Policy Debate

Resolution: The United States federal government should substantially reduce Direct Commercial Sales and/or Foreign Military Sales of arms from the United States.

Policy Debate is:

* Debating a hypothetical plan in a self-contained universe
* Weighing the impacts of implementing the Aff plan

2 Types of Arguments Occur Simultaneously in the Round:

1. On Case Arguments: Arguments that prove that the Aff’s specific plan will or will not fix the impacts of the status quo

* Advantage: reducing arms sales solves a problem in the status quo
  + Inherency, Impact, Link, Solvency
  + Ex. There is a humanitarian crisis in Yemen that is killing thousands. The crisis is fueled by Saudis giving their US-bought weapons to rebel groups. Ending sales from US will cripple Saudis’ ability to prolong conflict.
* Link and Impact Turns: argument that proves an argument the other side has made is in fact support for one's own side
  + Ex. If Aff wants to ban sale of all torture devices, Aff can prove that the issue has bipartisan support and therefore will not impact the passage of the USMCA bill (whereas a traditional arms debate would cause political disunity over strong disagreements); therefore, there is no link between banning torture devices and the disadvantages that the Neg suggests
  + Ex. If Aff want to reduce arms sales to Taiwan because it will spark a war with China, Neg can argue that in the status quo, the USA sells arms but war has not occurred; therefore, the impacts would have occurred but have not, so Aff is wrong
* Topicality: Does the Aff plan actually address reducing arms sales
  + Each side must prove their argument fits within their definition of a term in the resolution and why their definition is better for debating
  + Ex. Are torture devices arms? Does the term “arms” also include training to use weapons technology? How much is a “substantial” reduction? 2.7%, 50%, 51%?

1. Off-Case Arguments: Neg’s general responses to the resolution that apply to all plans that reduce arms sales-typically the prewritten case that do no respond directly to the Aff’s specific plan

* Disadvantage: reducing arms sales is harmful
  + Uniqueness, Impact, Link, Solvency
  + Ex. The USMCA bill has many benefits and currently has bipartisan support. Reducing arms sales will spark backlash from Republicans and undermine the passage of the USMCA bill and therefore everyone loses out on the benefits-applies to reducing arms sales to Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Ukraine, etc.
* Counterplan (CP): Competitive plan that is net positive
  + Must be mutually exclusive with the Aff plan, solve for the disadvantages of the plan, and have additional advantages
  + Purpose: to prove that the Aff plan is so bad that an alternative plan can and should be chosen
  + \*Note: If the Neg cannot prove that the CP has additional benefits, judge must default and chose Aff

Additional Notes:

* If one side does not refute an argument, they have “dropped” the argument- anything unopposed is assumed to be agreed upon by both parties and becomes fact in that debate round
  + Ex. If Aff say Trump will support the plan and Neg does not refute, Trump will support the plan and the Neg cannot refute the argument because it has been established as a fact in the universe of the debate
  + To further demonstrate the fact that Policy is a self-contained universe: if one side says that the plan will cause elephants to turn purple and aliens to invade Earth, but the opposition does not answer those arguments, then those circumstances will occur if the plan is implemented and those impacts should be considered in a final decision by the judge (this is an extreme example but possible)
* Fiat: overlook the practicality of implementing the plan
  + a final decision by the judge should be based on the impacts of implementing the plan
  + An argument that arms sales will occur illegally, so reducing arms sales is frivolous is not a valid argument because, in the universe of the debate, the plan is assumed to be 100% fulfilled