

would be at liberty to argue that the Roman and British empire examples are not that analogous and fail to assist the Proposition case.

The Proposition would be equally at fault if it defined the motion too specifically. The motion is framed in terms of maintaining 'United States military bases in Asia' and a proposition that said it would only talk about American bases in Japan (while ignoring those in Korea) would be giving a definition more specific than the motion itself. Arguing that the existence of bases in Japan is more controversial is unlikely to justify limiting the words of the motion. The organisers have set the debate on 'United States military bases in Asia' not on 'United States military bases in Japan', and the issues that apply to bases in Japan also arise, even if less acutely, with respect to bases in Korea and other parts of Asia. The Proposition might be entitled to use Japan as the major example supporting its case, but cannot claim it is the only one able to be raised in the debate.

As at other World Schools Championships, the motions at the 2002 contest in Singapore ranged from the very specific ('This House supports missile defence', 'This House supports the international trading of pollution permits') to the more general ('This House believes that low taxes are preferable to extensive government services', 'This House would compromise civil liberties in the interest of security'). The organisers sought to test the debaters' ability to argue both specific cases and general principles.

A Proposition team in the semi-finals defined the last-mentioned motion ('This House would compromise civil liberties in the interest of security') to mean that all countries should adopt a system of national identification cards (this compromise of civil liberties being warranted by the security benefits that would result). The problem with this definition is that it took a motion expressed as a general principle and tried to confine it to a single example. The organisers had not set the motion 'This House supports national identification cards' and the Proposition team, by defining the motion to mean this, was turning a topic of general application into something extremely specific. The plain meaning of the motion was whether, as a general principle, civil liberties should be reduced when this would benefit security, and national identification cards comprised but a single example which might or might not be contested in the course of this debate. By trying to make national identification cards the entire debate, the Proposition pitched the motion at a much more specific level than had been set and, as such, failed to provide the reasonable definition required.

Proving motions expressed as general principles

The Notes for Adjudicators at the World Schools Championships stress that when teams debate general issues, the emphasis 'is upon the principle, not the specifics'. The Proposition has the onus of proving the motion is *generally* true. In other words, it must prove the motion correct *as a general proposition*. This means showing it is true more often than not– that it is true in *the majority of cases*.

There will always be examples for and against any motion expressed as a general principle. This places a premium upon logical argument. As mentioned in the Notes for Adjudicators, the Proposition 'has to present a generalised case and prove it logically, rather than relying on large numbers of examples in the hope that these will do the job instead.' Just as a single example will not prove a generalised motion, nor will a welter of examples. What becomes important is not the number of examples, but the analysis of them, finding how they are linked, and the reasons and arguments they point to and that prove the team's case.