

2016-2017 Policy Topic Overview

CHINA

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic and/or diplomatic engagement with the People's Republic of China.

by Stefan Bauschard



Introduction

If you ask someone what the 2016-17 debate topic is, they will say the topic is “China.” They are right that the topic *area* is China, and since China is a country of one billion plus people that is becoming a leading global power, and since the U.S. engages China in many different ways on a daily basis, China as a topic area is a fascinating one for debate.

But the resolution more carefully focuses the question to whether or not the United States should significantly increase its “diplomatic and/or economic engagement” with China. Directing the Affirmative to such engagement substantially limits the topic, both substantively and strategically.

In this essay, I will review what it means to engage China through economic and/or diplomatic means, review the major issues for potential engagement, and discuss strategic considerations for both the Affirmative and the Negative.

Diplomatic and/or Economic Engagement: Key Questions

I think there are four issues regarding “diplomatic and/or economic engagement” that will be important to determining both the potential breadth of the topic and available Negative counterplan ground:

- 1) **Over what issues can the engagement occur?** For example, it seems obvious that *economic* engagement can occur over trade, but it is less obvious that economic engagement can cover military issues. Can *diplomatic* engagement occur over military issues and are there any limits to what constitutes diplomatic engagement?
- 2) **How do we engage?** This *how* question focuses on actions like providing economic aid, negotiating trade deals, engaging in talks and supporting direct financial investment

in industries in the topic countries. These are just a few examples.

- 3) **Can engagement be conditional?** In other words, is it topical for the U.S. to offer a reduction in trade barriers, for example, *in exchange for* action by one of the topic countries in some particular area(s)? This bargain is referred to as a *quid pro quo* (qpq). Related to this, if it is determined that engagement can be conditional, the question that will arise is if the Affirmative plan *has to* be conditional. In other words, must a topical engagement plan include a quid pro quo? The conditionality question is really a second formulation of the *how* question. If engagement *requires* a qpq, it means that most cases are likely to *hurt* relations.
- 4) **Does engagement require the United States federal government to interact with China?** This is somewhat related to the last question, but even short of a quid pro quo, if the U.S. engages China, does the U.S. have to interact with China's government, or can the U.S. simply lift a trade restriction it currently has on China? If the plan has to involve an *interaction*, teams can counterplan (when it is feasible) to simply remove the restriction and not interact.

Suggested answers to each of these questions will be provided in the next sections. The implication of the answers for topicality arguments is also previewed.

• What issues can be covered by economic engagement?

The core question here is how the term “economic” limits the topic beyond what would be true if the topic simply said “increase its engagement with...” Obviously, the term “economic” limits the type of engagement, but contextual usage evidence doesn't suggest that there is too much of a limit. I've found contextual evidence that supports including all of the following in economic engagement:

- Trade
- Information technology
- Investment
- General environmental issues
- Forest and wetland conservation
- Water and air quality
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Health care
- Clean energy, including renewable energy
- Electricity production and transmission
- Nuclear power
- General energy security
- Defense and security
- Economic development
- Intellectual property
- Reducing corruption
- Food regulation
- Environmental regulation

Specifically, in the context of China, it includes day-to-day interactions and discussions of trade policy, bilateral investment, bilateral dialogues, trade and investment, cyber security, climate change, clean energy, the rule of law, and global economic issues.

Sheets, Nathan. (2015, April 29). Remarks by Undersecretary Nathan Sheets at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Retrieved 01/10/16 from <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl10039.aspx>. (The author is Undersecretary, Department of the Treasury.)

It's a great pleasure to be here among so many proponents of economic engagement with China. I know many of you have devoted a good deal of your careers to this endeavor. In particular, Matt, the work that you and CSIS have done over the years has been enormously helpful as we try to improve our strategies and tactics for engaging with China bilaterally and multilaterally. In that context, I will focus my remarks today on an important mechanism for this engagement, the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (SandED). Around this time of year, the question we are asked most often about the SandED is: "When is it going to be held?" And we usually say—as I will today—that we will announce the dates later. But here's a more accurate answer: "The SandED is actually held every day!" In reality, the SandED is much more than just two days of meetings in early summer. It's not an event, but rather a mechanism. A mechanism for managing and building the relationship between the world's two largest economies, and it's powered by day-in and day-out interactions. ... But let's begin by looking back at how we framed our economic engagement with China even earlier, in the years before the SED. President Carter and Deng Xiaoping created the U.S.-China Joint Economic Committee soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations. It was initially chaired by the Treasury Secretary and a Chinese Vice Premier and designed to serve as the primary mechanism for coordinating economic relations. At first, the JEC agenda was broad. In 1982, for example, it included proposals for a bilateral investment treaty and

for what became the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, or JCCT. Over time, however, the JEC evolved to concentrate mostly on financial issues, while the JCCT covered commercial issues. Trade policy was handled in the WTO accession negotiations, and then increasingly added to the JCCT agenda. As our relationship grew, so did the modes of engagement. By the mid-2000s, the U.S. government had dozens of bilateral dialogues with China, many of them with an economic focus. ... The Obama Administration chose to broaden the SED, adding the strategic track so that it became the Strategic and Economic Dialogue. As a "whole of government" dialogue, the SandED has proven to be a powerful tool for engaging across the array of complex issues in our relationship—from trade and investment, to cybersecurity and pandemic response, to development finance and climate change. We have seen some notable successes, including last year, as the SandED brought together foreign affairs, energy, and economic agencies on both sides to advance our work on climate change and clean energy cooperation. ... They discuss not only bilateral issues but also global economic developments and broader strategic issues.

Since trade often involves weapons and potential weapons components, economic engagement can likely include military issues in certain instances.

• Does "diplomatic engagement" undermine limits?

How does the term "diplomatic" engagement limit the topic beyond if the topic had simply said, "engagement." We know that the topic allows economic engagement, but is there anything else that is allowed by diplomatic engagement that is not allowed by economic engagement? (Note: It may be the case that diplomatic engagement includes economic engagement, but we need to know what else may be covered by diplomatic engagement to see how much the topic enlarges beyond economic engagement.)

Haass, Robert N. (Summer 2000). *Survival*, 42(2), 114-5. (The author is the Director of Foreign Policy Studies at Brookings.)

Architects of engagement strategies can choose from a wide variety of incentives. Economic engagement might offer tangible incentives such as export credits, investment insurance or promotion, access to technology, loans or economic aid. Other equally useful economic incentives involve the removal of penalties such as trade embargoes, investment bans or high tariffs, which have impeded economic relations between the United States and the target country. Facilitated entry into the global economic arena and the institutions that govern it rank among the most potent incentives in today's global market. Similarly, political engagement can involve the lure of diplomatic recognition, access to regional or international institutions, the scheduling of summits between leaders—or the termination of these benefits.

Now that we have covered both diplomatic and economic

engagement, the question is, is any type of engagement excluded? Most significantly, can diplomatic engagement include engagement over military issues? It seems like it includes engagement over at least some military issues, such as joint exercises.

Curtis, Lisa. (2014, July 16). Indispensable partners – Reenergizing U.S.-India ties. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs Hearing. Retrieved 02/10/16 from <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/06/after-the-election-opportunity-for-revitalizing-usindia-relations>. (The author is a Senior Research Fellow at The Heritage Foundation.)

While their economic ties pale in comparison to those between [China and India](#), [Indo-Japanese diplomatic engagement has intensified in recent years](#). Japanese Emperor Akihito paid a rare visit to New Delhi in late 2013. Indian Prime Minister Singh made a historic four-day visit to Tokyo in May 2013, in which [the two sides signed a joint statement pledging nuclear cooperation and expanded joint naval exercises](#).

Other evidence suggests that it can include threats:

Quirk, Sean P. (2015, November 9). Reconciling China's PLAN: strategic intervention, tactical engagement. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved 01/10/16 from <http://thediplomat.com/2015/11/reconciling-chinas-plan-strategic-intervention-with-tactical-engagement>. (The author is a Lieutenant, junior grade, U.S. Navy Surface Warfare Officer stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He is also a Young Leader and non-resident WSD-Handa Fellow with the Pacific Forum CSIS. He previously lived in Beijing, China.)

[Diplomatically, Washington should hold a strategic intervention with Beijing to address China's bad neighbor policy: The United States will never accept the Chinese strategy of rapidly expanding its maritime domain at the price of international law and the sovereignty of its neighbors. There are already several forums for U.S.-China strategic discussion, among them the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, Strategic Security Dialogue, Defense Consultative Talks \(DCT\), Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue, and the Assistant Secretary Sub-Dialogue. Conveying U.S. concerns and intentions in these bilateral strategic forums allow Beijing to save face on the international stage. ... The goal of this strategic intervention would be to pressure Beijing to back down from its destabilizing belligerence in the East and South China Seas. ... The United States should, however, continue to demand that all claimants resolve disputes through peaceful arbitration, never with the use of force. ... Washington should make clear that China would face international repercussions for further militarization of international waters, to include United Nations condemnation and possible sanctions.](#)

The evidence reproduced in this section establishes two important points:

One, diplomatic engagement is much broader than economic engagement, so topicality violations that argue that the Affirmative is not “economic engagement” are not particularly useful since Affirmative teams can claim they fall under “diplomatic engagement,” which is quite broad. In fact, it is arguably so broad that it really doesn't limit the topic much at all, leading it to functionally read, the United States federal government should increase its engagement with China. “Diplomatic and/or economic” is arguably a useless modifier.

Second, there is a strong argument that diplomatic engagement makes the topic bidirectional because it can include pressure. While teams may win topicality “interpretation” debates that the Affirmative must be a “positive incentive” for the purpose of limits and avoiding bidirectionality, the literature clearly indicates that “diplomatic engagement” includes pressure—in other words, “sticks” as well as “carrots.”

• How does the U.S. engage?

As noted, this question is also related to the third question because whether or not engagement can (or should) include a quid pro quo is a *how* question related to engagement. I separated them because the conditionality question applies to *all* other *how* issues and is really a core question about the types of acceptable Negative counterplans. For example, the U.S. might engage by providing foreign aid, but whether or not that aid can or should be delivered as part of a quid pro quo is a separate question. Similarly, can the plan topically make a simple trade concession, or does the plan *have* to offer it as part of a quid pro quo to be topical?

In terms of specific mechanisms for engagement, contextual evidence exists for engaging in all of the following ways:

- Official contacts with the government
- Academic exchanges
- Two track dialogue(s)
- Development programs (foreign aid)
- Providing loans
- Working through non-governmental organizations (NGOS)
- Enabling International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to support work in the topic countries
- Negotiating trade agreements and facilitating trade ties
- Developing standards and practices for businesses
- Using the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) to support business development
- Encouraging other countries to reduce trade barriers
- Providing visas to individuals in other countries (this was an entire college resolution!)
- Supporting increased investment
- Helping U.S. companies navigate the business climate
- Strengthening measures to protect intellectual property
- Encouraging countries to invest in the U.S.
- Integrating countries into the global economic system
- Reduction in sanctions and other trade barriers
- Facilitating action by IFIs
- Boosting capital investment

- Supporting joint technology development
- Providing technical cooperation on energy environment
- Facilitating the development of regulation

Some of these mechanisms are more or less relevant in the context of China, but that are all generally considered *mechanisms of engagement*. Many of these are obviously not ppqs.

There is some evidence that says that U.S. economic engagement also includes engagement by private actors—businesses and nonprofit organizations that are not tied to the government. While this private engagement constitutes economic engagement by the United States, it would not constitute *the federal government's economic engagement* and the resolution does say the U.S. has to increase *its* engagement.

It is important to point out here that it is really the *how* question that determines what constitutes engagement. One way to look to define economic engagement is to look at what *economic issues* engagement can occur over. This list of economic issues was provided above in discussion of the first question. It is important, however, to emphasize that engagement is really a *process* and that if the Affirmative plan uses one of the tools discussed in answering the second question, the plan likely uses economic engagement, *even if that economic engagement occurs over non-economic military issues*.

• **Can (or must) engagement be conditional?**

Affirmatives will likely use one of the following engagement mechanisms that have been listed above. The major outstanding question is whether or not the Affirmative can topically choose to make that engagement conditional and whether or not they *have* to make the *how* conditional in order for the action of the *how* to constitute *engagement*.

At least in the context of *economic* engagement, there is evidence that supports both interpretations of the term—that it can be both conditional and unconditional.

Kahler, Miles, & Kastner, Scott L. (2006). Strategic uses of economic interdependence: Engagement policies on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait. *Journal of Peace Research*, 43(5), 52. (Kahler: Professor, Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego; Kastner: Professor, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland.)

While the determinants and effectiveness of economic sanctions have been the subject of a substantial and growing literature in international relations, much less attention has been given to economic engagement strategies, where a country deliberately expands economic ties with an adversary to change the target's behavior. This article develops a theoretical framework that distinguishes between three types of engagement strategies: conditional policies that directly link economic ties to changed behavior in the target state; unconditional policies where

economic interdependence is meant to act as a constraint on the behavior of the target state; and unconditional policies where economic interdependence is meant to effect a transformation in the foreign policy goals of the target state.

Although this previous card is in the context of economic engagement, there is no reason to believe that the same analysis would not apply to other forms of engagement and there is evidence that “engagement” includes both.

O'Hanlon, Michael. (2016, January 8). What Obama gets right about America's Asia policy. Retrieved 01/10/15 from <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/order-from-chaos/posts/2016/01/08-state-of-union-asia-pacific-policy-ohanlon>. (The author specializes in national security and defense policy. Before joining Brookings, O'Hanlon worked as a national security analyst at the Congressional Budget Office. His current research agenda includes military strategy and technology, Northeast Asia, U.S. Central Command and defense budgets, among other defense and security issues. His most recent book is *The Future of Land Warfare*, Brookings Institution Press, 2015.)

The Asia-Pacific region is a promising but dangerous one. The pillars of Obama's Asia policy are, in effect:

- A (hardly dramatic) military “rebalance” to the broader Asia-Pacific region that, among other things, will increase the share of the Navy based or deployed there from 50 percent (the historic average) to 60 percent of the total U.S. fleet by 2020;
- The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement that will include most of the region's key economies besides China, assuming that Congress (and other nations' legislatures) ratifies the accord;
- Building on the accomplishments of President Bill Clinton and President H.W. Bush in improving the U.S.-India relationship across economic, security, and diplomatic spheres; and
- A policy of engagement with China that promotes cooperation on issues like energy, climate, and broader economic policy, while also pushing back against China on issues like cybersecurity and the military's activities in the South China Sea.

The bidirectionally is true in the context of China:

Finkelstein, David. (2015, September 24). Heritage Foundation Panel Discussion. (The author is Vice President and Director of China Studies, CNA.)

But we must also understand that economic engagement with China means ensuring that they participate fairly in our system. First and foremost, China needs significant improvements to its legal system and to further open its economy to foreign and private investment. Another reform that China must undertake, urgently undertake, is combating the theft of foreign intellectual property. ... To effect these changes, we need a carrots and stick strategy

of increasing economic engagement with China that brings international norms and transparency, while holding firm on these fundamental principles.

Although the piece of evidence above indicates that engagement can be conditional or unconditional, there is contrary evidence on both sides that sets up all of the following topicality arguments on the Negative:

- 1) Affirmative plans *cannot be unconditional*; engagement *requires* a quid pro quo;
- 2) Affirmative plans *cannot be conditional*; engagement must always be positive and cannot be negative.

In regards to this second topicality argument, it is important to articulate a distinction between positive and negative conditions. A positive condition, for example, would be rewarding China with lifting a trade restriction if it frees political prisoners. A negative condition, for example, would be applying another trade sanction if it does not release political prisoners (or increase Internet freedom).

There is good evidence that negative conditions are not engagement but that positive conditions are part of engagement.

Mastanduno, Michael. (2003). The strategy of economic engagement: Theory and practice in Edward D. Mansfield and Brian M. Pollins (Eds.) *Economic Interdependence and International Conflict: New Perspectives on an Enduring Debate*, 184-5. (The author is a government professor at Dartmouth.)

The approach taken in this chapter focuses instead at the state level, on the expansion of economic interdependence as a tool of state craft. Under what circumstances does the cultivation of economic ties, that is, the fostering of economic interdependence as a conscious state strategy, lead to important and predictable changes in the foreign policy behavior of a target state? Students of economic statecraft refer to this strategy variously as economic engagement, economic inducement, economic diplomacy, positive sanctions, positive economic linkage, or the use of economic “carrots” instead of sticks. Critics of the strategy call it economic appeasement.

There is also evidence that negative and positive conditions *together* constitute economic engagement.

Forcese, Greg, et al. (2002). Globalizing decency: Responsible engagement in an era of economic integration.” *Yale Human Rights & Development Law Journal*, 42. (The author is a member of the Bars of New York, Ontario, and the District of Columbia. He is an Associate at Hughes, Hubbard & Reed, LLP, in Washington.)

At the margins, “conditionalities” inducing adherence to codes of conduct and sanctions blur together. For instance, while selective purchasing need not constitute a

boycott, the Burma and South Africa procurement regimes discussed above are clearly designed to curtail economic engagement with unpalatable regimes. Measures insisting on divestment cross a subtle boundary, going beyond the “mitigation” goal of the second prong of responsible engagement. They clearly constitute sanctions, the propriety of which must be scrutinized with an eye to the various concerns about sanctions, their effectiveness and secondary effects.

The interpretations of economic engagement related to whether or not it can be conditional or unconditional are both winnable, however, and this has two important implications for next year’s debates.

First, debaters that are good at debating topicality can win debates on both sides. If the Affirmative plan is a quid pro quo, the negative can argue that it cannot be a quid pro quo. If the Affirmative plan is not a quid pro quo, the negative can argue that it has to be a quid pro quo.

Second, different types of Affirmative plans set up different types of Negative counterplans. If the Affirmative plan is not conditional, Negative teams can advocate a counterplan to condition the plan on one of the topic countries adopting a particular policy. Popular net-benefits to this counterplan will be Politics (it will be more popular to ask for something in return than to just give something away) and the advantage that stems from adding the condition (protecting human rights, for example).

If the Affirmative plan is conditional, Negative teams can advocate passing the plan without the condition. Popular net-benefits to this counterplan include improving relations with the target country and avoiding the Sovereignty Good kritik.

If the Affirmative plan is conditional, it is also arguably competitive for a counterplan to *add a condition*. Although counterplans that simply add items to the plan are normally not competitive because the permutation to do both would solve for the benefit of the second action, a permutation to add a condition is arguably severance because the counterplan makes the quid pro quo *more difficult* for the topic country to accept and arguably severs out of the easier, earlier offer.

Regardless of the merits of the particular counterplans and the competitiveness of this latter counterplan, conditioning and deciding not to condition constitute strong Negative counterplan ground, so all debaters need to be prepared for this debate.

• Does the plan have to include dialogue?

If the plan is a conditional or quid pro quo engagement, interaction with China will inherently be part of the plan. If the plan is unconditional, however, must it still involve some sort of interaction with the government to be topical? For example, the U.S. can remove a trade barrier without any interaction with those governments at all—but do these actions constitute economic engagement?

One way to think about answering this question is to say that if the Affirmative wins the debate that unconditional actions are economic engagement then the plan is topical and interaction with the government is not required. However, is it the case that the Affirmative could write a plan that is simply unconditional, such as providing foreign aid or negotiating a trade deal, without attaching any conditions but nonetheless interacting with the government?

Requiring the Affirmative plan to include some interaction with China's government does two things for the Negative. First, it provides a limiting function on the topic by excluding some cases that do not provide for any interaction. Second, if the Affirmative plan is really an *artificial interaction with the government*, meaning that the interaction is not needed to do the plan but is only there for the purpose of making the plan topical, the Negative could read a counterplan to simply act unilaterally without engaging the government. This would require them to provide a reason that the artificial interaction is bad, but as long as the Negative comes up with some net-benefit (even a simple "Diplomatic Trade-Off"), they will probably win because the Affirmative will not be able to defend it as necessary to solve.

While this proposed "interaction" requirement does help the Negative, I don't think it will be that hard for the Affirmative to find a strong case that requires at least some type of diplomatic engagement with China's government to solve.

• Does the plan have to be positive?

Despite the quality of the evidence that says engagement can include pressure and Negative incentives, I think a lot of debaters will argue that engagement must be exclusively positive for limits purposes.

First, there is a lot of context evidence indicating that engagement is positive. Second, there are plenty (at least 100) proposals for positive/cooperative engagement.

Goldstein, Lyle J. (2015, May 1). *Meeting China halfway: How to defuse the emerging U.S.-China rivalry*, p. 1-2. Georgetown University Press. Kindle Edition.

Scholars who research U.S.-China relations on both sides of the Pacific are nearly universal in concluding that such a catastrophic conflict today is far from inevitable. But what they have not done thus far is to provide concrete intellectual paradigms and accompanying policy proposals to lead this troubled relationship away from the brink of disaster. Therefore, this book seeks to be dramatically different from any other in the field in its treatment of U.S.-China relations, by explicitly focusing on how to realize new paths to bilateral cooperation via "cooperation spirals"—the opposite of an escalation spiral. *One hundred policy proposals are made* throughout the chapters of this book, not because these are the only solutions to arresting the alarming course toward conflict, but rather to inaugurate

a genuine debate regarding policy solutions to the most vexing problems in bilateral relations.

Third, Negative teams will argue that restricting the Affirmative to positive cooperation will limit the topic and avoid bidirectionality.

So while this essay will cover all approaches, I think this practical topicality question is something debaters must keep in mind as they approach the season.

Issues to Engage Over

I devoted a substantial amount of time to the meaning of the phrase "diplomatic and/or economic engagement" not only because it establishes what plans can do but also because it sets up important Negative counterplans and lays the foundation for important Negative strategy.

In this section, I will review some of the major issues that the U.S. should arguably engage China over that will likely be popular Affirmative case areas.

Since the topic simply requires some engagement with China, teams can really argue for engaging China over any issue that represents a strong case area. There are proposals in the literature for "hardline," "softline," and various QPQ approaches.

Climate Change. China and the U.S. are the world's two largest emitters of carbon dioxide and cooperation over the issue could go a long way toward reducing global climate change. Given that the climate change advantage is often used to provide leverage against common kritiks and the overall strength of warming as an advantage, I suspect proposals to engage China over climate change will be popular Affirmative plans.

Cooke, Merritt. (2013, September). *Sustaining U.S.-China cooperation in clean energy*. Woodrow Wilson Institute. Retrieved 01/20/16 from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/US_China%20Cooperatin%20in%20Clean%20Energy_1.pdf

I believe this topic is an important one. If the United States and China find a way to realistically base and sustain their cooperation in clean energy, they will be addressing directly 40 percent of the world's total carbon emissions. And if together they manage to create a replicable model of cooperation, they can indirectly help the world address the remaining 60 percent.

South China Sea. There are a number of territorial disputes in the South China Sea (SCS), including between Brunei, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. There are also disputes over the Spratly and Paracel Islands. Recently, China has been more aggressive in asserting its territorial claims, building artificial islands and increasing military activity.

In response to China's military build-up the U.S. has increased its military activity in the region, including a number of "sail throughs" in the SCS. Some policy advocates argue the U.S. should take a more aggressive approach to containing China in the SCS and others argue the U.S. needs to take a less aggressive approach, arguing that its current policy risks an escalating conflict with China.

Tuosheng, Zhang. (2015, November 12). Use 'quiet diplomacy' to resolve sea issue. *China Daily*. Retrieved 01/02/16 from http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2015-11/12/content_22435699.htm. (The author is the Director of Research and Senior Fellow at the China Foundation for International Strategic Studies.)

The South China Sea is one of the busiest sea lanes in the world used by China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and many other countries, including the United States, and keeping it open is in the best interest of all. The shipping lane has never suffered disruptions despite the disputes among various countries over islands, reefs, and maritime rights and interests. Still, the U.S. has a fundamental disagreement with China over freedom of navigation. And the real reason for disagreement is the protracted close-range military reconnaissance and other operations by the U.S.. Since U.S. actions endanger China's national security, the latter is naturally opposed to them. Late last month, the U.S. further intensified the disagreement over freedom of navigation by sending its warship to patrol the waters near the islands where China has carried out reclamation work. On the handling of South China Sea-related issues, the White House, the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Defense have some differing views. But the views of the Defense Department and the U.S. Pacific Command seem the toughest. Their belligerent views could be a symbolic stance to satisfy China bashers and get more budgetary funds. Or, they could signify their intention of turning the military operations in the South China Sea into a regular affair, gradually increasing their scale and intensity. Although both possibilities are provocative, the latter will greatly increase the risks of China-U.S. frictions in the South China Sea. So, while waiting to see what exactly the U.S. is after, China must prepare for a long-term struggle in case the U.S. pursues the second path. Compliance or non-compliance with the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea aside, the entry of the U.S. warship into the waters near China's islands sends a strong negative signal: that the U.S. considers China an adversary or even a potential enemy. ... But ignoring China's promises, the U.S. has been consolidating its military presence in the South China Sea by continuing close-range military reconnaissance against China, interfering in the regional maritime disputes, selling weapons to Vietnam and other countries, strengthening its military alliances in the region and regaining its hold over military bases in the Philippines, and calling for joint patrols with Japan and other allies from outside Southeast Asia. By sending guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen to patrol the waters near China's islands, the U.S. seems to indicate that it

is ready for a direct military conflict or confrontation with China. In a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black, however, it has accused China of interfering in its exercise of freedom of navigation and "militarizing" the region by carrying out construction work on its islands. China and the U.S. indeed have serious differences on the South China Sea issue. But they should be addressed through dialogue, not through an armed conflict. Given the emerging risks, therefore, the two countries need to use "quiet diplomacy" rather than taking actions that could worsen the situation.

North Korea. China is North Korea's largest trading partner and likely has the greatest potential to thwart the problematic behavior of North Korea, which has recently tested a nuclear weapon, a ballistic missile, has a 9 million person army, and has recently made threats against South Korea. This case would probably struggle on the solvency question (teams would have to win both that some form of engagement would incentivize China to change their behavior toward North Korea and then win that China changing its behavior would induce changes in North Korea's behavior), but given the timeliness and magnitude of the impact, I think these cases will likely be popular. For example, one proposal suggests the U.S. could offer to China that the U.S. would not deploy its troops or nuclear weapons in North Korea after unification.

Rosenmount, Henry. (2015, October 14). What better U.S.-China cooperation might look like. Retrieved 04/12/16 from <http://fpif.org/what-better-u-s-china-cooperation-might-look-like/>

Believing that only even stronger sanctions can bring North Korea to the negotiating table on nuclear disarmament, Secretary of State John Kerry is pressing China to join in imposing them. China, however, is reluctant to do so, even though it has become sorely peeved at its neighbor in recent years. One thing the U.S. could offer in return for Chinese cooperation would be a pledge not to station any American troops or nuclear weapons in North Korea when the two countries reunite, as sooner or later they must. Such a pledge would clearly restrict our future options, but it is almost certainly worth the effort.

There is also a proposal for the U.S. to reduce troops in South Korea in exchange for China's cooperation on Korean unification.

Kydd, Andrew. (2015, July 30). Pulling the plug: Can there be a deal with China on Korean unification? *Washington Quarterly*. Retrieved 04/13/16 from https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/sites/twq.elliott.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Kydd_Summer%202015.pdf. (The author is a professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison.)

What kind of deal could enlist Chinese support for unification at a price tolerable to South Korea and the United States? China would have to withdraw support

for the North Korean regime in order to pressure it to join the ROK. To convince the North Korean leadership to leave power, it would be very helpful to offer them asylum in China, permanently protecting them from criminal trials or reprisals. South Korea would have to agree to reunification with the North on the condition that it immediately dismantles the North Korean nuclear program under full international inspections and reaffirms Korea's adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons state. The United States would have to agree to reduce its role in Korea. It would almost certainly have to withdraw its military forces from united Korea, and possibly scale back or eliminate its alliance relationship as well. Korea could be "neutralized," much as Austria was early in the Cold War, to remove it from the superpower competition. *The key quid pro quo is Chinese termination of support for the North in exchange for U.S. withdrawal from the South.* What would each of the major players have to gain from such a deal? China would reap benefits in at least four areas. First, it would see U.S. troops off the continent of Asia. China views U.S. troops as a threat that is bad enough for now, but would be even worse if Korea unified, with U.S. troops moving north to the Yalu. Second, a deal would eliminate other security threats generated by North Korea, in particular the possibility of war—even nuclear war—on the Korean peninsula. Third, a unified Korea would be an economic dynamo for northern China, contributing to investment and cross-border prosperity. Finally, it would permanently end the refugee problem posed by northern poverty. It's true that there would be a temporary period of instability and migration within Korea and possibly across the Korean-Chinese border, but South Korea would have to take responsibility for this issue and the problem would diminish with time, as it did in the German case.

Taiwan. Legally part of China, Taiwan is an island off the East coast of China. It is unique in that it is a "partially recognized state," which means that it has its own government, the capacity to enter into relations with other states, a defined territory, and a permanent population.

Taiwan has always been a controversial issue in U.S.-China relations because the U.S. defends Taiwan with arms sales and general military support but does not recognize Taiwan as an independent country, as this would collapse relations with China and risk a war over Taiwan.

Despite an overarching framework for U.S.-Taiwan relations (no support for Taiwan independence, military support to deter China's aggression), there are many proposals to "engage" China over Taiwan, including increased and decreased arms sales, collaboration to prevent conflict escalation, and other proposals to manage relations across multiple actors. One proposal in this area is to limit U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

Topping, Seymore. (2011, December 20). China vs. the U.S.: Cooperation over competition, part 5. *World Policy Journal*. Retrieved 04/12/16 from <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2011/12/20/china-vs-us-cooperation-over-competition-part-5>

In keeping with the Taiwan Relations Act, the Obama Administration, like administrations before it, sold this year a \$5.3 billion arms package to Taiwan consisting mainly of upgrades of Taiwan's fighter jets. ... The deal induced the usual bitter complaints in China of interference, but Beijing did not cancel the military-to-military consultations entirely as it did temporarily last year. In my view, the sale of arms packages to Taiwan, so irritating to Beijing, has more significance for the arms industry in the United States than it does for the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan is utterly dependent on the United States for defense against any Mainland military takeover attempt. Without that shield it would be entirely vulnerable to the far more powerful Mainland forces, more so now with the new batteries of missile launchers sited on the Mainland pointing at the island. Supplying arms to Taiwan makes little, if any, difference in the real military balance.

Outer Space. The U.S. and Russia were the original space powers but China has been aggressively expanding both its "peaceful" exploration and development of outer space as well as its military applications. There are various proposals to work with China to peacefully develop outer space as well as proposals to work with China to develop approaches to reduce the risk of military conflict in space. ASATs are designed to shoot-out the satellites of adversaries, blinding other countries and making it difficult for those countries to conduct military operations in the event of a conflict.

David, Leonard. (2016, June 16). U.S.-China cooperation in space: Is it possible, what is in store? *Space.com*. Retrieved 04/12/16 from <http://www.space.com/29671-china-nasa-space-station-cooperation.html>

It will take presidential leadership to get started on enhanced U.S.-Chinese cooperation, said John Logsdon, professor emeritus of political science and international affairs at The George Washington University's Space Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

"The first step is the White House working with congressional leadership to get current, unwise restrictions on such cooperation revoked," Logsdon told Space.com. "Then, the United States can invite China to work together with the United States and other spacefaring countries on a wide variety of space activities and, most dramatically, human spaceflight."

Logsdon said the U.S.-Soviet Apollo-Soyuz docking and "handshake in space" back in 1975 serves as a history lesson.

"A similar initiative bringing the United States and China together in orbit would be a powerful indicator of the intent of the two 21st century superpowers to work together on Earth as well as in space," Logsdon said.

While it is impressive that China has become the third country to launch its citizens into orbit, the current state of the Chinese human spaceflight program is about equivalent

to the U.S. program in the Gemini era, 50 years ago, Logsdon noted.

“China has much more to learn from the United States in human spaceflight than the converse,” Logsdon said. “From the U.S. perspective, the main reason to engage in space cooperation with China is political, not technical.”

Cyber Security. Cyber security deals with the protection of computer networks from cyber attacks. Cyber attacks include efforts to shut-down computer systems, redirect computer systems to more malicious tasks, manipulate the military and financial systems of other countries, and to steal corporate secrets. These attacks can be carried out by individuals, terrorists, and other countries.

Over the last few years, the U.S. has accused China of engaging in a number of cyberattacks against U.S. corporations and its military infrastructure. The evidence against China is arguably very strong.

In the fall of 2015, the Obama Administration reached an agreement with President Xi in an attempt to improve cybersecurity, but the agreement was vague and many observers argue it is not likely to accomplish much. As a result, there are a variety of proposals to reduce the threat of cyberattacks from China and to avoid military escalation over any potential attacks.

Staffy-Gaddy, Franz. (2015, October 30). Can the U.S. and China cooperate on the first (and last) line of cyber defense? *The Diplomat*. Retrieved 04/12/16 from <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/can-the-us-and-china-cooperate-on-the-first-and-last-line-of-cyber-defense/>

For now, the September 2015 China-U.S. cyber agreement remains the most useful framework for bilateral cooperation on cyber-related policy issues after the June 2013 Sunnylands summit pledges to deepen cybersecurity cooperation were abandoned with the U.S. indictment of five Chinese military hackers in May 2014. To avoid past mistakes, the rather vague September agreement needs to be followed up as soon as possible by bilateral meetings to more clearly define specific venues of cooperation between China and the United States. And while the September agreement talks about a meeting of a new joint China-U.S. high-level government-to-government working group to combat cybercrime to be held before the end of the 2015 and biannually in subsequent years, other initiatives to deepen cooperation between the two countries need to happen. One possible way to do so is to strengthen cooperation between the Chinese and U.S. Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). In general, CERTs are the first (and last line) of defense in protecting a country's critical information infrastructure from cyberattacks and are tasked with coordinating responses to network intrusions across the nation and beyond.

China's CERT is specifically tasked with “building up

the national monitoring, warning, emergency response, evaluation and public opinion centers for network security.” It serves as the coordinating body for other CERTs in China and also engages with CERTs in other countries.

Military-to-Military. The U.S. already has a dominant global presence and China continues to modernize its military and expand its global presence. As China's global power rises, it creates more opportunities for the U.S. and China to come into conflict. To avoid escalation, there are a number of proposals for the U.S. and China to develop agreements to reduce the risk of these conflicts and their potential escalation.

Guoliang, Gu. (2014). Cooperation and differences between China and the United States in the field of arms control and nonproliferation. Retrieved 04/11/16 from https://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/Gu_Guoliang.pdf. (The author is Director, Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation Studies, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.)

China and the United States should enhance their strategic reassurance through dialogues at different levels. ... It is particularly important to strengthen military to military relations between the two countries, as exchanges and dialogues between the U.S. and Chinese militaries have lagged behind exchanges and dialogues in other fields. The two sides should strengthen their communication so as to have better understanding on their respective threat perceptions, military strategies, and national defense planning, instead of basing their military preparation on the “worst case scenario” category. The military leaders and experts should have in-depth dialogues on specific issues such as nuclear doctrines and policies, nuclear security, ballistic missile defense, outer space, cyber security, military transparency and etc. The two militaries should enhance their cooperation in countering terrorism, anti-pirates and U.N. peace-keeping. They should have more regular exchanges of visits and restore their lab to lab projects. Greater efforts should be made to remove the three major obstacles, the concerned provisions of U.S. National Defense Authorization Act of 2000 in particular, which hinder further improvement of military to military exchanges between the two countries.

Trade Deficit. The low cost of producing goods in China contributes significantly to a trade deficit between the U.S. and China where the U.S. is purchasing more goods from China than it exports, arguably threatening the U.S. economy and its relative superpower strength vis-à-vis China. There are proposals to resolve this by facilitating U.S. exports.

Against all countries, China currently has a trade surplus of \$600 billion.

Currency. China has been allowing the devaluation of its currency, the Yuan, for the last nine months. In spite of this, most analysts think the Yuan is more than 10%

overvalued against the U.S. dollar.

China has continued to cut its currency because the government and investors borrowed trillions of dollars during the great recession and spent it on “uncompetitive factories and ghost cities” (Rubino, 2016). Now these companies and governments that own these assets are facing bankruptcy. The only way for China to deal with this is to lower the value of the Yuan to reduce domestic debts.

A devalued currency means foreign countries can buy Chinese goods more cheaply, and, since the cost of importing goods rises, it protects domestic Chinese producers. This contributes substantially to the trade deficit problem discussed above.

The problem is that this could lead to a domino effect as other countries lower their currencies to be more competitive with China. This would contribute to an artificial relative spike in the U.S. dollar, and that would “in turn swell the value of dollar-denominated commodities and corporate debt — which would likely grind global growth to a halt” (Rosenfeld, 2016).

Advocates like former Representative Bill Owen argue we need to pressure China to reduce its currency devaluation (Owens, 2015).

Human rights. One objective of U.S. policy approaches toward China has always been to push China in the direction of greater respect for human rights. Trade is likely the lever used to pressure China to move in this direction. Teams may claim general human rights advantages or claim to solve specific instances of human rights abuses, such as the central government’s treatment of Tibet.

Nuclear Power and Proliferation. China is an advanced manufacturer of nuclear energy technology and China often exports this technology in order to make money. These exports could support the development of nuclear weapons in countries such as Iran and Pakistan. Engaging China may encourage it to reduce this dangerous nuclear trade.

Recently, the U.S. and China have made pledges and entered into agreements on nuclear energy cooperation (123 agreements), so a critical component of a case in this area is finding evidence that more needs to be done.

Export Controls. Export controls limit the sale of advanced technologies to countries such as China in order to prevent them from developing military applications that could threaten the U.S. and its allies. Some scholars argue for reducing these controls.

Segal, Adam. (2004). Practical engagement: A fine-line for U.S.-China trade. *Washington Quarterly*, 200. Retrieved 04/11/16 from <http://www.cfr.org/china/practical-engagement-drawing-fine-line-us-china-trade/p7063>. (The author is Greenberg Senior Fellow for China Studies and Director of the Digital and Cyberspace Policy Program.)

The most effective response to this new paradigm is to maintain the embargo on the sale of military items and a small

but very crucial handful of dual-use items, while relaxing controls on most advanced commercial technologies. This policy will further integrate China into the international system and, more importantly, help preserve the U.S. comparative advantage in technological innovation, thus assuring continued U.S. technological superiority. The arms and defense technology embargo that the United States and the European Union imposed on China after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre should remain in place. Despite recent French claims that the EU’s ban is outdated and should be lifted, the United States should continue to cooperate with and, when necessary, pressure European suppliers to maintain a common policy with the United States. The United States has taken some tentative steps toward lifting controls on the sales of advanced commercial technologies, such as lifting the ban on the export of some types of supercomputers, but more can be done to ensure that U.S. technology producers are able to exploit rapidly changing markets. In a globalized world, excessive unilateral export controls risk harming U.S. access to critical markets and, therefore, U.S. innovative capacity.

Environmental Issues. Climate change will likely be the dominant issue addressed by teams that wish to focus on the environment, but other environmental problems that could be addressed include air pollution, acid rain, and water pollution. With 1 billion+ people and an economy that is working to move out of “developing country” status, the environment is not in the best shape and there are many proposals for efforts to strengthen cooperation with China to improve it. One potential area for cooperation is oil drilling safety:

Goldstein, Lyle J. (2015). *Meeting China halfway: How to defuse the emerging U.S.-China rivalry*, p. 124. Georgetown University Press. Kindle Edition.

The United States should focus on maritime spill mitigation in enhancing environmental and civil maritime cooperation with China. This chapter began with the assertion that it is not simply coincidental that China suffered a giant oil spill in the midst of the “green city” of Dalian at the same time (summer 2010) as the United States was engaged in the BP crisis and the resulting vast cleanup of spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico. Insofar as oil and natural gas will continue to play vital roles in both these economies for the foreseeable future, it is imperative that these fossil fuels are extracted from the sea floor in the safest manner and using the most ecologically sensible safeguards. In this area U.S. technology and practices will be of huge interest to the relevant Chinese agencies and companies. At the same time, and given the regrettably common occurrence of spills in Chinese waters, U.S. practitioners will also gain from having access to China’s widening experience in this area, for example, through the use of extensive case studies. Moreover, as undersea drilling expands to previously inaccessible areas (e.g., the Arctic) and sensitive domains (e.g., the South China Sea), it will be especially important to have developed integrated and interdependent commercial and official networks that can ease mistrust and enhance cooperation to benefit the

world's endangered oceans in a new era of technology-enabled exploitation of its resources.

Out of Area. As the discussion of North Korea demonstrates, the resolution in no way limits Affirmative cases to those that deal with problems in China. It is topical for the U.S. to engage China over any issue, including the Middle East (think Syria, Iraq, and the Gulf Area), various regional disputes and resource issues in Africa, ties with Russia, and China's growing influence in Latin America. Strategic considerations aside, the breadth of the topic really includes the entire world, because China is a global power.

Here are a couple of solvency cards.

Africa:

Goldstein, Lyle J. (2015). *Meeting China halfway: How to defuse the emerging U.S.-China rivalry*, p. 148. Georgetown University Press. Kindle Edition.

The United States should propose enlarged U.S.-China military engagement in the sphere of military medicine with a focus on Africa. The current Ebola Crisis powerfully demonstrates the imperative for greater global engagement in Africa's health situation, as well as the potential for Washington and Beijing to spearhead these efforts. Both the United States and China have large and well-developed military medical establishments. In each country, these military medical institutions enjoy high prestige for professionalism, high-quality care, and the unique ability to offer large-scale care in extremely austere conditions when called upon to do so, as they have each demonstrated in the 2014 Ebola Crisis. Both nations deploy military medical units around the world, and especially in the developing world, to offer medical aid. Undoubtedly, both Washington and Beijing likely have ulterior motives beyond altruism, not least competing for "hearts and minds" to outperform the other superpower in the grand game to increase their respective influence. The United States has engaged in such a form of military medical diplomacy for decades, and undoubtedly much good has been done, though the effort has not been entirely without missteps. Africa is a natural focal point of such efforts. China has radically increased its capabilities in this arena during the last decade. With the only purpose-built naval hospital ship in the world, Beijing has dispatched this unique vessel recently to both Africa and Latin America to deliver medical aid to needy countries. Arguably, a competitive approach to delivering aid between the two superpowers could actually benefit the developing world. However, a more cooperative approach would have the benefit of integrating the efforts, preventing redundancies, allowing for specialization, and generally offering the developing world the prospect that the two superpowers could work toward the common objectives of development and better health, as suggested by the example given at the start of this chapter. A joint patrol by hospital ships from the Chinese and U.S. navies along the African coast could have immense symbolic importance for the bilateral relationship more generally. Indeed, the two navies have already engaged

in regular educational exchanges between hospital ship personnel. In the current Ebola Crisis, the two hospital ships could work in tandem off the coast of West Africa to form a proximate safe haven for infected medical aid workers—a step that could plausibly boost the morale of those risking their lives on the front lines of the crisis.

Middle East:

Bandow, Doug. (2015). America and China face the 21st century: Replace confrontation with cooperation. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved 04/12/16 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/doug-bandow/america-and-china-face-th_b_7785546.html. (The author is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties.)

Elsewhere the cases get tougher. In the Middle East Goldstein ends his cooperation spiral with the U.S. pressuring Israel to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and China pushing Iran to recognize Israel. Wonderful ideas, but likely to face massive resistance by the other countries involved. Regarding India, Goldstein would have China back Delhi's membership on the U.N. Security Council and the U.S. president shun the Dali Lama and halt drone strikes in Pakistan. Big ideas worthy of debate, but, again, not easy to achieve.

Advantage Areas

I normally address the primary advantage areas in more detail, but given the breadth of the topic I will run through them quickly.

I do think the stronger cases will claim advantages that are likely intrinsic to engaging China, such as U.S.-China relations, China's economic development, containing China, and the avoidance of U.S.-military conflict with China.

There are, however, other advantages. Beyond the issues already discussed, these include China-Russia relations, China-Japan relations, U.S. power projection in Asia, the security of sea lanes, U.S. global hegemony (both hard and soft power), U.S. military readiness, China conventional force readiness, China nuclear modernization, terrorism, China & U.S. influence in the Middle East and Latin America, free trade (both regional and global), nuclear proliferation, and China's global soft power.

Basically, since China is a global power, every impact you have ever seen read will likely become an impact on this topic.

Disadvantages

In the discussion of the likely case areas, I didn't focus on likely plan mechanisms. I do think that methods of engagement that either increase or decrease pressure on China (and ones that do both) are likely topical/considered to be engagement, though some good T debaters will be good

at winning “interpretation” / limits debates in either direction. Regardless, however, most plans will move in one direction (increased or decreased pressure) and this creates opportunities to start thinking about strategy. The beginning of that is thinking about disadvantages that link to increased pressure and those that link to decreased pressure / more accommodating approaches.

Increased Pressure Disadvantages

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Stability. If China were to change its policies in response to U.S. pressure, this could undermine the legitimacy of the CCP and/or contribute to governmental infighting. This could undermine the ability of the CCP to implement particular economic reforms, make it more aggressive internationally, or accelerate military development. In the past, some teams have even argued this could lead to the collapse of the CCP.

U.S.-China Relations. Greater pressure on China would likely lead to disruptions in U.S.-China relations. There is a lot of good impact evidence that claims that strong U.S.-China relations are important to resolve many different global problems. As just discussed, strong U.S.-China relations could also undermine China-Russia relations and teams could argue it is bad for China and Russia to have strong relations.

Decreased Pressure Disadvantages

China Aggression. There is an entire body of literature devoted to the question of whether or not the U.S. should contain China. Containment advocates argue that we need a strong posture vis-à-vis China in order to deter China’s military aggression. This disadvantage will argue that going “soft” on China will encourage China’s aggression.

Some scholars argue that engagement of China that is aimed at integrating China economically has failed because of China’s perceptions of U.S. relative decline, a growth in assertive Chinese nationalism, and increased repression.

U.S. Elections. Approaches toward China that are “soft” will likely be bashed by Republicans as threatening U.S. military and economic interests. Teams will argue this bashing will make it more likely the Republicans will win and that a Republican victory will be bad.

U.S. Political Capital. Pushing “soft” approaches toward China through Congress is likely to burn Presidential political capital. Similarly, unilateral actions by the President are also likely to alienate at least the Republican side of Congress and burn capital.

Noori, Maral. U.S. (2015, August). Overcoming barriers to U.S.-China cooperation. Institute of Peace. Retrieved 04/11/16 from <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PB192-Overcoming-Barriers-to-U.S.-China-Cooperation.pdf>

Political interests undermine the bilateral relationship. U.S.

hard-liners fear an increasingly powerful China. The military threat is used both to rationalize increasing U.S. defense funding and to counter any Obama administration attempt to constructively engage China. Even the U.S.-China climate change and clean energy cooperation joint announcement was denounced, with Republicans complaining that China would not be required to make changes for sixteen years.

Human Rights Leadership. The uniqueness for this will be difficult to win, but positively engaging China may undercut U.S. leadership on human rights, undermining U.S. global human rights promotion. Similarly, teams may argue that positive engagement may undermine U.S. leadership on global democracy, threatening democracy worldwide.

CCP Stability. This disadvantage also links to softline approaches that claim to change China’s behavior in particular areas because those changes could be seen as caving in to the West.

Russia-China Alliance. Reducing pressure on China could cause China to align more with the U.S., reducing China’s cooperation with Russia. The impacts include arguments as to why it is good for China and Russia to develop strong ties.

Japan. Softline policies, particularly military softline policies, could anger and scare Japan and other U.S. allies in the region that rely on the U.S. to contain China.

Disadvantages Specific to Interacting with China

As discussed in the topicality section, there is a strong negative topicality argument that says the plan needs to involve some *interaction* with China in order to constitute engagement.

While many disadvantages can link to the outcome of the engagement, there are two that are relatively unique to the engagement.

The first, and best, is Diplomatic Capital. This disadvantage argues that when the U.S. negotiates with China that it consumes the resources and focus of the Department of State and that the DOS would be better off using the resources to work toward the resolution of another crisis, such as the one in Syria.

Similarly, it may be possible to spin a unique link story for the CCP stability disadvantage that argues that interacting with the U.S. may produce some political disruption.

Human rights and democracy leadership may also be undermined by interacting with China.

Disadvantages that Aren’t Specific to a Type of Plan

There are many disadvantages that stem from the *result* of the plan rather than the adoption / implementation of the plan. The plan might increase China’s economic growth, but Chinese growth might trigger inflation, or destroy the environment and

support military modernization. Similarly, the plan may slow down China's conventional force modernization, but that may support greater nuclear modernization, which may be worse. Similarly, if China's nuclear modernization declines, it may shift to a stronger conventional force posture. This may make military conflict more likely. Similarly, teams may claim to restrain the development of nuclear weapons but others may argue that nuclear proliferation is good. Others may claim to sustain or increase U.S. global hegemony, but Negative teams may argue this makes conflict more likely.

Impact turn strategies can represent good strategic choices when there are a limited number of common advantages on a topic and the total number of likely add-ons that any Affirmative team is likely to read will be limited. If not, it is difficult for teams relying on impact turns to at least play enough defense on all of the other advantages so that the impact turns can outweigh if they win them.

Counterplans

Discussion of counterplan opportunities is another opportunity to consider strategically.

“Soft Engagement” Counterplans. In 2005-2006, the college policy debate resolution focused on the question of whether or not the U.S. should increase its *pressure* on China. The topic was unidirectional—the Aff had to be mean to China in order to exact some concession.

It was tough to be Affirmative that year. Negative teams frequently ran counterplans to achieve the same results by being (super) nice to China and then read disadvantages such as CCP stability and relations as net-benefits to the counterplan. The Negative could always add in a long list of very nice rewards that it would offer China to change its behavior.

Pressure Counterplans. If the Affirmative is soft on China, Negative teams can counterplan to use pressure to obtain the same results, using the Containment Good and the Elections/Politics disadvantages as net-benefits.

I do think the solvency evidence for this counterplan is not as good as the general engagement solvency, so I think that most teams will turn to more softline approaches.

Unilateral Policy Change Counterplans. Rather than directly engage China, the U.S. could make a policy change unilaterally. The net-benefits to this counterplan are Diplomatic Capital and any other disadvantages that can be uniquely linked to interacting with the Chinese government (potentially CCP stability and human rights / democracy leadership).

This counterplan will be very effective against any case that interacts with China solely for the purpose of being topical. For example, cases that reduce U.S. export controls could be done without any interaction with China, but some plans may interact with China in an artificial way for topicality purposes.

Add a condition counterplans. The U.S. could make a QPQ deal with China that has either a positive condition (doing something nice for China if they go along) or a negative condition (a penalty if they fail to go along). Regardless of the type of condition, it is arguably competitive to either *change* or *add* condition(s), as those changes would sever out of the original offer. The net-benefit would be some better or additional solvency for the case.

Advantage Counterplans. Advantage counterplans are simply counterplans that solve the various Affirmative advantages *without engaging China*. Net-benefits are the various disadvantages to engagement (hardline or softline).

Process Counterplans. More and more angst has been developing against process counterplans, but they are still popular in debate. The basic idea is that rather than adopt the plan (as the Affirmative proposes) is that the plan is first sent through some process, which, the Negative will say, will inevitably lead to its adoption. For example, the Negative may propose that some U.S.-China commission consider the plan and that such consideration will improve U.S.-China relations and lead to its adoption.

Historically, one of the most popular process counterplans is the Consult counterplan. This counterplan argues that the plan should be proposed to a country that is likely to support its adoption, but since the counterplan gives the country a veto over the plan that this veto opportunity will likely strengthen relations with said country. But, of course, in the end the country will support the plan and it will be adopted.

If you are a Policy debater, it is always good to have a process counterplan in the hopper at the beginning of the year in order to have a potentially winning strategy against any case you are debating.

Kritiks

I think that kritiks are becoming less relevant to overall “strategy” because the Policy Debate community is becoming more divided between those who engage in more traditional policy debate and those who read kritiks as “one-off” positions and only “kritik.” The emergence of the new all-kritik labs at summer camps only reify this trend.

While factoring the kritik into overall strategy considerations has become less relevant, the presence of the kritik has only grown and, at the very least, people need to be prepared to debate the most popular ones.

Capitalism. Probably the most popular kritik in debate, there are strong links that are focused around the idea that engaging China and promoting relations would promote capitalism and neoliberal development.

One important strategy note is that the Capitalism K is also useful to Negative teams that want to fight off performance Affirmatives, as there is good evidence that addressing economic oppression is essential to solve oppression. There is also an entire

body of literature that argues that racial oppression cannot be solved until economic inequality is addressed.

Anti-Blackness. This is really not my wheelhouse, but I can imagine several applications of anti-blackness to the resolution. One, China is anti-black and, therefore, we should not engage it. Two, the international relations system is anti-black, so engaging it should not be supported. Three, the plan supports the global economic system, which is also anti-black. Certain representations and policies themselves may also be anti-black.

Shunning/Human Rights. As discussed in the case section, U.S. policy toward China has most often included consideration for how U.S. policies could encourage China to have greater respect for human rights. One way this argument manifests itself on the Negative is to argue that the U.S. should not engage China because of its human rights abuses. There is a “shunning” argument that claims it is immoral to engage countries that promote human rights.

Conclusion

China is a great area for a topic. Since China is an emerging superpower that interacts with the U.S. on the global stage on a daily basis, the topic intersects many important issues that I believe many will find quite interesting.

While the breadth of the topic means that students must be prepared to debate a variety of issues, this breadth may also be overwhelming even to the most dedicated debater.

Being prepared on the Negative will require debaters to think strategically in order to be able to confront a number of cases with common and applicable generics that support some case specific strategizing, particularly as the year goes on.

The most important way to start that strategizing is to think about what it means to participate in economic and/or diplomatic engagement with China. While “economic and/or diplomatic” won’t provide much of a useful substantive limit, debaters who are effective at winning topicality arguments that the plan should be limited to either softline or hardline approaches (and topicality debaters may be able to fit certain QPQ strategies into those categories) can then develop strategies against topical approaches. For example, if they can win that engagement must be softline, they can counterplan with a hardline approach, using Politics and U.S.-China relations bad as net-benefits. If they can win that it must be entirely softline, they can counterplan with a general softline approach but a hardline QPQ condition.

While it may be difficult to limit Affirmative cases to either hardline or softline approaches, teams will likely be successful at limiting plans to those that involve some interaction with China. Not only does this limit the breadth of topical changes, but it also sets-up a counterplan to change U.S. policy without engaging China, using Diplomatic capital as the net-benefit. This functionally limits the topic. And, if the “add a condition” counterplan is competitive, that counterplan strategically limits the topic.

Beyond these functional and strategic limits, Negative teams can also take advantage of process counterplans and a number of strong kritiks to fight off a variety of Affirmative cases.

While I have focused a lot on Negative strategy, Affirmative teams should think through these arguments when choosing a case, as defeating these core Negative arguments will be an essential element of their strategy. These strategies will effectively limit the ability of the Affirmative to win with many of these cases, but the potential breadth of the topic should create adequate ground for the Affirmative to choose a case that is less vulnerable to these approaches. 

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