

ly would be a national government; if it concerns international intervention in Sudan, it might be the United Nations.

The action refers to the proposed changes in policy that the affirmative team recommends. The affirmative may present the proposed action as a series of steps or as a series of component parts. If presented as a series of steps, the plan should include a schedule. If presented as a series of component parts, the plan should have a systematic framework. Because of time constraints, the affirmative can only outline its plan, but it should be ready to provide greater explanation if required later in the debate.

Nonessential elements of a plan involve details of implementation. These elements may include how the plan will be funded, how the plan will be enforced, how various agencies in the plan are expected to work together, etc. Because the affirmative has limited time, it cannot present these elements in great detail.

In the resolution on the International Criminal Court, the affirmative team might propose a plan for the signatories (*actor*) to strengthen the International Criminal Court by providing funds for trying war criminals and terrorists (*action*). Clearly, this plan will require elaboration: How will the money be collected, how will it be distributed, how much time will be needed to implement the plan? These are the nonessential elements. A second plan might call for defining the crime of terrorism. Unlike the first plan, it does not require elaboration and so has no nonessential elements.

THE BENEFITS OR ADVANTAGES

The affirmative demonstrates the benefits of their plan by showing how it eliminates or at least reduces the problem. Ordinarily they will argue that their plan addresses the cause of the problem. When they show how their plan eliminates or reduces the cause, they demonstrate that the benefits really accrue from the plan—this is an important step in developing the benefits portion of a need-plan-benefits case.

Using our earlier example, if the affirmative successfully proved that the cause of the ICC's ineffectiveness with terrorists or war criminals is the lack of resources or the absence of the definition of terrorism, then the affirmative's plan to provide these elements will logically solve, or at least substantially reduce, the problem. If the affirmative has shown that terrorism and crimes against humanity will continue to rise under the status quo, then the affirmative plan of providing increased resources and a definition of terrorism should logically reduce these crimes.

NEGATIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEBATING ABOUT POLICIES

The negative can use three specific strategies, either singly or in combination, to attack a need-plan-benefits case. The team can defend the status quo, defend a policy other than the status quo, and attack the affirmative plan.

When attacking the affirmative's case, the negative needs to keep in mind that they are defending a policy that enjoys a privileged position of presumption. **The concept of presumption** means maintaining current policies until someone makes