

The Final Round¹

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Warde High School

January 11, 2025

THBT the US should not defend Taiwan militarily.

A Note about the Notes

These are my notes from the varsity final round at Warde High School on January 11, 2025. 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 Warde was closed out by Joel Barlow. The team of Owen Fellows and Zachary Colangelo was on the Government against their schoolmates Cade Fravel and Griffin Speck on the Opposition. The debate was won by the Opposition.

1) Prime Minister Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the motion
- c) “This House”: US Federal Government
- d) Definition: “defend Taiwan militarily” resist an invasion of the island
 - i) US has stated it will defend Taiwan
 - ii) We will not send troops
- e) Plan
 - i) US will facilitate negotiations for a China/Taiwan union like the EU
- f) G1²: Defense v negotiations
 - i) We would lose a war
 - (1) In event of blockade, Taiwan only has 8 days of fuel
 - (2) PRC’s army 12 times that of Taiwan
 - (3) Many US soldiers would die
 - (4) \$10 trillion trade losses
 - (5) Loss of access to microchip production

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

- ii) Negotiations
 - (1) KMT party in Taiwan favors this

POI: How long to build semiconductors in US?

- (a) A few years for new factories to come online
- (2) Lose access to chips immediately if a war
- (3) Negotiate retain access to factories and production
- g) G2: No economic need to defend Taiwan
 - i) Semiconductors are indispensable
 - (1) Chip factories very sensitive to disturbance
 - (2) e.g., small earthquake takes offline for months
 - (3) war would certainly damage them
 - ii) So war/no war would lose access to chips
 - iii) No chance to win the war (G1)

POI: If goal is chips, why destroy factories?

- (1) Ukraine, Gaza shows can't control destruction
- h) G3: Defense not worth it
 - i) US doesn't recognize Taiwan as a country
 - ii) US lost 50,000 lives each in Korea and Vietnam

2) Leader of the Opposition Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) Weighing: which best protects the economy, morality and US geopolitical status
- c) O1: Defending Taiwan protects the economy
 - i) Agree with Gov that semiconductors are indispensable
 - (1) Most sophisticated chips made in Taiwan
 - (2) Communications and technology depend on them
 - ii) If China controls Taiwan, it can set price, limit access
- d) O2: Moral imperative to defend Taiwan
 - i) D-Day anniversary shows some sacrifices are worth it
 - ii) If we don't defend Taiwan
 - (1) Look at loss of rights in Hong Kong w/similar "union"
 - (2) Ethnic Taiwanese, dissenters will end up in jail

POI: Lives will be lost in a military action?

- (3) That's war compared to genocide
- (4) War's losses limited; occupation unlimited
- iii) No diplomatic solution is possible
 - (1) Can't trust China
 - (2) Look at fate of Taiwan
- iv) We accept the Gov definitions
 - (1) But to be clear, defense in case of military conflict
- e) Plan?
 - i) If there is a war, it means diplomacy has failed
- f) G1: If US can't win, why should China agree to commonwealth?
 - i) If US won't fight, no leverage in negotiations
 - ii) This is no solution!
- g) G2: 10 years or more before US factories can be built
 - i) May be worth it in the long run

- ii) Before that, US has no chips, can't defend itself
- iii) Implies Taiwan of geopolitical importance to US
- iv) Why would China threaten war?
 - (1) Because Taiwan would resist
- v) Chip factories hypersensitive
 - (1) Weeks to fix Taiwan factories
 - (2) Years to duplicate them in US

3) Member of Government Constructive

- a) Intro/motion
- b) O1; China can't take control

POI on targeting

- (1) War is unpredictable
- (2) Bombs vs earthquakes

POI: Easier to fix bomb damage than build new?

- (3) Yes, consider G2
- (4) China doesn't have chip factory engineers
- (5) 90-100 needed per factory
- (6) Equipment company won't provide them
- c) O2: Who is making the sacrifice?
 - i) Opp thinks war will be over in weeks
 - ii) Gov sees long war of attrition
- d) G1: Why would China negotiate?
 - i) China pays cost of war too
 - (1) Incentive to negotiate to prevent

POI: Has China shown respect for lives of its own citizens?

- (2) Good point, but still needs soldiers, leave answer for my partner
- ii) Time to build factories in US?
 - (1) Not a good reason not to build a domestic supply
- e) G2: China and chip factories?
 - i) China has incentive not to destroy them in war, but we can't rely on that
- f) Weighing
 - i) Opp: fights a war for no reason
 - ii) Gov: build infrastructure in the US
 - iii) Morality: Opp means China, Taiwan, US lives

4) Member of the Opposition Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) O1: Economic interests
 - i) Semiconductors: war could cause some destruction
 - (1) Easier to fix than build new factories
 - (2) China has money for engineers
 - ii) Engineers: China's tech is advanced
 - (1) e.g., Electric vehicles, other tech
 - (2) can't assume they don't have capability
 - iii) If we don't defend?
 - (1) Decade to rebuild in US
 - (2) No chips for US: weapons, missiles, GPUs, etc

c) O2: Death

- i) D-Day reminds us of the costs
 - (1) But sacrifice for greater good
 - (2) China genocide, breaks agreements

POI: How can we beat China if we can't beat the Taliban?

- (3) US only used part of its military
 - ii) Only one article in packet said US would lose
 - (1) China hasn't fought a war in decades
 - iii) Chips are importance
 - (1) Every device has a chip
 - (2) Lose Taiwan, no chips for 10 years
- d) Weighing
 - i) Jobs in US unlikely
 - (1) Repair is quick
 - (2) 10-year loss of chips will affect economy, military
 - ii) Moral to fight a war?
 - (1) Compared to loss of country to a dictator
 - (2) China has killed more Chinese than Stalin did Russians
- e) G1: Diplomacy?
 - i) Hong Kong shows this won't work
- f) G2: Chips: war is unpredictable
 - i) Repair vs build new factories
- g) G3: US "Taiwan not a country" doesn't reflect reality
 - i) Has to do with US/China policy
 - ii) Still have trade, travel, etc.

5) Leader of Opposition Rebuttal

- a) Intro
- b) Impacts on US, Taiwan, World
- c) Avg Americans?
 - i) More jobs in US
 - ii) Vs 10-years loss of semiconductors
 - (1) US military weapons out of date
 - (2) China could attack South Korea
 - iii) On Opp this doesn't happen
 - (1) US military stronger than China
 - (2) Protects semiconductor access
- d) Taiwan?
 - i) Diplomacy? Why would China agree?
 - (1) POI never answered
 - ii) Taiwanese send to camps, no rights
- e) Geopolitics?
 - i) Gov: US military outdated
 - (1) Just delays a war

6) Prime Minister Rebuttal

- a) Opp neglects the reality of war
 - i) Taiwan out of fuel

- ii) US military lacks capability
- iii) Taliban withstood 20 years and \$ trillions
- iv) How would we beat China
 - (1) China hasn't fought a war in 50 years?
 - (2) Has US won a war in 50 years?
- v) Can Opp protect Taiwan's liberties?
 - (1) US doesn't always win wars
- b) Decades to build chip factories?
 - i) Gov plan continues the status quo
 - ii) Keeps access to chips
- c) Can we trust China?
 - i) If China respects agreement, it works
 - ii) If not, China risks a war it doesn't want
 - (1) Regimes with unhappy people don't last
 - (2) Destruction leads to stagnation, terrorism
 - iii) US can effect change
 - iv) Take a chance for peace!