

The documents below consider the United Nations. Read them **both** in order to answer **all** the questions on the question paper.

Document 1: adapted from *The United Nations' Success Story* by Jim Van de Water. Van de Water was president of the San Diego (US) Chapter of the United Nations Association. This article was written in 2005.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN) at the end of World War II. The entire planet had been scarred by the ravages of war, and millions of lives had been lost. The survivors, led by the United States, pledged to end this scourge and created the UN to preserve peace.

We believe that the UN has made a major contribution to world peace, although there have been disappointments. The fact is that we did not have a third world war despite the titanic struggle between the free world and the Communist bloc. The fact is that the number of state-to-state conflicts in the last half of the 20th century was half that of the first half without the UN.

The process of creating world peace requires cooperative effort. The UN is a voluntary association of member states – not a world government which can readily force cooperation. The 51 original signatories to the UN Charter have grown to 191 members, each having its own economy, language and culture. Given the number and diversity of states, the wonder is not that there have been problems but rather that there has been so much success.

The problem is that we remember failures and discount success. We remember Rwanda and forget successful operations in El Salvador, Mozambique and Namibia. We focus on Kosovo, and forget Cyprus, where the UN has preserved the peace since 1964. Today, there are 18 peacekeeping missions in the world with more requests for missions than the UN can handle. If UN peacekeeping has failed, why does this demand exist?

It is important to remember the context in which the UN struggled for peace. Historians will look at the last half of the 20th century as the period when the world largely ended more than 300 years of colonial rule. Since the founding of the UN, 80 nations and more than 750 million people were freed from the shackles of colonial oppression and exploitation.

These emerging nations also needed assistance to survive. The UN provided much of that assistance through its specialized agencies and programs. Last year UNICEF* gathered more than \$700 million in supplies for children and operated safe water and sanitation programs in 90 countries. It provided much of the leadership needed to bring aid to victims of the Asian tsunami.

The poor and disadvantaged, however, are not the only beneficiaries of UN action. The UN's World Health Organization is critical to the world's "health security." No sensible observer discounts the value of its work in the fight to end polio; or deal with the AIDS crisis; or consider the work of the World Bank; the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to stabilize and improve the world economy.

Could we do without any of these agencies, which are part of the UN family? Who would do the work of UNESCO* to foster cooperative scientific and cultural programs? Who would provide the cooperative framework for ensuring safe air travel if we did not have the UN's Civil Aviation Agency?

We need the UN for all of these peacekeeping and humanitarian functions, and we need to be thoughtful about our criticism of the UN.

*These are agencies of the UN responsible for carrying out specialist work.

Document 2: adapted from *The Failure of a Noble Idea* by David Ignatius, editor and columnist for the *Washington Post*. This article was published in 2012 and considers the memoirs of the United Nations' secretary general, Kofi Annan.

Kofi Annan's new memoir, "Interventions," is a study in the failure of a noble idea, providing a devastating account of some of the United Nations' (UN) errors, especially the peacekeeping missions in the 1990s in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, which he collectively describes as the organization's "greatest of failures."

There is no "big idea" easier to pay homage to in principle, or harder to make work in practice, than the peacekeeping role of the UN.

The latest failure of the UN dream was its mediating mission to Syria. For months, it tried to cajole the Syrian President into stopping the killing and starting a political transition that would avert civil war. To which it received the standard answer to well-meaning UN missions: Go away. You are powerless to stop me. The UN mediator, Kofi Annan, finally walked away last month, ending his Syrian mission.

I've long been a supporter of multilateral action through the UN, and I still think the United States is most powerful when it operates under the legitimacy of international organizations. But the UN today is bootless; the will of most members for a change of government in Syria, for example, is too easily blocked by the veto of a single permanent Security Council member, such as Russia.

Somalia was a project of Annan's predecessor. A UN peacekeeping force had been authorized in March 1993, described by the United States' UN ambassador, as "an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country." The UN force had a US military contribution, but this was restricted to a small special operations force which didn't coordinate with the rest of the UN force. When the Americans got slaughtered in a bloody ambush (depicted unforgettably in the film "Black Hawk Down"), Washington bailed out, and the UN peace force quickly collapsed.

The Somalia mess made the UN so nervous about intervention that it ignored an appeal a few months later from its own representative in Rwanda that a genocidal massacre was about to begin there. Three months later, 800,000 Rwandans were dead.

The third debacle was Bosnia. In April 1993, the UN Security Council demanded that the town of Srebrenica, filled with 60,000 Muslim refugees and encircled by Bosnian Serb forces, become a "safe area ... free from armed attacks." The refugees waited more than two years for the UN to deliver. In July 1995, Gen. Ratko Mladic committed his infamous massacre. A month later, UNPROFOR* finally intervened.

When Annan became secretary general, the UN tried to bolster its peacekeeping efforts. It did better in East Timor, Kosovo and Libya in putting some teeth in the concept of a "responsibility to protect." But the abiding story has been the UN's limitations.

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