

**SCASS**  
**Colorado Social Studies Standards Assessment Project**

**The U. S. and the UN**

**Tamara Hoffman**

**Civics Assessment - Middle School**

**SCASS Theme #4: International Relations**  
**Colorado Model Content Standard #4**

*Revised Per ACT Recommendations and Field Test Results*

**Module- Middle School Civics**  
**The U.S. and the UN**  
**Tamara Hoffman**

**SCASS Theme #4: International Relations**

**Colorado Civics Standard #4: Students know the political relationship of the United States and its citizens to other nations and to world affairs.**

**4.2 Students understand how the United States government develops foreign policy.**

**4.3 Students understand the influence the United States has on other nations and how the actions of other nations influence politics and society of the United States.**

**READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE:**

The United Nations is an organization of world states committed to the eradication of war, the promotion of human rights, the maintenance of friendly relations among nations, the support of social progress, and the advancement of justice and international law. It was established at the end of World War II in 1945 and has grown from its original 51 members to 185 nations presently in the General Assembly. The United Nations has two main bodies, the General Assembly and the Security Council. Other UN bodies include the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The United States has played a decisive role in the creation and maintenance of the United Nations. President Franklin Roosevelt designed the original framework for the world organization. The United States provides 25% of the UN budget; in 1995 that figure amounted to \$575 million. However, criticism of U.S. support for the UN is becoming increasingly vocal. Besides the economic cost, opponents are uneasy with U.S. soldiers serving under foreign military leaders or even serving in UN-led peacekeeping missions. Other critics question the continued effectiveness of the UN due to its lack of authority to enforce resolutions.

Among the United Nations' most visible activities are its peacekeeping missions around the globe. In the past decade, incursions into Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, and Bosnia have demonstrated both the effectiveness and failures of this world body in preventing the loss of human life and maintaining world peace. Since the United Nations' inception, its peacekeeping role has changed from more traditional *peacekeeping* operations such as enforcing cease-fire agreements and monitoring buffer zones between disputing parties to *peace enforcement* missions with armed troops, such as in the Persian Gulf Wars. The cost (\$4.5 billion per year) and the number of missions has greatly increased over the past two decades.

### Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following UN bodies is specifically charged with maintaining peace throughout the world? (K)

- a. General Assembly
- b. Security Council
- c. International Court of Justice
- d. World Bank

2. Civilians who have been displaced from countries involved in UN peacekeeping conflicts are called (K)

- a. immigrants
- b. aliens
- c. emigrants
- d. refugees

3. Which of the following best describes what the UN wishes to accomplish? (U)

- a. to encourage a member nation to solve problems in their neighboring countries, especially economic ones
- b. to bring problems to the UN so member nations are involved in problem solving
- c. to get groups of countries like NATO to deal with economic and social problems
- d. to encourage countries to stay out of other nations' business

4. In which of the following conflicts have UN armed forces been involved? (K)

- I. civil war in Rwanda
- II. armed conflict in Bosnia
- III. Iran-Iraq War

- a. I only
- b. III only
- c. I and II only
- d. I, II, and III

5. Which of the following is a reason many nations are looking at the US and saying the US is avoiding a major responsibility towards the UN? (A)

- a. The US has not paid its full share of dues for several years
- b. The US refuses to allow US troops to be used for UN peacekeeping missions
- c. The US refuses to send an ambassador to the UN
- d. The US uses its superior military strength to get its way in the UN

6. Which cabinet position has the responsibility of dealing with the UN for the president? (K)

- a. National security advisor
- b. Secretary of State
- c. Attorney General
- d. Secretary of the Treasury

Short answer: Based upon information gathered from the reading section, what is the cartoon expressing about the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping and its effects of its involvement in Somalia? (A)



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**Extended Response: (A)**

The issue of whether or not the United States should continue to support the UN is controversial. In the chart below, list the reasons why the U.S. should support and reasons why the U.S. should not support the UN. Be sure to explain each reason fully.

Reasons to support the UN:
1.
2.
3.

Reasons for not supporting the UN:
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1.
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2.
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3.
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## Scoring guide for module on U.S./UN relations

Multiple choice:

1. b.
2. d.
3. b.
4. c.
5. a.
6. a.

Short Answer:

Item focus: What effect has the UN presence had on bringing peace to Somalia? The response needs to analyze the meaning behind an editorial cartoon on the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

Expected response: An exemplary answer would comment on the irony presented by the cartoonist, i.e. that the presence of the UN peacekeeping mission has in fact placed the war lords in a greater position of power and reduced the hope for a normal life for the people of Somalia.

Draft Rubric:

4 The response comments on the changing role of the UN from peace keeper to peace enforcer. The response also comments on the irony of the title of the mission (*Operation Restore Hope*), as well as that the mission has caused continued fighting. The response goes beyond a brief analysis of the situation in Somalia as portrayed in the cartoon to stating that the presence of the UN peacekeeping mission may have reduced the hope for a normal life for the people of Somalia.

3 The response describes the conflict in roles of the UN and its impact on the country of Somalia. The response gives a brief analysis of the situation in Somalia as portrayed in the cartoon, stating that the presence of the UN peacekeeping mission may have reduced the hope for a normal life for the people of Somalia.

2 The response speaks of an attempt to bring peace but fails to refer to the conflicting roles of the UN as a peace keeper and peace enforcer.

1 The response fails to refer to the UN role or the scenario presented in the cartoon.



**Extended response:**

**Item focus:** What are the positive and negative factors for continued U.S. support of the United Nations?

**Expected response:**

Correct responses for positive factors may include:

- the United States has been the prime support of the UN for over 50 years
- a joint approach by many nations rather than just one nation acting unilaterally can help ensure world peace
- the United States can no longer afford to act as the world policeman; it needs the support of many nations, as exemplified by the the military and monetary support given in the Gulf War.
- in order to maintain good relations in the world, the United States cannot be seen as always acting only for its own interests; the UN gives the U.S. a forum for shared discussion of issues

Correct responses for negative factors may include:

- continued support for the UN is an unnecessary cost for the U.S.
- having to place U.S. armed forces under UN command in peacekeeping missions gives away the U.S.'s authority
- the increasing use of peacekeeping missions increases the danger of losing American lives in situations that are not vital to U.S. interests
- UN resolutions are often ineffective and do not prevent conflicts
- member states in the General Assembly or the Security council can create voting blocs to oppose U.S. policies

**Draft rubric:**

**Note:** Eliminate duplicate responses.

- 4 Response contains two or more correct positive reasons and two or more correct negative reasons.
- 3 Response contains one or more correct positive reasons and one or more correct negative reasons.
- 2 Response contains one or more of a positive or negative reason but none of the other.
- 1 Response contains no correct reasons given.

**The U.S. and the UN  
Middle School Civics - Performance Event  
Tamara Hoffman**

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**Stimulus:**

In the small, mythical African country of Mawali rival ethnic groups have begun a civil war; thousands of people have been killed, and thousands more are fleeing the country. Mawali is poorly developed and has few resources. Its tropical jungles, however, do contain several species, both plant and animal, on the verge of extinction. Fears of ecological disaster, warfare extending into other regions of Africa, and massive refugee problems are prompting a quick resolution to the conflict.

The following paragraphs state the position on the Mawali conflict for each of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The accompanying UN fact-finding sheet is available for additional information.

**The United States** Past suffering of the people of Ethiopia and Rwanda encourages the United States to support the people of Mawali. However, the loss of American lives in Somalia makes the United States wary of committing U.S. troops to another African nation.

**France** Because of its many economic interests in the region, France is committed to an Africa that is safe and at peace. It is also gravely concerned about the well being of the refugees fleeing to neighboring countries.

**The United Kingdom** The United Kingdom (Great Britain) believes a joint humanitarian and military effort is necessary in Mawali. However, the British believe that since this is an African issue, the majority of the support should be drawn from wealthier African nations such as South Africa, Morocco, or Zimbabwe.

**China** Because of its own current conflicts with Taiwan over questions of power in its sphere of influence, China does not want to commit to a

UN military action at this time. China is also very sensitive to criticism of human rights abuses; it believes they should be handled within a country, and not be brought before the UN.

**Russia** Though concerned over the conflict in Mawali, Russia has its own internal political and civil unrest, as well as financial problems. The government does not feel capable of supporting a mission in Africa at this time.

## U.N. FACT-FINDING SHEET

### The Situation in Somalia

Civil war broke out in Somalia in 1991 after the downfall of President Siad Barre. Fighting occurred throughout the country, causing over 300,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of civilians having to flee their homes. Widespread banditry and looting, political chaos, disease, and malnutrition were also the result of the power struggle. A UN peacekeeping mission lost 24 Pakistani soldiers while trying to restore order in the country.

### The Situation in Rwanda

Fighting between the Armed Forces of the Government of Rwanda and Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) has been ongoing since 1990. Much of the fighting has occurred between rival tribal factions; at least a half-million minority Tutsis lost their lives in just a few months in 1994. The conflict has also had a great impact on the environment and the economy of Rwanda. (For example, the mountain gorillas of Rwanda are facing extinction.) A United Nations goodwill mission was sent to the area in 1993 in order to prevent military use of a border area between Rwanda and Uganda, and to examine all major aspects of the peace process. Refugees have put great stress on neighboring nations.

### Present U.S. Relationship with the UN

- U.S. tax dollars pay for 1/4 of the UN general budget and 1/3 of peacekeeping operations.
- The U.S. has not paid its UN bill for more than one year; it owes the UN more than one billion dollars.
- Many U.S. congressmen oppose sending Americans into combat under UN command.
- A bill has appeared in Congress to cut off aid to UN General Assembly members who vote against the U.S. too often.
- Many Americans support joint missions by the U.S. and members countries, such as occurred in the Persian Gulf War.

**Question 1: (A)**

As a member of the United States delegation to the UN Security Council, you represent your country's stance on the recent conflict in Mawali. Remember, the main job of the Security Council is to maintain world peace.

Write a one page position page explaining which of the three options listed below the United States would choose, and what support, if any, might be expected from the nations listed as members of the Security Council.

The Security Council has the following options:

1. Send in United Nations peacekeeping forces, as was done in Somalia.
2. Provide humanitarian aid to Mawali.
3. Stay out of the conflict, as it is an internal problem of Mawali.

**U.S. Position Paper on the Conflict in Mawali**

**Question Two: (A)**

As an editor of the newspaper, *The Daily Bulletin*, you need to write an editorial on how one segment of the American public would respond if the US did decide to enter into the Mawali conflict. Select one of the following groups to represent in your editorial: environmentalists, business interests, the military , or taxpayers. Clearly state your perspective and include factual details to support your opinion.

## Scoring Rubrics for the Performance Event

### Question One:

Item focus: What course should the United States UN delegation follow in regards to the conflict in Africa? Student response is in the form of a position paper that includes factual, supporting details, and reference to the support provided by other Security Council members.

Expected response:

An exemplary answer would include considerations of cost, loss of American lives, involvement of US troops in foreign conflicts, and humanitarian concerns. The response would also include mention of at least one or two other countries on the security council and the nature of the support (or lack thereof) as reasons as whether to enter into the conflict.

Draft rubric:

- 4- The response clearly states the chosen option regarding Mawali. Supporting details and reasoning are listed in regard to cost, loss of human life, or humanitarian concerns. At least one other country's support is listed and documented.
- 3- The response states the chosen option regarding Mawali. Supporting details are listed in regard to cost, loss of human life, or humanitarian concerns. At least one other country's support is listed but not documented.
- 2- The response states the chosen option regarding Mawali. Some details are given supporting the option but no other country support is listed.
- 1- The response fails to state the chosen option. No supporting details are given.

### Scoring rubric for Question Two:

Item focus: How would one sector of the American public react to United States/UN involvement in an African conflict? Students respond through a persuasive editorial.

Expected response: An exemplary response would include one of the chosen perspectives:

humanitarian or environmental considerations: famine, ethnic cleansing, refugees, loss of species

military concerns: intervention when there are questions of nationalist conflict or

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other internal conflicts within political states ( such as civil war), protection of military areas or routes  
political or military interests: concern over cost, loss of American lives, or UN command over US troops, protection of critical trade routes or military areas  
business or economic interests of the United States: mineral resources, protection of critical trade routes  
taxpayers concerns: cost of increasing debt, national needs over international needs

Draft rubric:

- 4 The response persuades the reader with a provocative position, well-reasoned arguments, and a compelling, insightful conclusion.
- 3 The response persuades the reader with a clearly-stated position, logical, detailed support, and a convincing conclusion.
- 2 The response persuades the reader with a stated position, logical support, and a satisfactory conclusion.
- 1 The response does not persuade the reader due to the lack of supporting details, a reasoned argument, and/or a satisfactory conclusion.

## Resources

Close Up Foundation

1-800-765-3131

Close Up Publishing

44 Canal Center Plaza

Alexandria, VA 22314

"The United Nations at Work" Teacher's Guide developed by Tiffany Farrell  
Larbalestier

"Special Focus - The UN at Work - The Challenge of Building Global Peace"

"International Relations: Understanding the Behavior of Nations" Third Edition

Internet Web Site: United Nations

Newsweek NewsSource "U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changing World"

1-800-526-2595