Monument Introduction Articles

The following are helpful articles for your study of the resolution that was debated during the   
2012-2013 school year in the NCFCA. Give due attention to checking all hyperlinks before attempting to run in competition as Monument Publishing does not update this archive information.

***Resolved: That the United Nations should be significantly reformed or abolished.***

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The Beginning of the United Nations

Thanks for letting us at Blue Book guide you as you begin another exciting season of team policy debate with NCFCA. In this chapter I’m going to show you the historical background that led up to the establishment of the United Nations, followed by a discussion of its establishment and structural organization. This background information will give you some points of reference that will aid you when you hear similar topics discussed in debate rounds, and you will be better able to discuss and debate these ideas, as well as to help you find ideas for cases that you may want to write yourself.

Before World War II

The Westphalian System – 1648

A major congress of European leaders and diplomats met between 1646-1648 in two cities in the region of Westphalia (Munster and Osnabruck), an area today part of Germany. These long negotiations came after Europe was exhausted by endless wars among its nations, states, empires, parts of nations, and wanna-be nations. Much of the fighting was about religion, as the influence of Protestant ideas was spreading in once completely Catholic countries. The Popes and some Catholic sovereigns believed they had a duty to convert back, by force if necessary, regions that had left the mother Church. Some of it was about the building of empires, as kings or emperors tried to stake or enforce claims of sovereignty over smaller European principalities.

If all of that sounds bizarre to our ears today, it is largely due to the Peace of Westphalia. The treaties hammered out by this large and lengthy convocation led to a new mindset recognized by scholars as the “Westphalian System.” Some tenets of this mindset, which persist even today, include:

* The ruler of each state has the right to determine the official religion of his state.[[1]](#footnote-2)
* Individuals who are not believers in the state religion have the right to practice their faith
* The state – as opposed to outside powers like other states or the Church - has sovereignty and the sole right to determine its people’s governance.

The concept that all states are sovereign over their own affairs and have some kind of moral or political equality with every other state on earth proved beneficial. Wars in Europe were certainly not ended for all time – far from it – but the generations that followed saw a substantial respite from the endless fighting that had characterized the generations preceding. And the concept of “national sovereignty” became a touchstone that we still come back to in our policy debates today.

“Westphalia abolished the remnants of political hierarchy in Europe and established the fundamental rules that would regulate relationships in a system of legally equal, sovereign states. Though the process took several centuries, with Westphalia as only a major event along the way, Europe changed from a polity organized on the principle of hierarchy under the authority of God[[2]](#footnote-3), to a formal anarchy; that is, to a set of independent political actors with equal legal standing, none under the authority of any other.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

With the Roman Church dethroned as overseer of the nations, the rulers of Europe entered a world of “formal anarchy.” They answered to no one but themselves. And in an anarchy, one must always fear whoever is strongest.

The Concert Begins to Play – 1815

As noted above, the Peace of Westphalia didn’t end war in Europe for all time. Still to come was Napoleon Bonaparte, emperor of France, whose wars (1803-1815) shook up Europe and killed millions. European leaders once again came together in a great meeting (the Congress of Vienna) to figure out how to prevent such things from happening again.

The solution they came up with, often referred to as the “Concert of Europe,” was an arrangement whereby the Great Powers of Europe would meet to discuss international incidents and try to agree collectively on solutions among themselves. There were no official institutions or bureaucracies, just a series of meetings and an agreement that they would not allow any one European power to gain hegemony (a high level of leadership or influence or control) in Europe again. A balance of power would be maintained and consultations would be engaged before anyone resorted to war.

“The Concert of Europe became the first example of constructive peaceful cooperation. As British Foreign Secretary R. Castlereagh put it: ‘…during that eventful Period the Quadruple Alliance, formed upon Principles altogether limited has had, from the presence of the Sovereigns, and the unparalleled unity of design with which their cabinets have acted, the power traveling so far *out of the sphere of the immediate and primitive obligations, without at the same time, transgressing any of the principles of the law of Nations or failing in the delicacy which they owe to the rights of other States …’ ”*[[4]](#footnote-5)

Note the tension in the italicized part of Castlereagh’s description of the Concert. The concept was that these Great Powers would act beyond their own immediate concerns (take action on the international stage to influence events outside their borders for the greater good of European stability) but yet at the same time would not fail to uphold national sovereignty (the rights of the other States). That, my friends, is the crux of the matter. How do nations work together to preserve peace and prevent war, without interfering (or at least not interfering “too much”) in the affairs of other nations? Is Westphalian sovereignty able to coexist with world peace or are they mutually exclusive?[[5]](#footnote-6)

The Concert Ends And The Lights Go Out – 1914

“The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.” -- Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary of Britain, 3 August 1914.

By 1914 the system that had done a decent, though imperfect, job of maintaining peace in Europe[[6]](#footnote-7) had broken down. The interests of the members of the Concert had drifted apart and the political landscape of their underlying populations had changed. There was discontent at some of the borders among the nations of Europe. New nations, such as the newly unified states of Italy and Germany, had appeared on the scene. And Europe had evolved from a mutual “concert” of Great Powers into two hostile armed camps of alliances: the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) versus the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia).

It’s a well-worn cliché, but nonetheless true: Europe was a powder keg just waiting for the spark to set it off. The assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian nationalist on June 28, 1914, was the spark. It is beyond the scope of this introduction (and probably not necessary for your debate preparations) to delve into the politics of the era to understand all of the reasoning behind why it led to the reactions that followed[[7]](#footnote-8). Suffice it to say that the subsequent events were like a series of falling dominoes. Austria declared war on Serbia; Russia came to the defense of its ally Serbia; Germany supported its ally Austria and declared war on Russia; Russia’s ally France must now join the war on Russia’s side, bringing France’s ally Britain into the war as well. Later, in 1917, the U.S. joined the war on the side of Britain and France, although it had not been in an alliance with any of them before the war started.

The League of Nations

The fighting ended on 11 November, 1918. The end result of the Great War[[8]](#footnote-9) was the death of around 16 million soldiers and civilians (mostly Europeans, but over 100,000 Americans as well) and another moment for the Western world to stop and contemplate, as it had in 1648 and 1815, how to stop this from ever happening again. The 1919 post-war peace conference at Versailles, France, offered the world a chance to do just that. And one leader at the conference, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, like a good Affirmative debater, saw the harm (millions dead), saw the inherency (no Status Quo international organization to prevent it from happening again), had a plan and claimed it would solve. His plan was the League of Nations.

“A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.” – Pres. Woodrow Wilson, speech to Congress on 8 January 1918.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Many Europeans, perhaps because they had taken the brunt of the horrific impact of the war[[10]](#footnote-11) and perhaps because they had the memory of the Concert of Europe, found Wilson’s proposal worth trying. Many Americans, including many members of the US Senate, found Wilson’s proposal a violation of the Founding Fathers’ vision of an America without entangling alliances that would at all costs avoid getting drawn into European conflicts. The US Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, blocking US participation in the League of Nations. It formed anyway and the European powers tried to make it work.

The League of Nations did accomplish some things. It set up systems for managing international mail delivery and the linkage of international telegraph lines. It created an expectation that world powers should meet to discuss issues before resorting to force. And it did manage to peacefully settle some small territorial disputes in a few cases among European powers.

But several factors conspired toward its failure. The most obvious factor was the absence of the nation whose President had proposed the League in the first place. The United States had become a great power, and its intervention had tipped the outcome of the Great War in favor of Britain and France. Why didn’t it show up to help maintain the peace it had fought for? Could the League of Nations be taken seriously if its founder was absent?

Next came the Depression, which started in 1929 and impacted the economy worldwide. Nations began to look out for themselves – an understandable reaction when millions are unemployed and many are going hungry.

And the elephant in the room was the fact that the Treaty of Versailles treated Germany very badly. Many Germans[[11]](#footnote-12), but few others, could see that the Treaty was an unjust settlement that was forced upon Germany at its moment of weakness. The Treaty imposed on Germany a large bill for reparations to pay back France and Belgium for damages caused.[[12]](#footnote-13) A war that started when a Serb killed an Austrian was officially blamed on Germany.

“This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years,” predicted French Marshal Ferdinand Foch in 1919 as he commented on the Treaty of Versailles. He got it exactly right, though he did not live long enough to see his prophecy come true.

Nations intent on rearming and expanding, like Germany, Italy and Japan, dropped out of the League of Nations in the 1930s rather than listen to any criticisms of their aggressions or waste time negotiating over policies they had no intention of changing. World War II broke out in 1939. The League was powerless to stop it.

World War II and the Founding of the United Nations

Planning for a New Order

There are many references you can turn to for the history and details of World War II and we leave that research to the interested student. The second great global conflict lasted from 1939-1945 and claimed a total of 63 million lives, including civilians.[[13]](#footnote-14) For the fourth time, the leading nations of the world came together after the war to find a way to make sure it would never happen again. The nuclear blasts that ended the war in Japan added loud warnings, as if 63 million deaths hadn’t been enough, of what could happen the next time if global war could not be prevented.

As early as 1942, while WWII was still raging, Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt began using the term “United Nations” to refer to the countries that were fighting against the Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan). He envisioned a plan, similar to Wilson’s vision during the first war, where the nations of the world would come together after the war to establish a new international order that could contain, reduce, or eliminate the risk of such a conflict in the future. FDR had given speeches supporting American participation in the League of Nations during his early political career in the 1920s, and he found the time right for bringing back an idea that he thought could have worked, had it been properly supported, managed, and given enough power to solve real problems.[[14]](#footnote-15)

“As the United States was being drawn inexorably into the maelstrom of World War II, the ghost of Woodrow Wilson was in the mind of every person and institution, public or private, who set out to think about, plan for, or create a new system of world security to ensure peace and stability in the postwar period, when the guns would once again fall silent after the democratic victory...

Many continued to believe that Wilson's ideals remained a body of profound political wisdom that could still light the true path for humankind, despite the undeniable failure of the League of Nations and the onset once more of bloody global war. …Also in 1944, Sumner Welles, who had resigned as Under Secretary of State just a year before, wrote that it was time to reaffirm the Wilsonian ideals, which had thrilled his generation "to the depths of our intellectual and emotional being" and whose realization was "well within human capacity."

But many others concluded that Wilson's high principles amounted to a moral code which humans could never live up to, and which thus led the world into dangerous delusions of what was possible. Also in 1944…scholar, and political columnist Walter Lippmann wrote that Wilson's "supreme spiritual error" lay in "forgetting that we are men and thinking that we are gods. We are not gods.... We are mere mortals with limited power and little universal wisdom."

– Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, FDR AND THE CREATION OF THE U.N., ellipses added, http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/h/hoopes-fdr.html

Proposals and outlines for the charter of a new international order were drawn up in 1944, and took shape in June, 1945, when 50 countries signed the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter officially took effect on Oct. 24, 1945, after ratification by the five major powers (US, France, Britain, Soviet Union and China) and a majority of the other signatory nations. Its headquarters was established in New York in 1952, where it remains today, although it also has important offices and agencies in other cities, like Geneva, Switzerland.

Contrast With the League of Nations

Let’s notice a few differences between the League of Nations (which formally went out of existence in 1946) and the UN. The most obvious is that all the big powers joined the UN immediately and were involved in creating it.

The UN is also established as a permanent diplomatic meeting place, where discussions, debates and negotiations take place all throughout the year. The old League only met four times per year. In addition, the UN has much broader mandates and programs, giving it a much greater impact on the lives of millions of people. For example, millions of the world’s poor and distressed have received food or vaccinations or refugee shelter from various UN agencies. Whether these programs work or not or should be reformed, you may certainly debate. But the UN has a global reach that is beyond the scope of anything the League was ever able to do, and millions of people believe it is a force for good.

The UN, through the Security Council (to be discussed below), has the ability to impose sanctions and authorize military force against countries that threaten world peace. This capability, which has been used numerous times, again separates it from the weak League, which was never able to carry out forceful actions sufficient to deter aggression in the troubled world of the 1930s.

The UN Charter

You should look online and review the UN Charter on your own. It will give you primary source material for some of your briefs, and may give you ideas for Affirmative debate. Find it here: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>. The Charter is to the UN what the Constitution is to the United States government, and amending the Charter will surely be a frequent method of reforming the UN in various Affirmative plans this year.

Article 1 and Article 2 of the Charter give Four Purposes and Seven Principles on which the UN is founded:

Article 1

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Article 2

The Organization and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following Principles.

1. The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.
2. All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.
3. All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.
4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.
5. All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.
6. The Organization shall ensure that states which are not Members of the United Nations act in accordance with these Principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.
7. Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter Vll.

Some of these Principles in Article 2, like #1 and #7, recall the principles developed earlier under the “Westphalian System,” with regard to the sovereignty of nations. Some, like #3 and #4, reflect the search for a solution to international conflict when the Westphalian sovereigns misbehave. Also, #3 and #4 reflect broad goals and aspirations that are, arguably, hard to follow in practice. All members will refrain from threat or use of force? Really? While this is certainly a great dream, that all nations would stop the threat and use of force, the listing of these items here does not make it happen by fiat. What it does accomplish, arguably, is to establish an international norm – a change in mindset – whereby all the nations of the world agree that this behavior is wrong, and it creates international legitimacy and influences world opinion to justify other nations intervening to stop any Westphalian sovereign who violates these norms.

The other side to this mindset is this (and this was also a critique of the League of Nations): If nations are disposed to behave peacefully, they don’t need an international agency to tell them to do so. And if they are intent on aggression, an international agency will be useless to stop them. By this reasoning, any such organization is either unnecessary or ineffective at keeping world peace.

In order to join the UN, a nation must be “able and willing” to carry out the duties of the Charter, and must sign and ratify it.[[15]](#footnote-16) It must also receive a vote of acceptance from both the Security Council and the General Assembly. A UN member that violates the Charter may be suspended or removed from the UN, although this has never happened.[[16]](#footnote-17)

How the United Nations Is Organized

The UN is organized in seven categories of functionality as outlined below.

The General Assembly

This is the big meeting where all countries of the world are represented, speeches are given, tempers may flare, and high-minded resolutions are debated, voted on, passed or rejected. It is the first thing that comes to mind when most people think of the UN. Each country of the world is represented on a one country/one vote basis. Here, tiny Monaco (population 36,000) has the same voice as India (population over 1 billion).

The “G.A.” votes by simple majority on “normal” issues, like resolutions expressing agreement or disagreement with world events and policies as well as actions to be taken by UN agencies or their budgets. Some issues (peace and security issues, electing members to subsidiary organs, and UN membership admission or expulsion) require 2/3 vote.

The General Assembly is not where the real power is. In the picture shown above, the General Assembly voted 133-12 that the violence in Syria should stop. But guess what: It didn’t stop, and there’s nothing more the GA can really do about it. One can argue that these resolutions have the same practical effect as a vote that every week should have at least five sunny days. One could, in the alternative, argue that they do, at least, establish an international expectation, norm, or mindset that shames and isolates wrong-doers. While in the short run nothing changes, in the long run turning the tide of public opinion against misbehavior is a good thing. Here are some samples of the General Assembly’s work in 2011 as exemplified by resolutions they passed:

The General Assembly also has five types of “subsidiary organs.” These are: Committees, Commissions, Boards, Councils & Panels, and Working Groups & Other. Many of them do things no one cares about and write reports no one reads. Some of them exist simply to manage the internal structure of the UN itself. Some of them have more prominent global visibility, like the Human Rights Council. A few examples of these subsidiary organs are listed in the chart here.

Res 66/281 – Declaring March 20 to be the “International Day of Happiness” due to the importance of happiness in human development

Res 66/253 – Condemning all violence on all sides of conflict ongoing in Syria, voted that it should be resolved peacefully.

Res 66/260 – Encouraging all nations to do more to promote road safety

Res 66/248 – Approving the 2012-2013 UN budget

Res 66/240 – Establishing additional resources for a criminal tribunal in Africa for Rwanda war crime investigations

The Security Council

In terms of the events that are most often in the headlines about war and peace, this is where the real power is at the UN today. The UNSC has five permanent members (the so-called “P5”: US, Russia, China, Britain and France) and 10 rotating seats to which other countries are elected for a two-year term. It is tasked with managing matters of international peace and security.

While the resolutions of the G.A. are advisory when they tell its members to change their policies, all UN members have agreed to this statement about the Security Council in Article 25 of the Charter:

Article 25

The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter.

This means that Security Council decisions are “binding” as part of “international law” on UN member nations. It is certainly debatable to what extent international law exists, to what extent it can or should govern the nations (remember that Westphalian thing?) and how it should be enforced if a sovereign nation violates it. The UN Charter gives the Security Council the right to impose economic sanctions and military intervention against any nation threatening world peace.

Article 41

The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Article 42

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.

The five permanent members of the Security Council are granted by the Charter an absolute veto on all actions by the Council. If any of the P5 vote “No” on a Security Council resolution, it is automatically rejected. This provision was, in 1945, a necessary political compromise to allow the establishment of the UN by respecting the interests of the great powers at that time, and ensuring that no decisions would be taken contrary to their interests.

The Secretariat

The Secretary General of the United Nations is elected by the General Assembly for a 5-year term. Ban Ki-moon, of South Korea, currently holds that post. His job includes general administration of programs and policies of UN agencies and oversight of peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat, the organization that manages these things, under his direction also researches and publishes reports about global issues and concerns, mediates international disputes, and organizes international conferences. The Secretary General is expected to notify the Security Council about any events threatening world peace and security, leaving the resolution of those threats to the Council.

“UN secretaries-general are infamous for their reform initiatives. Each new secretary-general has paraded plans to change the organization, and follow-on initiatives have continuously cascaded down … so that by the end of a term it seems a secretary-general must be reforming his own reforms. Kofi Annan …believed in the need for reform. He introduced three major waves of measures: at the beginning of his term; when he was reelected for a second term; and then again in his last two years. …Each new initiative led to greater levels of cynicism and reform fatigue…UN reform is about politics in the sense that it is a response to the frustration of governments and the UN's other stakeholders with the organization's capacity to get results. People wanted more from the UN. Unable to deliver, the managers kept on trying to fix the machine. “  
-- *Mark Malloch Brown 2008 (former deputy UN secretary-general) ellipses added.*

Economic and Social Council

Summary: They conduct studies and write reports.

The world’s economic, social and environmental challenges are ECOSOC’s concern. A founding UN Charter body established in 1946, the Council is the place where such issues are discussed and debated, and policy recommendations issued.…ECOSOC has broad responsibility for some 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system, including 14 specialized agencies, 9 “functional” commissions, and five regional commissions. …The Council holds regular meetings throughout the year with prominent academics, business sector representatives and 3,200+ registered non-governmental organizations. ECOSOC’s biggest gathering, however, is … its annual, month-long substantive session in July. Held in alternate years in New York and Geneva, the session is divided into 5 segments ― High-level; Coordination; Operational Activities; Humanitarian Affairs; and General ― which cover both global issues and technical, administrative questions. With its focus on pressing development challenges (employment, education, health, etc.), the High-level segment regularly attracts policy-makers from the top ranks of government.

--*UN ECONOMICS & SOCIAL COUNCIL official website:* <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/> *(ellipses added)*

International Court of Justice

Also known as the World Court, the ICJ meets in The Hague, Netherlands, with a mission of resolving international disputes between nations. It is not concerned with any individual criminal behavior, but only allows nations to bring cases against other nations.[[17]](#footnote-18) Although countries often agree to abide by ICJ decisions, the majority of the world’s nations do not recognize any compulsory obligation to comply. The ICJ itself has no means of enforcing its decisions, although Article 94 of the Charter authorizes the Security Council to take action to enforce an ICJ decision. It has a panel of 15 judges who serve 9-year terms. Examples of ICJ decisions include:

FAILURE: Nicaragua v. United States - 1984, in which Nicaragua charged that the US was in violation of international law by putting mines in Nicaraguan harbors to interfere with their shipping. The ICJ found in favor of Nicaragua. The US declared that it would not accept the verdict and simply ignored it.

PARTIAL SUCCESS: El Salvador v. Honduras – 1986, in which the two nations submitted to the ICJ a request to resolve disputes about boundaries on certain islands and maritime zones along their mutual frontier. The ICJ issued a ruling and both sides agreed to accept it. However, incidents continue to occur and accusations are made that the parties are not respecting the borders as drawn by the ICJ. [[18]](#footnote-19)

SUCCESS: Cameroon v. Nigeria – 2002, in which the ICJ resolved a border dispute over a peninsula of land between Cameroon and Nigeria. Although Nigeria was not happy about the settlement and initially suggested it would not comply, international pressure was applied by other nations, leading Nigeria to comply.

Trusteeship Council

This organization was established under the UN Charter to oversee the decolonization of territories that had either been colonies of Axis powers or had been under the oversight of the League of Nations. These territories all either received independence or merged with other states. When the last Trust Territory, Palau, received independence from the United States in 1994, the Trusteeship Council voted to suspend operations. It exists on paper because it is named in the Charter, but functionally it has gone out of business.

Specialized Agencies

The “Specialized Agencies” of the UN are:

United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)  
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
International Maritime Organization (IMO)  
International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)  
Universal Postal Union (UPU)  
World Bank   
World Health Organization (WHO)  
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)  
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)  
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Time and space will not permit in-depth analysis of all of these. However, we can discuss some in general and two specifically.

There are several categories of these agencies. Some (e.g. IMO, ITU, UPU, WIPO) are designed to coordinate commerce and set standards for cooperation on safety, compatibility, infrastructure and commercial dealings among nations. This means mundane things like getting post offices to accept each others’ mail, for example, or getting telecommunications systems in different nations to talk to each other.

Some of these agencies are designed to do what would otherwise be labeled as “foreign aid” projects in poor countries (UNICEF, FAO, IFAD, WHO). Famine relief, vaccinations, agricultural technology aid – these are all things the UN does in an attempt to reduce human suffering in poor nations. Many of these are fertile sources of ideas for reform under this year’s resolution, and you would be wise to familiarize yourself with these acronyms and get a basic knowledge of what they do. You might discover some interesting Affirmative plan ideas along the way.

We need to mention specifically two of the agencies in greater detail: the IMF and the World Bank, since these are perhaps the best known and most influential, and you are sure to see some debate cases on these this year (we have one on the IMF in Blue Book). These two agencies, though they are officially UN agencies, are operated with different management systems and different budgets than then rest of the UN. In a nutshell, the IMF and the World Bank are both agencies where rich country governments loan money to poor country governments. While mistakenly criticized as evil tools of capitalism by those who don’t know better,[[19]](#footnote-20) these agencies are actually designed to facilitate billions of dollars in government interventions by loaning money that the market would not have otherwise provided.

The IMF loans money to governments that are in financial trouble with their national budgets. Nations that are in danger of defaulting on their national debt or whose currencies are unstable will sometimes turn to the IMF for loans to bail them out of a crisis. Investors on the open market might not buy government bonds from such nations – or might demand unaffordably high rates of interest – due to the high risk they will not pay it back. In such cases, the IMF may step in with lower interest rate loans that come with strings attached. These strings usually involve IMF consultants with austerity plans to raise taxes, cut government spending, change trade policies, or other reforms the borrowing country doesn’t really want to make. Later when the money is spent and the unpopular reforms are made, there will be a political backlash and popular hatred will be unleashed against the IMF for forcing such policies upon the ‘victimized’ nation. Or, in the alternative, the nation will promise the reforms, cash the IMF check, and then decide they don’t want to do the reforms after all. This is risky because they might not be able to come back to the IMF again the next time they are in trouble, which probably won’t be long.

The World Bank also loans money to poor governments, but not under the crisis conditions common to IMF scenarios. Normally the WB lends money for physical projects that governments want to do, which, again, cannot obtain investors in private markets. Some examples include:

* Power transmission line between Ethiopia and Kenya
* Padma Bridge in Bangladesh (canceled when corruption discovered)
* Oil pipeline in Chad

The best critique of WB loans is the age-old question frequently asked of all government engagements in the business world: If it was worth doing and profitable, why didn’t the private sector think so and pay for it? And if it’s not profitable and worth doing, why should taxpayers pay for it?

History of the United Nations

Now we will get into an overview of the UN’s history with key events that you need to know about, and then finishing with some of the current issues that are hot topics today in discussions of reforming the UN. Just like the last chapter, this background will help you gain a healthy perspective of the cases you will deal with in this year’s NCFCA debates.

Historical Landmarks

We offer here a summary of a few highlights in UN history, with an emphasis on those that continue to have impact on our world today. There are many things not covered here, but I am hopeful that this introduction will at least give you terms of reference so that words and concepts you hear in debate rounds will not be out of context.

Palestine Partition – 1947

One of the first major crises the UN had to deal with after its formation was the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. After World War II ended, and the extent and horrific impact of the Holocaust became known, many sympathized with a growing movement known as Zionism – a movement to create a Jewish homeland inside the British League of Nations mandate territory of Palestine. Britain was planning to decolonize the region and was working with the UN on a plan to accomplish decolonization by creating two states: one Arab and one Jewish. The Jewish state would provide a homeland with some form of assurance to Jews that they would have somewhere to turn to escape any future repeat of anything like the anti-Semitism of Nazi-controlled Europe.

The UN General Assembly voted in 1947 to endorse the partition plan shown in the map on this page.[[20]](#footnote-21) Unfortunately, they did not obtain a broad consensus for acceptance of the plan. While a majority of the UN GA states voted for the plan, it was rejected by all the Arab states and locally by the Palestinian Arabs who lived in the region. Arabs were outraged when the plan was imposed upon them, and war broke out. Many Arab states and Arab people never accepted the legitimacy of the creation of the modern state of Israel. One might say that the UN created the state of Israel, but it also created the mess that followed and continues to trouble international affairs even to the present day.

Issues surrounding Israel, the Palestinians and their neighbors come up frequently in discussions about the UN. The UN has taken responsibility, under the UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), since 1948 for the care of Palestinians displaced by Arab-Israeli conflict. Today there are dozens of refugee camps serving several million Palestinians at UN expense.

The Arab-Israeli conflict also led to the first deployment of UN peacekeeping troops, in 1948. Soldiers were donated from various UN member states and sent, unarmed, under the UN flag to monitor a cease-fire between the two sides. This mission is still active today.

Korea – 1950

The Korean peninsula had been colonized by Japan between 1910-1945. When World War II ended, the US had taken the southern half and the USSR controlled the northern half. The US oversaw the installation of a friendly government in the South and pulled out its troops. The Soviet Union installed a communist government in the North and pulled out.

In June, 1950, North Korea invaded the South, hoping to reunify Korea under a single communist government. Pres. Harry Truman decided to intervene with US forces, but he elected to do so through the means of the UN, rather than going to Congress and asking for a declaration of war or authorization for use of military force. As luck would have it, the USSR was boycotting meetings of the Security Council at the time, so he had no trouble persuading the other 3 permanent members[[21]](#footnote-22) and the rest of the Council to condemn the North Korean attack. The Security Council authorized a military response, and the US took the lead in repelling the invasion, with minor help from a few other countries. The People’s Republic of China responded by intervening on the side of North Korea, pushing UN forces back toward the south. After three years of fighting, a stalemate developed along a line close to the original borders between the two Koreas, and an armistice was signed, halting fighting at that point. No peace treaty was ever signed, and tensions remain difficult between the two Koreas even today. The Security Council also continues today to impose trade sanctions on North Korea in response to its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. North Korea rejects and ignores UN calls for halts to its weapons programs.

End of the Cold War

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe between 1989-1991 and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought about the end of the Cold War – the decades long tension between the democratic and capitalist West and the totalitarian and communist East that had begun around 1948. This changed the political dynamics of the UN, particularly the Security Council, because there was no longer the automatic assumption that the Soviet Union/Russia would veto whatever the US proposed and vice versa.

There was also a greater desire by both sides of the former Cold War for the UN to intervene in areas where the two sides would have intervened unilaterally or else blocked UN intervention in times past. A number of old conflicts in various nations were still going on that had been fueled by Cold War politics, and the UN was brought in to help settle these issues, unhindered by any Security Council vetoes.

Kuwait & Iraq - 1991

Converging perspectives among the P-5 on a number of international crises, particularly on the need to disentangle the superpowers from them, allowed the Council to initiate action toward settlements. Between 1988 and late 1989 it established five peacekeeping operations to assist the settlement of conflicts in Afghanistan (UNGOMAP) and between Iran and Iraq (UNIIMOG), to implement linked agreements on the withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola (UNAVEM I) and independence for Namibia (UNTAG), and to help the resolution of three conflicts in Central America (ONUCA).

* *David M. Malone “The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century https://www.rienner.com/uploads/47d995239fdc1.pdf*

In August, 1990, Iraqi forces invaded and conquered neighboring Kuwait. The UN Security Council passed numerous resolutions condemning the invasion and authorizing a military response. Pres. George H.W. Bush put together a wide international coalition of armed forces and, with a vote of approval by Congress, led a campaign to rollback the invasion and liberate Kuwait.[[22]](#footnote-23)

Pres. Bush’s effort to bring together the coalition was successful, in part, by the legitimacy afforded him by the votes of the Security Council requesting the nations of the world to enforce its condemnation of the Iraqi invasion. “Legitimacy” is a concept full of debatable opportunities, and the Kuwait scenario is one you should understand to get a feeling for how it works in the international arena. Remembering the Westphalian doctrine that nations are sovereign and should not be interfered with by outsiders, legitimacy is that suasion of conscience that makes it acceptable for outsiders to use force against a Westphalian sovereign.

Legitimacy not only authorizes military actions, it may limit them as well.

Rwanda - 1994

“It’s true that after the end of the first Gulf War there was a lot of talk about why we didn’t finish the job and that continued until the second Gulf War,” said Scowcroft, explaining, “One thing that is important to remember is to put this in a context of a world emerging from the Cold War. We saw ourselves not as the United States flexing its muscles but as a representative of the world community in dealing with unprovoked aggression.” *-- Gen. Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor under Pres. G.H.W. Bush*

*http://www.eurasiareview.com/16022011-ex-bush-officials-praise-us-handling-of-first-gulf-war-20-years-later/*

A small country in Africa has become synonymous in our generation with “inaction in the face of genocide.” A civil war between the two ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi, had broken out in 1990 and the UN played a role in mediating a settlement and putting peacekeeping troops on the ground in 1993 to ensure it was respected.

In January, 1994, UN peacekeepers under the command of Canadian Gen. Romeo Dallaire became aware of Hutu preparations that looked like a plan to engage in mass killings of Tutsis. He reported the situation to UN management in New York, and was ordered to do nothing.

When the Hutu Rwandan president’s plane was shot down in April 1994, Gen. Dallaire realized the seriousness of the situation and sensed a civil war might break out. He called New York and was ordered to do nothing. When Hutus began a genocidal campaign against Tutsis, in revenge for the plane crash, and the mass killings began, Dallaire reported the facts and requested orders. He was told it wasn’t his mandate, there would be no additional UN forces sent in, and he should do nothing.[[23]](#footnote-24) He nonetheless tried to save as many as he could with the undermanned and underequipped forces he had.

When the killing finally stopped in July, 1994, an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were dead.

“We must and we do acknowledge that the world failed Rwanda at that time of evil. The international community and the United Nations could not muster the political will to confront it. The world must deeply repent this failure.”  
*- UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 1998 speech before the Rwanda Parliament*   
*http://bridgew.academia.edu/JasonEdwards/Papers/116673/The\_Mission\_of\_Healing\_Kofi\_Annans\_Failed\_Apology*

Of note is Annan’s concern that “the world failed” and must deeply repent this failure. The UN official to whom Gen. Dallaire reported the impending genocide and who ordered him to do nothing about it was at the time in 1994 the Director of UN Peacekeeping Operations, a gentleman named Kofi Annan.

Srebrenica[[24]](#footnote-25) – 1995

The issues and events are complex and we’ll summarize it simply here. The nation of Yugoslavia consisted of multiple ethnic groups that managed to hold together until 1991, when a three-way civil war broke out between Bosnian Muslims, Croats, and Serbs. This war brought into the popular vocabulary the phrase “ethnic cleansing,” the forced removal of an ethnic group in order to make a region homogeneous ethnically. The UN Security Council authorized a peacekeeping mission to try to stabilize the situation.

The peacekeepers established a “safe zone” for Bosnian Muslims in the city of Srebrenica. Trusting this promise of safety, a number of Bosnians resorted there for protection. Serbs, eager to “cleanse” the Bosnian Muslims out of “their” region, attacked. The Dutch UN peacekeeping troops abandoned the safe zone and left the Bosnians to the cleansing plans of the Serbs. They even handed over some Bosnian families who had taken refuge on the Dutch base itself. At least 8,000 were killed.

Back for another apology is Kofi Annan…

In any case, when you hear words like Srebrenica and Rwanda in debate rounds this year, they are representative of the concept of “UN failure to prevent genocide.”

The international community as a whole must accept its share of responsibility for allowing this tragic course of events by its prolonged refusal to use force in the early stages of the war. This responsibility is shared by the Security Council, the Contact Group and other Governments which contributed to the delay in the use of force, as well as by the United Nations Secretariat and the mission in the field. … Through error, misjudgement and an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us, we failed to do our part to help save the people of Srebrenica from the Serb campaign of mass murder. … Srebrenica crystallized a truth understood only too late by the United Nations and the world at large: that Bosnia was as much a moral cause as a military conflict. The tragedy of Srebrenica will haunt our history forever.  
  
*Kofi Annan, UN, Srebrenica Report: Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35 (1998), United Nations, 15 November 1999, p. 111 quoted in: http://dare.ubvu.vu.nl/bitstream/handle/1871/32725/abstract\_english.pdf;jsessionid=B8FE468B80C0F4CB1B8C4483D488CE93?sequence=3*

Iraq – 2003

The UN received reports that Iraq, under the direction of evil dictator Saddam Hussein, was constructing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), specifically biological weapons and an illegal[[25]](#footnote-26) nuclear weapons development program. In response, the UN had a team of inspectors searching Iraq to verify these claims.

Insisting that it had conclusive proof of WMDs in Iraq, the George W. Bush administration pressed the Security Council for authorization to use force to make Iraq comply with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to abandon the quest for such weapons. Iraq was evasive and non-compliant with the inspections process. The UN believed more time was needed to let inspections resume and resolve the issue. Pres. Bush believed enough time had passed and it was time for action.

In March 2003, after obtaining a vote of Congress authorizing military action, Pres. Bush ordered a massive invasion that toppled the Hussein government and occupied Iraq for the next 8½ years. The CIA admitted in 2005 that there were no WMDs in Iraq.[[26]](#footnote-27)

This event shows the inverse of the Kuwait/Iraq 1991 scenario. US policy on the UN was that it was too slow and military action needed to be carried out faster. UN policy was that diplomatic solutions had not been exhausted and that there was no international consensus (as there had been in ’91) for action against Iraq, and no action should be taken until there was. America’s standing in public opinion around the world dropped as a result of a military intervention that appeared to many to be illegitimate.[[27]](#footnote-28)

Additional Issues in UN Reform

Abolish

Since the resolution specifically mentions one case – “Abolish the UN” – we can start there. We have an Abolish case in this year’s Blue Book and it’s not a bad case. But I would caution you that while it’s easy to find criticism of the UN, it’s not easy to find credible sources who say it should be abolished.

By credible, I mean scholars, experts, or someone with experience in foreign policy, and I also mean recently written sources. Even John Bolton, the former US Ambassador to the UN, and one of its most outspoken critics, never advocated abolishing it, though some people accused him of that. It’s possible to find yahoos and wahoos on the web at various angry political blog sites who say the UN should be abolished. But those opinions don’t count for much in a policy debate round, and you will surely not get far by quoting them. Such sources are not worth your research time, so don’t waste it on them.

The Security Council

There are numerous proposals to reform the Security Council, either in its membership, or its voting rules, or any combination thereof, in lots of credible expert-written articles. The membership of the UNSC is a favorite target of reform, not least because it is fossilized in the Great Power arrangement of 1945. Even this hardened Francophile must admit that France is probably not a power worthy of a P5 seat and a veto in 2012 when countries like India, Japan and Germany, with bigger economies and populations and world profiles are denied. The Status Quo will be hard to change, however, because the P5 can always veto any changes. But Affirmatives can propose plans that argue the UN “should” be reformed, and win debate rounds with them. Affirmatives never have to prove their plan “would” be adopted, only that it “should.”

Even the existence of the veto itself can be reformed. Some argue that UNSC vetoes enable genocide by delaying or even denying authorization for intervention in situations where early response could save many lives.

Peacekeeping

There are two types of peacekeeping missions commonly referenced in the literature on the subject: Chapter VI and Chapter VII. These refer to chapters in the UN Charter, where Chapter VI is about peaceful settlement of disputes and Chapter VII is about taking action against acts of aggression. In the story above about Rwanda, Gen. Dallaire was on a Chapter VI mission (monitoring a civil war settlement) when a Chapter VII scenario (attacks, genocide) broke out. He was denied permission to transition his unit’s mission from Chapter VI to Chapter VII.

Peacekeepers dispatched on a Chapter VI mission are there because the parties involved have reached a settlement and want the UN to monitor the existing peace to ensure it is maintained. Peace exists and the peacekeepers are keeping it.

A Chapter VII mission is where the UN responds to aggression by attempting to restore the peace in a situation where there is currently no peace. The peacekeepers may have to fight armed groups who are disturbing the peace. In this scenario, peace does not exist and the peacekeepers are trying to create it.

The examples above, Rwanda and Srebrenica, suggest there are defects in UN peacekeeping decision-making. Rather than continuously apologizing for them, perhaps we should reform them so the problems don’t happen again.

Lots of material has also been published about misbehavior of peacekeeping troops while on missions in devastated regions. The UN has admitted that numerous incidents of sexual violence and exploitation have been committed by its peacekeepers, and has published reports and standards of conduct to document the problem and motivate corrections. Unfortunately, the UN itself does not have any disciplinary power over wayward peacekeepers other than to remove them from the mission and send them home. Troops serving in UN missions remain under the legal authority of their home nations, and it is up to them to discipline any offenders. While they sometimes do, frequently the problems are swept under the rug or the cases are not prosecuted for lack of evidence. Many argue that current UN and home country efforts to reform peacekeeper behavior have been inadequate, and that new reforms are needed.

Peacekeeping troops tend to come from poorer countries of the world. One reason is that the UN reimburses home countries a fixed monthly fee for each soldier they provide. In many countries, that fee represents more money than the salaries of their soldiers, so the government keeps the surplus and makes a profit on its participation in peacekeeping.[[28]](#footnote-29)

Another proposed peacekeeping reform is the possible creation of a UN standing army. Current peacekeeping is done on an “ad hoc” basis; that is, each time a crisis comes up, the Security Council votes to authorize a mission and then asks nations to donate troops and equipment to support that mission. The delays involved in waiting for the men and equipment to arrive could mean the difference between life and death if intervention is urgently needed for people at risk of genocide. A standing army could be sent in immediately to stop such a crisis and save more lives.

Budgeting

The UN has several different budgets, and you need to be very careful when you read evidence that talks about “the UN budget” to be sure you understand “which” UN budget is under consideration. There are essentially two different ways the UN is funded. One is through assessments, the other is voluntary contributions.

Assessments are like membership dues, a fee allocated to each member nation as a condition of being in the UN. The assessments are not a dollar amount but a percentage amount – each nation is told that they must pay a different percentage of the budget, based on each nation’s ability to pay. Wealthy countries are assigned larger percentages[[29]](#footnote-30), while smaller, poorer countries may pay only a tiny percentage, and the total across all countries adds up to 100%. Voting on the budget in the General Assembly, however, is one nation/one vote, which leads to some imbalances and perverse incentives between how the money is raised and how it is spent. Both the UN Regular Budget[[30]](#footnote-31) and the UN peacekeeping budget are funded through assessments, although the percentages assigned to countries for each budget are slightly different. The IMF and the World Bank each have their own “quota” system of assigned contributions that are required for membership.

Other UN programs are funded by voluntary contributions. That is, countries look at the programs operated by the UN and decide voluntarily how much to donate. One possible reform (we have a case about it in Blue Book) is to shift all UN budgets to a voluntary basis, with a goal of forcing every agency to be more accountable and produce results that would attract donors.

Topicality Questions

One vital question about the resolution is whether it allows reforming “actions the UN is taking” as opposed to reforming “the institution of the UN itself.” A good argument can be made that “the UN should be significantly reformed” means that the structure of the institution must be changed in some way. But, the definition of “reform” is probably broad enough that Affirmatives can argue that if reform means “changed for the better,” then the UN is a better institution if it stops doing some policy that is harmful, even if the institution itself is unchanged.

Beware of Affirmative cases that have some nation or nations change their domestic laws with a goal of affecting the UN.[[31]](#footnote-32) Since every country on earth is either a member or observer at the UN, it will be tempting for Affirmatives to believe they have fiat over all countries to do all manner of things that might help or affect the UN in some way. A good test to use is this: Could we do this plan without affirming the resolution? If so, then it’s not topical. Another test is: What UN official will do anything differently post-plan? If nothing changes for any UN official, one can certainly argue that the UN has not been reformed.

Along the same lines, beware of cases that fiat concurrent actions by other non-UN agencies (like NATO or the World Trade Organization, for example). Although the same countries might be both members of the UN and the outside agency, fiating changes to outside agencies is extra-topical and will get you into trouble. The test here is: Will anyone other than UN officials have to do anything differently from what they do today to make your plan work?

Conclusions

There are many other topics that we don’t have space to cover here, but this should get you started. I suggest you check the case summaries presented later in Blue Book to understand the topics we selected as Affirmative reform ideas.

The great question of the UN is whether mankind can find a way to reduce or eliminate conflict among nations by establishing institutions that are outside of or above the nations to influence or correct their behavior when sovereign states go astray. The benefits of such a process could include many lives saved and wars prevented. The drawbacks could include loss of the sovereignty vested by the people in their local government in favor of an unelected global bureaucracy, since the people of the world get no vote in the budget or management of the UN.

There was once a human dream of uniting mankind together to see what great projects could be accomplished if all peoples were united instead of being separated throughout the globe. It was called the Tower of Babel, and it ended in failure.[[32]](#footnote-33) Can reuniting the separated peoples of the earth, for projects small or great, work today? You get to debate that this year.

Case Summaries

*Blue Book* is stocked with 13 solid debate cases, the core cases that you may hear a lot about throughout the season. Even if you branch off on your own and create a case unique to any of these, it would be wise to familiarize yourself with these 13, for they likely will pop up in debate rounds at your tournaments. All cases are written by Vance Trefethen.

Understand that these Affirmative cases do not necessarily reflect any political views held by any of us at Training Minds or Monument Publishing. These plans for change are offered because they are supported by lots of experts in published literature. We may or may not agree with them, and it's never our goal to use *Blue Book* to express our own political views. It is our goal to provide evidentially supported cases that would make for a good educational debate round, that's all. The case descriptions below describe these cases so that you can understand them and think about whether you would want to use them in a debate round. We also publish extensive Negative briefs against all of the positions described in these Affirmative cases.

**Note:** We don’t choose the NCFCA topic, but we do choose cases that cover reforms that we believe are the most reasonable to change. The UN is deeply involved in activities that include discussions that can be edgy for young people (even our stomachs turn at some of the stuff). For instance, because the UN sees overpopulation as a concern, it has taken it upon itself to engage in policies that deserve a good debate. However, such debates sometimes involve uncomfortable discussions about birth control, contraception, abortion and sex education. We’ve noted two cases that you should use discretion before running.

1. Tower of Babel: The Case for Abolishing the UN

In the Bible story of the Tower of Babel, all the people of the earth spoke one language, and decided to unite together on a big project to make a name for themselves. They began construction of a massive tower that would reach all the way up to the heavens. The project failed when God confused their languages and scattered them abroad into different groups. This story repeats itself today at the United Nations, where national governments trying to unite into a global project have instead lost what they shared in common, and the project has failed.

This case’s fundamental premise is that the moral clarity and unity that existed at the foundation of the UN no longer exists.  When the UN was established in 1945, the world agreed that Naziism and its accompanying aggression among the nations was evil and had to be stopped.  The great powers of the time had a common purpose of building an institution that could maintain world peace.

And there were fewer countries in the world in 1945 because decolonization was still to come, where the European powers would grant independence to a large portion of the earth’s surface and create dozens of new nations that never existed before.  The addition of this great “Babel” of nations and the changed political landscape today compared to 1945 makes it impossible for the UN to function as it was intended.  It has lost its moral clarity and its relevance, and we can do without it.

Additional urgency is added by substantial failures visible in the crumbling wreckage of that once great institution. The most obvious is Anti-Semitism, which is now an institutionalized and well-entrenched part of the organization, not just a minor aberration easily corrected. No Negative “minor repair” could change the mindsets of dozens of nations that hate Israel and use the UN as a forum to advocate for its destruction. The UN failure to promote world peace and security actually undermines the search for solutions to global crises and sets back the hope of global order. And the UN’s perverse neutrality - its ridiculous insistence on not taking sides when one side begins killing helpless victims on the other side - simply magnifies the death toll.

Negatives will argue that blaming the UN for the world’s troubles is like blaming a storm-tossed ship for causing the storm.   Every “failure to act” on the part of the UN would not be solved if the UN did not exist.  Mankind would still kill mankind; the difference would be that there would be no forum to turn to search for an answer.  And the good that the UN does, including combating WMD proliferation, health and nutrition in poor countries, refugee support and many others, would be undone by its abolition.

2. The Kids Are All Right: The Case for Abolishing Family Planning / UNFPA

This case deals with a sensitive topic in a mature way and without getting into graphic details.  Review the case with your parents and/or coach and discuss it with them, particularly if you fear that concerns about its subject matter would cause any problem in your region.  We don’t believe that it should, for several reasons. While birth control is mentioned, there are no graphic terms or descriptions that should be offensive.  And although the Affirmative case could have gone deeply into the subject of reducing abortion by adopting the plan (forcing the Negative into an awkward position), the evidence and arguments have been carefully written to avoid raising the issue of abortion.

This case is about the United Nations’ misguided zeal for combatting the imaginary problem of overpopulation by promoting family planning methods of preventing the conception of children in poor countries worldwide. At their best, these programs are useless. If they actually do have effects, they’re harmful. And at their worst extreme, they’re an abuse of human rights.

Let’s do a brief summary of the three justifications: Useless, harmful and abusive.  Useless:  This case claims that family planning programs don’t actually make any difference in the birth rates of developing countries.  Countries that have family planning programs have seen the same decline in birth rates as countries without programs.   Harmful:  The world today is already reproducing at a slow rate, with world population expected to peak and even decline in the next generation.  Underpopulation can cause economic problems as more and more elderly are to be supported by fewer and fewer younger workers.  Abusive:  The idea that government should be involved in planning anyone’s family should be repulsive.  And when governments discover that voluntary programs don’t achieve the benefits expected, they sometimes resort to coercion, as China did, to tell people that they must limit their family size or else be punished.

This case does not ask anyone to debate the merits of large families or the moral values of limiting family size. Its focus is not about anyone’s personal beliefs in those areas, but about the role of the UN in trying to influence or even coerce those choices for poor people in Third World countries.   It does not require the Negative team to argue that families “must” reduce their size or that large families are bad.   It only requires them to support the concept that the UN should provide “optional” family planning programs in poor countries.  Negatives can easily endorse such programs in poor countries, where an extra child could be dangerous (e.g., a sick mother, a family already on the verge of starvation; a country where there isn’t any more farmland or food available) and yet they can still be in favor of large families where such families are easily sustainable, like in the United States, where they have adequate  food and medical care to survive.

Negatives will argue: At least give these poor women a choice of how big they want their families to be, just like American families have the same choice today, and don’t take away their option to prevent the conception of another child when it would be bad for them or the baby.  Studies have shown that mothers in poor countries who have babies one immediately after the other are very vulnerable to disease, and the babies are vulnerable to infant mortality.  Mortality rates go down dramatically if there is more “spacing” between children, a key Negative disadvantage to removing these families’ means of making that happen.  We don’t worry about it in America because it isn’t a problem thanks to our decent medical care.  These poor women have no such option.

In addition, Negative can argue “overpopulation” in two ways.  First, they could concede (but I wouldn’t) that the earth as a whole is not overpopulated, while still running an overpopulation disad.  How?   Because local regions and environments may be stretched to their limit by the existing population, even if the earth as a whole is not.  If Egypt, for example, cannot sustain its growing population and they are running out of food, farmland and fresh water, the fact that there is plenty of food, water and open space in Montana is of no help to them.  The local ecosystem is overpopulated and consequences will follow for those who live there.

Second, Negatives can just go ahead and engage the debate about the total “carrying capacity” of the earth.  It isn’t just open space for people to live - there’s plenty of that - but it’s a question of resources.  Where will another billion people get the oil to make the gasoline to put in their cars, if earth’s population grows that much?  Where will they get the fresh water or the electricity, if these resources are already stretched to the limits today?

3. Our Daily Bread: The Case for a UN Food Reserve

A generation ago the world was worried that we wouldn’t have enough food to feed today’s large global population. Those fears were wrong; there’s enough food today for everyone in the world. But yet millions still go hungry. It’s not because the food doesn’t exist - it’s because millions of the world’s poor simply can’t afford it when food prices unexpectedly spike.

Global food prices can be affected by numerous factors beyond the control of any individuals or nations.  In America we don’t worry about it much, because (even though it may seem like food prices go up a lot) we spend such a tiny percentage of our household budgets on food.  If you’re spending 5% of your income on food and prices double, now you spend 10% - maybe you cut out going to a few movies or that new TV you were thinking about.  In some poor countries, people spend up to 70% of their income on food.  If food prices double, they can’t spend 140% of their income (100% is the max; when you’ve spent that you have nothing left).  Instead, they simply eat half as much.  And starve.  This case has the classic impact and emotional appeal about millions suffering and dying, as measured during recent food price spikes in 2007-2008 and 2010-2011.

Experts say international grain reserves are the key to solving this volatility and its terrible impacts.  One expert recommends a three-fold reserve system:  1) a decentralized grain reserve located in poor countries, where the grain could be sent directly to those in need; 2) centralized grain reserves in grain producing countries, which could release grain onto the market at times of high prices, with the effect of lowering the market price thanks to the new abundance available; and 3) a “virtual” reserve - a pot of money that would be used to buy or sell grain contracts in the market to move the market opposite to its trend in times of excess volatility.  Low prices hurt farmers and high prices hurt consumers, so the virtual reserve would buy or sell in order to reduce market movements toward these extremes.

Negatives have two philosophical critiques they can apply to this case, along with straight-up negative refutation of harms and advantages.  One philosophical response is that the plan promotes an unjust manipulation of the market by government intervention, which is an inherently bad thing to do.  Another philosophical critique is a response to the perceived duty to solve the sufferings of humanity by government action, arguing that government has no such duty.

Straight-up negative responses start with attacking the inherency.  The status quo already has grain reserves at national and regional levels.    Significance responses can challenge the theory that price volatility is really a problem.  And there are several solvency attacks against specific mandates in the plan, which have been offered by experts critiquing the studies cited in the Affirmative case.  Some of these critics even argue that the mechanisms advocated by the Aff will cause more problems in international grain markets, leading to disadvantages.

4. No Greater Cause: The Case for Reforming the Human Rights Council

In 2005, then-UN-Secretary General Kofi Annan urgently advocated reform of the UN Human Rights Commission, saying: “We have reached a point at which the Commission’s declining credibility has cast a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations system as a whole, and where piecemeal reforms will not be enough.” The UN responded by abolishing the Commission and creating a new UN Human Rights Council with, you guessed it, only piecemeal reforms. This case aruges that we can do a better job upholding human rights globally by reforming the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

There are two major flaws in the UNHRC today.  The first is that it spends way too much of its time writing reports and holding meetings to condemn Israel.  Of all the specific country reports it has issued, 41% of them have been to condemn Israel.  Even if Israel has issues in its handling of the Palestinians, they can’t be responsible for 41% of all the human rights violations in the world.  Real violations and real victims are going unnoticed as time is wasted bashing Israel at every meeting.

The other major flaw is the composition of the council.  The council is too big to be effective, and there are no standards for who can be on it.  At the time of writing this chapter, the government of Sudan has been nominated for a seat - a stunning irony, given how much of their own citizens’ blood is on the hands of the Sudanese regime.  Putting genocidal dictators on the human rights panel is ridiculous on its face, and can only set back the cause of global human rights.

Negatives will argue that there are flaws in each of the changes being proposed.  They will also present evidence that the focus on Israel is not necessarily misplaced, since the Palestinian refugee crisis is arguably one of the biggest human rights issues in the world in terms of the number of people affected.  The status quo HRC is working fine, has already implemented a number of reforms, and has taken action on key issues.  There’s no reason to change it.

5. You’re No Help: The Case for Abolishing the IMF

The International Monetary Fund was established to help stabilize world currency trading in the aftermath of World War 2. When that mission ended in 1971, instead of going out of existence, the IMF instead began loaning money to countries that couldn’t afford to pay it back, and dispensing advice that helped make their situations worse. Bad advice and more debt are the last things we need in these perilous economic times.   This case challenges us to compare IMF government-to-government lending with governments borrowing money on the open market.

The most important thing to understand about the IMF is that it basically involves rich governments creating a pool of money and  lending it to poor governments 1) at interest rates lower than markets would charge;  2) with strings attached.  The IMF is often a lender of last resort to governments that are in big trouble with their national debt (Greece is a good example).  Investors in the market (sane ones) would either not buy Greek government bonds at all, or would demand exorbitantly high rates of interest that the Greek government could not afford to pay.  The reason is simple:  Greece is in so much financial trouble that there’s a high likelihood those bonds will not be paid back.  But if Greece doesn’t get the money, they won’t be able to pay government workers’ salaries or keep government offices open.  Government officials find it disturbing to have men with automatic weapons angry upon discovering their Army paychecks have bounced.  What to do?

The IMF comes onto the scene and offers to replace the scared private investors by loaning money to the troubled nation on the brink of default.  Many criticize this because of the obvious moral hazard:  It gives countries with reckless government spending habits a bailout allowing them to continue their prodigal ways without having to face the discipline of the market that would have otherwise forced them to stop borrowing and balance their budgets.   It “helps” countries with debt problems by giving them more debt.

The second part of the IMF policy is important too:  “With strings attached.”  The IMF uses these last-resort loans as leverage to force the “beneficiary” of the loan to make public policy changes.  In order to get the money, the country has to agree to restructure its economy, change its budget, change its trade policies, or other things the IMF demands.  One of two things might then happen.    First, the country may, out of desperation, sign the agreement, take the money, then refuse to comply.  That’s not wise because it means they probably won’t get any more money from the IMF next time they are in trouble.  Second, they might take the money and then do the changes - and then pandemonium breaks loose.  The IMF was not elected by the voters, and their changes are imposed from outside, appearing to bypass democracy and creating backlash and riots in the streets, literally.  Worse, sometimes the conditions IMF imposes actually make the target country’s situation worse, not better, if they follow them.  In the long run, countries tend to do better by not getting any “help” from the IMF and letting markets solve.

Negatives will argue that there are still vital roles the IMF must play in today’s international fiscal crises.  The IMF is heavily involved in stabilizing the eurozone sovereign debt crisis, and like it or not, their intervention is better than all the other alternatives.  IMF lending promotes reforms by using the leverage of its lending - reforms that otherwise would not happen.  The IMF is also doing anti-terrorism-funding programs that attempt to block the flow of cash to terrorists.  It’s a force for good, and we need to keep it.

6. Cool It: The Case for Abolishing the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, also known as IPCC, is a scientific panel in name only. Because of its habit of reaching its conclusions first and then trying to find or invent data that will fit, Australian climate researcher John McLean concluded in 2010: "The IPCC has been a disgrace to science." This case argues that it’s time to end this international disgrace.

The IPCC is best known as the international panel that publishes highly influential research showing that earth’s climate is changing, that anthropogenic (man made) forces are causing earth to warm up, and that there is an urgent need to take action to reduce these effects.  Many governments, hearing these warnings, are signing treaties, issuing regulations, and taking various expensive actions to answer the threat.  But, this case argues, the threat is imaginary.

IPCC relies on bad studies, poor methodology and generates results that conform to political persuasions rather than good science.   Their incompetence and corruption is leading global policy-makers astray by trying to solve a problem that doesn’t exist.  IPCC even has a hidden agenda of global wealth redistribution, using climate warming as a smokescreen to justify massive government intervention in the economy.   A number of experts say it’s so corrupt and dangerous that the only way to fix it is to close it.

Negatives have plenty of responses.  There are lots of non-IPCC scientists who have done their own studies and reached independently the same conclusions: namely, that the earth’s climate is warming, that the warming is dangerous, and that human activity is causing it.  If we ignore these warnings, the consequences could be immense, in both lives and money.  Those opposing IPCC have political agendas of their own, and it’s the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community that IPCC is correct and the critics are wrong.

7. Two Olive Branches: The Case for Admitting Palestine to the UN

In 1974, Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat gave a famous speech at the UN General Assembly wearing a gun holster. He said: "I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."  Today the Palestinians have come to the UN with a different approach, as non-violent Palestinian democracy movement leader and Nobel prize nominee Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi said in 2012: “One time a Palestinian leader came to the United Nations with a gun and an olive branch. Today we are coming to the United Nations with two olive branches. Don't let us drop them.”.

The long Arab-Israeli conflict is probably too big for anyone to solve easily.  But there is one important step the UN can take that would help:  Admit Palestine as a member.

Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza have as much right to a homeland and representation in the UN as any other people.  The original UN resolution that created the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state (Israel) and an Arab state has only been partially fulfilled.  Israel exists and is a UN member, but the Palestinian Arabs over 60 years later are still waiting.

While there are a fair number of individuals and groups who are using or advocating violence and terrorism to promote the Palestinian cause, there are also non-violent advocates of the Palestinian cause.  Admitting Palestine to the UN would prove that peaceful means and non-violent negotiations through legitimate institutions like the UN can bear fruit.  It would give the international community more tools to use against Palestinian extremists, working with Palestine as a nation rather than a lawless entity.   And one more benefit: Palestinian membership would enhance Israel’s security, as it gives Palestinians an option other than violence to gain attention for their cause.

Negatives will argue that Palestine’s admission to the UN would only be at best a useless symbolic gesture for the Palestinians and would create numerous additional problems.  Admission would be functionally the same as a recognition of statehood, which is problematic since Palestine’s borders are not yet settled.  That’s a matter that needs to be negotiated between the Palestinians and Israel before the UN gets involved.  In addition, there will be financial consequences to UN admission, since status quo US law imposes an automatic cutoff of funding if this plan is enacted (and changing domestic US federal budget laws is arguably extra-topical, so Affirmatives may have a hard time doing anything to stop this).  Without US funding, UN programs will suffer.

With regard to hope versus violence, Negatives will argue that admitting Palestine will only create greater frustration, since it will not change any facts on the ground.  The resulting frustration will be more violence, reduced chances for Middle-East peace, and likely new Israeli retaliation.

8. Go Directly to Jail: The Case for Peacekeeper Accountability

This topic is a sensitive one that we’re going to deal with in a mature way and without getting into graphic details.  The details would shock and horrify you, but we trust you to understand the seriousness of sexual violence and exploitation without going into the details.  Let’s summarize it this way:  UN personnel are committing serious abuses.  Current legal structures aren’t dealing with it.  And we have a plan that will.

The harms of this case are widely known.  UN peacekeepers on missions in poor war-torn countries commit sexual abuse in the communities they were supposed to be protecting.  This has been widely documented now for a number of years.  You may have thought that the problem has been solved, but in fact there is little the UN can do about it.  They can issue reports, set standards, and give speeches.  But the UN itself has no criminal jurisdiction over its peacekeepers.  All the UN can do if they commit abuse is send them home.   It is up to their home countries to prosecute them.   Believe it or not, in some home countries, the abuses these men are committing are not actually considered illegal.  In other cases, the home country just sweeps it under the rug.

A solution is to get the International Criminal Court (ICC) involved.  The ICC is not part of the UN, but it already exists and already conducts trials of international war criminals referred to it by the UN.  (This case does not reform the ICC, which would be extra-topical)  Abusive peacekeepers should be referred to the ICC as well and treated in the same fashion.  Even the threat of such prosecution might deter future abuse, and prosecution of such cases would bring closure to victims and justice upon the perpetrators.

Negatives will argue that the problem is not as bad as it sounds.  Some of the “abuse” cases, truth be told, were consensual in nature (not to say morally right, just consensual and not involving violence or abuse).  And the ICC was set up to deal with big cases of mass killings and genocide, not individual criminal cases.  It arguably does not have jurisdiction to hear such cases.  The best way to solve is to Minor Repair (or Counterplan) that the home nations do a better job prosecuting such cases.

9. More Equal Than Others: The Case for Security Council Membership Reform

The United Nations started with the idea that world peace can be achieved by bringing the mightiest nations on earth to the same table.  At its birth in 1945, that meant only a handful of nations. The world has changed a great deal since then, but the UN has not.  Reforming the Security Council would create comparative advantages as we move closer to achieving  the UN’s lofty premise.

This plan argues that two major factors block the effectiveness of the UN Security Council (UNSC) today.  First, it is frozen in time with the same permanent five (P5) members as it had in 1945.  Those nations are not representative of the world today.  Major large nations like Germany, Japan, India, Brazil, and South Africa deserve a seat at the table, not only because of their influence but also to obtain geographical diversity.

Second, the veto power, where any one Permanent Member can automatically stop any UNSC action, needs reform.  This plan expands the UNSC by adding these five additional nations and also reforming the veto by requiring two (not one) Permanent Members for a veto to be effective.  This plan improves the Council by enhancing its legitimacy through better representation, and removes a major barrier to life-saving intervention, the unilateral veto.

Negatives can respond to the basic issues raised in the case.  First, the veto is not that big of a problem and is not what blocks effective UNSC response to humanitarian crises.  And second, expanding representation on the Council is not only unnecessary but unwise.  A bigger Council will have more conflicts and will be more likely to bog down, resulting in even less effective response to global crises.

10. Just Say No: The Case for Abolishing the Security Council Veto

When the UN was established, it created the Security Council to manage serious issues of war and peace and provide a mechanism for intervention to solve world crises.  At the time it seemed like a good idea to give each of the 5 major victorious World War 2 allies an absolute veto over Security Council decisions.  In fact, it was an absolute political necessity at the time; without it, the major powers never would have agreed to establish the UN at all.    Today,  based on experience, we know that reform is needed.

This cases focuses solely on the veto and makes the case for abolishing it.   There is widespread advocacy among many UN member states (who don’t have the veto) for abolishing the veto.  It is perceived to be responsible for blocking Security Council action on various critical situations where thousands of lives were lost as the UN delayed or failed to engage in solving the crisis.  One member of the Council, protecting some ally, may act on its special interest to block actions that would be in the interests of the world as a whole and that have virtually worldwide support from the international community.  Not only do the people in that scenario suffer, but the ongoing legitimacy of the Council suffers and its future work is threatened.

Negatives will argue that in fact, vetoes are on the decline in recent years, and they are not responsible for blocking humanitarian missions.  The veto power is vital to the proper functioning of the UN today, just as it was in the beginning, because it prevents the Council from engaging in actions that would result in Great Power conflict.  Nothing can happen contrary to the interests of any of the Great Powers, which helps maintain global stability.  In addition, some specific problems would happen in relation to Israel, since it is only the US veto that blocks a lot of the anti-Semitic forces in the UN from enacting resolutions taking harsh action against the Jewish State.

11. Be Prepared: The Case for the UN Emergency Peace Service (Standing Army)

The sad fact of the human condition on planet Earth is that conflicts, violence and even genocide break out from time to time.  We don’t know in advance where or when it will happen, and no one can solve for every incident everywhere.  But being prepared for the inevitable is a better policy than being surprised by it.  And in those crisis situations, every day we wait to respond can make the difference between life and death for thousands of innocent people.

When a crisis arises in the world, the UN Security Council is often called on to respond.  When it decides to intervene with peacekeeping forces, it has no standing forces to send.  Instead, it must issue an appeal to UN member states, wait for troops, funding, and equipment to arrive, then get them coordinated and transported to the crisis location.  In a situation where genocide or major conflict is going on, the delays involved in this process cost many lives.  In addition, the military capability of hastily thrown-together forces is not as effective as a prepared, trained, equipped force that was ready in advance for the mission.   Many advocate establishing just such a force, a United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS).   The very existence of such a force might, in addition to responding faster, deter the perpetrators from even starting the crisis in the first place, knowing that a rapid response will arrive that could immediately take them out.

Negatives will argue that there are several factors that block the success of this concept.  One is that we tried something like it already before and it failed.  The UN had a small reaction force available from 1996-2009, but it was disbanded because it was too cumbersome and lacked the resources to be effective.

A second, even bigger factor is a turn on Affirmative’s inherency.  The inherency is that the UN has never created a standing army, and there’s a good reason for it:  the majority of UN members don’t want to do it.  While the Affirmative can fiat that the plan gets done, it is more problematic when you try to fiat that everyone has a new mindset.  A standing army that most members don’t support is doomed to fail, since financial support, troop commitments, and political unity about its use are key elements that will determine its success.

Other concerns about a UN standing army include the size of the force.  The recommended size of UNEPS is around 15,000 (depending on which advocate you read).  That sounds like a lot, but dealing with a crisis on the order of the civil war in Burundi a decade ago, for example (which had many advocates for intervention), would have required several times that many troops to be effective.  Sending in a small force quickly sounds like a cool idea, but it can backfire if the force is too small to be effective.   When they start taking casualties, or being ineffective at stopping the casualties they were sent to prevent, political support wanes and the mission is likely to be cancelled.

The UN also lacks a lot of the behind the scenes things that make armies work, like intelligence gathering and a general staff made up of competent leadership.  These things would make the plan unlikely to succeed.

12. Don’t Have to Live Like a Refugee: The Case for Ending UNRWA

Imagine 60 years from now in the future:  A government agency that was set up to temporarily assist resettlement of citizens displaced by Hurricane Katrina is still in business.  They issue a press release in which they announce how proud they are that the number of refugees they are serving has grown dramatically over the decades and how they look forward to many more years of growth! That’s crazy, but it’s Status Quo UN policy in the Middle East for Palestinian refugees of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

UNRWA - the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees - was established just after the 1948 conflict that gave birth to the modern state of Israel as well as the ongoing Middle East tensions that remain today.  During the 1948 war, hundreds of thousands of Arabs were displaced from their homes.  The UN took on the responsibility for “temporarily” assisting them until they could be relocated.  But with their homes back in what became the Jewish state, they were unable to return.  They either could not or chose not to immigrate to other countries, so they and their (millions of) descendants live on as refugees in dozens of refugee camps in neighboring areas outside Israel.

While UNRWA does not “own” the refugee camps, this case argues argues that the agency perpetuates a false refugee “crisis” by providing free services not only for those actually displaced in 1948 but for all their descendants until the end of time.  Whenever you provide free goodies for anyone who claims to be a refugee, millions of “refugees” will show up.   An endless welfare state of free stuff for millions of people who are maintained in a permanent state of hatred toward Israel is a recipe for endless conflict in the Middle East, and the camps are notorious for breeding terrorism.  These people should have been permanently resettled long ago.

This case phases out UNRWA by attaching the current budget as subsidies connected to existing refugees (not any future descendents) and giving that money directly to any neighboring governments or the Palestinian Authority for taking the refugees in and resettling them in their nation.   This would provide a clear end date for the “refugee crisis” and incentives and funding for neighboring nations to permanently resettle them, rather than just leaving them stateless outsiders in camps.  Getting these people off UNRWA welfare and permanently settled as citizens of either the Palestinian Authority or neighboring nations would end the refugee crisis and solve one of the major impediments to Arab-Israeli peace.

Negatives will argue that even Israel endorses the existence of UNRWA as a necessary safety net for the relief of genuine needs of displaced Palestinians.  UNRWA doesn’t support terrorism against Israel, and in fact they screen out terrorist group members from their programs.  Canceling UNRWA will result in a humanitarian crisis.

13. Show Me the Money: The Case for Voluntary Funding

It’s always more fun to spend other people’s money than your own.  It’s even better when the other people don’t ask you how you’re spending it and promise to keep giving you more, no matter what.  A childish fantasy, perhaps … but it’s also an accurate description of current UN budgeting.  This case offers the comparative advantages of reforming this abusive system.

The UN has basically two types of budgeting.  The first is “assessments.”  These are like membership dues for belonging to the UN and they are an obligation each nation agreed to when they joined the UN.  Each nation is assessed a percentage of the total UN budget based on ability to pay.  Large nations with big economies pay higher percentages, while smaller and poorer nations pay very little.

The second type of budgeting is voluntary.  There are a number of UN agencies and programs that are entirely funded by voluntary donations from UN member nations.  Countries look at the work these agencies are doing and just decide to donate money because they want to support the work that is being done.

This case argues that UN programs supported by assessments are inefficient.  Since they’re guaranteed their budget each year, they lack any incentive to improve their competence, or to even determine if their mission is one that UN members even want to pay for.  Since there are far more tiny countries who pay very little, they can outvote the big countries that pay the vast majority of the budget.  Hence, the budget may not at all reflect the priorities of those who actually pay for it.  Changing all UN programs to be funded by voluntary donations would force all UN agencies to clean up their act, prove to potential donors that their programs are worthwhile, and demonstrate efficiency gains over time.

Negatives will argue that voluntary donations do not produce the expected efficiencies, and in fact there are several reasons why they may actually reduce the efficiency of their operations.  In addition, since peacekeeping is an assessed contribution program, what would most likely happen when it turns voluntary is that the US would be expected to pay the entire cost.  This would either raise US deficit spending or else lead to loss of funding for peacekeeping.

Lesson for Teaching

***Understanding what we are debating.***

**1. News Discussion**

Begin class discussing the issues of the previous week's news. When you do the same, attempt to relate issues with the very things the students are learning in class. Be prepared with the articles that were emailed to you via Google News Alerts from the previous week (hopefully the students have read some of the same) and relate them to the lessons of the first few weeks.

**2. Review**

Have the students take out their completed assignments and work through the questions and answers together as a class. Depending on the size of your class, you could have students exchange papers to correct. You will collect the assignments after review.

Spend the most time on the review of the first case from *Blue Book.* Students will review one case every week for the remainder of the class, each week answering a couple questions on the assignment handout. Encourage the debaters to read the case summaries *before* diving into the case. It'll help make things more understandable.

Point out that every case is approximately 4-5 pages long. "This case can be read in its entirety within the 8-minute 1AC." Students should be able to read to this proficiency. It is not uncommon to have students who are lacking in reading skill. No worries; encourage these students as much as possible. Do explain, though, that the activity of debate will require them to read well, and it will also teach them to read well.

Optional Activity: Read the this first case aloud. Have a timer run through its length. Have students read along in their *Blue Book* and underline words that (a) they do not know their meanings, or (b) they did not know how to pronounce. You may spend some time discussing the words they had trouble with.

**3. Lecture: US Policy Toward the Topic**

This lecture will attempt to load a lot of information into the students' minds. You may or may not want to teach this portion of class. In the 1-2 hours, you need to review the data in Chapters 4 and 5 of *Blue Book* (history and status quo of the topic).

**New this year:** Every student has access to what traditionally was sold as a separate item, *Blue Disk.* It used to be a DVD of one of the Training Minds Coaches presenting the history and status quo issues, complete with slides. This is now available to every student, instructions to view it on the downloads page at <http://monumentpublishing.com/downloads>.

If time allows, watch this 1.5 hour video together as a class. It is worth the time to go through it together even if the kids do it on their own. Set up a projector or large monitor and watch it on full screen. Pause often to discuss more difficult topics. If you go overtime, assign the rest of the video to the students as homework. They all have access to the video online.

This will likely be the most demanding lecture time for you this entire curriculum. You are required to take the most important features of the historical timeline and the status quo. The important thing to teach on is the relationship between the US and the league-specific topics.

Get ready for a robust discussion. The best way to engage the class is to read up on the topic yourself. Here are some preparatory ideas:

1. Read through the current topic in *Blue Book*. Highlight the keys facts you *didn’t* know. These can be questions you will ask the students, “Did you know this?”
2. Print up key articles that came up in the news that relate to the *Blue Book* cases. Highlight ahead of time some paragraphs that could be used as evidence in a debate round, paragraphs that either affirm or negate the case theses.
3. Print visual aids. Use Google Images with the topic terms to print visuals of key figures of your discussion. The images used in *Blue Book* are good examples of imagery used to make the discussion more memorable.
4. Class guest. Is there an expert in the topic in your area? Diplomats or other experienced individuals are usually very eager to come and speak on what they know best.

**4. Class Activity: Relating Significance**

By the time you're done lecturing, you should have a whiteboard filled, and student notes should be packed with information. Next week's lesson will delve into case construction, but for now, look back at the heading from Chapter 4. These are all headings of historically significant times of the topic. Ask the following questions:

1. Why were these historically significant?
2. What changes in the status quo at the time?
3. Were the changes good or bad?
4. How did the historical changes affect the topic today?

Use the rest of your class time to discuss the history and status quo before handing out the assignment.

**5. Assignment**

Hand out the assignment due the next class session. The assignment reinforces what the students were exposed to today.

Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Memorize policy resolution. Be able to recite it from memory in class. Your coach and your classmates will expect this from you.

2. What concept arose from the 1648 Ratification of the Treaty of Munster Gerard ter Borch that helped shape many of today’s views in the UN? Why was this, at the time, considered a “formal anarchy”?

3. What was the next major development toward peace after the Treaty of Munster? What was it a response to?

4. The next response was after World War I. How many people died in WWI? What was the response to secure world peace? Why was this response never ratified into American law?

5. The UN became the next world organization. What “evil” entity was it created to respond to? Who was the major founder of the UN? Where was its headquarters founded (where it remains today)?

6. What do the first two articles of the UN Charter give as the founding of the UN? These did not preserve world peace, but what did it do that was good?

7. Briefly explain the seven categories of functionality of the UN.

8. What was one of the first (and most controversial) actions of the UN? When was this done? What part of the world did this upset? How did the UN intervene in Korea?

9. How did the end of the Cold War help the validity of the UN?

10. What president assembled the world correlation to condemn (and push back) Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait?

11. What world injustice did the UN-led wars of Rwanda and Srebrenica attempt to deter?

12. What major war was authorized by the UN in 2003? What intelligence was used to justify the war? Was the intelligence confirmed or not?

Answer Key

1. No answer necessary.

2. The concept that arosw was Westphalian sovereignty: The concept that all states are sovereign over their own affairs and have some kind of moral or political equality with every other state on earth. This was considered a “formal anarchy” because it dethroned the Roman Catholic Church as overseer of the nations.

3. The next attempt at peace was the Concert of Europe, a response to the wars conducted by Napoleon.

4. The number of people killed in WWI was 16 million. The response was the League of Nations, proposed by then-President Woodrow Wilson. Americans saw it as a violation of the Founding Father’ vision to avoid entangling alliances, ultimately keeping America from ratifying it into law.

5. The “evil” entity that the UN was created to respond to was the Axis of Evil, the union of Germany, Italy and Japan during World War II. The major founder of the UN was President Franklin Roosevelt. Its headquarters was founded in New York.

6. The UN Charter’s Article 1 and Article 2 give Four Purposes and Seven Principles on which the UN is founded. Though this didn’t preserve world peace, it did establish an international norm whereby all the nations of the world agree that certain behavior is wrong, and it creates international legitimacy and influences world opinion to justify other nations intervening to stop any Westphalian sovereign who violates these norms.

7. The General Assembly is the meeting of the UN countries; The Security Council is the five permanent members and the 10 rotating seats; The Secretariat is the elected leader of the UN; the Economic and Social Council conduct studies and write reports; the International Court of Justice is the World Court; the Trusteeship Council oversees the decolonization of territories; and the Specialized Agencies are the numerous arms of action by the UN.

8. One of the first (and most controversial) actions of the UN was the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in 1947. This upset the Arab part of the world (those interested in the lands of Palestine). After civil war broke out in Korea, the UN intervened and held back the expansion of Communism into South Korea.

9. After the end of the Cold War, the UN was expected to be the intervening conduit between the Soviet Union and the US.

10. It was President George H.W. Bush who assembled the “new world order” to condemn Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

11. The world injustice that was deterred in Rwanda and Srebrenica was genocide: the intentional killing of people based on their ethnicity.

12. The war between the US and Iraq was authorized by the Security Council in 2003. The intelligence that was used to justify the war was Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). WMDs were never found in Iraq.

1. If you’re wondering how this mindset persists today, Anglican Church bishops have seats in the British House of Lords, and Finland and Denmark today still have official state religions. THE GUARDIAN, 17 March 2011 http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2011/mar/17/europe-religious-right [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In this context, Prof. Holsti means « the authority of God as expressed by the Roman Church” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Prof. K.J. Holsti (Polit. Sci., Univ. of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada) « From States Systems to a Society of States : The Evolution of International Relations » http://www.eolss.net/Sample-Chapters/C14/E1-35-01-01.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Oksana V. Goncharova (Russian Academy of Public Administration) “Concert of Europe (1815-1820) as a global government” italics added http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=%22concert+of+Europe%22&source=web&cd=13&ved=0CHIQFjAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ceeisaconf.uni.wroc.pl%2Fwordy%2Fpapers%25203%2520session%2FGoncharova.doc&ei=dkYtUMuDIYm80QXloYDQDA&usg=AFQjCNGmbi61H\_c8u03XPr5uKZhT\_tG53g [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Assuming, of course, that world peace is theoretically achievable under some system, be it Westphalian or not. A good debater would not let that assumption go unchallenged. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. With notable exceptions like the Crimean War and the Franco-Prussian War. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. For more details, see, for example, http://www.history.com/topics/the-death-of-archduke-franz-ferdinand-and-the-outbreak-of--world-war-i [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. As it was called at the time. No one knew it was great war number “one” at the time, and no one could imagine the world putting itself through such a thing a second time. Except, perhaps, for French Marshal Ferdinand Foch. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. He gave the speech even as the war was still being fought. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. France, for example, lost at least 1.3 million soldiers killed (<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/FWWcasualties.htm>) plus civilians. At the time, that was around 4% of the total population of the country. Imagine 4% of the US population today being killed (around 12 million deaths) and you can imagine the psychological impact this had on the people of that time. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Including a young Austrian Great War veteran named Adolf Hitler, who used opposition to the punitive Treaty as part of his campaign platform during his rise to power in Germany. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. You’ll be happy to know that the debt was finally cleared in October, 2010, when Germany made the final payment required by the Treaty. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1315869/Germany-end-World-War-One-reparations-92-years-59m-final-payment.html [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. http://www.secondworldwarhistory.com/world-war-2-statistics.asp [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Hoopes & Brinkley, http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/h/hoopes-fdr.html [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. The US Senate voted 89-2 to ratify it on 28 July 1945. Note the different Senate reaction to the UN as compared to the League of Nations. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Although South Africa came close. Though not officially ejected from the UN, their delegates to the UN General Assembly were refused recognition and seating in the G.A. from the 1970s until 1994, because of anger over S. Africa’s “apartheid” policy of racial oppression. Indonesia voluntarily dropped out of the UN in 1965 but rejoined in 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Individuals accused, for example, of war crimes would be tried either by their home country’s courts, a special international tribunal set up to deal with a particular crisis situation, or by the International Criminal Court. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/18/5/250.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Here, for example: <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread838381/pg1>. The ordinary words for government intervention on that scale are words like socialism or fascism. There are lots of good reasons to criticize the IMF and World Bank, but calling them agents of capitalism isn’t one of them. The disgraced former head of the IMF, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, was considered a leading candidate for the nomination of the Socialist Party for the presidency of France in the 2012 elections, before he was overtaken by scandals. It is humorous to observe socialist web sites condemning the IMF as a capitalist tool when the organization itself was run by a Socialist. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Map taken from http://jdasovic.com/2011/03/23/partition-of-palestine-1948/ [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. One of which was China, but at that time the anti-communist government of Taiwan was recognized by the UN as “China,” while the communist government of the People’s Republic of China on the mainland was not recognized. Thus, China did not veto intervention against N. Korea; they welcomed it. Oddly enough, the reason the Soviets were boycotting the Security Council was their objection to Taiwan holding the seat instead of the People’s Republic. With the Soviets absent, there was no one to veto Security Council actions condemning North Korea. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. House Joint Resolution 77, passed by Congress in January 1991, referenced no less than 11 UN Security Council resolutions as it defined what Pres. Bush was authorized to do in response to the occupation of Kuwait. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/dallaire.html, but beware of some rough language. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. This is pronounced “shreb-reh-NEET-zah”. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. “Illegal” because Iraq was a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), which allows non-nuclear weapons states to use nuclear energy but not to develop nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an agency of the UN, is responsible for inspections and reporting of violations of the NPT back to the UN. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7634313/ns/world\_news-mideast\_n\_africa/t/cias-final-report-no-wmd-found-iraq/ [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. For example, <http://www.apsanet.org/media/pdfs/apsa_tf_usstanding_long_report.pdf>, p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. http://www.economist.com/node/21556608 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. The USA, for example, is assessed 22% of the UN Regular Budget. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. The Regular Budget pays for the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC, ICJ, the Secretariat, and certain missions overseas, but not peacekeeping and not the Specialized Agencies. http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/issues/funding/the-un-budget-process.html [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. For example, imagine an Affirmative case that has troop-contributing nations do a better job domestically prosecuting their peacekeepers who misbehave. The changes would occur in the court systems of many nations and could have a positive effect on the UN. But since no UN official would be doing anything differently, is that a reform of the UN? Or is it rather an outside and extra-topical reform that has some benefits for the UN? [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Genesis 11:1-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)