



2020-21 Debate Series

International Human Rights - How Can the United States Best Support Human Rights?

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (EST) - Zoom

Central Question: Should the United States pursue economic and/or military interventions in the name of protecting international human rights?

In response to the above debate prompt, students will be divided and assigned to one of the following two groups. In preparation for the debate, students should take note of their assigned group and read through both the general background resources and all group-specific resources. Students should take notes on the resources provided and may do additional research if they choose in order to help strengthen their arguments during the debate.

- **Group 1: Affirmative Group**

*“Based on our studies and research, **yes**, the United States should pursue economic and/or military interventions in order to support human rights around the world.”*

- **Group 2: Opposed Group**

*“Based on our studies and research, **no**, the United States should **not** pursue economic and/or military interventions in order to support human rights around the world.”*

Program Agenda

3:20 p.m. **Recommended log-on time for student participants and faculty advisers**

3:30 - 3:40 p.m. **Introduction and Rules Presentation (*Main Room*)**

3:40 – 4:00 p.m. **Teams Meet and Prepare Opening Statement (*Breakout Rooms*)**

Students work together in an assigned sub-group to draft an opening statement defending their position. Students should take the last 5-10 minutes to synthesize their group’s opening remarks as a whole. Each sub-group elects 1-2 representatives to present the entire group’s opening statement.

Opening Statement: *Introduce the topic in a way that supports your position. Provide supporting evidence. The last sentence of the introduction should be your “thesis” or main objective.*

4:00 – 4:10 p.m.

Present Opening Statement - 5 min. each (*Main Room*)

Each sub-group’s elected representatives present their entire group’s opening statement to the at-large plenary. Fellow group members take notes on opposing groups’ arguments for use during the rebuttal period.

Presentation Order:

- 1) *Affirmative Group*
- 2) *Opposing Group*

4:10 – 4:20 p.m.

Prepare Rebuttal (*Breakout Rooms*)

Students representing the “Affirmative Group” finalize a rebuttal representing the group as a whole. Moreover, students representing the “Opposing Group” finalize one rebuttal representing the group as a whole. Each group elects 1-2 new representatives to present their rebuttal.

Rebuttal: Respond to and criticize the arguments presented by the opposing side. Prove that the other side’s logic and arguments do not make sense. Provide sound counter-arguments.

4:20 – 4:30 p.m.

Present Rebuttal - 5 min. each (*Main Room*)

Each group’s newly elected representatives deliver a rebuttal to the at-large plenary. Once again, fellow group members take notes on opposing groups’ rebuttal for use during closing arguments.

Presentation Order:

- 1) *Opposing Group*
- 2) *Affirmative Group*

4:30 – 4:40 p.m.

Prepare Closing Argument (*Breakout Rooms*)

Students work in their respective groups (Opposing or Affirmative) to prepare a closing statement that reaffirms their position. Each group elects 1-2 new representatives to present their rebuttal.

Closing Argument: Summarize your team’s main arguments. Emphasize the strongest points made throughout the debate. Make sure to include facts to support your position and address any counter arguments.

4:40 – 4:50 p.m.

Present Closing Argument - 5 min. each (*Main Room*)

Each group’s newly elected representatives deliver a closing argument to the at-large plenary.

Presentation Order:

- 1) *Affirmative Group*
- 2) *Opposing Group*

4:50 – 5:00 p.m.

Presentation of Winning Team and Closing Remarks (*Main Room*)

Judges deliberate, select, and announce the winner of the debate as well as confer awards for excellence in debate performance. Council staff deliver closing remarks, distribute program evaluations, and provide information about upcoming Council programs.

Debate Resource Guide

Tips for Preparing

We have provided a number of general background resources, as well as team-specific resources below. Please read and review these resources as preparation for the program. We recommend that you come to the Debate Series program prepared with notes on these resources so you are ready to craft well-thought, detailed statements with your team members in the allotted time. It is also important to consider the other team's potential main arguments and talking points as a means of strengthening your assigned team's arguments and talking points. Finally, you may want to conduct additional research outside of these resources, but we ask that you practice good digital literacy and utilize vetted resources from reputable news or analysis organizations. Are you not sure if a site is vetted and reputable? Discuss with fellow debaters or talk to your teacher/faculty adviser.

Questions to Consider

- What are the United States foreign policy goals? How does the promotion of human rights fit into the United States foreign policy goals?
- What are the different kinds of economic interventions, namely sanctions, that the United States imposes in response to global human rights violations? How are they different and what are their intended effects?
- Why would the United States choose a military intervention over an economic intervention in order to support human rights? And what about vice versa?
- How does the international community, including intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations, combat international human rights violations?

General Background Resources

(Blog) U.S. Aversion to International Human Rights Treaties

<https://globaljusticecenter.net/blog/773-u-s-aversion-to-international-human-rights-treaties>

(Article) The Dilemma of Humanitarian Intervention - Council on Foreign Relations

<https://www.cfr.org/background/dilemma-humanitarian-intervention>

(Article) The United Nations 'Responsibility to Protect' - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

<https://www.globalr2p.org/what-is-r2p/>

(Timeline) A Short History of Human Rights - NYSUT and the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights

<http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/resources/a-short-history-of-human-rights/>

(Article) President Obama's Humanitarian Legacy - BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38297343>

(Resource) Armed Humanitarian Interventions - Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<https://iep.utm.edu/hum-mili/>

(Article) What Are Economic Sanctions? - Council on Foreign Relations

<https://www.cfr.org/background/what-are-economic-sanctions>

(Video Debate) Will U.S. Intervention in Venezuela Help or Harm its People? - PBS Newshour

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/will-us-intervention-in-venezuela-help-or-harm-its-people>

(Article) The US Global Magnitsky Act - Human Rights Watch

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/13/us-global-magnitsky-act>

Group 1: Affirmative Group Resources – “Based on our studies and research, **yes**, the United States should pursue economic and/or military interventions in order to support human rights around the world.”

(Article) U.S. Imposes Sanctions on China - New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/09/world/asia/trump-china-sanctions-ughurs.html>

(Report) Treasury Sanctions Serious Human Rights Abusers on International Human Rights Day - U.S. Department of the Treasury

<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1208>

(Opinion) How Targeted Sanctions Can Provide a Response to the Most Egregious Human Rights Violations - Forbes

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2020/03/06/how-targeted-sanctions-can-provide-a-response-to-the-most-egregious-human-rights-violations/?sh=f2c610d3c427>

(Report) Responsibility to Protect (R2P) - The United Nations

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml>

(Article) Case Study: Military Intervention for Human Rights - BBC

https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/ihavearightto/four_b/casestudy_art28.shtml

Group 2: Opposing Group Resources – “Based on our studies and research, **no**, the United States should **not** pursue economic and/or military interventions in order to support human rights around the world.”

(Video and Article) Iran: Sanctions Threatening Health - Human Rights Watch

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/10/29/iran-sanctions-threatening-health>

(Opinion) Why sanctions should be a key issue in this US election - The New Humanitarian

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2020/10/22/sanctions-human-rights-united-states-impact>

(Article) The Overmilitarization of American Foreign Policy - Foreign Affairs

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-02/robert-gates-overmilitarization-american-foreign-policy>

(Report) US Sanctions Violate Human Rights and International Code of Conduct, UN Expert Says - United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24566>