

## Judges Ballots 2009

Kansas (Brett Bricker & Nate Johnson) vs. Wake Forest  
(Alex Lamballe & Seth Gannon) 4-1 Aff. Kansas



### Hays Watson, University - University of Georgia

I vote Affirmative because I think that the counterplan's increase in US/EU relations sparks a unique and distinct Middle East conflict (Israel-Palestine) that outweighs the "peace" benefits of US/German relations.

Both the plan and the CP trigger the link to the Hill confirmation disadvantage. This means that both trigger an unstable Iraq that escalates to involve outside powers like Russia and also escalates to Israel using nuclear weapons against Iran. Does this "Middle Eastern war" make a nuclear war between Israel and Palestine inevitable? No. The warrant as to why an Israel-Palestine war would go nuclear are that a two-state solution would eliminate Israeli strategic depth, thus compelling them to use nuclear weapons. I have no reason to believe that the spillover effects from an unstable Iraq would trigger a two-state solution and I have no reason to believe that such war would compel Israel to use its nuclear weapons in a war against Palestine.

The counterplan solves US/German relations, which are both the foundation for the overall US/EU relationship, which the Negative evidence says has produced unprecedented peace and provided an economic alternative to military confrontation. Does this solve for Middle Eastern war? The evidence certainly doesn't say so. It doesn't even say "global peace." Reading the evidence, "peace" seems to mean peace in Europe, not global or Middle East peace.

The Affirmative wins that US/EU relations, which the CP generates uniqueness to by bolstering both US/EU and US/German relations, empowers the US and the EU to conclude a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. Beres says that such a two-state solution would undermine the balance of power in the Middle East and threaten Israeli strategic depth, which would result in a Israeli-Palestinian nuclear conflict.

The counterplan solves the case, which Seth argues means it also solves Middle East war. This assertion is based on a Bricker 1AR argument that Indian instability which accesses Middle Eastern war. Does the fact that the CP solves Indian stability mean it solves the outbreak of war in the Middle East? No. Solving the case means that the CP solves for Indian stability and avoiding the spillover effects that Indian instability would have on the Middle East. That does not mean that solving Indian stability means solving all sources of instability in the Middle East, as Seth's assertion seems to suggest.

Both the Aff and the CP solve for “all of terrorism.” The CP’s increase in US/EU relations solves for bioterrorism. If the CP solves for terrorism and the plan solves for terrorism, is there still a risk of bioterrorism? Having already solved for “all terrorism,” does the CP’s ability to foster US/EU cooperation to prevent bioterrorism unique? Is there still a residual or marginal risk of bioterrorism in a world in which the motivation for all forms of terrorism globally have been eliminated by the Aff and the CP? Not in my mind.

So, the CP creates a 100% risk of a unique and distinct Middle East war (nuclear war between Israel and Palestine). The CP solves “peace” via US/German relations. The “peace” the CP solves for is not Middle East peace or global peace, but rather peace in Europe (my reading of the Negative’s evidence). The CP’s creation of Israel-Palestinian nuclear conflict outweighs the CP’s unspecified “peace” dividend in Europe. Since all terrorism has been eliminated by both the plan and the CP (by getting rid of grain subsidies), there’s no reason why increased US/EU relations solve bioterrorism (there’s no longer any motivation to commit acts of bioterrorism).

### **Eric Morris, Missouri State Univ**

I should begin by congratulating both teams, and a few more. The Kansas program has won a ton of major tournaments under Scott Harris, and it’s really nice to see it all come together for them at the NDT. It was not an easy path, or an easy year, and the accomplishment is all the more special for that reason. This is a win for the program in general, as the impressive work of the KU coaching staff, and the debaters past and present, helped provide the tools to finish well.

The term “defending champs” is secondary to “classy” when describing this team. At a time when some debaters might be miffed about losing, or sad that Gannon’s “epic” (Osborn’s words) 2NR didn’t quite seal the deal, both Wake debaters were extremely classy. Further, the 2nr was really, really good. It’s hard to steal back the possession arrow in this situation, but Seth did and created a high threshold for the 2ar. Both Wake debaters appropriately congratulated their coaches and teams, and I was moved throughout the day on Monday to see the same seniors (Doowon & Seungwon Chung) that Wake GL advanced over in the doubles round working so hard to facilitate Wake’s impressive elim run. The path to finals was impressive, as was the ability to generate so many possible win conditions against a new case in finals.

So – the decision. The round hinges upon whether the Peace Process bad disad to the Death Penalty / EU Relations CP outweighs the Germany relations and terrorism net benefits. I think it does, largely on uniqueness grounds. I’ll talk about each of the three impacts separately, and then in comparative terms.

First, I think the peace process disad to the CP is nearly unmitigated. The angle of attack is about Beres’ motive, but there’s little evidence offered to demonstrate the sort of motive that would overwhelm academic credibility. Evidence would have been helpful on this argument, but such evidence might have also said Beres was materially wrong about the effects of a two state solution, and thus would have been doubly useful. It think Kansas still wins if Wake gets the 5% reduction they request. It’s a nuclear conflict and, had Kansas emphasized the terrorism impact in some of their evidence, it would have been an even easier decision. I’ll discuss why I don’t think the Hill Confirmation DA mitigates the risk below.

Second, the Germany war impact isn't much of an impact. This argument is conceded by the affirmative, but what did they concede? To locate an impact comparable to the peace process war, Wake suggests the advantage re-accesses the case evidence on the Russia war. The trick is, however, that the negative has never offered an explanation of why the plan alone is insufficient to solve the 1ac advantage, which means the terminal impact isn't inherent to the CP. It's hard to decide whether to give the negative any credit for this impact at all. The 1nc card is probably good enough to be a tiebreaker, but it's a long way from indicating there will be a war absent a further relations increase. I understand why Wake thinks this should be framed as 100% risk of some war, but I don't think that's the argument that Kansas conceded.

Third, the terrorism impact is the best hope for the negative. The impact calculus here really becomes that magnitude trumps probability, and thus the 2nr framing of probability first cuts against it. The probability of uniqueness is at best low, because the 1ac makes global claims about solving terrorism that the negative doesn't directly contest until the 2nr. Three years ago, I sat out for Wake in part because I didn't consider new 2nr defense to a previously conceded solvency claim, and I'm inclined to do the same in this instance. That's a difficult call, because I personally agree with Wake that perhaps solvency for terrorism is hard to view as "all or nothing". At the same time, the expectation that Wake explain why the specific solvency mechanisms of the affirmative will be insufficient to get access to their advantage seems appropriate – particularly given that "extinction magnitude framing" of the negative seeks to make the entire round rest on this point. If so, there needs to be a lot more for me to hang my hat on.

There are a couple of meta issues that need addressed. First, both teams agreed to disallow some Middle East defense because of contradiction with the Corsi impact. I thus didn't resolve this question independently, but I would say that the Corsi impact and the Beres impacts are NOT the same impact. It may be they are close enough that some defense applies equally to both, but Wake's DA/uniqueness trick (when Gannon comes out from behind) doesn't really demonstrate the Beres impacts are inevitable. To do so, it would need to include some detailed explanation of how Corsi spills over to Beres. Both cards are clearly good enough to link to a generic ME escalation card (Steinberg comes to mind) but that doesn't mean that one of them happening makes the other one inevitable. To put it another way, Kansas' claims to solve Middle East war with their turns are well short of claiming to prevent the possibility of a two state solution emerging or causing a specific future conflict. There's not enough in the 1ar for Wake to concede and use the way they want to use it. Separately, Kansas' strategic concession of Wake cards to suggest the nomination was complete was an effective debate trick, and it's hard to give Wake much uniqueness takeout on that basis (at best for Wake, its 50-50). In hindsight, it's clear that Chris Hill is not yet confirmed (as I write), but based on the debate round, this concession greatly diminishes the uniqueness damage that the Hill DA could do to the peace process DA.

Second, the 2nc and the 2nr frame the question as probability, but the more effective framing would have been to argue magnitude trumps probability. The extinction/non-extinction part of this argument is clear in the 2nc, but the implication that an extremely low risk of terrorism outweighs an extremely high risk of peace process is fairly new in the 2nr. Not illegitimate, but it makes it harder to screen out the 2ar. The 2ar is very good on why there's no solvency benefit from bringing the EU aboard, and that the war itself is greater impact. The choice of the 2nr to emphasize probability first really complicates the negative's framing.

All this said, a ballot for Wake is possible given the round that occurred. One could treat the “prevents war” tag line as summoning up a uniquely prevented war. I am more inclined to say there was never any particular war claim that Kansas conceded. One could also say that even an extremely small risk of risk of terrorism outweighs 95% (or 100%) of the Beres impacts. I spent most of my decision time grappling with this one. But, it’s hard to vote that way when the negative has conceded case solvency and has highlighted probability in their impact framing. Voting for Wake here seems to require allowing the 2nr to make some new arguments while precluding the 2ar from doing the same. Perhaps there is some 2nr packaging that would have persuaded me to look at it differently, but I’m still not sure what it would have been.

Overall, this was a really interesting final round. Although it came down to just a few issues, it did so only after an extremely complex chess game between two highly capable teams lead to an endgame in an interesting corner of the board. There is a ton to be learned from watching and thinking about a round such as this, regardless of whether one agrees with the assessment of any given judge.

### **David Heidt, Emory University**

This was a great debate, I thought both teams did very well and that the final decision ended up being close.

I thought that Kansas won their Middle East war impact turn to US EU relations, and that Wake won their US German war impact, but that the terrorism net benefit to the counterplan ended up being too small to matter given that both the counterplan and the plan both solved terrorism. The Middle East war impact turns outweighed the US German war impact.

1. Kansas won their Middle East war impact. The 2nr is very good trying to use the politics disad to prove that it’s either inevitable or that the plan and counterplan both solve it. Unfortunately, I agree with the 2ar that conceding the argument that the aff solves the impact just sets up uniqueness for the turn: both the plan and the counterplan stabilize the Middle East (by enhancing the US image and removing external sources of instability); however, the counterplan involves Europe, which independently pushes for Israel to give up too much territory and therefore increases the likelihood of nuclear conflict by encouraging greater Israeli nuclear reliance and emboldening Israel’s enemies. I also think the argument that the politics disad makes war inevitable doesn’t really fit with the concession that the aff solves the impact, particularly because the way the aff solves the impact is by enhancing US credibility in the region, which the Hill nomination is supposed to also achieve. Third, I gave Kansas some credence to the concession of the neg’s evidence that the Hill nomination had already occurred – while I find it HIGHLY unlikely that Wake read a politics disad that had already happened – both sides conceded this card that predicts the vote was on 3/25. Lastly, I didn’t find Wake’s indict of Beres persuasive. While I do think that qualifications are very important, Beres is a professor of political science, and the charge that he’s a “hack” isn’t grounded and no reason is provided that suggests his specific arguments aren’t true.

2. Wake won their German war impact, given that this wasn’t answered prior to the 2ar. While the 2ar evidence attack is accurate, this card was dropped by the aff in the two previous speeches so I don’t think it gets them very far. This impact makes very little sense, but sometimes judging requires a suspension of disbelief when dealing with dropped arguments (this is the same reason I give credit to the Hill argument above, it wasn’t exactly dropped but

both sides conceded an argument that probably wasn't true). However, the terminal impact to this card is never really explained, and the evidence is certainly very weak on this claim. The 2nr makes a new extrapolation that this would collapse Russia's economy as well, but this is entirely unsupported by the evidence and the 2ar answer to the economy component is fair given I think the application to Russia was new. In any case, it's certainly not going to cause a nuclear war, and there's nothing supported in the neg's evidence or speeches that indicate it would be worse than a Middle East war, other than the new Russian economy argument. The aff's Middle East impact evidence does say it would cause nuclear escalation, so I think that is much worse.

3. The terrorism part of the debate didn't make much of a difference for me. While Wake does have a portion of the 2nr devoted to a "bioweapons are worse than nuclear weapons and extinction risks are paramount" impact assessment, I don't think they win that the counterplan is better than the plan for terrorism. Intuitively, the counterplan is better; both address terrorism in different ways and it makes sense that we need to do everything we can possibly do against terrorism because it's not a phenomenon that can be eliminated completely. All it really takes is for one Aum Shinrikyo type group to end the world even if 99% of the terrorists call it quits. The problem, however, is that Kansas has made the argument in multiple speeches that the aff solves the "root cause" of terrorism, everyone likes us after the plan and I guess the jihad is over. This isn't the most convincing argument, but Wake has never questioned the aff's solvency and I don't remember them articulating a strong argument about why the aff is insufficient or that the counterplan is necessary. If I had understood a better warrant for why the aff wasn't enough, I might have changed my overall decision given that the 2nr impact arguments about terrorism were very good and mostly unchallenged by the 2ar.

Overall, this debate was outstanding and I was very honored to judge it.

### **Will Repko, Michigan State University**

#### **One weird thing I decided to do with this ballot**

Judges are thinking many things while a round is in progress. Most of the time, we are processing arguments. But, our minds do wander. In some respects judges are socialized to decide everything *after* the dust finally settles. But, in a moment of intellectual honesty, most would admit to making a series of smaller-picture decisions *as* the round is occurring.

For this ballot, I decided to be transparent about my thoughts. As the debate was happening, I wrote down some of the random things that were running through my mind.

I did not really do this for the sake of these four debaters. I did this for all of the high school coaches, young judges, and curious students that have – through the years – asked:

“What is judging like for you ?...”

Well, this is an example of what it is like. Consider it the equivalent of live-blogging the final round – from the judge's perspective.

This will not be the entirety of my ballot – I will issue a concise, formal “basis of decision” that mirrors the post-round oral feedback. If the “blogging” section gets tiresome, skip to the section called “basis of decision”.

### **Talking about the final round participants and their coaching staffs**

It’s become a norm to devote a section to this on a final round ballot. But, in this era, if you get selected to judge the finals (after elim strikesheets, strikecards, etc) you have likely already made clear to the programs that you respect their work. To be frank, if Wake or Kansas truly felt that I thought they were bad at debate, they would have (long ago) struck me – there’s plenty of room on the card to get rid of the haters.

Given that, let me re-package something that gets said all of the time.

*I am the one that’s honored to be selected to judge the final round.*

In part, this is because the NDT itself is a prestigious event. But, honestly, it is more that the damn strikecards are (now) such a selective event. To make the cut for both teams is tough and conveys something. I tried my best to live up to it.

A couple of quick personal notes:

- I am proud of Athena Murray (Kansas GA), Andrea Reed (Wake GA), and of course The Gonzo (Wake GA). I suspect that each of them, for different reasons, underestimates how talented they are at coaching. Post-MSU, I think each did a good job of finding a place that “fit” for them. As an aside – it’s a little weird to judge the arguments that I can tell that they helped produce.
- Ross is my mentor.
- Thanks to Seth and Alex – I think it’s rare to be asked to judge the same exact team in two different NDT final rounds. Half of this is testament to how gifted you two are. Half of it might be testament to the fact that I voted for you quite often throughout your three seasons together.
- I hope history remembers how well Nate Johnson debated in this round.
- It’s an aside – but I always had mad respect for everything that Brad Hall was for Wake Forest debate. I “see” aspects of Brad in Wake’s current debaters. I just wanted to acknowledge him publicly. His overall contribution is under-rated.
- Harris... no one can say you didn’t earn it... digging deep all those years... congrats.

**Here were some of things that I was thinking as the debate was occurring**

1AC

Some feelings are tough to describe. They're not universal – they're contextual. In these spots, I don't find myself saying "I feel \_\_\_\_". Instead, I find myself saying "I feel like I did when \_\_\_\_ (specific event) happened". For instance, I always get the same feeling of intrigue at the first tournament of the year – as we all discover what approaches everyone took to the topic.

A different (but familiar) feeling hit me as Bricker was starting his thank you's. It's a feeling associated with judging "a big round". I don't get that "big round" feeling as often anymore – but I sure remember it from the days when I judged an elim round at the Michigan High School State tournament or when I judged my first college elim round.

Today, I felt nervous in a different way – not so much "am I ready for this ?", but:

- o b/c I am tired, will my handwriting be an even bigger mess ?
- o will I allot enough space on each page ?... I get cocky with that.
- o Will my mind wander *too* much ?..

...we'll see...

### Opening cx

Seth is being aggressive on specification questions – but I'm Aff on all of these issues. Affs get afraid in moments like these – at least in the modern era. They often give-in to the persistence of the thread – for fear of being the team that creates a stalemate. I'm fine with Kansas' decision to dig in. One thing my sister Biz said to me hit me in this moment:

"the Neg often pretends they're asking these specification question for the sake of intellectual development... but it's usually for selfish gain."

As this persisted, I wondered where community sentiment and *panel* sentiment might be on questions of this sort. I think voting on vagueness has died off from its apex.

### INC

Too much. I get (and even sort of adore) that this is a final round and the gloves are off, but I worry a little about the longer-term trends that are at play. Hell, when MSU BH rocked it out with two conditional cplans in the 2006 final (something BH really was oddly itching to do) I think that might have been the point where multiple cplans started to come back in vogue – so some of this may be on MSU. Still, the "logic of conditionality" argument is beginning to place *every* egg in the "logic" basket. I mean Aff fairness and depth of discussion are at least a little important as well.

Unrelated – four of the last five elims I have judged at the NDT and the TOC have featured a 2NR going for a cplan with solely an internal net benefit. I get the utility of this – the topics are all too broad and

negs have to prep generically. A cplan with an internal net benefit can be a strategic approach.

But, the community needs to consider scaling back this practice. Rejoinder with the 1AC is a dying art. And, the competition arguments in favor of these “single sheet of paper” cplans are more-than-awful. These competition arguments are now so standard that a generation of young judges and coaches think that the arguments are actually correct. If “sever the certainty” is not scaled back fast, our final rounds (and many other rounds) are going to be about the EU’s Death Penalty (on an ag topic)

Bottom line – I’ll see what happens, but I am leaning Aff on prospective theory questions exiting this speech.

### Cx of the 1N

This idea just hit me – I will hold a sheet of paper in my left hand for when the 2AC says conditionality bad. I’ll flow that on its own sheet of paper – b/c that could become a big deal.

I wish even more people would watch the final round. I mean... really... everyone should watch.

### 2AC

Well... I held that paper in my left hand for the whole speech.

Sort of can’t believe that the Aff didn’t raise that objection. Seems so “no-cost” for the Aff to introduce. And, conditionality is something – given the unique nature of the 1NC – that the Neg would have to invest at least a little time on.

This is a weird moment where many of things that I was thinking the Aff should say did not really become points of emphasis. When I was younger, I held this against teams. Now, I just wait-and-see... many of these debates wind up being different from my early “take”.

### CX of the 2AC

I may have ranted about Wake GL’s theory gunk – but they just did something strategic. As KU began to go down the path of Aff complaining (about covering 11 off), Wake “threw an accommodating bone” and backed-off a bit. I don’t think Wake was going to win on hyper-technical appeals about “nothing new in the 1AR” anyway... I thought this was a savvy move. Veteran play, sir.

### Neg

I am quickly tiring of this blogging – mostly b/c I am physically exhausted. I am trying to write this during prep-time breaks – much like I do during prep time breaks at the summer camps. But, when I get



tired, I also like to use the breaks to physically walk around.

Seth was good on theory in the 2NC. I don't think this debate is headed in that direction – it feels a little different than last year's final round in that regard.

People forget that Alex often needs to be the clean-up man. He is almost-always solid in my opinion.

### 1AR

I was somewhat surprised by the time allocation in this speech. I don't really get why so much time was spent on the politics disad—the neg seems so much more apt to go for cplan (given case coverage). Some of the Aff answers to the cplan lack solvency deficits/permutations.

During the 1AR, I saw Seth get excited when Bricker exited the Cplan page. I suspect we'll all see what he was excited about.

### 2NR

Well, it's not hard to recount what Seth was excited about. People in Arkansas might have heard. He's jazzed about the undercovered EU net benefit, as well as some interactive arguments about the Middle East (from politics). This speech was loud about some central messages, and the 2AR will need to counter this – either by being loud about his own offense, or calling out one the 2NR themes as inaccurate.

### 2AR

At the end of the 2NR, I thought I was a little more likely to vote Neg. The basis of decision would have been a simple “relative defense” ballot (“dropped internal net benefit outweighs contested impact turn, plus no solvency deficit for the 1AC”). But, I think I might vote Aff now. The nexus question seems to be how interconnected the politics disad and the EU/Middle East impact turns really are. Nate did what I described above – he countered Seth's connection and called into question the accuracy of the ballot that the 2NR tried to script for us.

I am going to spend a minute or two cleaning up my flows and thinking about how I will sequence issues in the process of deciding. I also want to beat the rush for evidence – or else I'll take forever to decide.

I kind of want to start my post-round with the 1NC politics shell and compare the security risks (on that page) to the scenarios outlined in the Beres impact turns. If they are different security risks, the Aff is good shape. If they are the same, the Neg is going to win (Aff has no real other realm of offense). The offense for both sides is fairly compartmentalized – that will make this easier to decide.

## **The Basis of Decision**

I voted Affirmative.

The short, short version is that the risk of the peace process impact turns out to weigh the combined risk of the two major internal net benefits to the plan (EU war and bioterrorism scenarios).

The longer version basically entails explaining how I calculated the risks of:

- **The Aff's impact turn** (peace process bad)
- **The Neg's EU war impact module**
- **The Neg's bioterror impact module**

I will discuss each:

- **The Aff's impact turn**

There seems to be three defensive arguments here (by the neg).

First, Beres indicts. There is at least something to this – Beres is certainly extreme. But, the neg may have made an error in quantifying this indict (and quantifying the level of reduction at such a small number). I am disinclined to give the Neg indict more reduction than they request (the neg requested a 5% reduction). Plus, the Aff made the obvious retort (this dude is qualified, works at a University, etc). I did not think this got the Neg very far.

Second, Hill's nomination (on the politics disad) complicates the Aff impact turn. The 2NR is right – it is impossible for the judges to know (based on the events of this round) whether or not Hill is already nominated. If it mattered, I would err Aff on this – just because the 1AR expressly granted a neg card (which was some insane thing like “nomination in X days” when X days had already surpassed).

But, the “yes-no nomination” argument is ultimately not that important – because it's the internal link that really matters. If Hill is *truly* key to solving the Middle East Peace Process (between Israel and Palestine), then irrespective of whether Hill is nominated or not, the process has or will meet its fate. More than anything, this was the 2NR's point.

The problem for the negative is that none of their ev (about Hill or on the disad) speaks to the peace process or tension between Israel-Palestine. The 2AR spin that “whoa... not all events in the region are the same... and this is a different Middle East Thing” is not new (it's reactive to a 2NR development). And, the evidence appears to read the way it needs to for the Aff. While savvy, I thought the neg was inaccurate here. I granted the neg very little reduction based on this thread.

The third 2NR stance was to grant a moment where he felt the 1AR said “we solve middle

east war via the case”. Thus, the neg would solve as well b/c there was no real solvency deficit to the cplan (and it did the whole plan if conditions were met). The problem here is that the 1AR had no real place where it claimed to solve “all Middle East war”. They had many scenarios – some of which got close to the region. But none were about Israel-Palestine. In a nutshell, I think the 2AR adequately de-characterized and explained away this contradiction.

Let me close this section by saying that the starting point for this impact turn was very, very large. It may have been a touch smaller than the extinction claim on the bioterror scenario, but the (possibly overblown) security risks were huge. Given that the amount of reduction into this impact turn was pretty low, the Aff was looking at a high-risk of solving a high-impact event.

The neg’s offense never rose to that level.

- **The Neg’s EU war module**

There are two parts to assessing any impact module – probability and magnitude.

The probability question here was tricky (explained below). The magnitude was not – at least not in a comparative sense. This module – while arguably unaddressed in the 1AR – was not a security risk that rose to the same level of magnitude as the events described in the Beres impact. So, while marketed to the contrary, even a 100% probability of this module probably could not outweigh the Aff offense. Fewer lives were at stake.

As for probability – it really became a question of “how to judge”.

Years ago, Ben Coulter of Samford voted against MSU in an important debate. While we would have preferred to have won, I learned quite a bit about judging as I listened to his oral critique. He explained that a judge can craft two oral critiques – one where they vote Aff and one where they vote neg. Before filling out the ballot, they can review each oral critique and decide which version is the most educational, or the most fair, or the most whatever.

I stole that idea from Ben and tweaked it. Sometimes, I use it to decide smaller pictures as well. Here, I had to decide if the 2AR’s claim that “the 1AR did *not* drop the EU war module b/c he cross-applied the Layne card” was too new or too much of a stretch.

I thought about what the rationale would be for voting neg on this narrow question. It would entail conveying to the Aff that their application (while accurate, on the correct page, and having very few other logical applications on said page) was too imprecise.

A different way of conceptualizing a judging paradigm is as follows:

A paradigm is how the judge sets the curriculum for the course (in this case, the course is the debate itself). Since the students usually want to win (as a top priority), they will adjust to the curriculum the judge sets and it will change their practices. In turn, this will change their education, their curriculum, etc.

If my ballot had read “cross-app of Layne = too new, too imprecise”, I would have embraced a curriculum that prioritized technical application over argument interaction. At times in my judging life I was all about technical precision. But, over time I realized that hyper-technique (while slightly under-rated for the purposes of rejoinder) is, in fact, not terribly valuable.

I thought that the rationale for saying “the Aff’s cross-application of Layne is legit” was stronger. That rationale not only embraces a better curriculum, I also think there was very little else on that page that the Layne argument would address (it’s certainly not an in-round theory objection for instance). So, the Aff was not really skirting rejoinder – which is the chief reason that I render technical rationales in other decisions. Also, the neg placed a huge (if not epic) burden on the Aff in terms of coverage, etc. I was honestly a little loathe to render a decision that spoke with the voice of “you needed to apply X a little more specifically”. I would fear what kind of practice such a decision would encourage. I wouldn’t like the curriculum that would create. In the end, I thought the “better” decision was to let the Layne cross-application fly.

Once that happened, the Neg’s voice of “this was completely dropped” wore-off. Probability slid down from 100%.

The Layne argument was not a silver bullet – but it does help to minimize the consequences cited in this impact module.

I exited this section of the debate thinking that the Aff won a medium-sized risk of a comparatively smaller impact module. I thought the Neg would need to win something big on the bioterror net benefit in order to tip the scales.

- The bioterror module

I am not a zero-risk kind of guy. Plans and disads carry risks – some big, some small, some microscopic. So, if the Aff had never introduced the peace process turn, I would have been very unlikely to vote on the 2AR’s appeal that “we solve ALL terrorism” – so bioterror is not possible in the world of the Aff, vote on presumption”.

I would not have voted on this because – in the world of a forced choice – it simply does not make sense that one would not opt to remedy ALL terrorism (as per the 1AC and no solvency deficit has been cited), as well as throwing a little icing on top and solving some bioterror (in case someone with a handy smallpox vial is having a bad day).

I get that some people love that oral critique – live for it in fact. But, in terms of creating a curriculum, it places the “you should have said something”/technique rationale a little too far ahead of the “common sense” rationale.

However, different factors were at play. The Aff *did* have external offense in this round. The neg really did grant the (possibly overblown) claim that the Aff could end all terrorism.

This may not have – in an extreme case – absolutely eliminated the bioterror net benefit. But, it did not need to. The 1AC’s uncontested appeals were relevant. They moved this internal net benefit into the low-probability camp.

In closing, I did not think the sum total of lives at risk from an improbable bioterror impact module outweighed the edge that Aff had already built (large Middle East nuclear war versus smaller EU war risk).

Thus, I thought the Aff was the safer option.