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Peacekeeping Operations and Superpower in the Post Cold War

General Goals:

- Test reading comprehension
- Generate insightful discussion and critical thinking skills
- Students are to discuss, formulate an argument about peacekeeping, and defend it

Objectives:

- To have students understand the idea of international peacekeeping as it evolved from the Cold War to the present and the factors that affected its development
- To have students critically assess the pros and cons of unilateral action versus collective action
- Apply analysis to a contemporary conflict in need of resolution

College course Level:

Political Science International Relations Survey Course, or
Upper division Political Science or History Course (World Order or US Foreign Policy)

Time Structure: 50 minutes or 90 minutes*

Materials:

Readings:

UN Peacekeeping (overview from wikipedia.com) *Reader*

Charter of United Nations (Abridged). *Reader*

Uniting for Peace-UN Resolution 377. *Reader*

1988 Nobel Peace Prize, United Nations Peacekeeping Forces. Presentation Speech by
Egil Aarvik. *Reader*

Weiss, Thomas. The United Nations and Changing World Politics. Chapter II. *Reader*

Ikenberry, John. "Americas Imperial Ambition." The Use of Force: Military Power and
International Politics (Sixth Edition). Eds. Robert Art and Kenneth Waltz (2004).

Huntington, Samuel. "The Lonely Superpower." American Foreign Policy
(Fourth Edition) Ed. John Ikenberry (2002).

Other Materials:

Blackboard and chalk, or whiteboard and markers
Pens and paper
Stopwatch

Pre-class Preparation (one week prior):

- Assign all required reading
- Inform students of the activities (including the quiz)
- Ask students to research and submit a hard copy of a recent article (Internet or newspaper) about a peacekeeping issue or United Nations operation.

Talking Points:

Principles of Traditional Peacekeeping

Consent, Security Council support, Troops, clear goal, and force as a last resort

Cold War Peacekeeping

United Nations Organizational Structure

Systemic Restraints and Politics

Examples (1956 Suez Crisis, Congo, etc)

Post Cold War Peacekeeping

Examples: Bosnia, Rwanda, Gulf War

How has Peacekeeping changed during and after the Cold War? And Why?

George W. Bush's National Security Strategy (NSS): Grand or Neoimperialist?

Activity/Activities:

1. Short Quiz to test compliance and understanding of reading assignment (10 minutes)
2. Discuss right answers and talking points (above) (15 min / *20-25 min)
3. Separate them into four groups for discussion (10 min / *15 min)
4. Group Presentation and debate (10 min / *15 min)
5. Assessment (5 min for both)
6. Current event discussion and predictions (*Only for the longer section- 20 min)

Sample Quiz ID's (define and give significance for each one)

Peacekeeping vs. Peacemaking

Chapter Seven

Uniting for Peace

Preemption

The Rogue Superpower

Group Activity

Break the students into two groups. Assign one group with the task of defending unilateral military engagement and the other with collective enforcement and have them talk it over. Debate: Have group “A” first propose the advantages of a United Nations operation. Then have group “B” counter-argue the disadvantages of a UN mission (first), and (second) advocate the advantages of a unilateral peace mission. Lastly, have group “A” point out the disadvantages of a unilateral mission. All presenters should provide historical evidence.

Guidance questions to give to both groups:

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses associated with UN Peacekeeping (give examples). Does Peacekeeping accomplish what it intends to do or is it merely epiphenomenal? Are there alternatives to UN peacekeeping? What does Huntington mean by a “uni-multipolar system?” What is Ikenberry’s assessment of the Bush Doctrine? Do you agree?

Assessment:

Teacher will assess the strengths and weaknesses of each group’s arguments and discuss them with the class. Student evaluations will be based on rhetorical skill, organization, and persuasion.

Current Event Discussion:

Students are to read or paraphrase several current events relating to the topic. Have a critical discussion regarding each article, analyzing the author’s arguments and/or the international crisis at hand. Apply and compare theories and premises from the assigned readings, and argue for a particular course of action.

Example: The recent crisis in Sudan.

Discuss and debate what the relevant role of the UN should be and predict the effectiveness of their recent ultimatum for possible future sanctions. Will the threat work in getting the Sudanese government to disarm the accused militias? Have UN sanctions worked before? What makes this case different, if at all? What are the peacekeeping options in this region of the world?