

The Final Round¹

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State Finals

Wilton High School

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Resolved: We (Russia) should actively seek to reincorporate those former Soviet territories with a substantial Russian population.

A Note about the Notes

I've reproduced my flow chart for the State Championship Round at Wilton 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 State Championship round was between the Greenwich team of Scott Abbott and Rebecca Murray on the Affirmative versus the Fairfield Warde team of Brandon Campbell and Sara Murphy. The debate was won by the Affirmative.

1) First Affirmative Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the Resolution
- c) Definitions
 - i) "actively seek" is to use legal means such as referendums
 - ii) "reincorporate" is to exert control
 - iii) "Russian population" are those with cultural, political and linguistic ties
- d) A1²: Expanding influence should be a national imperative

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

- i) 72% of the population approve of Putin
- ii) Actions in Crimea have gained international respect against an expanding West
- iii) These are areas with historical and cultural ties to Russia
- iv) Russia has suffered from Western-controlled globalization
- v) Russia's actions in Crimea have been peaceful
 - (1) Note Russian actions in Syria led to peaceful resolution
- e) A2: Defending and protecting Russians is a government imperative
 - i) Crimean actions have been a success
 - ii) Ukrainian "revolution" was actually violent, non-democratic and directed against ethnic Russians who had no say in the process
- f) A3: Consequences of these actions pale when compared to the gains
 - i) The West won't take serious actions
 - (1) Travel restrictions and minor sanctions are insignificant
 - ii) Gains are many
 - (1) Restores Russia's superpower status
 - (2) Increases Russia's internal market
 - (3) Provides buffers against West
 - iii) Actions were achieved by non-military means, referendum in Crimea
- 2) Cross-Ex of First Affirmative**
 - a) Aren't Russia's actions inflammatory? It's Russia's time
 - b) So dominance is preferable to normal relations? Yes, if Russia is to reach it's full potential
 - c) Doesn't it sacrifice relations with trade partners? It's a small price
 - d) How long ago was Crimea taken over, a week ago? Yes, but we seized parts of Georgia in 2008 and there were no long-term effects
 - e) So Crimea was a success for everyone? Russians are no longer afraid
 - f) Isn't a significant segment of the population in fear? Gov't says 97% voted in favor
 - g) Weren't voters worried about being blacklisted? I don't believe so.
- 3) First Negative Constructive**
 - a) Intro
 - b) Resolution
 - c) N1: This won't recover Russia's international reputation
 - i) Putin seen as corrupt and ineffective
 - (1) Other nations don't want to work with him
 - (2) This will harm Russia's reputation
 - ii) Actions ignore the modern sources of wealth and power
 - (1) "Swordfish and macramé"
 - iii) Referendums are a risky strategy for Russia
 - (1) Country has 80 regions and 100 ethnic languages
 - d) N2: It will lead to unrest, retaliation and threat of war
 - i) Many in Russia are not in favor
 - (1) The packet says the initial enthusiasm for the Crimea has faded
 - ii) Loss of trade partners and sanctions could leave Russia like Iran or North Korea

- e) N3: Russia will have to absorb the social tensions and fiscal problems of these territories
 - i) Russia has already had 2 recessions in five years.

4) Cross-Ex of First Negative

- a) In N2 are you saying that it will lead to unrest among Russians? Yes
- b) Then why to 72% support Putin? Statistic says they support Putin, not the takeover of the Crimea.
- c) Isn't Russian patriotism at an all-time high? There have been peace protests with large crowds, tens of thousands.
- d) Are 10,000 a lot less than 72% of the population? Yes
- e) Do you say Latvia and Estonia are not in good economic shape? They haven't recovered from being in the USSR
- f) Would they be annexed by the Aff? They might be absorbed under your plan.
- g) Why have the former republics failed to thrive? We just think there is no reason this will change under the resolution
- h) You claim Aff will absorb countries with fiscal ills? Russia doesn't have a strong economy. Why should we absorb more problems?
- i) What should Russia have done in the Crimea? We don't have an opinion
- j) Does the Neg support the actions? No
- k) Wasn't there a violent coup in the Ukraine? [time]

5) Second Affirmative Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) Def of "actively seek" was to use legal means
 - i) Crimea was an exception due to need to protect Russians
 - ii) Aff supports peaceful military intervention
 - iii) But Aff would prefer to use economic incentives, like the EU
- c) N1: (Clashes with A3)
 - i) West will never favor what is best for Russia
 - (1) Putin's actions are best for Russia and force West to respect us
 - (2) John Kerry does not support our interests
 - ii) Aff supports a modern, powerful Russia
 - (1) This requires we expand our sphere of influence
 - (2) Demonstrate to other countries the benefits of joining with Russia
- d) N2: (Clashes with A2)
 - i) In cross-ex, Neg failed to say what it would do differently in Crimea
 - (1) Russia protected Russians from an illegal, fascist government
- e) N3: former Soviet republics find themselves on an uneven playing field
 - i) Western globalization favors the West
 - ii) This is why republics don't thrive, they are exploited
 - iii) Russia can help them maximize their potential. All gain from this success
- f) A1: Russia must be assertive to combat the West
 - i) Actions in Georgia led to limited sanctions
 - ii) EU is dependent on Russia for energy
- g) A1, A2, A3

6) Cross-Ex of Second Affirmative

- a) Is it necessary for Russia to consider Western opinion? No

- b) Who will we trade with? They may not like us, but they will trade with us. Look at all the trade with Saudi Arabia despite its treatment of women
- c) Who will we trade with? As I said, the West won't stop trade.
- d) Was the Crimean referendum legal? Yes
- e) And was the Ukrainian transitional government illegal? Yes
- f) Didn't the Ukraine have elections planned?
- g) Wasn't the referendum unconstitutional? No
- h) But there was no provision in the Ukrainian constitution for it? It was the prerogative of the Crimean people
- i) Was the Ukrainian government fascist? As determined by the Russian government, yes.
- j) Are you aware that Article 7 of the NATO Treaty forbids the taking of territory?
[time]

7) Second Negative Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) Resolution
- c) N1: We asked about trade in Cross-Ex
 - i) The West won't trade with us if we offend them
 - ii) Russia needs the West for a stable economy
 - iii) If we bypass legality, no one will recognize our actions and it will lead to harsher sanctions
- d) N2: The resolution will lead to unrest, retaliation and possibly war
 - i) We haven't seen the full scope of the West's response yet
 - ii) The US has the power to crush Russia
- e) N3: Russia has the lowest per capita GDP in the G8, UN Security Council
 - i) Russia lacks the funds to rehabilitate places like Crimea
- f) A1: Russia can only gain influence through legal action
- g) A2: Russia should defend Russians in Russia, through domestic policy
- h) A3: Marginal cost much higher than gains
 - i) GDP per capita is 1/3 that of the US
 - ii) Resolution does not recognize reality
 - iii) NATO Charter forbids attacks on members
 - iv) Russia doesn't have the power or will to deal with this.

8) Cross-Ex of Second Negative

- a) Does the US only trade with those countries they agree with? No
- b) Why would they cut off all trade with Russia? We didn't say "all".
- c) Then how will they affect trade? They will apply sanctions.
- d) How will this affect the Russian economy? Russia is the weakest economy in the G8. Resolution doesn't recognize political and domestic reality in our own country
- e) You say absorption will damage Russia, so you mean it would be better for Russia if these countries joined the EU? EU is 10x stronger than Russia
- f) But would it be better for the Russian economy? It would be better because it would maintain diplomatic relations.
- g) Are you proposing they join the EU? UK said no, then said yes.

- h) Would it be better for Russia if they joined the EU? That isn't in the scope of this debate.

9) First Negative Rebuttal

- a) Intro
- b) Aff then Neg
- c) Aff case is plagued by what-ifs
 - i) What if other countries don't agree
 - ii) What if the West imposes additional sanctions
- d) Aff ignores international alienation
 - i) Why will other nations see these actions as "diplomatic"
 - ii) It's more likely they will apply increasing sanctions over time
- e) A1: This contention assumes domestic issues are more important
 - i) Economic expansion is one possibility, not assured
- f) A2: Our first priority should be to protect the nation
 - i) These other areas were only due to the Soviet Union
- g) A3: The exact opposite is true: disadvantages outweigh gains
 - i) Sanctions will harm Russians domestically
- h) N1, N2, N3

10) First Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) Will the West continue to trade with Russia? Yes, they won't stop.
 - i) Neg has already said US has been opposed to Russia for years
 - ii) US trades with Saudis and Bahrain, so we don't need to worry
 - iii) Sanctions after Georgia in 2008 were temporary, with no long term effects
- b) Are we pitting ourselves against the West?
 - i) No, they will continue to trade with us
 - ii) We are simply asserting dominance over trade areas with linguistic and cultural affiliation
 - iii) We are re-incorporating former Soviet territory
 - (1) This will improve our economy and our international reputation
- c) N1: We will never recover our reputation if we play by Western rules
 - i) This contention hinges on Russian power not Western opinion
- d) N2: 72% of Russians approve
 - i) Crimeans voted in favor
 - ii) Neg gave no reason for a war to occur
- e) N3: We aren't annexing them all
 - i) Looking for political control

11) Second Negative Rebuttal

- a) Intro
- b) Neg then Aff
- c) N1: this will damage Russia's reputation
 - i) We need our reputation and good diplomatic relations to succeed
- d) N2: These regions won't come peacefully, it will require pressure
 - i) The territories and the West will resist
 - ii) Annexation is illegal everywhere
- e) A1: Having influence means not being a bully
- f) A2: Annexation boosts ego, not the people

- i) Putin must be responsive; poll says people don't support action in Crimea
- g) A3: This is not true
 - i) Former Soviet republics are weak
 - ii) Russia can't afford to support them

12) Second Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) I will summarize the consequences versus the benefits
- b) Consequences
 - i) Loss of trade? No significant sanctions after Georgia, Crimea
 - (1) No impetus to change
 - ii) Reputation? Romney was mocked in 2012 for calling Russia the main enemy of the US
 - iii) Unrest? This is not annexation
 - (1) Russia will offer economic concessions
 - (2) Russia has vast resources—offered Ukraine \$15 billion
 - (3) Ukraine now moving to EU—would have been successful if Russia had offered earlier
 - (4) US/West trade with many who they disagree with, e.g. Saudis
 - iv) Absorbing Ills? Relations with Russia will help these regions grow
 - (1) They will no longer be exploited.
- c) Benefits
 - i) Russians can challenge the West
 - ii) Competition won't cancel trade, but increase it
 - iii) It's the will of the people—72%
 - iv) It will strengthen Russia