

**Critical Mass:
Toward an Understanding of America's Role in the World**

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DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING WORLD EVENTS

At the outset of this century, it is apparent that the world is a smaller place than before the millennium. The students I work with have no memory of a time when communication was not easy, of a time when 24-hour news programs, the Internet and email were not readily available. Because so much information is available with very little effort, students have a difficult time making sense of it all. I believe a curriculum unit designed to provide them an approach to learning about the world around them and America's role in it would be very helpful. Students in the eighth grade generally have limited experience with the outside world. However, their interest in the world is real and engaging. Many are children of immigrants from around the world and many have parents who travel extensively for work. These students bring much to the classroom. In the aggregate, their bits and pieces of experience help students see they are part of the world at large. Yet the random nature of the information they have, and their opinions based on partial understanding, sometimes confuse rather than clarify a discussion. It is in this context of bright, energetic students that one tries to focus on clear articulation of ideas. Students love a discussion and an argument even, but a lack of prior knowledge and experience often causes the relevance of a discussion to fall short. It is imperative that we, as teachers, capture the “teachable moment.” When the events in the world pique the students’ curiosity or sense of outrage, we must help them understand what is actually going on if we can. Yet the challenge of presenting and discussing current events in the classroom remains a daunting one.

I would like to develop a unit: "Critical Mass: Toward an Understanding of America's Role in the World." I see the unit as two distinct parts: first, an introductory, three-week unit developing a framework for understanding world events, and second, a method for systematic examination of current events throughout the academic year. My goal will be to help students reach a fundamental understanding of the world around them in which they make connections and links with both current and historical events. By developing an approach to learning about current events that is more than the standard “find a clipping in the newspaper” method, I believe students will begin to accumulate both information and understanding that will bring them closer to the essential critical mass where it all begins to make sense. Developing an approach to learning is much more beneficial to the students than memorizing specific facts about discreet topics. The approach to learning becomes the key. It will help students focus on a foreign policy topic without getting bogged down in the details. Through practice during the entire year students will build on the basic principles and ideas they are introduced to in the introductory unit. A combination of theory and real time events will make the analysis of current issues relevant to the students.

What is America's role in the world today? How can students begin to comprehend the news of today without a context? Students in the state of Texas take the first half of American history as eighth graders, roughly the beginnings through Reconstruction. They do not take the second half of American history until they are in the eleventh grade, a scant year before they are eligible to vote. It is crucial that students in the eighth grade be introduced to approaches to learning about America's role in the contemporary world. They need to be able to sort through the news they see and hear each day. In the information age, the problem is most often too much information and no effective way to process it. News in sound bites is everywhere. The reporting of crises and catastrophes around the world is almost overwhelming. The absence of context for much of the news is a genuine problem. If students have no way to connect to the information they will simply dismiss and disregard it as irrelevant to them and their lives. Once students understand some of the basic concepts associated with America's role in the world they should be able to more effectively process the information they are bombarded with daily.

I see the unit beginning with an overview, a look at American history and a look at some basic concepts in international relations. In this three-week unit students will be introduced to different ways of looking at the world and individual countries. They will participate in simulations, do research, participate in discussions, make generalizations, and practice using a model for analyzing issues. Active learning is the key to success with middle school students. Keeping this in mind, direct instruction will be kept to a minimum and be used primarily to help clarify and simplify ideas generated by the students through their research and discussions.

INTRODUCTORY UNIT

Beginning the Quest

Historical Overview

In order to begin to understand today, we must look back briefly to America's beginnings and its evolution as a nation. America began as a small, weak, and relatively powerless nation. Our colonial beginnings colored our role in the world for a very long time. From Washington through Adams to Jefferson we were struggling with our own issues and skeptical of interactions with Europe. In his farewell address Washington set the tone:

...History and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican Government...The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little Political connection as possible... Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation... 'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world... (Morison, 346)

European entanglements were to be avoided at all costs. A few years later, when faced with the Napoleonic crisis in Europe, it was Jefferson's intention to protect American independence and flexibility. Our country was now growing and expanding yet the French and British continued to challenge our shipping. Jefferson's efforts to use commercial sanctions were ineffective. When Madison assumed the presidency, the issues of neutrality and freedom of the seas were in the forefront, being challenged by Napoleon and Great Britain. The war hawks were disgusted with Madison's diplomatic efforts and felt our national honor demanded a fight. The War of 1812 was a matter of national pride. The war, brought on by two decades of resentments, did little but give notice to the world that America had arrived.

By 1823, President Monroe announced his policy for the western hemisphere that stood upon the two principles of non-colonization and nonintervention. This was a triumph for American isolationism. From Washington through Monroe the guiding principle of isolationism held fast. To many Americans the idea was clear. The new world must be kept separate from the old. The new world represented promise, hope and a future, the old only crumbling regimes and ancient hatreds.

During these early years of the republic certain principles of foreign policy were widely accepted including: freedom of the seas, freedom of trade, neutrality in regard to European affairs, national integrity and the promotion of liberty. America was now totally separate from Europe and free to make its own way.

The middle of the nineteenth century was dominated by increasing sectionalism and ultimately the Civil war. Concern with the rest of the world paled in comparison. By the end of the nineteenth century we made the transition from an agrarian to an industrial nation. Our exuberance and belief in manifest destiny made our ventures in imperialism seem like part of the natural order of things. Americans supported the Spanish American War in 1898 more unanimously than any war in history. It was a lashing out against the treachery of the old world. Our economic strength led to a confidence and an acceptance of some expansionist aims. The trappings of empire captured the imaginations of many Americans. Others, however, resisted the notions of colonies and territories as contrary to our own Declaration of Independence. The war, won at so little cost militarily, made us a great power in the eyes of Europeans. Our drive for economic expansion increased our interests in the Caribbean, and led to our involvement in Asia. President Theodore Roosevelt outlined his concerns about protecting our interests in the Western Hemisphere in his corollary to the Monroe doctrine:

Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United

States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power. (Wright, 319)

We were clearly willing, at this point, to be the policeman of the Caribbean. Roosevelt's adage, 'Speak softly, and carry a big stick; you will go far' proved an accurate symbol for his policies. Roosevelt was the first American president to seek critical involvement in world politics.

As Europe became embroiled in World War I, none of the three major American political parties would support efforts to prepare for the possibility of war. We only joined the war when events made our staying out of the war untenable. Yet Americans in the end would not support President Wilson's League of Nations as they reverted back to their isolationist ways. In July 1919, President Wilson said:

Our isolation was ended twenty years ago... There can be no question of our ceasing to be a world power. The only question is whether we can refuse the moral leadership that is offered, whether we shall accept or reject the confidence of the world. (Wright, 329)

Americans were divided. Ultimately, they did not support Wilson and the League of Nations. American civilians had not suffered significantly during World War I and the period following the War was marked by a new prosperity and comfort in isolationism. Through the period of the Great Depression, preoccupied with our situation at home, we watched upheaval throughout the world with a certain detachment. As events in Europe and Asia unraveled, Americans were convinced that neutrality was the best course. Not until the direct attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, were we willing to commit to the war. The Second World War permanently ended the historic isolation of the United States. The period following the war, marked by rapid expansion of the Soviet Union and the demise of the European colonial structures around the world, insured American's would not be bystanders again. Our competition with the Soviet Union during the Cold War period thrust us into a position of world leadership. The Cold War competition with the Soviet Union set the context in which our involvement in Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East and Africa, as well as the western hemisphere, took place.

With the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Soviet Union the world was a new and different place. What was the role of America in this world? Was America to be world policeman or peacekeeper? Should America take the lead in human rights and promote the spread of democracy? How was America to function as the lone superpower? How will America be able to keep even her allies from fearing or resenting her hegemony? These are questions that frame the new reality.

Fundamental Principles

The second part of the introductory overview will focus on basic principles important to the understanding of international politics. Students will need to become conversant in the peculiar vocabulary of the field. When we begin to look at America's role in the world, it is important to first consider some of the basic elements of international politics. We begin by defining what we mean by international relations—how countries relate to one another, how they work together, and how they conflict. (*Close Up*, 94) America exists in the world as one of many nations. Each nation is unique and has needs and priorities of its own. Beginning with the basics the lessons will be designed to foster understanding of what is meant by the various terms used regularly in any discussion of international relations. Focusing on how international politics differ from politics within one nation will help students make associations from the familiar to the unfamiliar. In domestic politics the principal participants are the people of that country. In international politics the principal participants are national governments. In domestic politics everything occurs under the national government. In world affairs there is no international government. In domestic politics there is a degree of cultural consensus and unity. In world politics the diversity in language, customs, values, religions, history and ethnicity present significant challenges. In times of crisis these differences often seem magnified and can take on inordinate importance. The art of diplomacy strives to minimize these fundamental differences and reach for common shared goals and interests. In international relations sensitivity to differences becomes very important. In domestic politics the use of force is seldom called for. In international politics the use of force to resolve political differences is much more frequent. Within a nation most citizens have a strong sense of security. Nations often experience far less security within the international community.

The issue of national interest is basic to the study of America's role in the world. All nations have security interests, economic interests and ideological interests. Security interests include the protecting of national borders, maintaining good relations with allies and keeping its citizens safe. Economic interests include providing an adequate standard of living, strengthening the economy and successfully trading with other nations. Ideological interests include supporting a way of life, protecting the religious or cultural heritage of a people and promoting a system of government. We will examine what this means in America's case and try to evaluate what it means as we work through various case studies. The issue of power as it relates to the pursuit of national interest is important to address. It is easier in most cases for powerful nations to reach their foreign policy goals than weak nations. Nations, however, have many different kinds of power. There is military power, economic power, resource power, technological power and national resolve power. At different times one or the other type of power becomes more or less important. Proximity to resources or strategic trade routes can also be significant.

Initially we will look at the world and the nations in it in relative terms, focusing on very basic needs of all peoples and nations. Then we will examine the current reality of have and have not nations. Eighth graders, living in an affluent urban community, do not usually have a very accurate worldview. It is difficult for them to conceive of people and places where everyday life and conditions are significantly different from their own. In order to raise their consciousness, we will spend a bit of time looking at a variety of data. What are the implications of low life expectancy rates, literacy rates, per capita income etc.? Raising their awareness is important in two ways. First people are people. The common humanity of all peoples needs to be reinforced. Second, an awareness of and sensitivity to the vast differences among people must be addressed.

Case Studies

Moving from historical background to fundamental principles of international relations, students will then need to look at the real world. The United States in the post cold war era has had to come to grips with the new reality. What is our role? How do we define our national interests? In what instances is it appropriate for the United States to intervene in another nation? The United States has dispatched military troops to foreign soil six times in the post cold war era between 1989 and 1999: Panama in 1989; the Persian Gulf in 1991; Somalia in 1992; Bosnia in 1995; Haiti in 1996; and Kosovo in 1999. The United States has also chosen not to intervene in a number of crises most notably the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the Congo in 1998. A brief synopsis of some of these situations will give us an opportunity to begin looking at concrete situations while addressing America's role in the world.

Persian Gulf Crisis 1991

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August of 1990, beginning the first major crisis in the post cold war era. During their war with Iran (1980-1988), the Iraqis accumulated significant debt. They had unsolved territorial disputes with Kuwait and believed Kuwait was intentionally keeping oil prices low by refusing to go along with the plans of the OPEC countries to restrict production. The United States responded to the invasion of Kuwait quickly. President Bush announced four goals of U.S. intervention in the crisis.

- The unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait
- The restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait
- The safety of U.S. citizens in the region
- The stability and security of nations in the region (Razali, 2)

The unstated goals relating to oil and economics also drove American policy. A major disruption of oil supplies posed a real threat for the industrialized nations of the world. President Bush enlisted the help and support of many nations in the crisis. He enjoyed popular support for the intervention. The war resulted in a coalition victory and Iraq accepted UN Security Council Resolution 686, which dictated the terms of defeat.

Somalia 1992

Somalia, under General Said Barre, slid into a state of anarchy in 1990 when he resorted to arming the masses and exploiting inter-clan divisions within the opposition. He lost power and fled the country in 1991 leaving a country divided and essentially ungovernable. President Bush sent in 28,000 troops as part of a United Nations humanitarian mission. In spring of 1993, guerilla attacks and the military reactions to those attacks turned a humanitarian intervention into an overt military occupation. President Clinton described America's goals in sending troops to Somalia:

- First, they are there to protect U.S. troops and U.S. bases. We did not go to Somalia with a military purpose. We never wanted to kill anyone. But those who attack our soldiers must know they will pay a heavy price.
- Second, they are there to keep open and secure roads, the port and lines of communication that are essential for the United Nations and the relief workers to keep the flow of food and supplies and people moving freely throughout the country so that starvation and anarchy do not return.
- Third, they are there to keep pressure on those who cut off relief supplies and attacked our people, not to personalize the conflict but to prevent a return to anarchy.
- Fourth, through their pressure and their presence, our troops will help to make it possible for the Somali people, working with others, to reach an agreement among themselves so that they can solve their problems and survive when we leave.
(Razali, 5)

Our involvement in Somalia did not have public support once the violence escalated. U.S. troops were withdrawn in 1994. The UN left the following year and essentially nothing had been solved.

Bosnia 1995

In 1992 Bosnia achieved official independence and was accepted as a member of the United Nations. Shortly thereafter, the Bosnian Serbs launched a civil war in an effort to carve out ethnically homogeneous territories that could then relate to the Yugoslavian state. The goals of the United States in intervening were:

- Protecting the lives and human rights of Bosnian citizens.
- Preserving the possibility of Bosnian self-determination and statehood
- Taking an effective stand against the determination of boundaries by force.
- Bringing to an end the process of ethnic cleansing and the creation of vast numbers of refugees.
- Establishing an example of the defense of the rights of a religious minority.
(Razali, 8)

Public opinion regarding our involvement in Bosnia was mixed. The complexity of the political situation made for ambivalent opinions. While people felt we should do something about ethnic cleansing, they opposed the use of military force. Bosnia was of vital interest to the United States because the credibility of NATO was at stake. This argument was not always a compelling one. There is now peace in Bosnia but it is still dependent on the presence of NATO and U.S. forces.

Congo 1998

The Congo is one of the most important countries in Africa. It is home to roughly 50 million people and borders nine other countries. It has vast mineral and agricultural wealth as well as water resources. The Rwandan genocide of 1994, in which over a half a million Tutsis and Hutus were murdered set the stage for the crisis in the Congo. After the new government came to power in Rwanda, the genocide had technically stopped. However, attacks inside Rwanda were still being launched from refugee camps in neighboring Congo. Long-time Congolese dictator Mobutu Sese Seko was overthrown leaving a country marked by economic and institutional decay and large-scale corruption. The new leader Laurent Kabila initially enjoyed the support of the Congolese people as well as much of the international community. However, promises of reform disintegrated and Congo was once again embroiled in internal warfare. The conflict was a serious humanitarian emergency threatening hundreds of thousands of civilians. The U.S. chose not to intervene in Congo. The reasons for not intervening were:

- We support African diplomatic initiatives to bring all sides to the negotiating table.
- All the African countries and leaders of the Congo who have contributed to the crisis must determine whether to continue on the present violent path or to step away from armed military action and work in concert to find a viable solution.
- We support the efforts being made by the OAU and the United Nations.
- Neither the United States nor any external actor can resolve this conflict for the people of the Congo or the region. (Rice, 5)

There was no ground swell of public opinion urging intervention in the Congo. The memory of our less than successful experience in Somalia was still fresh and reinforced the idea that without a clear mission a good result is not probable.

Kosovo 1999

Fighting erupted in Kosovo in 1998. The international community actively sought resolution of the conflict through diplomacy backed by NATO. The Rambouillet agreement kept Kosovo in Serbia but gave the Kosovars self-government. President Milosevic's regime continued to follow policies undermining the agreements. As the numbers of displaced Kosovars grew and ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Serbs continued the U.S. and NATO intervened. The issues that led to intervention were:

- Belgrade's sustained and accelerating repression in Kosovo was creating a humanitarian crisis of staggering dimension.
- Instability in Kosovo directly threatens peace in the Balkans and the stability of Europe.
- NATO's credibility is at stake in Kosovo. When Belgrade rejected out of hand all efforts to achieve a peaceful solution and continued his repression NATO needed to make good on its threat of force. (U.S./NATO, 1)

The intervention in Kosovo was supported at home on humanitarian grounds and limiting our troops to air strikes made involvement more palatable.

These brief summaries of the case studies to be researched by the student groups demonstrate that once ideas and theories are applied to factual situations the interpretations can vary. Why are some actions supported and others dismissed? What is the role of the press and public opinion? How important is the involvement of international organizations such as the United Nations and NATO? What was our role in each of these cases? Do they show a well-defined American role in the world?

CONTINUING ACTIVITY

Working toward a Critical Mass

Following the first part of the curriculum unit, the three-week introductory unit, students will address current issues throughout the year. As events unfold we will go back to the basic principles we first investigated, use the Hanvey model and over the year develop some real understanding about America's role in the world. This emphasis on current situations, for many students, should make the historical situations we address in the curriculum more meaningful. As we study American government and structures as part of the course curriculum we will look at the making of foreign policy. Who makes American foreign policy? How does it actually work. Who has the power? What are the relative powers of the President and Congress? How are the State Department, the military, the CIA, the NSC involved? How important is public opinion? These issues will be addressed as they occur.

Incorporating current issues into the curriculum, with a focus on America's role in the world, will continue throughout the year. Students will keep a journal on America's role in the world. Each week they will prepare a reflection or analysis based upon an assigned article, political cartoon, pertinent quote or provocative headline. Every Friday focused discussions will be part of the daily lesson. Topics for the discussions will be posted in advance to allow time for preparation.

TEACHING STRATEGY

How do we develop a meaningful approach to learning? How do we get a handle on such a broad and unwieldy area of study? The first thing we will do is look at the big picture.

Then we will work through specific fact situations together. Eighth graders need a wide range of activities and a variety of experiences to keep them engaged. Conversely they also need a systematic approach to help focus their energy. The teaching strategy I have chosen combines a number of elements, which in combination will comprise our approach to learning about America's role in the world. We will begin by looking at five major conflicts of the 1990's. These include the Persian Gulf, Bosnia, Somalia, Congo and Kosovo. Students working in small groups will examine one of these conflicts in depth. Students will use the *Hanvey Global Awareness Model* for their investigations. Using a model will insure some consistency and depth for each investigation. The *Hanvey Model* consists of five parts. (NCSS, 1999)

Part One: Multiple Perspectives

Each person has a view of the world that is shaped by influences that often escape conscious detection. Other people might have views of the world that are profoundly different from one's own.

Part Two: State of the Planet

To understand an event, we first need to learn about the basic facts surrounding it, answering the basic questions of who, what, where, when, how, and why. We need to determine the geographic location of the event in relation to the rest of the world. We also need some knowledge of large trends. Examples are population growth, migration, resource exploitation, climate change, and the rise and fall of local and international conflicts.

Part Three: Cultural Forces

There is a diversity of ideas and practices found in human societies around the world, but there are also elements that are common to all. Cultural influence can be as powerful as physical factors in determining the course of human events.

Part Four: Global Dynamics

Events are often interconnected because the world is a complex system, in some ways like a machine. When one part of the system breaks down, other parts of the system are affected. The systems approach shows the dynamics of positive and negative change that affect people and nations.

Part Five: Human Choices

Events are shaped, in part, by people who make decisions about what should happen in a certain situation. Every day, such decisions are made at the individual, family, school, community, state, national, and international levels. As a result, the decisions

collectively made by individuals, groups and nations affect our lives today and will in the future as well.

Addressing all five aspects when dealing with current issues will help students see events in a larger context. Each group will be asked to design a guide sheet or template based on the Hanvey Model to use when doing their research. When they have completed the initial research and are sharing their findings, we will also look at their guide sheets and select the one they felt was most workable. Taking ownership of the way they will organize and keep track of their research material is very important. We may end up with a few options for students to choose from. Since students will practice this method throughout the year, it is important that the guide sheets or templates work for them. As events occur we will focus on the major areas of concern. We will attempt to select those areas and issues with the highest likelihood of remaining current issues.

This initial research option will also provide the opportunity for guided instruction on some of the basic research techniques that will enhance the students approach to their learning. When approaching research of this type it is important that students learn to use indexed research tools effectively. The key indices, as well as, key web sites will be book marked to facilitate the efficient use of research time in the classroom. Students may want to put key sites and URLs on a cardstock 'bookmark' to take home so they can set up their own computers, as well.

Each group will report back to the class on their area of focus: the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia, Congo, and Kosovo. Students will assess what kind of role they think America played in the event. Students will look at the various possible roles for the United States in the world including: intervention to promote national security, intervention to promote humanitarian goals, non-intervention, economic assistance, political support or opposition, mediation, and peacekeeping. They will be encouraged to ask themselves questions. Was America a peacekeeper, an alliance builder, a policeman, a humanitarian etc.? Students will brainstorm a list of possible roles and try, through this initial research project, to come up with key roles they can look for in subsequent investigations. When they have clarified the key roles they will need to find some way to visually represent these roles. This visual can be displayed in the classroom throughout the year. It will be a visual cue as discussions proceed helping students to remember and consider the various roles. This initial research project, in addition to giving students some understanding of the Persian Gulf conflict, Bosnia, Kosovo, Congo and Somalia, will set the process for addressing issues throughout the year. Looking at the facts of the situations, as well as America's role, will give them something with which to compare and or contrast other events.

Determining the best approach to the study of current issues, the way that will help students begin to see patterns and relationships, clearly is a challenge. Beginning with a framework for understanding world politics should lead to increased understanding. Because an eighth grader does not generally have a broad understanding of world history,

attention will have to be given to providing adequate, manageable support resources within the classroom. We will address the challenges to traditional notions of sovereignty by economic globalization, transnational norms such as universal human rights, NGOs, environmental concerns and the advent of supranational entities like the EU. How are these challenges different today than they were a half a century ago? Increased mobility and the blurring of the lines between citizens and non-citizens in many parts of the world also challenge traditional ideas about sovereignty.

We will explore what is meant by terms commonly used such as isolationism, expansionism, containment, world's policeman, geopolitics, multilateral, etc. as we look at the direction of our foreign policy in the post cold war context. The various periods in American history from the beginnings through reconstruction are addressed through the general curriculum. We will supplement the curriculum with materials from the 1870s to the present.

We will use age appropriate materials, such as, multiple copies of the short book, *International Relations—Understanding the Behavior of Nations* (Close Up, 2000). Folders of materials and a variety of articles on the five major conflicts of the 1990's will also be available. Critical to the overall success of the unit is development of an on-going vehicle for a regular and systematic approach to addressing current issues following the initial unit. The follow up discussions and activities should enable students to build on their initial understanding and make the connections essential to reach a critical mass. Students will be required to keep all of their materials, notes and research in a binder that will become a resource for them as the year progresses.

THREE WEEK INTRODUCTORY UNIT

Lesson Plans

Students meet on a block schedule for 85-minute periods every other day. Each class meets five times over a two-week period.

Day 1

Global Awareness Simulation

Raising the Consciousness

The very first day of the unit will be a simulation game designed to help students see the very basic needs of all nations. Getting the students actively involved at the outset will set the tone for the course of study, as well as, peak their interest. The use of simulations with 13 and 14 year olds is an extremely effective technique.

In this simulation activity, which takes one 85-minute class period, students are arranged in six groups. Each group is given a manila envelope with its supplies. The supplies they

are given represent the wealth of a nation. Different supplies symbolize different aspects of wealth i.e. a scissors = technology, blue paper = ample water supply etc. Every group has a different set of supplies. The objects they must make to complete the activity are the same. Each group must make from its simple supplies a specific number of items representing the basic needs of a society. Some countries have very limited supplies. For example every group must make a paper house using a four-inch square of brown paper and a triangle of red paper. Once the students realize the contents of their envelopes are not the same, they have to try to get what they need from the more resource rich nations. The realization that the reason they did not get a scissors in their packet is because their country has no technology, forces them to look at resources in a different way. It also makes cutting the paper into the correct shapes more difficult. The goal of the simulation is to heighten student awareness that every nation tries to provide for its people's basic needs. The relative positions, of the resource rich and resource poor nations, become readily apparent. The interdependence of nations at a very basic level also becomes clear. The simulation forces students to reflect on the relative power of countries of the world.

Day 2

Data Search

Isn't that Amazing

Students will examine a wide variety of data to raise their awareness of the relative differences between nations. What can the numbers tell us?

The second day students will work with the *Goode's World Atlas* focusing on the thematic maps, which show the world proportional to population in a variety of categories. These maps show calorie supply, protein consumption, life expectancy, literacy, and an extensive analysis of agricultural production and natural resources. Students in pairs will draw country names at random. The countries in the case studies will be included. Each pair will have one hour to complete a questionnaire on the basic characteristics of their country. Students will have additional resources such as the *CIA Fact Book* online to use. They will report back to the class and the students will have to ultimately arrange themselves in order from richest country to poorest country based on their research. This exercise is designed to build on the global awareness simulation from the day before. Developing an awareness of the basic needs of all nations and the relative status of nations will help prepare students to begin their case studies. Without an understanding of the underlying reality of the have and have not nations, the details of international conflicts make little sense.

Day 3

Using the Hanvey Model

Plunging into the Real World

Students will be divided into groups and begin initial research. They will be introduced to the Hanvey Model and begin working in groups on the five major conflicts; the Persian Gulf, Bosnia, Somalia, Congo, and Kosovo. Each group will work on one conflict. We will work through the five steps of the Hanvey Model together on a sample current that week. Modeling the process should enable each group to work through their case study more easily.

Day 4 and Day 5

Research and sharing and discussion

Getting to Work

Students working in their groups will actually use the Hanvey model to focus their research. They will devise a guide sheet or template to help them organize their information based on the Hanvey Model. They will be preparing for an oral presentation on their topic. During this phase we will look at the international news each day, as well.

Day 6

Oral presentations

Conveying Information and Ideas

Students will give their oral presentations and field questions from the class.

Day 7

U.S. RESPONSE: The Making of U.S. Foreign Policy/A simulation (Close Up,1997)

If I were in Charge

Students will revisit the hypothetical in a simulation game. As a culminating activity the students in their research groups will be given a situation which calls for a U.S. response. The situations include: an ethnic conflict, nuclear weapons in a rogue nations, human rights abuses, environmental disaster in a third world country. Students will be assigned different roles from journalists to CIA to members of Congress and the President. The situations and countries except the U.S. are fictitious. Students develop possible solutions to the crisis and have to convince the President on the best course of action. The simulation has elements of surprise via CIA top secret cards and mid game crisis cards. This simulation will force the students to draw upon the ideas they have been discussing and researching and apply them to a hypothetical situation. It will also be a demonstration of how in reality foreign policy decisions are made.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY

Lesson Plans

Weekly Journal Reflections

Flirting with Deep thoughts

America's Role in the World is the title of the journal. Each week students will be required to make a minimum of two journal entries. Journal prompts may be assigned articles, political cartoons, pertinent quotations or provocative headlines. Students will be encouraged to submit possible prompts. Students will also be encouraged to clip articles, note vocabulary and record questions in their journals. The journals will be a vehicle for their continued study of America's Role in the World for the entire year.

Friday Forums

Articulating Ideas

Each Friday at least a portion of the 85-minute period will be devoted to the discussion of current issues. Students will use their journals as a resource for these focused discussions. Topics will be posted in advance to allow for preparation time.

FINAL PROJECT

Answering the Question

What is America's Role in the World? Each student must answer this question in a culminating project. Students will select one area of focus. They will use the materials and information gathered during the year to help them select an appropriate topic.

Once they have selected a focus topic they will attempt to answer the central question. Students will develop the format of their project themselves. Required elements include:

- a visual component
- an oral component
- a bibliography

Students may opt to use Power Point presentations, video presentations, artistic renderings, a series of political cartoons, etc. Creativity is good. Students will assist evaluating the projects and how well they address the central question: What is America's role in the World. The students will put together a project showcase, and invite the school and parent community to see their work.

UNIT EVALUATION

Was it worthwhile?

Students will prepare evaluation comments on the entire unit at the close of the year. They will be asked to assess how effective the unit was for them. I will also solicit suggestions for additions, deletions and improved strategies for the next year.

Do they have a better understanding of America's Role in the World? Do they feel confident approaching complex topics in international politics? Are they getting close to critical mass?

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