



NATIONAL PEACE ESSAY CONTEST 2010-2011

GOVERNANCE, CORRUPTION,
AND CONFLICT

SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Introduction

The international system has witnessed dramatic changes in the recent past. Developments around the globe and at home challenge us to rethink the role of the United States in the international community. What is our nation's place in this increasingly complex global picture? How do we best promote respect for human rights and the growth of freedom and justice? What can we do to nurture and preserve international security and world peace?

The United States depends on knowledgeable and thoughtful students—the next generation of leaders—to build peace with freedom and justice among nations and peoples. In the belief that questions about peace, justice, freedom, and security are vital to civic education, the United States Institute of Peace established the National Peace Essay Contest to expand educational opportunities for young Americans.

The National Peace Essay Contest:

- + promotes serious discussion among high school students, teachers, and national leaders about international peace and conflict resolution today and in the future;
- + complements existing curricula and other scholastic activities;
- + strengthens students' research, writing, and reasoning skills;
- + meets National Content Standards.

What Do Essay Contest Winners Receive?

College Scholarships

State-level selection categories include the fifty states, Washington, D.C., U.S. Territories, and American students abroad. First place state-level winners compete for national awards.

1 National award, first place: \$10,000*

1 National award, second place: \$5,000*

1 National award, third place: \$2,500*

53 State awards, first place: \$1,000 each

(*national awards include state award amounts)

Invitation to the Awards Program in Washington, D.C.

First-place state winners are invited to Washington for the awards program. The Institute pays for expenses related to the program, including travel, lodging, meals, and entertainment. This unique five-day program promotes an understanding of the nature and process of international peacemaking by focusing on a region and/or theme related to the current essay topic. Program activities have included:

- + taking part in a simulation exercise in which students assume roles of national and international leaders, examine issues, address crises, and then formulate and propose solutions;
- + meeting with U.S. government officials and political leaders;
- + participating in briefings by highly-regarded practitioners and foreign government officials;
- + visiting historical and cultural sites;
- + attending a musical or play;
- + sampling international cuisines from some of Washington's most interesting ethnic restaurants.

NATIONAL PEACE ESSAY CONTEST 2010-2011 TOPIC AND QUESTION

Governance, Corruption, and Conflict

Corruption often compromises the peace and stability of countries in transition. Corruption involves exploitation of power by those who wield it—people who, in their official position, exploit the power with which they are entrusted by seeking private gain, either economic (e.g., stealing money) or political (e.g., stealing votes). While corruption is not the only factor responsible for the destabilization of a country, it weakens public confidence in actors involved in governance, particularly undermining the ability of government officials to prevent or quell conflicts. As Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General, noted in his foreword to the 2004 United Nations Convention Against Corruption, corruption diverts funds intended for development, undermines the ability of governments to provide basic services, feeds inequality and injustice, and discourages foreign aid and investment.

Some argue that corruption is a concept that is culturally determined and varies from one society to another. Gift-giving to officials may be expected in one country and prohibited by law in another. Good governance relies upon responsible civic participation, equality, and rule of law; it involves political leadership, bureaucracy, civil society, community leaders, and others who play a role in or influence decision-making and implementation of laws and policies within society. Corruption can undermine institutions of governance that are responsible for accountability, transparency and oversight, destroy the credibility of the government, and erode the consent of the governed. Without good governance, a society is more vulnerable to destabilization, which can escalate to full blown conflict. In many cases, corruption not only leads to instability, that can trigger tribal, ethnic, religious, or even class divisions, but instability leads to greater levels of corruption.

When outside organizations and countries, such as the United Nations and the United States, work to help a state make the transition from war to peace, dealing with corruption is often a major challenge. Outsiders can choose to ignore the corruption (facing certain negative consequences down the road), deal with it directly, or work with the host society to change customs and expectations. For those who hope to prevent violent conflict, how can their efforts to reduce, if not eliminate, corruption best contribute to building sustainable peace?

In 1500 words:

- + Choose two cases from the past twenty years of countries in transition from war to peace, one successful and the other unsuccessful. Analyze how third parties handled issues of potential and actual corruption.
- + What forms of corruption developed and why? How did corruption affect the peacebuilding institutions and processes?
- + Why did one country fail and the other succeed in making the transition from war to peace? How did the efforts of outside parties to address corruption contribute to the success or failure?
- + Finally, what recommendations would you give to third parties about addressing corruption that would prevent conflict and enhance the prospects of building sustainable peace in countries emerging from war?

When is the Deadline?

Entries must be received by February 1, 2011.

When Do You Announce the Winners?

Participants are notified in May of their essays' status. Students and coordinators should not contact the Institute for information about the status of the essays.

What Does the Institute Provide to Help Students and Teachers Participate?

This guidebook contains, in addition to the requirements, a national winner's essay as a sample. Also, we have created a study guide for teachers and students.

You may download the study guide as well as this guidebook from www.usip.org/npec. You may also request additional copies of the materials through our Web site, (www.usip.org/ed/contactus/ordermaterials.php).



Who Is Eligible?

Students are eligible to participate if they are in grades nine through twelve in any of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, or if they are U.S. citizens attending high school overseas. Students may be attending a public, private, or parochial school. Entries from home-schooled students are also accepted. Previous first-place state winners and immediate relatives of directors or staff of the Institute are not eligible to participate. **Previous honorable mentions are eligible to enter.**

Students must have a contest coordinator who can review the essays and act as the key contact between participants and the Institute. It is to the student's advantage to have a coordinator review the essay to make sure it is complete, has all the necessary forms, is free from typographical and grammatical errors, and addresses the topic. See the next section for further information about the contest coordinator.

We encourage students of all backgrounds and ability to participate in the contest.

How Will Your Essay Be Judged?

Essays are sent to state-level judges—qualified experts selected by the Institute who evaluate the essays according to the criteria described on page 5. National winners are selected from among the first-place state essays by the Institute's board of directors. The decisions of the judges are final. The Institute reserves the right to present no awards at the state and national levels, or to reduce the number of awards if an insufficient number of deserving entries is received.

An excellent essay uses well-researched ideas and facts to hold together logical and compelling argument(s) and presents thoughtful solution(s) to the problem. It also reflects a student's ability to organize complex facts and ideas, to bring in his/her own interesting perspectives and ideas to the analysis and recommendation(s), and to focus on writing style and mechanics (grammar, syntax, and punctuation).

What Are The Essay Requirements?

For the purpose of the National Peace Essay Contest, an essay is a three-part paper that lays out and develops a position in response to the essay contest question. Researching the topic to gain greater knowledge about critical issues raised in the question and to find examples that support your argument is crucial. However, the essay should be more than a research paper, a narrative description of events, or a statement of opinion.

Your Essay Should Have The Following Structure:

- + **Introduction:** Introduce the subject and state your **thesis**. The objective is to demonstrate that you understand the essay contest question and have formed a response to it.
- + **Body:** Develop your arguments and assertions using **research and analysis**. The process of analysis may include comparing and contrasting, differentiating among several ideas or events, critiquing a variety of perspectives, interpreting results, or drawing inferences. **Be sure to identify the sources of your information or ideas using a standard citation method.**
- + **Conclusion:** Summarize the research and analysis presented in the essay and set forth your **recommendations and conclusions**. Drawing on ideas already presented, you should demonstrate that your conclusions support the thesis you put forward in the opening paragraphs. Your aim is to convince the reader that your thesis, facts, and analysis are reasonable and valid.
- + **Credit the Sources of Information and Ideas:** Use a widely used **standardized method and style** such as MLA, Chicago, or APA to consistently give credit to the sources of the ideas and information used in your essay. Use **in-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes** to credit the sources of your information or ideas. Also include a **bibliography or a references list** for the works consulted or cited in your essay.
- + Essays that use a variety of sources—academic journals, news magazines, newspapers, books, government documents, publications from research organizations—fare better in the contest. **General encyclopedias are not acceptable as sources.** The USIP study guides are not acceptable as sources. Essays citing general encyclopedias in notes or bibliography may be disqualified. **Web sites and Web pages should not be the only source of information for your essay.** When citing Internet sources, include the following information: author(s), title of work, Internet address, and date information was accessed.

Your Essay Must:

- + address all parts of this year's contest question (on page 3) in English;
- + **NOT** have your name, teacher's name, or school name anywhere on the essay;
- + be typed, double-spaced, on one side of white 8½ by 11 inch (letter size) paper with left and right margins at 1¼ inches each. Font must be no smaller than 12 point Times or similarly sized font;
- + have a title and page numbers;
- + have no more than 1,500 words. The word count limit includes all words in the text but does not include the bibliography and notes (you may exclude the words in the in-text citation from your word count);
- + follow accepted standards regarding attribution of quotations, arguments, and ideas of others;
- + include standardized citations and a bibliography with Internet sources listed separately;
- + use two international (non-U.S.) cases.

In addition to this guide, use the essay topic study guide for additional help writing your essay:
www.usip.org/npec.

Essay Checklist

Essay Requirement Checklist

- Is your essay written in English?
- Does the essay answer this year's essay contest question on page 3?
- Does your essay address all parts of the contest question?
- Have you given your essay a descriptive title?
- Is your essay no more than 1,500 words long?
- Is your essay typed, double spaced, with left and right margins set at 1 ¼ inches, on one side of white 8 ½ by 11 inch paper? Have you numbered your pages?
- Have you made sure that your name, school, or city does **not** appear anywhere on the essay manuscript?
- Have you scrupulously followed accepted standards regarding attribution of quotations, arguments, and ideas of others within the body of your paper and bibliography?
- Does your essay have citations and bibliography, widely which follow a standardized method and style, such as APA, Chicago, or MLA?
- Are your Internet sources listed separately from other sources in your bibliography?

Application Directions

How do I submit my essay?

Detailed instructions on how to submit your essay online will be made available on www.usip.org/npec by September 1, 2010. The submission process will involve both the student and the coordinator. If the student does not have easy access to the internet, the student or the coordinator should contact us for instructions on how to make submission by mail.

We Must Receive Complete Essay Submission By February 1, 2011

- + **Directions for online submission will be on our Web site. Please visit www.usip.org/npec**

How to Choose a Coordinator

A coordinator is the key contact between students and the United States Institute of Peace. The coordinator may be **selected by the student** and can be any adult—teacher, parent, youth leader, etc. A coordinator should register online as a coordinator, help each student write an essay that meets our requirements, and make sure the submission guidelines are followed. Coordinators need not contact the Institute to participate. Instructions on how to register will be on our Web site by September 1, 2010.

Responsibilities of the Coordinator

- + Ensures that essays are conceived and written by students and represent the students' own thoughts;
- + Reviews the essays to ensure that they follow the guidelines and to check for grammatical and typographical errors;
- + Signs each student registration form to certify compliance with the rules;
- + May coordinate multiple students' (a whole class, for example) submissions.
 - If students are from the same school, the coordinator only needs to register online once. If students are from multiple schools, the coordinator needs to register online for each school that the students attend.

Please do not send us your essays without following our new directions. Your essay may be disqualified. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we make changes to improve your experience.

Email us at essaycontest@usip.org or call us at 202-429-7178 with your questions regarding the contest.

United States Institute of Peace

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent conflicts, promote post-conflict peacebuilding, and increase conflict management tools, capacity, and intellectual capital worldwide. The Institute does this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by its direct involvement in conflict zones around the globe.

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2009 National Peace Essay Contest Winning Essay

+ Responding to Crimes Against Humanity: Prevention, Deployment, and Localization

National First-Place Winner

Sophia Sanchez

Ladue Horton Watkins High School, St. Louis, Missouri
Coordinator: Megan McCorkle

“Never again” has long been the somber declaration of those victimized by crimes against humanity. It bears with it the hope that the international community can learn from past atrocities and, in the words of the United Nations Charter, “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”¹ However, a lack of cohesive international action has meant that genocide, torture, and other such acts continue to occur. Based on lessons learned from case studies of Somalia and Rwanda, the international community should prevent escalation of conflict by addressing its socio-economic root causes, maintain a long-term peacekeeping force that utilizes a multilateral approach, and establish a localized administration system bolstered by a structure of accountability.

The Somali conflict stemmed from decades of political and ethnic unrest, which was intensified by the regime of Siad Barre. The northern Issaq clan resented Siad Barre’s 1969 seizure of power, which established an ethnically Marehan government.² In 1988, the Somali National Movement (SNM), a primarily northern endeavor, began an insurrection against the Barre regime.³ On January 27, 1991, Siad Barre fled the capital to escape the northern assault, causing a power struggle between the former United Somali Congress members.⁴

By the end of 1992, over 300,000 Somalis had died from the conflict.⁵ Human Rights Watch expressed its outrage at seeing Somali refugees “undergoing traumatic suffering with apparently no end in sight.”⁶ The United Nations later labeled the systematic rape, displacement, and torture by rival clans in Somalia as crimes against humanity as

defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.⁷

While rhetoric was in no short supply among global actors, the humanitarian response to the crisis proved inadequate. Relief efforts were complicated by the loss of 60 percent of Somalia's infrastructure and insufficient peacekeeping forces.⁸ From October to December of 1992, the World Food Programme anticipated sending 100,000 metric tons of food to Somalia, but only distributed 18,900 metric tons.⁹ UNOSOM (United Nations Operations in Somalia) concentrated its forces in Mogadishu while leaving positions in smaller settlements unfilled, effectively cutting off assistance to certain regions of Somalia.¹⁰

As the atrocities mounted, international actors began to withdraw altogether from Somalia. On October 3 and 4, 1993, eighteen American soldiers were killed during the Battle of Mogadishu.¹¹ Faction leader Mohammad Aidede used these deaths to increase foreign discontent with the Somali operations and rid the country of peacekeeping forces.¹² By March 31, 1994, all United States forces had evacuated Somalia.¹³ Lacking support, UNOSOM disbanded one year later, and Somalia became the epitome of a failed state and a failed international intervention.¹⁴

The violence in Rwanda resulted from prolonged ethnic tension that erupted after the assassination of Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana. After Hutus overthrew the Tutsi king in 1959, displaced Tutsis formed the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda.¹⁵ The RPF invaded Rwanda in 1990, marking the beginning of the civil war.¹⁶ Radio stations broadcast propaganda, urging Hutus to "exterminate the Tutsi cockroaches."¹⁷ On April 6, 1994, President Habyarimana's plane was shot down, an act the Hutus blamed on the Tutsis, and three months of genocide began.¹⁸

From April 6 to July 4, 1994, approximately 800,000 Rwandans were systematically murdered.¹⁹ Two million Rwandans fled to neighboring countries, where many ended up in disease-ridden refugee camps.²⁰ On May 17, 1994, a UN Security Council resolution stated that "acts of genocide may have been committed," but refrained from definitively labeling the Rwandan conflict "genocide."²¹ As Vince Kern, director for African affairs and head of the Rwanda Task Force at the Pentagon, explained, "Genocide finding could commit [governments] to actually 'do something.'"²² The genocide ended on July 4, 1994, when the RPF captured the capital city of Kigali, but Rwanda was left in ruins.²³

Despite the international community's knowledge of these atrocities, its response to the conflict in Rwanda proved woefully insufficient. A CIA report issued 20 days before Habyarimana's assassination stated that 300,000 to 500,000 people could be killed if hostilities intensified.²⁴ Clearly, the international community knew of the danger, but lacked a plan of action. Matters worsened when Hutu extremists murdered ten Belgians on April 7, 1994, prompting an international outcry.²⁵ The United States closed its embassy, while the United Nations withdrew all but 270 UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda) peacekeeping troops for the duration of the genocide.²⁶

After the conflict ended, the international community implemented a tiered judicial system that worked toward lasting peace. An international tribunal presided over high-profile cases, while the localized Gacaca court system handled less serious offenders.²⁷ The courts held trials in each village to not only prosecute defendants accused of genocide, but also to promote reconciliation through dialogue and community service.²⁸ Such localized reintegration programs may be the key to quelling ethnic tension. For example, after the Gacaca system was implemented in Sovu, Rwanda, only 2 percent of residents agreed with the statement "I prefer to buy things from a shopkeeper of my own ethnicity."²⁹ The Gacaca approach was one of the successes of the Rwandan intervention, although much work remains to be done.

With the atrocities committed in Somalia and Rwanda in mind, international actors should subdue conflict by addressing socioeconomic root causes. On a financial level, the international community should work to stabilize depressed economies in at-risk nations. One way this might be achieved is through microfinancing, a small-scale investment program that effectively stimulated post-war Rwandan farming.³⁰ The international community should also address social tensions by targeting hate radio, which was a large factor in escalating ethnic resentment in both Somalia and Rwanda.³¹ International law should permit the destruction of hate-radio transmitters when an agreed-upon code of conduct is broken.³² The global community must address economic and social root causes of conflict if it hopes to effectively prevent mass atrocities from occurring. On the national level, governments such as the United States should establish an interagency Atrocities Prevention Committee (APC), as outlined by the Genocide Prevention Task Force.³³ The APC should work with the United Nations, subregional organizations, NGOs, and individual nations to coordinate information concerning at-risk nations. The committee should establish a tiered warning system, based on factors such as institutional racism, history of conflict, media propaganda, and leadership instability. Reports such as the one that predicted 300,000 to 500,000 deaths in Rwanda should immediately trigger an ad hoc meeting at the presidential level to discuss policy options. With mass atrocities like the Rwandan genocide occurring in the time span of 100 days, it is imperative that international actors be prepared to take quick and decisive action to prevent their occurrence.

Should the conflict reach a point where preventive measures are no longer possible, international peacekeeping forces should commit themselves to rapid deployment and long-term stationing. The United Nations should plan for troop deployment in at-risk nations within 30 days of a Security Council resolution.³⁴ In order to supply sufficient peacekeeping forces, international organizations should capitalize on subregional offers of assistance and support a civilian police force within war-torn countries. The key is to create a multilateral coalition that reflects global sentiments, not to establish western imperialism. These measures can work to drastically decrease response time and increase long-term peacekeeping capabilities by involving troops at the international, regional, and national levels.

Finally, the United Nations, United States, and other international actors should rely on a decentralized peacekeeping approach, rather than focusing on an urban headquarters. In order to increase dissemination of aid, staffing small towns should be a greater priority than establishing a headquarters in the capital.³⁵ Global actors can garner local support by admitting regional leaders into intervention discussions. In northern Somalia, UNOSOM incorporated local elders into policy meetings, which increased clan willingness to cooperate with the United Nations in dismantling anarchistic factions.³⁶ Placing a priority on local intervention personnel leads to better distribution of aid and more effective peace negotiations. The judicial system for crimes against humanity should likewise be localized. The system should be modeled on the Rwandan Gacacas, assigning a court to each village. As more criminals are brought to justice, localized court systems demonstrate that war crimes will be punished. Dialogue between the accused and the victimized and a sentence involving community service should be key facets of the courts. A system of accountability similar to the one in Rwanda, in which 90 percent of the electorate voted for Gacaca judges, would ensure that local judges have the consent of the people and are not arbitrarily appointed.³⁷ Moreover, the international community should establish sentencing guidelines, which would standardize punishments and guarantee a focus on reintegration, not retribution. By utilizing a localized judicial system, the international community can transition from a goal of short-term peace to long-term stability.

In the wake of the atrocities in Somalia and Rwanda, it is critical that the international community learn to better protect against crimes against humanity. By addressing the root causes of conflict, rapidly deploying a long-term peacekeeping force, and shifting to a localized administration approach, international actors can convert rhetoric into results. The process will not happen overnight, but by implementing these policies, the international community can begin to make “never again” a reality.

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