

Season 23

Debating the 2022-2023 Stoa Policy Resolution

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Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe

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Current Issues - U.S. Policy Towards Europe



US and Russian collaboration on the International Space Station

STOA 2022-2023 Policy Resolution

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe

Here we summarize a few of the most prominent issues likely to be raised this year by debaters using this resolution. With a resolution this broad, Affirmative debaters are likely to find all manner of obscure policies that could be debated. But even so, knowledge of the big picture and the major issues will help you debate anything more intelligently and successfully.

Russia & Ukraine

The February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine is at the top of everyone's mind when we think of our foreign policy towards Europe. The invasion has numerous implications and provides fertile ground for things that could be changed by Affirmative debaters.

US arms shipments to Ukraine

"The U.S. will send Ukraine another \$1 billion in weapons to fight Russia, including Harpoon anti-ship launchers for the first time, and more ammunition for high-tech, medium-range rocket launchers, the Biden administration announced Wednesday. The U.S. aid will include two Harpoon launchers and an unspecified number

of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, or GMLRS, rockets for previously committed M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced in Brussels. Also included are 18 M777 howitzers, 36,000 rounds of 155mm ammunition and thousands of secure radios."¹



A "Javelin" anti-tank missile of the type being supplied to Ukraine

Arms shipments to Ukraine instinctively sound like a good thing to do, but they come with risks. First, the risk of escalation and direct conflict with Russia. The US is not [at the time of this writing] at war with Russia and the world rightly fears the consequences

if we ever were, since nuclear escalation and annihilation is one possible outcome of such an event. But remember from the previous article the story of the Lusitania during World War I and what happened to it. Transportation of weapons to one side in a conflict can make whoever is transporting those weapons into a legitimate target of war by the other side. Is Ukraine of any significance to US national security that would justify risking American lives?

Second, if Ukraine's defeat in the war is inevitable, given Russia's size and ultimate determination to win no matter the cost, it's possible that supplying weapons simply prolongs the conflict, increases the death toll, and gives Ukraine false hope, when we should be encouraging them to negotiate for peace instead.

¹ Joe Gould 6/15/2022 "US sending Ukraine new \$1 billion arms package amid grinding Donbas fight"
<https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2022/06/15/us-sending-ukraine-new-1-billion-arms-package-amid-grinding-donbas-fight/#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20E2%80%95%20The%20U.S.%20will%20send,the%20Biden%20administration%20announced%20Wednesday>

Financial and trade sanctions on Russia

The U.S. federal government has implemented wide ranging sanctions on Russia, blocking trade, banking, investment, and just about anything else. These include blocking commercial trade as well as claims on the property of specific individuals.

"The United States, alongside over 30 partners around the world, has imposed unprecedented sanctions and export controls to hold President Putin to account for his war against Ukraine, restrict Russia's access to critical technology it needs to fund its war machine, and turn Russia into a global financial pariah. The Department of the Treasury is targeting prominent Russian government officials and business leaders, luxury property of elites, and luxury asset management and service companies key to Russian attempts to evade sanctions. So far, the United States has added 1,000 parties to Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List and over 300 parties have been added to Commerce's Entity List."²



Economic and other sanctions against Russia - increasing them or reducing them - are sure to be debated this year.

Claims on the bank accounts or property of individuals might be problematic on justice grounds. Imagine your reaction if the Russian government somehow went after you, a private citizen, and confiscated your bank account because it objected to the policies of the US federal government, even though you had no role in making those policies and might even have opposed them.

And the impacts on the Russian people might also need to be considered. The stated goal of American policy is to cripple the Russian economy to punish the government and motivate changes in their behavior. Questions might be

raised as to whether economic sanctions ever succeed at motivating leaders of target nations, since they personally are not affected. Vladimir Putin is not going to go hungry because we damage his economy; but a lot of his citizens might. Do economic sanctions merely punish the common people for the benefit of making us feel like we're "doing something," even if it has no effect on Russian policy?

Keep in mind that the US has been sanctioning Russia in some way since the 1970s. Sanctions were escalated after the Russian annexation of Crimea, and Russia has become used to the US possibly sanctioning them forever.

² White House press release 2 June 2022 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/02/fact-sheet-united-states-takes-further-actions-to-counter-sanctions-evasion-by-russia/>

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"Since 2013, sanctions and counter-sanctions have been an inescapable element of U.S.-Russian relations. Sanctions have also become a tool of choice for U.S. foreign policy across an ever-wider range of issues and states. Most sanctions measures are adopted in response to discrete actions (e.g., the annexation of Crimea), with little consideration for their longer-term impact or potential second-order effects. ... The USSR/Russia has not been completely free of U.S. sanctions since at least the early 1970s. Moscow is consequently skeptical that anything it does will lead the United States to abandon the use of sanctions in the bilateral relationship."³

Energy prices and supplies in the US and Europe

The war and its accompanying sanctions have had a dramatic impact on oil prices, since Russia is one of the world's largest producers of oil. Since oil is priced globally on world markets, it matters not where US consumers of petroleum products obtain their oil. Even if it is 100% coming from domestic sources, the price of products like gasoline rises and falls based on world events affecting global oil supplies. The economic principle of supply and demand dictates that when the supply is diminished (Russian oil taken off the market), the price must increase.



The Russian war on Ukraine and sanctions on their oil have spiked global fuel prices.

Europe finds itself the victim of some questionable decisions made over the last few decades with regard to their imports of natural gas from Russia. Many European countries elected to participate in pipeline projects and to import Russian gas to fuel their economies, even as they shut down coal-fired and nuclear-powered electrical generating capacity. But this means Europeans who want to stay warm in winter or use electricity from gas-fired power plants must be careful how they treat Russia. It may take several years before alternate sources of natural

gas can come online to replace Russian supplies, if Europe chooses to cut them off. And Russia may threaten to turn off the pipeline from their end if they are offended at Europe's reaction to the Ukraine war.

A number of American policy experts, and Pres. Trump himself as well, warned European leaders of this risk several years ago, but the warnings went unheeded.

³ Jeffrey Mankoff 13 March 2020 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/addressing-unresolved-challenges-us-russia-relations>

Other forms of aid to the Ukraine/Russia situation

There may be other things the US can do (and perhaps already is doing) to aid Ukraine in addition to military aid. For example, the US is increasing (enough?) the number of refugee immigration visas for displaced Ukrainians. Should we consider doing the same for Russian dissidents who don't want to be associated any more with Putin and his shenanigans? Or who just want to escape from the mess we make of their economy by our sanctions?

As of 23 May 2022, Congress had approved (borrowing and printing of) a total of \$40 billion in aid to Ukraine, and that aid consists of more than just weapons. It includes economic assistance, humanitarian relief, as well as food assistance to people in other places, like Africa, that are tangentially affected by disruption of the Ukraine economy and agricultural production.⁴

Russia & everything else

The Ukraine war may have displaced everything else from the headlines, but there have been lots of other US/Russia policies in the minds of policymakers and experts over the last several years as well.

Space Exploration & Cooperation

"The International Space Station is essentially two halves - one operated by Russia and the other maintained by the U.S. The Russian side of the space station is responsible for keeping the station in orbit. So far, the hatches between the two halves remain open. Charlie Bolden was a NASA astronaut and served as the agency's administrator during the Obama administration. He says that while the partnership has endured geopolitics for decades, just how long that relationship can now last is unclear. ... The long-term fate of the station may now be at risk, says space policy analyst Laura Forczyk. Russia, even before the invasion of Ukraine, was hesitant to join NASA beyond 2024, even though the U.S. has agreed to extend its support of the space station through 2030. ... Commercial partners, like SpaceX, have helped NASA end the nearly decade-long reliance on Russia for rides to the station, and the agency hopes commercial partners will help build a new space station to replace the ISS without Russia."⁵

⁴ Mark F. Cancian 23 May 2022 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-does-40-billion-aid-ukraine-buy>

⁵ Brendan Byrne 7 March 2022 <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/07/1084870818/the-u-s-russia-space-partnership-historically-has-transcended-political-tension>

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Nuclear weapons & disarmament

"In 2019, under then-U.S. President Donald Trump, the United States formally withdrew from a Cold War-era treaty with Russia to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) that could strike between a range of around 310 to 3,400 miles, accusing Russia of having violated the treaty by testing and deploying missile systems that the treaty banned. All NATO allies backed Trump's decision and blamed Russia's violations for the INF treaty's demise. But some arms control experts still criticized the move at the time, voicing fears that Trump was dismantling an important arms control regime before exhausting all avenues to salvage the treaty. After entering office, Biden vowed to reverse Trump-era arms control policies and revive arms talks on a variety of weapons systems with Moscow. Just days after being inaugurated, Biden reauthorized the New START Treaty, which limits the number of strategic nuclear missiles that both sides can possess, such as deployed ballistic missiles and strategic bombers, warheads, and missile tubes."⁶

Trade

One of the problems with US trade sanctions, or US trade policy in general with Russia, is that Russia doesn't have much to trade other than oil, which the US already has plenty of. Russia's economy is highly centered on the petroleum industry - probably too much so, and the rest of their economy is not very well developed. Russia's government doesn't care that much: as long as oil revenues keep them solvent, they don't need to worry about the rest of the economy.

"The combined effects of climate change, the development of green technologies, and the proliferation of oil and gas producers promise a bleak future for the Russian economy absent a major push to diversify, which by most accounts is not forthcoming. And without diversification, the prospects will remain limited for expanded U.S.-Russian trade and economic relations. Further, the economies of the two countries are not complementary, and indeed there is competition in exports for oil, gas, agricultural products, and arms. As long as this situation persists, it will be extremely difficult to expand U.S.-Russian trade; cooperation on joint economic ventures involving technology, energy, and space; and American foreign direct investment in Russia."⁷

⁶ Jack Detsch & Robbie Gramer 24 Feb 2022 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/25/biden-russia-arms-control-talks-ukraine-invasion/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20under%20then%2DU.S.,by%20testing%20and%20deploying%20missile>

⁷ Richard Sokolsky, Eugene Rumer 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/15/u.s.-russian-relations-in-2030-pub-82056>

NATO and its discontents

The U.S. has been committed to the defense of Europe since the 1949 establishment of NATO. US troops stationed in Europe are a visible sign of that commitment. They are also, potentially, an incentive for European nations to "free ride" by counting on the US guarantee of military protection and save their own taxpayers from the expense of defending their own soil.

"Previous U.S. Administrations and many Members of Congress have criticized what they view as insufficient European burden sharing in NATO, and some have questioned the costs of the U.S. military presence in Europe."⁸

East European NATO members are asking for increased US troop deployments in response to the perceived increased threat from Russia. But they do this even as they minimize their own defense spending, begging the question: If the threat is so great that US troops are urgently needed, why isn't the threat great enough for their own taxpayers to pay to defend their own country?

The U.S. continues to maintain about 100 tactical nuclear weapons in five NATO countries in Europe. These are a legacy of the Cold War, when thousands of them were placed in Europe to be used in case of a massive conventional attack from the east by the communist nations of the Warsaw Pact. It seems hard to fathom any scenario in which it would be wise to use those



weapons in any situation today. They do, however, provide some political reassurance to NATO allies, even if the weapons could never be used. Is the benefit of that political assurance worth the risk and cost of maintaining weapons of mass destruction that have no military use and could only be stolen, misused, or lead to global annihilation?

The NATO charter states that it is open to accepting any new "European country" that can contribute to the goals of the organization.⁹ And admittance of new members requires

⁸ Congressional Research Service 14 Jan 2022 "U.S.-European Relations in the 117th Congress" <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11094.pdf>. Coach Vance's family left France in 1966 following Gen. DeGaulle's order.

⁹ This, incidentally, provides Affirmatives a good definition of "countries in Europe" for the resolution. If NATO invites a country to join, then by NATO's definition they must be in Europe. For example, NATO has invited the country of Georgia, which is on the edge of either being in Europe or Asia.

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unanimous agreement of existing members. Hence, the US could, by itself (in an Affirmative plan), block any new European country from joining, but could not by itself fiat that a new country joins. Currently there are at least five countries trying to gain NATO membership (Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia, Finland and Sweden).

But NATO expansion has been a controversial policy issue for the last 30 years, since the end of the Cold War. NATO was originally designed to counter the threat of the Soviet Union invading Western Europe. That threat no longer exists, so why does NATO keep expanding? Countries that used to be allies or even components of the Soviet Union have joined NATO in recent years, to the great consternation of almost all Russian policymakers, not least Pres. Vladimir Putin. Just because Putin may be paranoid doesn't mean he's wrong. NATO expansion may be an unnecessary "poking the bear," and merely expanding US military commitments with no increase in benefit to US security. If you want to imagine how Putin views it, imagine that Russia formed a mutual defense alliance with Mexico and stationed Russian troops, airplanes, and tactical nuclear weapons on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande River, across from Texas - but assured the United States that they were there for peaceful defensive purposes. Would you be worried? Putin got worried when we did that to him.

European Union Defense Policies

European countries believe, and probably rightfully so, that they are individually not big enough to secure the military defense of their region or their continent. NATO is one effort for them to band together, but that relies on ceding leadership and control over their defense to the United States. The European Union (which contains some countries not in NATO and excludes some countries that are in NATO) has also for years been considering its own collective military effort.

This process has been difficult for several reasons. First, the U.S. has consistently opposed it, preferring that Europe work through NATO (and the U.S.) rather than working on their own. The argument is that an EU force would simply duplicate NATO and probably divert resources away from NATO, creating a weak useless EU force and a weaker NATO, with net reduction in capabilities. Of course, another reason for the US to maintain this position might be that they don't want to give up control and leadership over Europe's military power. Perhaps it's time for Europe to grow up and take responsibility for their own military defense, like grown up nations normally do.

Second, getting all the members of the EU to agree on whether and how much military force to establish, how to pay for it, and when to use it would be extremely difficult. It's nearly impossible to get them all to agree what day of the week it is. Agreeing on difficult decisions like the use of military force would be highly problematic.

Foreign Trade

"The European Union and the United States have the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship and enjoy the most integrated economic relationship in the world. Although overtaken by China in 2021 as the largest EU import source for goods, the US remains the EU's largest trade and investment partner by far."¹⁰

"Congress may be interested in examining U.S.-EU efforts to resolve trade irritants and in two new initiatives launched at the 2021 U.S.-EU Summit—a Trade and Technology Council (to promote greater cooperation in areas such as standards for new and emerging technologies, digital governance, supply chain security, and global trade challenges) and a Joint Technology Competition Policy Dialogue."¹¹

Keeping in mind that all the nations of the EU must be dealt with collectively for most aspects of foreign trade policy, there are a number of proposals and issues that can be debated, most of which are not usually in the headlines. Two are suggested above: a "Trade and Technology Council" (which was established in June 2021) and a "Joint Technology Competition Policy Dialogue."

The US and EU have recurring trade disputes over specific imports/exports, regarding tariffs that one side or the other imposes that may or may not be in violation of WTO rules. Since the US and EU are both members of WTO, both sides are bound by the WTO's limits on the very low tariff rates they may charge each other. Exceeding those limits leads to grievances being filed with WTO, which can authorize the other side to retaliate with higher tariffs until the offender reduces their tariffs back into compliance with WTO standards. These disputes typically don't affect a very large percentage of US/EU trade, but some of them might find their way into cases written by Affirmatives looking for something interesting to debate.¹²

There is also ongoing discussion about the possibility of a US/EU free trade agreement. Since US/EU tariffs are already pretty low, one might question how much this would accomplish.

Others have suggested a US/UK FTA, now that Brexit has separated the United Kingdom from the European Union.

¹⁰ European Commission https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/united-states_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Union%20and%20the,and%20investment%20partner%20by%20far.

¹¹ Congressional Research Service 14 Jan 2022 "U.S.-European Relations in the 117th Congress"
<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11094.pdf>

¹² For example, a dispute in 2021 was over the level of US tariffs on "ripe olives from Spain."
https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/united-states_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Union%20and%20the,and%20investment%20partner%20by%20far.

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Bilateral trade might be trickier for the U.S. and the U.K. to agree on. Trump's much-vaunted negotiations on a U.S.-U.K. free trade agreement was largely for show. Tariffs are already very low and the agricultural and regulatory issues are highly contentious on both sides. Trump and the Brexiteers needed the illusion of a negotiation—for Trump, it burnished his image as a dealmaker and, for the Brexiteers, it offered proof that they were active on the world stage.¹³

Others have suggested US free trade agreements with other non-EU countries like Georgia and Switzerland. While Affirmatives cannot fiat that a foreign country will join our FTA, they can fiat that the US offers one and then prove with evidence that the target country "would" accept if it were offered, and thus gain solvency for their plan.

The Balkans

US interest in the Balkans has faded substantially since the shooting stopped and the countries of the former Yugoslavia settled into their present configurations around the turn of the 21st century. There are still a few lingering issues that may come up from time to time.

"Targeted support for European allies is a strong incentive for U.S. involvement in the region as the U.S. can benefit from increased stability and stronger trading partners. This was highlighted by President Biden's recent signing of an Executive Order on June 8, 2021, that provided additional sanction authority, efforts to combat corruption, and promote accountability within the Balkans and the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia."¹⁴

"A more focused foreign policy in the Balkans does not mean the U.S. neglects the other countries such as Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Greece. Efforts in these countries should focus on diplomatic efforts by U.S. embassies and limited military interaction to support NATO interoperability. China's BRI provides them access to many eastern European countries through enticing loans as many of these countries are looking to bolster their economies. While it can be difficult for the West to compete with China's loan tactics, the West can coach Balkan countries on the dangers of China's loans and, more importantly, demand fair loan terms from China. Additionally, the U.S. and the E.U. can increase their coordination to provide increased funding to Balkan countries, limiting their need to rely solely on China."¹⁵

Concerns remain about Serbia and its drift away from democracy and ongoing refusal to recognize the independence of its former territory, Kosovo.

¹³ Thomas Wright 23 July 2020 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/07/23/what-a-shift-in-the-uks-foreign-policy-means-for-the-us/>

¹⁴ Richard McManamon 2021 "U.S. Strategy and Foreign Policy throughout the Balkans"
<https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/us-strategy-and-foreign-policy-throughout-balkans>

¹⁵ Richard McManamon 2021 "U.S. Strategy and Foreign Policy throughout the Balkans"
<https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/us-strategy-and-foreign-policy-throughout-balkans>

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"As Serbia positions itself to receive support from China, Russia, and the United States, it can be said that the geopolitics for Serbia is intensifying as the country plays an increasing role in the region. Furthermore, Serbia serves as one of the strongest allies for Russia and China in the area, and their connection will likely increase over the coming years. Highlighting the strengthening bond between Russia and Serbia, joint exercises were recently held in May 2020, bringing their militaries closer aligned. While Russia has strived to maintain positive and growing relations with Serbia, the U.S. has continued to partner with Serbia. Since 2001, the U.S. has provided nearly \$1 billion, focusing on good governance, economic growth, and bolstering the country's infrastructure. Additionally, the Ohio National Guard has partnered with Serbia since 2006 as part of the State Partnership Program (SPP), where they have conducted joint exercises. This long-term support emphasizes the importance the U.S. sees in the role of Serbia in the greater Balkan region."¹⁶

Questions still remain about prosecution of Serbs and Kosovars who may have been involved in war crimes during the brutal civil wars of the '90s. Bosnia still faces lingering ethnic divisions that might benefit from US policy initiatives.

"... serious challenges still exist and keeping the Western Balkan countries on the path toward security and stability will require active engagement by the United States and our European allies. One such challenge currently facing the region is the political division in Bosnia. Last month, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Accords, which brought an end to almost 4 years of fighting in Bosnia. However, Bosnia has still not been able to establish a sustainable democracy. In addition, American leadership will be especially critical to the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia."¹⁷

Turkey

Though the vast majority of the land area of Turkey is in Asia, it nonetheless qualifies as a "country in Europe" because of the small portion of it that lies on the west side of the Bosphorus strait. The modern nation of Turkey originated in 1923 as the successor state containing the remainder of the defeated Ottoman Empire following World War I. While the vast majority of Turks are



https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/turkeys-growing-foreign-policy-ambitions?gclid=EAIaQobChMltPj6pMm_AiV852MChlh0Q2BEAYASAAEgKIdfD_BwE

¹⁶ Richard McManamon 2021 "U.S. Strategy and Foreign Policy throughout the Balkans"
<https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/us-strategy-and-foreign-policy-throughout-balkans>

¹⁷ Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Tex.; ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee) 8 Dec 2020
<https://www.congress.gov/event/116th-congress/house-event/LC66658/text?s=1&r=1>

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Muslims, Turkey consciously chose a secular government and society and alignment with the West.

Though Turkey has had a democratically elected government for most of its modern history, it has also had a history of regression from democracy from time to time. The Turkish military has overthrown the elected government three times (1960, 1971, and 1980), forced the removal of a prime minister in 1997, and issued an official statement of opposition to a presidential candidate in 2007. The military is typically on the side of secularism and opposed to strict interpretation and enforcement of Islamic rules on society (as often seen in Iran or Saudi Arabia).¹⁸ And Turkey's foreign policy has often been at odds with other Muslim nations in the region.¹⁹

Turkey has been an ally of the United States as a member of NATO since 1952, and was considered a key strategic partner during the Cold War due to having a direct border with the Soviet Union, NATO's great adversary. But that alliance has been tested severely in recent years, many question its ongoing longevity, and some question its usefulness.

Turkey's current president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in power since 2002, has made numerous changes to solidify his power and chip away at Turkey's democratic traditions and institutions. Turkey has been trying since 1987 to join the European Union, but has always been postponed by Europe as being too foreign (too Muslim?) and not democratic enough. Erdogan has apparently concluded that if they are not going to be accepted as democratic enough, he might as well stop trying. Erdogan appears to be moving Turkey in ways that show disregard for past friendships with the US and Europe, preferring instead for Turkey to be perceived as its own independent power in the region.

Turkey has had for decades an ongoing conflict with the Kurdish minority in the southeast, some of whom are labeled as terrorists by both the U.S. and Turkey. Others, of course, might view them as "freedom fighters," trying to uphold the rights of their language and traditions against forcible attempts to assimilate them into Turkish nationality. The US has sometimes allied itself with Kurds, when it has been in our interest to do so (e.g. against ISIS and Saddam Hussein's Iraq). This, of course, is not appreciated by Turkey.

Turkey has also been deeply affected by the 11-year civil war in Syria, with millions of refugees from that conflict spilling over the border. Most Turks believe they should be sent home. Turkey has intervened with military force in the Syrian conflict to help forces attempting to oust evil dictator Bashar Al Assad, and Turkey currently occupies a small section of Syrian soil. In 2015, Turkish forces shot down a Russian fighter plane intervening in the conflict on the Syrian

¹⁸ For example, Turkey for some time (not any more) had a law banning women from wearing head scarves in public. Meanwhile, Iran to this day requires women to wear them, in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic law.

¹⁹ And keep in mind that while Turks are Muslims, they are not Arabs and typically do not speak Arabic.

government's side. In 2019, Turkish forces fired on a position held by US troops in Syria, which was in the vicinity of Kurdish forces allied with the US but hostile to Turkey.

Turkey is host to US forces as part of NATO at Incirlik Air Base. This base is also the location of some of the US tactical nuclear weapons arsenal. The weapons are controversial in general, but even more so given the instability of Turkey and concern of what would happen if Turkey completely turned against the United States and tried to confiscate the weapons.

Generic Arguments & Issues

Generic Arguments

Generic arguments are good to brief out ahead of time for Negative debates, and become even more urgent as part of your strategy in a season with such a broad resolution. Affirmative plans will be coming from all directions and squirrely topics will abound. Develop a good set of generic arguments that can be used against multiple lines of policy reform, so that you will have at least something to fill two 8-minute Negative constructives when you have no specific evidence about the Affirmative case.

Hegemony

US hegemony (leadership, direction, global influence) is a recurring theme as a generic issue in foreign policy debates.

"Experts point out that the well-honed habits of U.S.-European political, military, and intelligence cooperation are unique and cannot be easily replicated with other international actors. U.S. engagement in Europe also helps limit Russian, Chinese, or other possible malign influences."²⁰

We will have this year, as we have in past years, a published Negative brief arguing in favor of the need for US hegemony and providing disadvantages to any policy that moves the US away from our military or economic leadership in the world. The argument here is that if an Affirmative plan reduces US global influence (e.g. by dropping out of military alliances, reducing military presence, cutting off an ally, etc.), the world will become a worse place because Russia or China will grow in influence as ours is diminished. This can impact world peace and prosperity, as the world would surely be worse off if these "bad guys" gain hegemony and spread oppressive policies and values without us to keep them in check.

²⁰ Congressional Research Service 14 Jan 2022 "U.S.-European Relations in the 117th Congress"
<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11094.pdf>

Trade

Generic briefs for trade policy debates can include Negative responses to the importance of trade itself. Maybe it isn't a significant part of our economy and it doesn't matter whether we increase it or not. Maybe it confers no benefit, creates no jobs, or adds no value.

Free trade agreements are frequently controversial, and lots of articles have been published and can be mined for evidence to argue that FTA's are never a good thing. The US has entered numerous FTA's in the past, so there's lots of track record on which commentators can base predictions about why future FTA's would be bad, even if we don't know specifically which country the AFF will target.

Sanctions

Sharp Negatives will prepare briefs both in favor of and opposing the value of economic sanctions against foreign nations. Sanctions can be shown to have a bad track record of merely punishing the innocent citizens and not the evil leaders, having no effect on their bad policies. There are also examples of where they have succeeded and can be an effective policy in many cases. If AFF proposes new or tighter sanctions, be prepared to argue they don't work. If AFF argues for removing sanctions, be prepared to argue they are effective and needed.

Russia

Do some research to find generic positions on Russia that can be used in various debates. For example:

- Russia will never reform no matter what we do
- Russia is a big threat (just look at Ukraine)
- Russia is no threat (losing in Ukraine and troops tied up there, so they can't hurt anyone else)
- Europe needs US military protection from Russia
- Europe doesn't need US military protection from Russia
- Putin is rational, won't go too far, no need to worry about him
- Putin is crazy, might do anything, so we can't risk provoking him

Summary & Conclusions

It's impossible for us to cover all aspects of US and European foreign policy, but this introduction will give you a start at understanding some of the issues currently being discussed in the world today. It will be very important for you to keep up with the news on a daily or at minimum weekly basis. Cut evidence from news websites and add it to your Negative briefs regularly. Update (or abandon) your Affirmative case as circumstances change.