can argue "perm: reject the state and help poor people." In doing so, you are pointing out that the kritik is irrelevant.

3. Turn the kritik.

Show that your plan, case, approach, and arguments actually support the

opposition's kritik. For example, be ready to argue that your case is supportive of women against a patriarchy kritik (a criticism of the way men dominate and oppress). A turn on a kritik can lead to victory because the kritik often is, according to your opponents, an 'a priori' issue that should be voted on first.

4. Attack the alternative.

Argue that the kritik's alternative is harmful and will not be superior to your approach. For example, if the opposition's alternative is "reject the state," argue that even if the state is sometimes harmful, overall it does positive things and rejecting it would prevent the state from helping people.

5. Outweigh the kritik.

One way to defeat a kritik is to outweigh it. If the judge is not prone to vote for kritiks, this argument will get you farther than with a judge who likes kritiks. The best way to advance this argument is to explain that values are not the ONLY thing to consider in the round. People must consider the consequences of their actions. You should argue that "preventing a war" is more important than "reducing sexism." You should also argue that your position uses a perspective that stops war while respecting equity among genders while the opposition perspective rejects your peaceful perspective.

Topicality

Government teams need to be prepared to defend their plans or value cases against topicality attacks. That means that when you prepare for the government, you should make sure that demonstrate that your case is topical. You should develop answers to any possible violation that the opposition may raise against your plan. Here are the main kinds of arguments you can present:

1. We meet the opposition interpretation.

You should attempt to argue that your plan meets the opposition definition. For example, the opposition argues that your support for federally managed and state developed policies violates the phrase "United States government." They define United States government as "the central government which is the centralized body connected to each of the 50 state governments." In response, you should argue that your plan meets the opposition interpretation. You can argue that you do use the centralized government with its federal management of the 50 state branches and therefore support the topic. There are at least two different ways to show that your plan meets the opposition definition:

- Refer to an argument in your government case
- Use logical reasoning

2. We meet our interpretation.

Argue that your case is topical with your own definition:

1. THE PLAN SUPPORTS (THE TERM).

**This is because the definition of (the term or phrase) is:
(include definition here)**

So, the plan does do what the definition says it does.

There are at least two different ways to show that your plan meets your definition:

- Refer to an argument in your government case
- Use logical reasoning

3. Their interpretation is bad; Your interpretation is good.

You should also develop arguments that explain why your interpretation is good and why your opponent's interpretation is bad. When the opposition presents a standard, you should respond. Against a best definition standard, be prepared to respond with support for a reasonable definition standard.

CONCLUSION

If you have prepared a castle of an affirmative case built upon solid ground, you will be tough to defeat. You will be prepared for your opponent's arguments and ready to sell your case as effectively as Lyanda, the saleswoman, did.

EXAMPLE GOVERNMENT CASE

COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY CASE

Currently, the United States is one of the few nations in the world that has not ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The treaty obligates countries to cease nuclear weapons testing. Ratifying the treaty would protect the environment and enhance US credibility worldwide. That is why my partner and I stand resolved: The United States should improve its adherence to international law.

OBSERVATION 1: THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT RATIFY THE TREATY IN THE STATUS QUO

A. THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS OPPOSE THE TREATY

- The President and Congress are unwilling to ratify the treaty because they feel it would erode US military power
- The US government opposes international treaties like the CTBT
- The government is committed to expanding unilateral non-proliferation policies

B. NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING IS INEVITABLE WITHOUT THE CTBT

- Nuclear scientists want more nuclear testing soon
- The government is committed to constructing 'bunker buster' nuclear weapons that will require testing
- The current US moratorium against testing is weak and can easily be overturned

PLAN: The United States should ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

ADVANTAGE 1: RATIFYING THE CTBT WOULD IMPROVE US CREDIBILITY WORLDWIDE

A. US CREDIBILITY AND PRESTIGE IS LOW NOW

- Unilateral non-proliferation policies, like the invasion of Iraq, undermine US credibility and alienate allies
- Under the Bush administration, the US has abandoned or rejected many important international agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the Law of the Sea Treaty

B. RATIFYING THE CTBT WOULD DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE US CREDIBILITY

- The US is one of the few major, developed states that has not ratified the treaty
- Other holdout nations include North Korea and Pakistan
- Failure to ratify the treaty violates US obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
- After the invasion of Iraq, other nations are looking for a strong US commitment to international law

C. IMPROVED US CREDIBILITY IS IMPORTANT

- The US cannot confront important international problems, including global warming and terrorism, without the help of allies
- Credibility is important to military power, because without it other countries will not trust the US enough to allow us to base troops there
- Without ratification of the CTBT, other countries will not help important non-proliferation goals like the Proliferation Security Initiative
- The unchecked spread of nuclear weapons risks arms races, accidental launches, and terrorist theft

ADVANTAGE 2: RATIFYING THE CTBT WOULD PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

A. NUCLEAR TESTING DESTROYS THE ENVIRONMENT

- Nuclear explosions contaminate test sites for thousands of years
- Radioactive fallout can be carried great distances by wind, threatening ecosystems and communities
- Oceanic nuclear tests are uniquely bad, because they destroy coral reefs and threaten small island nations
- Nuclear testing endangers thousands through environmental destruction and the spread of radiation

-

EXAMPLE OPPOSITION CASE RESPONSE OUTLINES

NEW NUCLEAR TESTING IS UNLIKELY

- The US currently has a moratorium against nuclear testing that has strong support
- The US has many scientific instruments that can test nuclear weapons without detonating them
- After the difficulties the military faced fighting insurgents in Iraq, it will shift emphasis away from nuclear weapons and toward smaller weapons that are more useful in insurgent conflicts

NUCLEAR TESTING DOES NOT HURT THE ENVIRONMENT

- Sophisticated testing methods, including underground tests, ensure that radiation cannot spread beyond the test site
- Any environmental destruction claims are empirically denied. The US has tested hundreds of weapons at all of its test sites, meaning that any damage has already been done

RATIFYING THE TREATY WON'T IMPROVE US CREDIBILITY

- Allies aren't concerned about the CTBT. They want US action on Iraq and global warming
- One action cannot restore US credibility. The US needs to demonstrate a consistent, sustained commitment to international law in order to regain its standing
- Ratifying the CTBT would hurt US credibility. Key allies such as India see the NPT as discriminatory, and will view ratification of the CTBT as an attempt to further entrench a discriminatory regime

EXAMPLE GOVERNMENT BACKUP OUTLINES

NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING IS NOT NEEDED TO ENSURE THE VIABILITY OF THE NUCLEAR ARSENAL

- The US already has a tremendous technological lead over other countries. Even if we stop testing, our technology will be years ahead of any competitor
- We have other means of ensuring the viability of the nuclear arsenal, including the Stockpile Stewardship Program, which tests each component of a weapon without detonating it
- Nuclear tests aren't a good way of proving the viability of other weapons in the arsenal, because they only test the weapon detonated
- Scientists have concluded that our nuclear arsenal is safe and viable for the foreseeable future

RATIFYING THE CTBT IS KEY TO PREVENTING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

- Other countries, including India and Pakistan, are looking for US ratification before they agree to ratify the treaty
- Failure to ratify the CTBT violates the US's commitment under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to work toward complete nuclear disarmament. This undermines the credibility of this treaty, encouraging other states to avoid their obligations

