

The Final Round¹

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This House, as the US, should favor increased tariffs.

A Note about the Notes

These are my notes from the varsity final round at Fitch on November 9, 2024. They are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. They are not verbatim transcripts but rather summarize what was said as I understood it. I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what the debater said or thinks they 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 presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow, structured to follow arguments from one speech to the next. It looks like my written notes from the debate, cleaned up and formatted.

The Final Round

The final round at Fitch was between the Joel Barlow team of Trevor Steinke and Luis Diez on the Government and the Joel Barlow team of Cade Fravel and Griffin Speck on the Opposition. The debate was won by the Opposition.

1) Prime Minister Constructive

- a) Comment on products produced with child labor
- b) Intro
- c) Statement of the motion
- d) Framework:
 - i) Definition: “tariffs” as as tax on imports
 - ii) Weighing mechanism: what is best for the American people
 - iii) Plan: raise tariffs on imports from China from 2% to 7%; distribute the funds of US programs
- e) G1²: Tariffs will improve the US economy
 - i) Wall Street Journal: 2023 trade deficit of \$1 trillion results in selling off US assets
 - ii) 1861-1913 US had high tariffs
 - (1) US produced 1/3 of world manufactures by World War I
 - (2) US produced ¼ of world manufactures by World War II
 - iii) Since then globalization

POI: Are there other changes since WWII we should consider?

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² “G1” indicates the Government first contention, “O2” the Opposition second contention and so forth.

- iv) Population has grown
 - v) Tariffs were the largest source of USFG revenue until 1913
 - f) G2: Tariffs will help US diplomatically
 - i) Sanctions increase the use of other currencies like China's RMB yuan
 - (1) Tariffs keep a free market in operation
 - (2) Countries have a stake in free trade
 - (3) Sanctions have caused Saudia Arabia to move away from US\$
 - ii) Sends a message on child labor
 - (1) Tariffs are the best solution
 - POI: How will a 7% tariff eliminate child labor?***
 - (2) It is a perfect first step
 - g) G3: Tariffs will resurrect manufacturing ("mfg") in the US
 - i) World Trade Organization ("WTO") led to a small drop in prices but a large loss of jobs
 - ii) Result was to reduce domestic industrial output
 - iii) Loss of 4 million jobs, 1/3 of industrial output, many going to China
 - h) Applying our weighing mechanism, we improve the economy, increase our security and increase mfg
 - i) In 1933 US had its highest tariffs
- 2) Leader of the Opposition Constructive**
- a) Intro: pause to show brain freeze, freeze of commerce
 - b) Weighing mechanism focuses on two issues:
 - i) Domestic economic prosperity
 - ii) Foreign policy objectives
 - c) O1: Tariffs will hurt everyday Americans
 - i) Tariff is a tax imposed by the USFG
 - (1) This will increase costs, and firms will raise prices to protect profits
 - (2) The price increase harms, not helps, American consumers
 - ii) It also harms US workers by destroying jobs
 - (1) Many raw materials and parts are imported
 - (2) As costs rise, companies cut wages or workers
 - (3) Exports are more expensive so decline so no help to trade deficit
 - d) O2: Tariffs harm progress
 - i) E.g., Chinese-made electric vehicles become too expensive
 - (1) Limits our ability to solve the climate problem
 - (2) Loss of access the Chinese technology
 - (3) Only choice is to buy Tesla
 - ii) E.g., China produces most minerals needed for green energy
 - (1) Solar, wind power growth harmed
 - e) O3: Tariffs harm US geo-politically
 - i) Free trade lowers prices, binds trading partners
 - (1) E.g., Canada, Mexico, China, are alienated by loss of access to US
 - ii) Tariffs cause our enemies to unite
 - (1) E.g., sanctions on Russia has pushed it closer to Iran, North Korea
- POI: aren't there other differences***

- (2) Yes, ideology, but trade dependency serves as a check, forcing countries to cooperate
 - f) G1: Gov never shows us how the trade deficit has harmed the US
 - i) Quality of life much improved since WWII
 - ii) Why don't we still produce 1/3 of world manufactures?
 - (1) Labor is expensive in the US
 - (2) Tariffs will not bring mfg back
 - g) G2: Tariffs will make the BRICs stronger
 - i) China forced to unite with them
 - ii) Tariffs won't end child labor
 - (1) Some goods become more expensive
 - (2) Countries will just sell elsewhere
 - h) G3: Compare to O2
 - 3) Member of Government Constructive**
 - a) Debates are about finding solutions
 - i) Opp offers none regarding China, blue collar workers, the trade deficit
 - b) We agree with the LO's comments on the weighing mechanism
 - c) G1: Is the trade deficit a problem?
 - i) More than a number, it is like the national debt
 - (1) It will lead to increased inflation
 - ii) If we increase our exports we increase our influence and negotiating power
 - iii) With changes in the workforce and a more global economy we need to emphasize mfg
 - d) G2: BRICs/China?
 - i) These countries have only recently drifted from the US\$
 - ii) Need to give them no other choice but to use US\$, rely on US
 - iii) China can't ignore US as a trading partner
 - (1) They will be forced to lower prices to compete with US companies

POI: How will a rise in tariffs influence China?

 - (2) Higher tariffs will force China to lower prices
 - iv) On child labor, tariffs are a first step
 - (1) Opp offers no solution
 - e) G3: vs O1
 - i) Now blue-collar workers are being left behind
 - ii) Gov plan helps blue-collar workers and increases USFG revenue
 - f) O1: Will prices rise?
 - i) Tariffs will increase US production and force foreigners to lower prices
 - ii) US workers helped by rise in mfg, see G3
 - g) O2: Tariffs will force countries like India to work on climate change
 - i) China is not the best example for a good actor on climate change
 - ii) Solar panels have seen a 60% decline in price in the last decade
 - iii) DARPA will have money to invest in US research
 - h) O3: Status quo not all sunshine
 - i) NAFTA/USMCA resulted in job losses
- 4) Member of the Opposition Constructive**
 - a) Intro/Motion

- b) Will cover Opp first then Gov
- c) O1: Importers bear the costs of tariffs
 - i) They will pass it on in increased prices to consumers
 - ii) Will tariffs increase competition and production?
 - (1) 1861-1913 was an era of monopolies and decreasing competition
POI: Weren't monopolies due to lax antitrust measures?
 - (2) That was a factor
 - (3) High tariffs provided the opportunity to raise prices and lower wages
 - iii) Any returning jobs likely to be low pay and hard work
 - iv) Prices of imported raw materials will increase, e.g., cobalt
 - (1) If product prices don't go up, firms will cut jobs, e.g., Pennsylvania
- d) O2: US will miss out on advanced tech, e.g., Chinese elec. Vehicles
 - i) Forced to buy expensive Teslas
- e) O3: Did NAFTA/USMCA lead to job losses?
 - i) Some, but they tied Canada and Mexico to the US
 - ii) Boosted all our economies, improved relations
- f) Gov says Opp has no solutions
 - i) The problems they raise are systemic
 - ii) They will not be fixed by a 7% tariff, e.g., child/slave labor
 - (1) Goods will be sold elsewhere, or workers will lose jobs and income
- g) G1: Trade deficits will lead to inflation?
 - i) Tariffs actually increase inflation
 - (1) 7% increase in price of goods from China
 - (2) Lower export of more expensive US goods
 - (3) It will take 100 years to replicate lower costs in US
 - (4) US firms won't pay low wages or use child labor
- h) G2: Dollar and diplomacy?
 - i) BRICs interdependence will increase if we raise tariffs
 - ii) China has less incentive to listen to US
 - iii) E.g., China could invade Taiwan as it has nothing to lose

5) Leader of Opposition Rebuttal

- a) Three questions
- b) What is the impact on consumers?
 - i) Direct increase in prices of imports
 - ii) Long run harm to the economy
 - (1) Eliminates international competition
 - (2) Why should firms compete internally?
 - iii) US labor is not cheap
 - iv) Prices will increase in the US
- c) What is the impact on labor?
 - i) Maybe some new industries in the US
 - ii) Costs for all industries will increase
 - (1) Most or all rely on imports
 - (2) Corporation will look to cut wages
 - iii) Job losses from free trade were not permanent
 - (1) Manufacturing jobs were lost

- (2) There was no increase in unemployment
- (3) New jobs were created
- d) What is the impact on geopolitics?
 - i) Tariffs will strengthen the \$
 - (1) Costs will be passed on
 - ii) Countries like Russia and North Korea draw closer together
- 6) Prime Minister Rebuttal**
 - a) I paused for 4 seconds to represent the 4 million jobs lost
 - b) Three questions:
 - c) Tariffs and everyday Americans?
 - i) Wages go up
 - ii) US innovators don't have to compete with foreigners
 - iii) For homeowners and others with debt:
 - (1) Tariffs reduce the trade deficit
 - (2) Revenues reduce the national debt
 - (3) Interest rates decline
 - iv) Opp praised trade agreements that have only weakened democracy
 - d) US on the world stage?
 - i) China can't disengage a symbiotic relationship
 - (1) 5% increase in tariffs not enough
 - ii) Moral impact is a significant signal to others
 - e) Compare using the weighing mechanism?
 - i) Gov helps everyday American vs Opp job losses
 - ii) O1: raw materials issue disproved statistically
 - iii) O2: it isn't progress when foreign EVs flock to US with no competition
 - iv) O3: Additional revenues available on Gov side
 - v) Gov: better economy, security, improved lives
 - vi) Gov provides a turning point to a better world.