

The Final Round¹

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This House supports a policy of containment with respect to China.

A Note about the Notes

These are my notes from the Varsity championship round of State Finals at Stamford High School. They are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. 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 chart, with each contention “flowed” across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It’s closer to the way I take notes during the debate.

The Final Round

The final round at Stamford was between the Wilton team of Sid Suneja and Shawn Gregory on Government and the Ridgefield team of Gabriel Uceda-Sosa and James Cox-Donovan on Opposition. The debate was won by the Government team from Wilton.

1) Prime Minister Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the motion
- c) Definition: “containment” as stated in the packet
 - i) Stop geopolitical expansion into sovereign, free nations
- d) Framework: which side best supports democratic values
 - i) Premise of US
 - ii) E.g., support Taiwan, Ukraine self-determination
- e) G1²: China presents a direct threat to the United States
 - i) Supply chain, leads in 37 of 44 technologies
 - (1) Used by hospitals, in commerce
 - ii) Holds US debt
- f) G2: US duty to uphold democratic ideals
 - i) US was founded on principle of democracy for the world
 - ii) Won’t force democracy on anyone, rather support self-determination
 - iii) E.g., support Taiwan, prevent what happened to Uighurs
- g) G3: Containment is the best policy
 - i) We realize USSR was not the same as China

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

- (1) USSR suffered great losses in WWII
- (2) Containment was a process of waiting them out
- (3) No boots on the ground, fewer than 4000 US military deaths
- ii) For China we need to fund nations around China
 - (1) E.g., Taiwan, Hong Kong, Ukraine
- POI: Is your plan to “wait out” China?***
 - (2) Not just wait, as China is economically strong
 - (3) We have to limit expansion in Asia, e.g., Taiwan, deter Russian in Ukraine
- iii) Success means the following:
 - (1) Limit China’s power over the US and the world economy
 - (2) Prevent harm to the Uighurs
 - (3) We wouldn’t take any Chinese territory
 - (4) Work on protecting supply chain
- h) Self-determination is the crux of the debate
- 2) Leader of the Opposition Constructive**
 - a) We accept the Gov definitions
 - b) Observations:
 - i) Taiwan is an unofficial ally of the US
 - (1) This is unrelated to containment, support not opposed by Opp
 - ii) Containment must consist of measures beyond simply supporting an ally
 - c) O1: China is a major economic power
 - i) Taiwan is about an historic injustice, not regional dominance
 - ii) Ukraine has nothing to do with China
 - iii) Issues with other countries are economic
 - (1) Belt and Road program has led to excessive debt
 - iv) How to best deal?
 - (1) Expand US economic power with domestic investment
 - POI: Hasn’t this failed in the past?***
 - (2) It worked for most of the 20th century, China was a closed economy
 - (3) US/allies together will have more success
 - d) O2: Containment is an expensive, losing policy
 - i) Chinese influence has not been met with hostility
 - (1) Public opinion outside of the West favors China and Russia
 - ii) Western economic revival is more important
 - (1) Best to develop global power with allies
 - e) O3: Change won’t come from containment
 - i) Hostility will ultimately increase hostility and enmity
 - (1) Increased Chinese determination to resist
 - (2) E.g., WTO turned China away
 - f) G1: Unless Gov is suggesting a trade war, no containment
 - i) China strength is economic
 - ii) Gov “plan” is not containment
 - g) G2: We agree we should uphold economic ideals
 - i) That isn’t what sending weapons to war does
 - ii) Ukraine is not a China issue
- 3) Member of Government Constructive**

- a) Intro
 - b) Taiwan: allies, but not to any extreme
 - i) We will argue both ways
 - c) O1: Economics
 - i) US investment in itself and other countries is a form of containment
 - ii) It resists a sphere of control, therefore part of Gov case
 - iii) Removes dependence on China
 - d) O2: Gaining local support is also containment
 - i) E.g., providing money reduces China's sphere of influence
 - e) O3: Cooperate with China is unrealistic, as US/China on different paths
 - i) China authoritarian, totalitarian
 - ii) US democracy and freedom
 - iii) These are irreconcilable

POI: Hasn't China become more capitalistic?

 - iv) Yes, but also more oppression
 - v) Everyone agrees US and China differ on ideology
 - f) G1: China has a chokehold on supply chain
 - i) Letting China grow without hindrance let's threaten us and do what they want
 - ii) Motion prevents expansion, increased power
 - g) G2: We can't stop the problems withing China, e.g., Uighurs
 - i) Can prevent it from happening elsewhere
 - ii) Help defend against China, Russia
 - h) G3: Containment avoids conflict
 - i) Conflict is inevitable
 - ii) Containment minimizes the lives lost
 - iii) Ensures democratic ideals
- 4) Member of the Opposition Constructive**
- a) Intro/Motion
 - b) Containment and investment
 - i) Reinforcing your own economy is not containment
 - (1) No harm to China or Chinese influence
 - ii) Better to strengthen US economy than confront China
 - iii) POI: Investment isn't unique to either side, can be done on Gov?
 - iv) Investment isn't the Gov's plan
 - (1) Investment isn't containment, better policy
 - c) Gov would have to force "freedom of choice"
 - i) We didn't just ask Russia to break up
 - ii) Opp works with economies
 - (1) E.g., worked w/Japan to rebuild their economy
 - (2) Economic development is a policy throughout history
 - d) G1: We agree there are supply chain issues
 - i) Need to expand trade with other sources
 - ii) Trade war is just attrition
 - iii) Containment with respect to China means inhibiting trade
 - iv) Expanding trade is not containment
 - e) G2: Investment helps democracy

POI: Doesn't investment resist Chinese influence?

- i) There is no direct harm to China
 - (1) Spending on our military or investing is not containment
 - (2) Containment requires we directly oppose China
- ii) In the Cold War we directly opposed the USSR
 - (1) It is not the same world now
 - (2) China is much stronger economically, can't starve them out
- f) G3: Gov wants to force China to change its ways
 - i) China was closed off for most of the 20th century
 - ii) China isn't going to become democratic
 - iii) China has moved to economic competition
- g) O1: Gov wants to prevent Chinese power from growing
 - i) Tariffs and sanctions didn't work under Trump
- h) O2: A war of attrition is not good policy

5) Leader of Opposition Rebuttal

- a) Taiwan? Gov can't limit the debate to Taiwan
 - i) Containment has to be a more general policy
- b) Trade w/allies?
 - i) Indirect behavior is not containment
 - ii) Containment means directly stopping China in the region
 - iii) Gov doesn't do this
 - (1) Selling arms? Done on Opp too, not containment
 - (2) Often leads to coups
- c) No warrant explaining how Gov will limit Chinese power
 - i) E.g., saving African countries from debt trap
- d) Opp funds US, invests in allies
 - i) Puts US in position to respond if necessary
 - ii) Ready for containment, trade wars, etc.
 - iii) Best policy isn't containment but to strengthen US influence
- e) Gov argues for self-determination
 - i) This doesn't stop Chinese power
 - ii) Opp prepares US to act
- f) O1, O2, O3

6) Prime Minister Rebuttal

- a) Framework was best support democratic values
 - i) No mention by Opp in last 12 minutes
- b) Opp mis-characterizes Gov case, abusive
 - i) Containment defined in packed
 - ii) Nothing about intent
 - iii) Anything that inhibits China is containment
- c) Taiwan?
 - i) We fund Taiwan military
 - ii) Saved their semiconductor industry
 - iii) Not just investing in allies: giving to Taiwan
- d) O1: no link to economic and democratic values
- e) O2: We never talked about attrition or tariffs

- i) Gov not trying to trip China but make US faster
- f) O3: Change came in the case of the USSR
 - i) It also works with Taiwan
- g) Investment in the US is quantitative easing
 - i) Can invest in US economy to prevent Chinese expansion
- h) We have to prevent harms like those to Uighurs or anyone with faith in God
 - i) Prevent China from forcing Taiwan