

Synopsis of Problem Areas and Resolutions for 2022-2023

PROBLEM AREA I: GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its support of multilateral greenhouse gas emission reduction regimes.

Climate change is a pressing global crisis that has the potential to dramatically change life on earth. Many of these risks, such as desertification in the Middle East and Africa and disparate health outcomes in urban America, can be seen today. Unfortunately, our students are already dealing with the consequences of these issues. A 2019 poll found that the prospect of devastating climate change is causing fear, anxiety and anger among a “solid majority” of American teenagers. The same Post-KFF poll found that Black and Hispanic teens expressed the strongest sense of urgency, because “they are more likely to live in vulnerable areas and less likely to be able to insulate themselves” from the drawbacks of the changing environment. There are a variety of people and groups with proposed solutions, ranging from de-growth of the industrial economy to more tech growth with energy efficient solutions. Some believe regulatory fixes similar to the Clean Air Act can solve the problem, while others think we may need to geo-engineer the earth itself. Although each solution is similar in that it attempts to address the problem of climate change, each comes with its own unique benefits and drawbacks.

This topic provides a fair division of affirmative and negative ground. On the affirmative, teams can use international regimes as a basis for affirmatives. Affs will require a command and control and top down approach to climate regulation. Negatives will have a variety of economic and political based disadvantages. Negative ground also includes unilateral counterplans and counterplans that focus on private sector solutions. Finally, there are a ton of relevant kritik arguments ranging from identity based arguments to arguments about neoliberalism.

Despite the importance of the climate change debate, fewer than half of K-12 teachers discuss the topic with their students. When it is discussed, it is most frequently taught in science classrooms, which, although important, misses the social, economic and political elements of the topic. This reality is reflected in national polling, which found that “the number of teenagers who say they are being taught in school how to mitigate climate change appears to be on the decline.” Thus, a debate topic focused on the contributing factors, harms and solutions to climate change has the potential to address a significant pedagogical gap in our nation’s educational system.

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PROBLEM AREA II: GLOBAL GEO-POLITICAL CRISIS: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its security cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in one or more of the following areas: artificial intelligence, biotechnology, cybersecurity.

Most Bond films open with 007 in the middle of some major crisis with the audience waiting for the opportunity of Q's new technology to resolve the conflict. However, emerging technology like AI, biotechnology, and cybersecurity, can be easily created, intercepted, and used by the "enemy". Clearly, the U.S. and its allies need to collaborate for the best solution. Possible case affirmatives would be creating a U.S.- NATO emerging technology investment fund; instituting a NATO treaty on autonomous weapons; increasing cooperation in biotechnology (e.g., on vaccine diplomacy, biofuels investment, or agricultural biotech cooperation); establishing a new U.S.-NATO infrastructure for thwarting and responding to cyber threats; banning offensive cyber operations; and forging U.S.-NATO partnerships with private technology companies to bolster the alliance's leadership in emerging technologies. These emerging technologies are vulnerable to outside threats. The negative will have multiple strategies. These technologies create case specific disadvantages generating specific links and turns. Theoretical discussions of offensive and defensive cyber weapons, the effectiveness of deterrence, the role of the U.S. as a hegemon, and global politics will be

popular. Economic repercussions and interdependence of the global economy will be key. Negatives can argue alternative methods of engagement by using public/private non-military partnerships. Various perspectives on philosophically driven arguments will be intrinsic. The voices of the disenfranchised will be argued. A diverse set of arguments creates a level playing field for all students by debating emerging technologies. This topic affords students from across the nation in rural and urban areas from coast to coast, with ample research and provides scaffolded skills' development. The topic is broad, but the strength in it is the balance of affirmative and negative material. Debaters will gain experience in a well-rounded understanding of how emerging technologies are reshaping society, the advantages and disadvantages of different policy approaches, and how the issues surrounding emerging technologies will shape the global security agenda for decades to come. Students' knowledge of how crisis and opportunity work, with a collaborative approach to the solution, are essential skills for life.