

mention is just one of hundreds of nonbinding resolutions passed every year? It has no legal force.”

- *Demonstrating weak arguments or evidence.* Of course, POIs and CX are important for pointing out when arguments are simply wrong. Drawing attention to evidence that isn’t credible, or for which you have data that clearly refutes it—preferably from a more reliable source—can work well in hard interaction. However, you want to maintain a balance between keeping quality material for a speech later in the debate and deploying it in questioning. This is particularly true for BP—where you may not want to give away a strong argument to a speaker on your side but not your team. A good rule in these circumstances is to consider whether you can destroy a particular line of argument with the question or series of questions. If all you will accomplish is to damage it and allow your opponent time to tidy up her position, leave the material for your speech when you can deal with it more fully. However, a well-placed question that refutes a vital piece of evidence or interrupts a logical progression can bring a case to its knees before it even gets started. If that is the situation, deploy the question and use your speech to focus on the arguments that remain of the other side’s case.
- *Highlighting inconsistencies.* Point out inconsistencies or contradictions sooner rather than later. If the opposing team continues to put forward mutually exclusive or incompatible arguments, continue questioning their logic. The respondent will have to ditch one of the arguments or try—usually unsuccessfully—to present it as part of a seamless whole or waste time prevaricating. It’s possible that the respondent will have contradictions within his own arguments, but it’s more likely that the divisions will lie between two speakers. “You’ve said trade sanctions are the main driver of change but First Affirmative said diplomatic pressure was. Which is it?”

Asking your opponent to clarify points that are inconsistent not only takes the speaker aback but also demonstrates to the adjudicator that you are engaged in the debate and aware of the remarks of all speakers. In CX, this process can be drawn out by using examples that are at variance with an earlier point. With POIs, you can usually just point it out and leave the speaker to backpedal his way into a broken case.

- *Pointing out unintended consequences.* It’s easy for speakers to forget that any course of action will have multiple consequences, many of them less helpful than the ones they would like to focus on. Use POIs or CX to point these out. Remember that these may lie a couple of steps further down the course of action than has been apparent up until that stage in the debate. “Your case as to how sanctions will hurt [country X] is very interesting, but you haven’t discussed how our car industry will cope without the steel we import from them.”