

Sample Drafting Skills Test

You work in the field of political, peace, security and humanitarian affairs for the Large International Organization (LIO). The director of your office, Mr. Smith, travels to various regions and nations to engage with both local LIO missions and national leadership.

Mr. Smith is planning to visit the country of Hopelandia in the next few days, and he has asked you to **identify the main developments and draw relevant conclusions** regarding the current political, peace, security and humanitarian situation there.

Today's date is 22 March. Using the news reports from January to March 2017, which you obtained from reliable sources, write a briefing note of **no more than 400 words**. Do not provide any background information in your briefing note. Use the following paragraph headings and follow the suggested word limits:

1. Political: (50-90 words)
2. Peace: (50-90 words)
3. Security: (50-90 words)
4. Humanitarian: (50-90 words)
5. Conclusion: (30-40 words)

You are strongly advised not to exceed the word limit, as no credit will be given for content that is written in excess of the first 400 words. Please make use of the word counter located at the bottom right corner of the response text box while drafting your response.

Country: Hopelandia
Neighbouring countries: Freeland and Westlandia
Population: 30 million
Ethnic groups 85% Hammur; 14% Jingar; 1% Passor
Government: Presidential Republic (2 terms maximum)
Head of State: President Jones (2009-2012 & 2012-2016)

News reports on Hopelandia January to March 2017

Political

- 22 January:** President Jones remains in power after narrow vote to impeach him
30 January: President Jones: "I will stand for a third term."
7 March: High Court judge calls the president's announcement "unconstitutional".
15 March: Army places High Court judge under house arrest.
18 March: LIO condemns arrest as "threat to an independent judiciary".

Peace

- 21 February:** Regional Organization for Peace (ROP) offers to deploy 10,000 peacekeepers to ease conflict amongst the Hammur and the Jingar.
2 March: President Jones outlines his conditions for accepting the ROP peacekeepers.
6 March: ROP "considering the President's conditions" with support from LIO.
18 March: President speaks of "intolerable delay" and sets even more stringent conditions.
20 March: ROP and LIO jointly "considering the President's new conditions".

Security

- 25 February:** High security surrounding trial of rebel army leader General Sanders.
27 February: General Sanders' lawyers: "our client was tortured while being detained".
12 March Ten tourists are taken hostage by rebel army at the airport.

13 March: Hostages offered in exchange for the release of General Sanders.
20 March: International pressure mounts on President Jones to resolve the hostage situation.

Humanitarian

10 January: 100,000 Hopelandians displaced due to flooding.
15 January: Leading aid agency: “We are in great need of basic provisions”
22 January: Freeland and Westlandia each will accept 50,000 grateful refugees.
13 February: “Food production down 10 per cent in 2016” according to government report.
15 March: “Food prices rapidly going up” warns local newspaper.

Sample answer and scoring

Briefing note on the current situation in Hopelandia

Political

President Jones announced his intention to run for a third term just days after narrowly surviving an impeachment vote. The High Court Judge who condemned the president’s decision as unconstitutional was placed under house arrest by the Army. LIO has criticized this as a threat to the independence of the judiciary. Although there are no reports that the president ordered this action, he does not seem to be in a hurry to order the Army to lift the house arrest.

Peace

Due to the conflict between the Hammur and the Jingar ethnic groups in Hopelandia, ROP recently offered to send 10,000 peacekeepers to help establish peace. In response, President Jones has set increasingly stringent conditions for the deployment of the ROP peacekeepers. The president appears to be impatient as ROP and LIO jointly review his conditions, yet he risks impeding the process further by imposing even more stringent conditions on the deployment. While the ROP and LIO are currently repeating the process, the obvious danger is that the president could announce further conditions or even reject ROP’s offer entirely. A bad deal might be better than no deal in this instance.

Security

Shortly after the start of the trial of rebel army leader General Sanders, his soldiers took 10 international tourists hostage in an attempt to negotiate his release. President Jones is under international pressure to take action, but it is unclear how he will respond. On the one hand, the president is generally reluctant to bow to international pressure, but, on the other hand, he sometimes acts impatiently. We can expect developments any time soon.

Humanitarian

In January, flooding caused the internal displacement of massive numbers of Hopelandians and basic provisions are in very short supply. 50,000 of those displaced have been taken in as refugees by the neighbouring countries of Freeland and Westlandia. The recent flooding comes when it has just been announced that food production in Hopelandia fell by 10 per cent in 2016 and while food prices have soared. There is a clear danger that starvation may result.

Conclusion

The key concerns of LIO should be to encourage the Hopelandia government to allow ROP peacekeepers into the country under the best possible conditions, to make sure that food is delivered safely in the most affected areas and to ensure that access to drinking water is provided in affected communities.

(394 words)

Grades and grader's comments

Effect on the target reader. Score 4 out of 5.

The candidate has clearly identified and explained the key points and the conclusions drawn are mostly relevant to the information provided, with a few exceptions.

Coherence and cohesion. Score 5 out of 5.

The candidate exhibits good control of language and there is very little or no unnecessary repetition.

Clarity of intent and appropriateness. Score 3 out of 5.

Although the candidate's intention is clearly expressed, the style of writing is sometimes speculative and occasionally somewhat informal.