

The Final Round¹

Everett Rutan

Xavier High School

ejrutan3@ctdebate.org

or

ejrutan3@acm.org

Connecticut Debate Association

Glastonbury High School

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Resolved: The use of drones for targeted killing of individuals should be prohibited.

A Note about the Notes

I've reproduced my flow chart for the Final Round at Glastonbury High School augmented by what I remember from the debate. The notes are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. I'm sure the debaters will read them and exclaim, "That's not what I said!" I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what they said or wish they had said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was actually presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention running across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It's close to the way I actually take notes during the debate.

The Final Round

The Final Round was between the East Catholic team of Jonathan Oechert and Cole Tamburin on the Affirmative and the Simsbury team of Kevin Gyurco and Matt Smits on the Negative. The debate was won by the Simsbury.

1) First Affirmative Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the Resolution
- c) A1²: Drones have other, better purposes
 - i) Drones are best used for surveillance
 - ii) Better than "boots on the ground"
 - (1) E.g., movie "Lone Survivor"
 - (2) Could be used to deliver packages and ammo
- d) A2: Better technology will lead to an arms race
 - i) E.g., consider the cold war: US v. Russia, nuclear weapons

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² "A1" indicates the Affirmative first contention, "N2" the Negative second contention and so forth.

- (1) Led to Cuban Missile Crisis and brink of war
 - ii) Errors in drone warfare could lead to major war
 - e) A3: It is an ambiguous form of warfare, opaque as to attacker and victim
 - i) CIA doesn't always know target and kills innocent civilians
 - (1) Packet says up to 30% in attacks in Pakistan
 - ii) Surveillance is a better use of drones
 - iii) Drones remove the personal aspect of war
 - iv) Can't always identify who sent the drone
 - (1) Could lead to more war
 - f) Restate A1, A2, A3
- 2) Cross-Ex of First Affirmatives**
- a) Aren't drones used to kill foreigners? They are only foreigners to the attacker
 - b) You would apply the prohibition internationally? Yes
 - c) To all countries? Yes
 - d) How would you enforce it? Like chemical weapons, by treaty and int'l law
 - e) Aren't there arms races in the development of conventional technology? Yes, but drones are similar to mutually assured destruction ("MAD"). Could be nuclear armed, as destructive as missiles.
 - f) Isn't this true of any technology? Yes, but most technologies aren't this destructive
 - g) Aren't US drones limited in number? I don't know
 - h) Aren't some used for surveillance, some for killing? Yes
 - i) So the fact some are used for killing doesn't prevent the benefits of surveillance? There is no benefit to killing
 - j) Aff is supposed to affirm the resolution? Yes
 - k) Neg to negate? Yes
 - l) Does the resolution include "surveillance"?
 - m) You say people will be confused as to the source of a drone? Yes
 - n) Couldn't we require nations to paint them different colors? Yes, but anyone could paint any drone any color
- 3) First Negative Constructive**
- a) Intro
 - b) Resolution
 - c) N1: Drones are safer than other forms of warfare
 - i) Compare it to an invasion, bombardment, economic sanctions
 - ii) There is time to analyze the target
 - (1) Soldiers have a split second to make life or death decisions
 - iii) Much lower casualties
 - (1) If you value civilian life you have to vote Neg
 - d) N2: There is no replacement for drones in the war on terror
 - i) This is not the cold war, with nation states in conflict
 - ii) We are fighting the idea of violence, can't invade
 - iii) Need to cut off the leadership
 - (1) Al Qaeda is splintered, showing targeted killing is successful
 - iv) Compare this to Iraq with 300K civilian deaths
 - e) N3: Problems with drone warfare can be resolved

- i) This is our counterplan—reform drone usage
 - ii) Problem Aff cites are not inherent
 - iii) Int'l convention to establish controls, like nuclear weapons
 - (1) E.g. due process for targeting
 - (2) E.g. require registration or painting
- 4) Cross-Ex of First Negative**
- a) Is targeting safer? Compared to invasion yes
 - b) What if the technology falls into the wrong hands? Drones take a lot of technology, computers, etc.
 - c) What if many countries with drones go to war? There are lots of bad weapons, they aren't always used, e.g. nukes
 - d) How do you know all countries would adhere to an agreement? Most would, some wouldn't, e.g. chemical weapons
 - e) Couldn't countries mimic other countries' drone markings? They do it with subs and planes now
 - f) Isn't that a problem? No plan is perfect, but lack of perfection is not a reason against.
 - g) Do drones cause collateral damage? Yes
 - h) Is that acceptable? No, but can be controlled with counterplan
 - i) Wouldn't it be better to prohibit them? Abuse is no reason to ban something, e.g. prescription drugs
- 5) Second Affirmative Constructive**
- a) Intro
 - b) Resolution
 - c) A1: Drones have other uses
 - i) Neg says do both
 - ii) Aff says focus on most benefit
 - iii) Can use surveillance to end wars, better than violence
 - d) A2: Focus on violent uses will lead to a cold war situation
 - i) This is a direct consequence of not restricting drones to peaceful uses
 - e) N1: This could be true if only one country possesses the technology
 - i) Two become opponents, lead to war or cold war standoff
 - f) N2: Neg says invasions and air strikes are the only alternative to drone strikes
 - i) Aff says surveillance can end war without either
 - g) N3: Neg idea of an agreement on numbers and capability is very optimistic
 - i) Can't base safety on trust and honesty
 - h) Aff case is based on using drones for peace, surveillance to end violence
 - i) Repeat A1, A2, A3
- 6) Cross-Ex of Second Affirmative**
- a) Why will drones lead to mutually assured destruction (MAD)? It's not a good idea to meet violence with violence
 - b) How do you prevent it from happening? (Reply) How do you? (Neg) An international convention.
 - c) Then some countries could have the technology? We don't have a plan
 - d) Are you saying the Aff doesn't have to deal with practicalities while the Neg does? We didn't present a plan, you did

- e) So you are saying the Negative has a burden of proof and not the Aff? Neg has to defend its plan, we don't have one
- f) How could drones fall into the wrong hands? Not my part to say
- g) How can surveillance end the war on terror? No killing, just watching
- h) Did N3 say there was no trust or honesty? No

7) Second Negative Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) Aff then Neg
- c) A1: Neg agrees that drones have other uses
 - i) Also, this is not relevant to the debate
 - ii) Can agree with this contention and still negate
 - iii) All that is left here is Aff wish "to encourage peace"
- d) A2: This argument is true of any conventional military technology
 - i) Tanks, planes, vehicles all show an arms race. It's human nature
 - ii) The alternative would be to have no national defense, which is not realistic
 - iii) But the Aff is not a believer in realism
 - iv) MAD requires highly destructive technology like nukes
 - (1) Drones are not that powerful
- e) A3: drone usage is already ambiguous and opaque
 - i) There is no due process in US and Israeli strikes
 - ii) But this problem is not inherent
 - (1) We can avoid ambiguity and limit casualties
 - (2) E.g., biologic and chemical weapons are governed by int'l regulations
- f) N1: drones are clearly safer than the alternatives
 - i) Drone operations are more discriminating in choice of target
- g) N2: Aff answer to war on terror is simply to end violence
 - i) This really means to stop defending ourselves

8) Cross-Ex of Second Negative

- a) You said an arms race could apply to any technology? Yes, for example stealth aircraft, submarines
- b) How does that show arms race for drones isn't bad? Aff says an arms race is bad. We are just saying it's true for all military tech, and will happen unless you ban everything
- c) Are we asking to ban all military technology? No
- d) How can you compare vehicles to drones? We gave other examples: bombers, fighter planes, submarines
- e) Can risk of drones be fixed immediately? It would take time
- f) How would you ensure all adhere to any agreement? (Response) How can you ensure all countries will ban drones? (Aff) I'm asking the questions.
- g) How do you prevent terrorists from acquiring drones? They don't have the technology or the facilities. You need a lot of resources to do it.

9) First Negative Rebuttal

- a) The Neg has shown the Aff case has flaws
- b) The Neg has also shown flaws in drone use claimed by Aff can be fixed
- c) There are four major areas of contention
- d) 1. Solvency Gap

- i) Aff claims int'l goodwill will end violence
- ii) There is no mechanism, it's like saying, "Make Miley Cyrus behave"
- iii) If true, why didn't agreements on biologic and chemical weapons lead to peace
- e) Inherency Gap
 - i) Aff says drones have negative consequences
 - ii) Neg says that these can be mitigated
 - iii) Neg can't say drone use will be perfect
 - (1) But banning drones will make terrorists happy
 - (2) Banning drones will also encourage cheating
- f) Benefits
 - i) Drones provide a counterterrorist ability
 - (1) They can be used selectively
 - (2) They can still be used for monitoring
 - ii) Aff can only hope terror ends if we stop using drones
 - (1) If you care about terrorism, vote Neg
 - iii) Neg can add due process to drone strikes
 - (1) Aff can only hope for peace
- g) Efficacy
 - i) Neg has provided specific reasons for the results it claims
 - ii) Aff only hopes for the best
 - iii) Neg should get your ballot

10) First Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) Intro
- b) Neg claims flaws are all on the Aff side. Not so.
- c) Solvency is not the only go
 - i) Aff is the only side making a step in the right direction
 - (1) Reach towards peace not retaliation
 - ii) Under Neg what happens if one country mimics the drones of another?
 - (1) Or if someone simply violates the bans
 - (2) Result will be war or danger of war
 - iii) Both plans can be circumvented
 - (1) Aff offers an end to violence
- d) Counterterrorism
 - i) Drone use destroys potential intelligence
 - ii) E.g., bin Laden was seized with intelligence material
- e) Arms Race
 - i) Not a problem with most other weapons
 - ii) Drones can be used from thousands of miles away
 - iii) Eventually drones will be nuclear capable
- f) Repeat A1, A2, A3

11) Second Negative Rebuttal

- a) Aff has still not replied to the these presented by my partner
- b) Solvency/Practicality
 - i) Aff says they do not need to support a plan
 - ii) How can we know how it will be implemented

- iii) How can they link to the benefits they claim
- iv) This burden is usually on Aff
- c) Arms Race
 - i) We already have nukes; not much difference if they were on drones
 - ii) Aff argument implies we must ban all military tech to avoid arms races
 - iii) This simply isn't practical
- d) Guarantees
 - i) There are lots of weapons conventions
 - ii) Sometimes they are breached, and there are penalties
 - iii) This argument applies to the Aff case equally
- e) No Alternative for Counterterrorism
 - i) Seal Team 6 is great but we are not the Justice League
 - ii) Aff has no other solution for terrorism

12) Second Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) Arms Race
 - i) The other examples do not show that drones are beneficial
- b) Neg makes sweeping generalization of Aff case
 - i) We agree you can't trust countries entirely
 - ii) A1: surveillance leads to a closer world, more trust, more peace
 - iii) You are not likely to end war with more violence
- c) Goal of Aff is Peace
 - i) Aff leads to a more interconnected world
 - (1) More security leads to more peace
 - ii) Neg plan is based entirely on trust, and unlikely to succeed
 - iii) Aff plan is described in A1
 - (1) Peace requires trust