Activity 2 – International Attempts at Avoiding War

International Treaties drawn up in the aftermath of wars, large and small, are numerous. They can range from settling specific issues that led to the war, to settling (invariably in the favour of the victor) issues such as boundaries and trade deals, or even to attempts to regulate the use of war as a tool of state power in its entirety. In the aftermath of both the First and Second World Wars, which dominated the history of the twentieth century, international organisations were created to prevent war on such a global scale. In the aftermath of the First World War, The League of Nations was the first international body tasked with preventing war from reoccurring through the use of diplomacy. Although it was not successful, it led directly to the foundation of the United Nations which has, for all that it is criticised, helped prevent another World War – no mean achievement given the tensions of the Cold War.

Task

Read the following (the Charters of both the League of Nations and the United Nations):

http://www.refworld.org/docid/3dd8b9854.html

1. What are the similarities between the two Charters in terms of language, aims, ends and means? What are the differences?

2. Based just on the wording of the Charters, why might it be that the League of Nations failed but the United Nations has succeeded?

3. In what ways might the United Nations Charter be written differently today?

4. How effective is the United Nations Charter in avoiding or stopping war?