

TITLE: United Nations General Assembly

OVERVIEW: Students read position summaries regarding the Chinese occupation of Tibet and role play the non-intervention positions of selected foreign nations.

SUBJECT AREA / GRADE LEVEL: Geography/Government/History, 7th - 12

STATE CONTENT STANDARDS / BENCHMARKS:

- Understand how the United States government relates and interacts with other nations.

- Understand the importance and lasting influence of issues, events, people, and developments in world history.

OBJECTIVES: After reading the positions of selected countries towards Tibet, students will form an opinion about the position regarding US support towards Tibet.

MATERIALS: Copies of position summaries of the nations involved (taken from the book *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*, by Tsering Shakya)

PRESENTATION STEPS:

- 1) Explain to the class that we will investigate the reasons why the countries Tibet asked for help did not respond, and learn more about why the countries involved acted in the manner they did.
- 2) Identify the four foreign countries approached for help by Tibet (U.S., U.K., India, Nepal).
- 3) Review the role of the United Nations as a peace keeping organization.
- 4) Read as a class the Position Summaries.
- 5) Discuss in class, or cooperative groups, why each of the countries choose not to provide aide at the time. (Research may be needed to help discussion.)
- 6) Ask for volunteers to serve as the leaders of the countries in question, (including China and Tibet). Their teams will be the delegates from that country.
- 7) Provide time for each team to prepare statements for their country's leader, or to prepare questions to ask the leaders represented.
- 8) The Dalai Lama will give a statement as to why the countries should support Tibetan independence. A student portraying Mao will explain why Tibet belongs to China.
- 9) Each leader will then give a statement as to why they can not support Tibet.
- 10) Delegates will then ask questions of the leaders, facilitated by the teacher.
- 11.) Establish rules for discussion to be used in your classroom.

ASSESSMENT: End class by asking each student to participate in a role playing situation. Ask each to be a member of the UN and conduct a vote responding to Tibet's request for help. Role play the vote as if it were 1950 and again for 2001. Is there a difference in the outcome? Why or why not? Students should be prepared to offer an explanation.

ADAPTATIONS: Know the names of the countries that declined to assist Tibet.

Know the reasons why one of the countries said no to the request for help.  
Participate in discussion offering an opinion on the decision not to help.

EXTENSIONS: Conduct an opinion survey of your school asking if the United States should demand the freedom of Tibet from the Chinese government.

#### TIBET

Leader: The Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

- Independent since the fall of the Ming Dynasty in 1913.
- Has been isolated from outside world for hundreds of years, and the government is resistant to change.
- Would like to keep their political and religious freedom.
- Population is Buddhist, and very peaceful, would rather negotiate than fight.
- Very small military and does not feel that they can resist China alone.
- India has given Tibet small guns and ammunition, but has not given other support.
- Has asked India, Great Britain, USA, and Nepal for assistance, but no response.
- Feels that any anti-communist act might cause Chinese aggression. Would like to negotiate with China.
- Dalai Lama would like to establish a compromise with China: would like to work on an agreement that would make them happy.

#### CHINA

Leader: Mao Tse-tung

- Civil war between Communist Party and Nationalists ended January 1949 when the nationalists fled to Taiwan.
- Communist party is fighting against Western Imperialist countries who are trying to take over Asia.
- VERY strong military, willing to use it if Tibetan leaders don't agree with them.
- Believes that Tibet was a part of China for a hundred years or more.
- Would like Tibet so they can unify all Chinese races into the "Motherland"
- Believes that Tibet is run by Western powers, and would like to free the citizens from their old-fashioned religious leadership.
- Believes that Communism is the best way to run a country.
- Since they occupied much of Tibet, believe that Tibet belongs to China and would like to "defend" the Chinese borders of Tibet.
- After communist take over, brought electricity, modernization of country.

#### INDIA

Prime Minister: Jawaharlal Nehru

Earned independence from Britain on August 15, 1947

- More concerned with building their own new government and economic systems, and solving problems between their social classes.
- Relationship with neighboring Pakistan is very tense and getting worse.

- Relationship with Tibet did not start well when Tibet asked for land on their border, but India thinks that if Britain earned it, India gets to keep it.
- Would like to keep China away from Tibet, and keep it as a buffer between their country, but India does not have the military to defend it.
- India officials are divided: some would like to help Tibet, but others afraid of China.
- Does not feel that they can defend Tibet, do not have the military.
- Like China, they do not like Western countries controlling other countries, do not want to upset China by acting like they are controlling Tibet.
- Does not want to contribute to Korean War conflict by upsetting China.
- One ambassador has reported that negotiations will be peaceful.
- Other countries are looking to India for advice about Tibet.

#### GREAT BRITAIN

Leader:

- Was interested in Tibet when Britain controlled India, but now not as concerned.
- Do not want to upset India by going against India's wishes.
- Believes that the Tibet issue is India's problem.
- Since Britain controls Hong Kong, which China would like, they do not want to upset China even though they do not like the Chinese Communists.
- Feels that if they say it is wrong for an outside government to control a country, they might not be able to run their own colonies, like Hong Kong.
- Gave suggestions to India regarding India's policy towards Tibet: Don't upset China, Do what you can to help but don't give Tibet money or military weapons, only give them small guns, don't give up on Tibet, but don't recognize their independence.
- Do not want to get involved with China.

#### UNITED STATES

Leader: President Truman

- Willing to help Tibet, but only if it is OK with Great Britain and India.
- Is not willing to bring up the situation to the UN because they do not want to show China that they support Tibet.
- Wants India to bring up the Tibet issue to UN, but India says do nothing. US asks Britain, Britain says don't get involved. US tells Tibet sorry.
- When Tibet asks for aid, they tell Tibet that they will provide military aid only if China attacks, but not before.
- The US is in the beginning of a major war against Communist North Korea and democratic South Korea. China is supporting North Korea, so they US does not want to upset China even more by supporting Tibet issue.
- Believes that the UN decision to support Tibet would be voted down by China and Soviet Union anyway, so they don't feel that they need to bring it up.

#### EL SALVADOR

Leader: UN Delegate Chairman Hector Castro

- Small country in Central America, not close to the Tibetan problem, but does not like the act of a large country controlling a smaller country. They could be worried that another large country would want to control El Salvador.
- Believes that the United Nations needs to speak out against Chinese aggression.
- Believes that the UN needs to support Tibet independence and democracy.
- Tries to gain support from other UN members, but does not have the authority to be listened to.

#### NEPAL

Leader:

A very small country bordering India and Tibet in the middle of the Himalaya Mountain Range. They do not have much money, military, or influence in the world. Nepal is a trading partner with Tibet. They are sympathetic to Tibet, but do not have the resources to help them. They are only able to give encouragement.

#### SOVIET UNION

Leader: Joseph Stalin

- Strong supporter of China and the communist movement.
- Very strong anti-US feelings: Will vote against US on everything.
- Currently trying to expand their own borders in much the same way as China.