

A Quarterfinal Round¹

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This House would militarily intervene to prevent Iran from getting the bomb.

A Note about the Notes

These are my notes from one of the quarterfinal rounds of the Yale Invitational. 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 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 “flowed” 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

This quarterfinal round of the Yale Invitational Parliamentary Division was between the New Canaan team of David Luchs and Gita Abhi-Rahman on Government and the Wilton team of Allie Schaefer and Eleanor Clifford on Opposition. The debate was won by the Government team from New Canaan.

1) Prime Minister Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the Resolution
- c) Definition: “US Military Intervention” as the use of force on any scale
- d) G1²: A nuclear Iran is dangerous
 - i) They have a radical Islamic Shiite government
 - ii) They oppose Jews, Christians and Sunni Muslims
 - iii) Ahmadinejad has threatened Israel
 - iv) They could intervene in Israel, India/Pakistan and Iraq
 - v) The popular Green revolution was crushed
 - vi) Long-range missiles threaten Europe
 - vii) Potential for nuclear terrorism

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² “G1” indicates the Affirmative first contention, “N2” the Negative second contention and so forth.

- e) G2: Diplomacy has failed
 - i) Iran deserves civilian nuclear power
 - ii) Russia and France offered to enrich uranium for this purpose
 - iii) Qom enrichment program is for weapons grade
 - iv) Missile program is not peaceful
 - f) G3: Large scale attack is not necessary
 - i) Locations are known
 - ii) Israel has already practiced fly-bys
 - (1) Iran can't defend the sites
 - iii) Surgical strikes would solve the problem
- 2) Leader of the Opposition Constructive**
- a) O1: The motion would stir global conflict
 - i) US is seen as meddling
 - (1) Misunderstands Iran and effect on the Middle East
 - (2) Not a global policeman
 - ii) We should be a unifier not a divider, use diplomacy
 - b) O2: More peaceful means are available
 - i) Diplomatic methods save lives, reduce threats
 - ii) Military intervention unnecessary, not worth loss of lives
 - iii) Need to understand Iran's intentions, cultural differences
 - c) O3: Intervention is too expensive
 - i) High military cost.
 - (1) Gov says "on any scale" so could be expensive
 - ii) Could lead to war in the Middle East
 - iii) Economic and social pressure are better approaches
 - d) G1: Action would give terrorists and radicals a reason to attack
- 3) Member of Government Constructive**
- a) O1: It is in our interest to defend ourselves and our allies
 - i) Nuclear weapons themselves would cause conflicts
 - ii) Allies are already united on this issue
 - b) O2: Iran's motives and intentions are clear
 - i) Willing to attack Israel
 - ii) Diplomacy has failed, by US, UN, others
 - c) O3: Gov is not suggesting a war
 - i) Intervention can be limited and cheap
 - d) G1: Iran is ruled by Shiites
 - i) Already in conflict with many others
 - e) G2: Iran has already declined international support
 - i) Offered help on energy if it gives up nukes
 - f) G3: Locations of nuclear facilities are known
 - i) A direct, effective attack is possible
 - ii) US military can target weaknesses
- 4) Member of the Opposition Constructive**
- a) G1: Several of Iran's neighbors are already nuclear powers
 - i) Iranian bomb is an invitation to attack
 - ii) No benefit to attacking them

- b) G2: Diplomacy hasn't failed, we just haven't found the right compromise
 - i) We need to prove US stands for principles
 - ii) Military intervention seems easy, but should be a last resort
- c) G3: If a "large scale" attack isn't necessary, why did they define military intervention that way?
 - i) If it only requires a pinpoint attack, they could have defined it that way
 - ii) Training, transportation, weapons will be exorbitantly expensive
 - iii) Economy has no funds for this
 - iv) In previous wars, US economy was stronger
- d) O1: World is not behind a military intervention
 - i) No one wants to meddle with a government
 - ii) Other nations do not see US police role
 - iii) Allies are not with the US, there are divisions
 - iv) There is likely to be a loss of lives
 - v) Clear possibility of failure
 - vi) Can't assume the targets are known
 - vii) Too expensive

5) Leader of Opposition Rebuttal

- a) Gov then Opp
- b) International Support
 - i) Terrorists will oppose intervention and reach
 - ii) A large conflict is likely
- c) Definitions Issue
 - i) Broad Gov def of military intervention conflicts with G3
- d) Economic
 - i) Economy is already strained by Iraq and Afghanistan
- e) Diplomacy
 - i) We should use every means possibility
 - ii) We should be a unifier not a divider

6) Prime Minister Rebuttal

- a) Opp is based on noble sentiments
- b) O1: Other nations have already agreed to act
 - i) E.g., Israel
 - ii) It is better if the US leads
- c) Definitions: we want to keep options open
 - i) Intervention will be short and brief
 - ii) Preemption is possible as nuclear facilities present a target
- d) Tension: terrorists are a small minority
- e) O2 vs G2
 - i) We can't negotiate with radicals
 - (1) Chamberlin and the Nazis
 - ii) Cultural experts understand Iran
 - iii) If we don't act, we may let millions die
- f) O2: war isn't necessary, just intervention
- g) G3: This is not Iraq
 - i) The world stands behind us