



# INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

General Assembly & Security Council

Theme III: Safeguarding International Peace and Security

# CHAPTER ANALYSIS



MASTERY

- Understanding the difference between processes and outcomes
- Memorization of critical statistics and key events
- Measuring the effectiveness of the GA and SC as unique organs
- Changing political context across time



EXAM

- Managing your time well in the examination
- Clearly defining parameters for success or failure
- Evaluating the effectiveness of processes and outcomes for both the GA and SC



WEIGHTAGE

- Constitute to exactly 30% of final paper grade
- 50 mins per essay

UNPACKING THE UNITED NATIONS

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**THE SECURITY COUNCIL**  
**MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE ORGANS**



## General Assembly



The GA is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. It is important to note that the GA has no enforcement or veto power within the United Nations.

GA's effectiveness can be measured in its ability to **demonstrate unity within the new world order (Uniting for Peace Resolutions)**, and then **proceed to enforce this peace (Peacekeeping financing)**.

Equally important to focus on the global political context as well. What can be considered effective during the Cold War may be ineffective in the post-Cold War.

## Security Council

The SC is the main body responsible for maintenance of international peace and security. It is supposed to identify threats, craft resolutions and when all else fails, resort to imposing sanctions or authorize use of force to restore international peace.

SC's success is based on its ability to gain consensus within its members, and then **enforce upon things agreed upon through active intervention.**

Post-Cold War, it is more important to measure the **quality of enforcement and intervention** stemming from the SC.



## International Court of Justice



The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It has no enforcement ability and is dependent on the willingness of its members to abide by its decisions.

Effectiveness of the ICJ can be measured by its ability to **settle international disputes peacefully through arbitration and judicial settlement**. It can also be measured by its ability to **develop international law based on settlement of past disputes**.

Important to note that beyond judicial powers, the ICJ has the role of developing international law and contributing to a further sense of rule of law within the international community.

## The United Nations

The UN has multiple roles beyond just the political. It is also involved in the social development of the impoverished around the world. However, most of the case studies we see mainly revolve around the political aspects of the UN.

Political effectiveness of the UN can be unpacked as its ability to **pass peacekeeping resolutions** and **enforce peacekeeping mandates** amidst disputes.

The UN's ability to reform and change its political structure over time is also critical in analyzing its effectiveness over time.





## Sample Essay Question

### Why has the United Nations been mostly ineffective in achieving its goals since its inception?

What does this question require? -> An analysis of the weaknesses that plague the United Nations from its inception.

Inception seems to highlight that you are to focus on the FUNDAMENTAL weaknesses of the UN.

These factors can include but are not limited to -> structural weaknesses of the UN, political agency of individual members within the UN, failures of certain organs within the UN such as the Sec-Gen

Potential angles of analysis

1. Context/Trigger
2. Change/Continuity over Time
3. Fundamentality



## Sample Introduction

Clear definition on tools to measure effectiveness

This question requires an evaluation of the reasons to why the UN has been ineffective since its inception. Effectiveness of the UN in this context refers to the ability of the UN to **effectively pass peacekeeping resolutions and enforce peacekeeping mandates**. **During the Cold War years**, the structure of the UN in the provision of veto power the P5 members led to it being ineffective. However, it can also be argued that the **context of political will** and P5 interests was more important in influencing the effectiveness of the UN in achieving its goals. **Post Cold War**, the UN's need to respect sovereignty **fundamentally provided the framework** to which members could opt out of supporting UN peacekeeping missions if they wanted to, leading to it being ineffective on occasion. However, much of this effectiveness can be attributed to the changing agencies of different Secretary-Generals, highlighting how **sustained the importance of an effective SG** within the UN is. However, **during the reform process in the later years**, it can ultimately be seen that the inability to come to meaningful reform is fundamentally attributed to the structural limitations of the UN, where few powerful members of the UN are given veto powers to any change that does not work in their favour. As such, this essay serves to posit that the UN has been mostly ineffective since its inception due to the structure in which the UN was founded upon.

Identifying evaluative handles

Awareness of different timelines and thus changing political context

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