

Topicality Press – Russia Must Exist

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1. INTERPRETATION

The Affirmative team must reform a policy that is towards Russia. **Towards** basically means that the plan needs to be aimed at Russia specifically:

"With regard to; in relation to" (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry?id=T0291900>)

The problem is that what is "towards" Russia is very vague. How much relation to Russia does the plan have to have to be "towards" Russia? To clarify this, we propose a simple brightline that sets a specific, measurable standard: Russia must exist for the plan to be implemented.

2. VIOLATION

Their plan doesn't require Russia to exist. If Russia dropped off the face of the globe tomorrow, their plan would still be possible, because none of the actions taken are specifically reliant upon Russia.

We believe that this standard is reasonable and should be preferred for the following reasons:

3. REASON TO PREFER

Brightline Limits: We clearly establish a cutoff for topicality - the plan must require Russia to exist. This straightforward standard makes topicality much simpler and clearer than the Affirmative's vague standard. Clarity and limits are good for the educational value and quality of debate.

Only Logical Standard: For a clear interpretation of the resolution, we need to know how much relation something must have to Russia to be "towards" Russia. None of the other precise standards make sense. Saying the plan must merely have some impact on Russia or our relations with them would make pretty much anything topical - nuking China, for example. Likewise, saying that the plan must *only* have relation to Russia makes the resolution impossibly restrictive. Our brightline establishes a clear standard *between* these two extremes.

Common Man: This brightline just makes sense. You can't be "towards" something that doesn't exist, but you can be towards something that does. To the average person, and probably the framers of the resolution, this is a reasonable standard - a specific articulation of how they would naturally interpret the resolution.

(Response to "but under this standard, X would be topical": We're obviously not saying that this is the *only* standard we need to apply to topicality - there are other limits, as well. We're merely establishing one facet of a clear resolutorial interpretation.)