**Primacy DA**

1. Uniqueness – The U.S. currently maintains its position as the premier global power by imposing a wide array of economic sanctions. Jonas Elmerraji[[1]](#endnote-1) writes,

It's not a good idea to get on the United States' bad side. **As the wealthiest country in the world, the U.S. also lays claim to the world's most powerful military. But military might is nothing compared to the repercussions that economic sanctions from the U.S. can bring about. Economic sanctions are** a **popular** way for large governments to exert their disapproval over one another. **While wars are costly – both economically and politically – economic sanctions tend to be somewhat less tangible, at least for the country doing the sanctioning.** But for the country being sanctioned, the results can be enormous and long lasting. (This instrument of foreign policy and economic pressure is preferred over military action but can still pack a punch. Find out more in The Power Of Economic Sanctions.) What does a country need to do to attract the ire of the United States? **Overwhelmingly, the U.S. sanctions countries that sponsor terrorism or perpetrate human rights violations on their people.**

1. Link – the affirmative places a prohibition on the use of economic sanctions, meaning that in the affirmative world the U.S. would have to remove all existing sanctions. As a major democracy, removing sanctions would make the U.S. look weak, acting as an immense sign of appeasement. Jerome Venteicher[[2]](#endnote-2) writes,

In a key study that assesses the relationship between economic sanctions and military conflict through a large-N analysis, Lektzian and Sprecher (2007) also assume that sanctions act as costly signals. They stress the dual political and economic costs associated with sanction imposition, with a particular focus on the effects of these costs in democratic systems. Lektzian and Sprecher argue that democracies, because of the propensity to tie their hands with audience costs and the pressure they face to keep economic costs low to their constituents, are likely to escalate a sanction episode to military conflict. **Democracies tie their hands when they sanction a target, meaning they will suffer domestic audience costs if they back down from such a public challenge** (see Fearon 1994, 1997). These **audience costs can also apply internationally in that states are concerned with their reputation among other states.** For a democracy, **backing down can signal constituents that their leaders are weak, or that they made a poor initial decision** when engaging the target. Further, any interest groups that may benefit from the sanctions will want to see the policies implemented and supported by the sending government (see also Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1988, 1992; Hart 2000; Hiscox 2002). Therefore, democrats try to avoid tying their hands, except in highly salient cases. When democracies tie their hands and initiate an economic coercion campaign, Lektzian and Sprecher contend that they are likely to follow through – all the way to the use of armed force, if need be – because of their aversion to audience costs.

And, if the U.S. ceases to use sanctions, our enemies will gain power. U.S. leadership will decline, resulting in growing international anarchy and violent extremism. Thomas Henriksen[[3]](#endnote-3) writes,

Our adoption of **severe remedies short of declared conflict must be seen as an extension of diplomatic instruments to realize our strategic goals. Power must be employed to further diplomatic goals. Sanctions** and criminal legal proceedings **make up part of our arsenal**. These initial steps can build international support for more draconian measures. Offensive military operations and other measures short of war are our best defense for peace and continued security. **They represent political warfare, provided**, of course, **that the U**nited **S**tates **has the tenacity and wherewithal to complete them once begun. By backing away from realistic approaches we will demonstrate to our opponents that they can oppose us without cost. Our allies will take note and go their own way. This turn of events will cause still further problems down the road. If the forces of global disorder come to dominate the world scene, the human condition will be degraded, producing fertile soil for still more extreme elements to take root. The alternative to American leadership is growing international anarchy. Unless we restore power, and the credibility it represents, to U.S. diplomacy, we await the dire consequences of our feebleness.**

1. Impact – Loss of U.S. primacy will result great power conflict, leading to global instability and mass destruction. Stephen Walt[[4]](#endnote-4) writes,

**A** second **consequence of U.S. primacy is a decreased danger of great-power rivalry and a higher level** of overall **international tranquility.** Ironically, those who argue that primacy is no longer important, because the danger of war is slight, overlook the fact that the extent of American primacy is one of the main reasons why the risk of great-power war is as low as it is. For most of the past four centuries, relations among the major powers have been intensely competitive, often punctuated by major wars and occasionally by all-out struggles for hegemony. **In the first half of the twentieth century,** for example, **great-power wars killed over eighty million people. Today, however, the dominant position of the U**nited **S**tates **places significant limits on the possibility of great-power competition**, for at least two reasons. One reason is that **because the U**nited **S**tates **is currently so far ahead, other major powers are not inclined to challenge its dominant position. Not only is there no possibility of a “hegemonic war”** (because there is no potential hegemon to mount a challenge), **but the risk of war via miscalculation is reduced by the overwhelming gap between the United States and the other major powers. Miscalculation is more likely to lead to war when the balance of power is fairly even, because** in this situation **both sides can convince themselves that they might be able to win. When the balance of power is heavily skewed**, however, **the leading state does not need to go to war and weaker states dare not try.**8 The second reason is that the continued deployment of roughly two hundred thousand troops in Europe and in Asia provides a further barrier to conflict in each region. So long as U.S. troops are committed abroad, regional powers know that launching a war is likely to lead to a confrontation with the United States. Thus, states within these regions do not worry as much about each other, because the U.S. presence effectively prevents regional conflicts from breaking out. What Joseph Joffe has termed the “American pacifier” is not the only barrier to conflict in Europe and Asia, but it is an important one. This tranquilizing effect is not lost on America’s allies in Europe and Asia. They resent U.S. dominance and dislike playing host to American troops, but they also do not want “Uncle Sam” to leave.9 Thus, U.S. primacy is of benefit to the United States, and to other countries as well, because it dampens the overall level of international insecurity. World politics might be more interesting if the United States were weaker and if other states were forced to compete with each other more actively, but a more exciting world is not necessarily a better one.

And, U.S. primacy is key to global economic prosperity. This link turns the AC because maintenance of U.S. primacy guarantees more economic prosperity in the long run, and the aff’s impacts flow from economic deprivation. Stephen Walt writes,

**By facilitating the development of a more open and liberal world economy, American primacy** also **fosters global prosperity.** Economic interdependence is often said to be a cause of world peace, but it is more accurate to say that peace encourages interdependence—by making it easier for states to accept the potential vulnerabilities of extensive international intercourse.10 **Investors are more willing to send money abroad when the danger of war is remote, and states worry less about being dependent on others when they are not concerned that these connections might be severed. When states are relatively secure, they will also be less fixated on how the gains from cooperation are distributed. In particular, they are less likely to worry that extensive cooperation will benefit others more and thereby place them at a relative disadvantage over time.**11 **By providing a tranquil international environment**, in short, **U.S. primacy has created political conditions that are conducive to expanding global trade and investment.** Indeed, American primacy was a prerequisite for the creation and gradual expansion of the European Union, which is often touted as a triumph of economic self-interest over historical rivalries. Because the United States was there to protect the Europeans from the Soviet Union and from each other, they could safely ignore the balance of power within Western Europe and concentrate on expanding their overall level of economic integration. **The expansion of world trade has been a major source of increased global prosperity, and U.S. primacy is one of the central pillars upon which that system rests.**12 **The United States also played a leading role in establishing the various institutions that regulate and manage the world economy.** As a number of commentators have noted, the current era of “globalization” is itself partly an artifact of American power. As Thomas Friedman puts it, “Without America on duty, there will be no America Online.”13

1. Jonas Elmerraji [Editor and portfolio manager of the Rhino Stock Report, a free investment advisory, contributor to Forbes]. “Countries Sanctioned by the U.S. – And Why.” San Francisco Chronicle. Provided by Investopedia ULC (Forbes Digital Company). April 8th, 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Jerome Felix Venteicher II [PhD student and instructor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Missouri]. “What Economic Sanctions Signal: Cheap Talk, Or Putting Your Money Where Your Mouth Is?” Dissertation presented to the faculty of the graduate school at the University of Missouri. Advised by Dr. A. Cooper Drury. April 2009. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Thomas Henriksen [Senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, former professor of history at the State University of New York]. “Using Power and Diplomacy To Deal with Rogue States.” Hoover Institution at Stanford University. 1999. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Stephen Walt [Professor of International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government]. "American Primacy: Its Prospects and Pitfalls." Naval War College Review, Vol. 55, Iss. 2. pg. 9. Spring 2002. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)