

Lesson Plan

PoSc 609

United States Foreign Policy Rationale

Introduction

The end of the Cold War has generated tremendous debate over the future rationale of American foreign policy. Most students reflect the general mood of the nation, which considers many international situations as irrelevant to national interests. The following activity promotes debate over the question of what should guide foreign policy planning---Idealism & Morality or Realism & National Interests

Connection to Classes

Subjects: International Relations, Government, U.S. History
Grade Level: 10 - 12
Ability Level - College Prep to Honors

Estimated Time: Two Class Periods

Objectives

- Students will analyze the key issues in formulation of American foreign policy
- Students will develop a case supporting their position on American foreign policy
- Students will practice oral presentation skills

Procedures and Materials

Day One

1. Handout "Jettison the Policy", (see debate materials book from Strom Thurmond Institute) and the reading guide as homework the night before beginning the lesson.

Day Two

2. Brainstorm with students using the following question -- What areas of the world has the United States been active -- either diplomatically or militarily in the last 5 years?

Write the responses on the chalk or dry erase board. (5 minutes)

3. Explain or review the ideas of idealism/morality and realism/nation interests to the class incorporating some of the arguments from the article. (10 minutes)

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4. Discuss and assign the probable rationale - morality or self interest - to the issues listed on the board (5 minutes)
5. Explain the debate topic to the class -- Should Morality Be the Guiding Principle in U.S. Policy?
6. Describe the format to the class (5 minutes)
 - Four Person Teams
 - Constructive Speech (4 Min) - Outline position and key arguments
 - Cross Examination (3 Min) - Ask questions of opposition's constructive speech
 - 1st Rebuttal (3 Min) - Point out flaws in opposing argument/reaffirm position
 - 2nd Rebuttal (3 Min) - Point out flaws in opposing argument/reaffirm position
7. Divide students into groups -- construct groups to include at least one student with strong oral skills. Provide students access to evidence. Internet sites, articles, current event magazines
8. Allow students to work with groups until the end of the period. (55 - 60 minutes)

Day Three

9. Begin debating!

Assessment

- Require all students to write a constructive speech on their position
- Essay question
- Evaluate reading guide

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Reading Guide

"Jettison The Policy"

Content & Ideas

Read the following statements. As you read the article refer back to these statements and indicate, with a check, those which restate what the author said in the selection.

- 1. America's human rights policy has gained numerous supporters world wide.
- 2. Opponents of the Vietnam War used the human rights issue to push the view that the United States should abandon the use of force and power-politicking.
- 3. Human rights policies advanced U.S. interests in the 1970's.
- 4. U.S. policies based on human rights did have some successes in the 1970's.
- 5. The end of the Cold War led to the abandonment of human rights as a foreign policy rationale.
- 6. Conservatives have argued that America should help foster democracy and capitalism around the globe.
- 7. One survey on the growth of democracy stated—freedom around the world is stagnant, while violence is increasing.
- 8. Other nations of the world have challenged U.S. human rights initiatives as arrogant.
- 9. Strong domestic support for an active human rights policy has always existed.
- 10. One area of human rights that the United States needs to address is the repression of labor rights.

Interpret

Check the statement you believe represents what the author meant.

- 1. A policy centered on human rights makes sense in the post Cold War era
- 2. The promotion of American democracy and morality in areas like Bosnia and China reflects a lack of
- 3. The United States should promote human rights issues that will serve the national interest.

Reflections

Review the following statements and check those that combine information from the article with what you already know.

- 1. Human rights became an element of U.S. foreign policy in the 1970's.
- 2. Democratic nations have never started a war with another democratic nation.
- 3. United States foreign policy is affected by the Holocaust and Vietnam War.