

## Plan-Side Arguments

The natural progression of the NEG strategy is, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment. That is why the order of these lessons has been Significance(symptoms), Inherency(diagnosis), and now Solvency(treatment).

Plan-side looks at the change itself. This will include a look at the plan text, workability, and solvency. Disadvantages will be covered in the next lesson.

### Plan Text

As the NEG, you want to use every tool in the toolbox to create reasonable doubt against the AFF. One of the lesser used tools in my experience is the Plan Text itself. There are several things that can be argued from these mandates. Topicality can be argued, but we have covered that. Let's look at a few other mandates. Typically, "agency" isn't going to be a strong press, but there are some other items listed that can produce some NEG fodder.

### Funding

As a rule, I tell my students, "When the other teams bring up numbers, get out the calculator." The reason is that many times the other team overestimates or underestimates the cost of their program. For instance, during the *Russia* year, one plan was to increase funding for the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program. The idea was that if we increase the number of Russian students/future leaders coming to America, we could influence them toward capitalism, and in turn influence Russia in the future when these kids take over. The funding was set at several million dollars and was to fund 3500 Russian FLEX students over the years. It looked good. Low cost, high influence. My question to the team after the round was what the money was going to be used for. They said it would cover all costs for the 2 years they were here. The problem? The funding would barely cover the airfare, let alone transportation, housing, etc.

In another year debating agriculture, the AFF wanted the government to give low interest loans for farmers converting to hydroponics. They could grow roughly 5 acres of food per acre of land. To get started, it would cost \$26,000 per acre, but would be worth it as we could grow food way more efficiently. The AFF was very excited about the program and thought that most farms would change over. I looked up how many acres of farmland there was in the USA. It is almost 900 MILLION acres. Therefore, to get every acre converted would take an initial cost of \$23.4 TRILLION. And, looking at individual farms, they range from 80 to 3000 acres. Income from those farms range from \$10,000 to \$1 Million+. Suppose a small 80-acre farm wanted to switch totally to hydroponics, they would need to get a loan for \$2 Million. They could produce 5 times as much, so could profit \$50,000+ per year, which without interest would take him 40+ years to pay it off.

So, you see what I mean about calculating this all out using their numbers. It can get quite interesting.

### Enforcement

Enforcement can mean a couple of things. It could mean the execution of the plan or process, or the compelling of others to comply. This could come with penalties for non-compliance.

If enforcement is the mere execution of the plan or process, take a look at who is doing this, and whether it is the right people or agency. If not, the plan can't progress as it won't work.

If, however, enforcement also includes ensuring compliance along with penalties, or fines, this can create other problems for the AFF. Are they using the right agency? If so, do they have enough personnel to police this plan. If not, does the budget include increasing the numbers so they can effectively enforce compliance.

### Timeframe

Timeframe is when the plan will take effect. This can cause issues depending on other factors. For instance, during some of the foreign policy years, the Plan was for the USA to withdraw from a treaty. As the NEG, you will want to look at the treaty to see what the rules are for withdrawal. That is usually found toward the back of

the document. If the AFF isn't following the timeframe in the Treaty, that can come with some disadvantages, like breaking our word with an ally.

If the Harms are really bad, but the timeframe begins next fiscal year, I would want to know why.

Timeframe can inhibit the workability of the plan. Which leads me to...

### Workability

As a business owner, I have had to think through how things need to be organized and ordered to work properly. If you get some things out of order, you could run into some major roadblocks.

When thinking through the workability, try to consider the step-by-step process that gets you from point A to point G. Certain things need to fall into place for some plans to work. If the AFF forgets a step, the plan can't work.

For instance, during the Foreign Military Commitments and/or Presence year, one plan was to help Taiwan defend against China by building their nuclear submarine program. The AFF made a big point that an attack by China against Taiwan was imminent, meaning in the next year or two. It was going to take 5-10 years to get the subs built and sent to Taiwan. This made the plan unworkable.

Another AFF during the Environmental year was passing the Basel Convention on the transfer of hazardous waste. This convention made it so developed countries couldn't transfer hazardous waste to developing countries. The problem was that the US could transfer the waste to another developed country who could then transfer the waste to a developing country. There was always a way to get around the rules. The plan was unworkable.

One place to look for workability issues as well is in the inherent barrier. If there is truly something getting in the way of the policy that the AFF isn't addressing, the plan won't work.

If a plan is unworkable, there is also a big issue with...

### Solvency

Solvency is where many NEG's focus their strategy. Arguments here are best set up by Inherency. If the AFF got the diagnosis wrong, they cannot solve. You can also make attacks based on Plan attacks. If funding is at issue and they have no money to bankroll their plan, they can't solve. Workability also leads to solvency issues. You can likely guess this, but here goes; if the plan can't work, they can't solve. Do you sense a theme here? Most solvency arguments don't have to exist on their own, but are a result of attacks on Inherency, and the Plan.

Let's suppose though that they have good Inherency and a solid Plan, all is not lost. The NEG can also argue that the Plan will not meet the needs or will not gain the advantages.

### Plan Doesn't Meet Need

This works best in a Harms/Solvency or "Plan Meets Need" case structure as there are specific harms as well as a statement of solvency. While in most instances the Plan doesn't necessarily need to solve every harm 100%, it does need to solve a good majority of it.

For this, you will want to examine the Harms, the Plan, and the Solvency statement. You should see a thread that weaves through them and then ties them all together. Again, this assumes they have Inherency. There are times that the AFF will claim 100% solvency. Pay close attention to this. If you can show that the harms are not completely solved, you should win. Inherency will play a role here if you can find other causes for the Harm, that plays in your favor.

Back to the Harms. Examine each one of them to see what they say specifically. Ask if the harm is quantitative or qualitative. If quantitative, get the numbers from the AFF. As long as they can give you something close to the actual numbers, don't spend time trying to get exact quantities as this is a waste of time. If they can't give you

any numbers, then you need to bring up the question of how they will know if they indeed solved. If you can't know solvency, the NEG should win.

If qualitative, you will need to see how the Plan will solve. Qualitative is harder to prove, since there are no numbers. If this deals with human rights abuses, they shouldn't be running a Harms/Solvency case. As long as people exist on this earth, there will be human rights abuses. This is a result of the fall of mankind.

In both of these cases, the AFF may say that they are solving for the specific harms they brought up, but if there are enough alternate causes that produce the same harms, the question becomes what they are truly accomplishing. This will require some good Cross-Ex questions, which we will get to in that section.

### Plan Doesn't Gain Advantages

The strategy here is much the same as above. However, the threshold of gaining the advantages is a bit lower for the AFF. As long as they can show enough advantage, they will likely win the point with the judge. If you can prove they aren't inherent, you have a good case that they can't gain advantages either. Your best bet with this though is to have good Disadvantages, which we will now get to.

## Disadvantages

Disadvantages (aka. Disads, or DAs) look at the potential negative consequences of passing the AFF plan. These are considered "off-case" arguments, and the NEG team will be the ones who set the structure of these arguments. The NEG is in essence telling the judge, "Even if you believe there are good reasons for change, there are significant problems that will come about if the plan is passed."

### Burdens

Disads carry with them some special burdens on the NEG. They can't just toss out whatever. This is not throwing a plate of spaghetti against the wall to see what sticks. DAs need to do three things to be considered viable by most judges.

### Link to Plan

The NEG needs to show that the specific DA is linked or tied to the passing of the AFF plan. In some cases, this will be obvious, but most of the time it is not. You as the NEG will need to show the link either with evidence, or with a Cross-Ex admission. If the AFF can prove that their plan is not linked to the DA, you will not win that argument.

### Uniqueness

Even if the DA is tied to the passing of the plan, you will need to show that it will come about because of the plan. This is called uniqueness. In other words, if the Disad is in the SQ, and can be shown to be caused by something else, it is not being caused uniquely by the AFF plan. However, if the NEG can show that the DA will be made much worse by the Plan, you can still show it is unique. For instance, in the child soldiers case, if the NEG can show that the Plan will bring about MORE child soldiers, this shows a unique DA.

### Impact

Impacting a DA shows why it matters; why it is so bad. Some debaters will assume the judge knows why something is so bad, such as a recession DA, but it is always best to spell it out. The more you can relate it to the judge(s) in the round, the better. For instance, most judges understand that a recession is bad. However, if you point out to the judge that their cost of living is going up, their taxes will increase, everything will cost more, they may even lose their job, or their house, that shows impact.

Be careful that the impacts are realistic, though. Young debaters like to try to take every impact to the worst possible scenario. I call these the "Nuclear Holocaust" DAs because it seems that every year an AFF plan will

have the DA of China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, or some terrorist organization dropping a nuke on someone else. While there may be some DAs that can show this, not every DA leads to nuclear war. Overuse of this impact will cause you to lose credibility. Use it sparingly, and only if it is truly warranted.

### Stock Issues of Disadvantages

Disads will have stock issue-like similarities. The Link and Uniqueness are related to Inherency. You will need to diagnose the DA correctly. The Impact is related to Significance. You will need to show quantitative or qualitative harms that will come with the DA.

### Finding Disadvantages

A common complaint for the NEG is that it is difficult to find DAs, especially for a case they have not seen before. While this can be true, a good understanding of the biblical roles of government, how civil government operates, the differences between Keynesian and Classical/Austrian economics, a grasp on world religions, as well as a good understanding of the Constitution, will go a long way in helping find DAs. Really? Yes. The students in my club are consistently surprised at how fast I can develop inherency issues, workability issues, as well as strong DAs, all without much evidence. Part of the reason is because I have lived longer (okay, *way* longer) than my students, but the other main reason is that I have a really good understanding of the above topics. When you have that down, there is a simple tool you can then use to find more DAs than you can present in an 8-minute speech.

### Stakeholder/PERMS

A stakeholder is someone who either directly or indirectly will be involved in or will experience the consequences of the AFF Plan. They “have a dog in the fight” to borrow a colloquialism. Stakeholders will include the actor, usually the USFG, the agencies involved in passing or enforcing the plan, the industries, countries, governments, and citizens affected by the plan.

To use this tool, start by listing all the stakeholders. Write them out. This can be done ahead of time when studying the AFF case, or even during the round for cases you’ve yet to hear.

PERMS is an acronym, which is why it is in all caps. Let’s look at each.

#### P is for Political

With each stakeholder ask if there is a political disadvantage that will come about by the plan. This will typically be toward the USFG, its agencies and departments, as well as other foreign governments. This is why having a good understanding of our government and esp. the Constitution is essential. Also knowing the form of government of other countries is also a very good idea. Political unrest can lead to war, refugees, etc.

#### E is for Economic

Are there any economic problems for any of the stakeholders? This will include funding, recession, tax increases, inflation, job loss, trade loss, income, employment, any financial problems. Business closures would fit here as well.

#### R is for Religious

As we saw during the 2-year pandemic, things that our government does can cause religious DAs. Policies the USFG enacts can also harm foreign religions too. For instance, there have been plans to pull aid from Egypt until they become more democratic, give more respect to women, and have more open and free elections. The problem? Egypt governs under Sharia Law which ties them to the Quran. To become a more democratic society, similar to the USA, could require officials to deny aspects of the Quran, which would be asking them to deny their religion. There are extreme consequences for this action, like a death penalty.

### M is for Moral

Some plans will result in moral consequences. This is typically not going to be the case in a Christian league, but there may be some unintended consequences that you can argue may have moral consequences. Some policies can turn law abiding citizens into criminals. For instance, churches that felt that the government lockdowns created a moral dilemma of obedience to God or obedience to governing authorities. By continuing to meet, they became law breakers.

### S is for Societal

This deals with the societies and social relations. Consequences like discrimination, family, neighborhoods, how people work together, healthcare, immigration, poverty, education, environment, culture, human rights, natural resources, substance abuse, to name a few.

### Application

Each of these areas can be applied broadly to countries, geographic areas, cities, and individuals. As you can hopefully see, by having a working knowledge of how things should work, and how they actually do work, and the effects the AFF Plan has on the Stakeholders via the PERMS, the problem won't be finding enough DAs, but rather choosing which of the myriad DAs you should run that creates the best impacts.