

Southern & Eastern Asia

U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam

Essential Question: What were the reasons for foreign involvement in Korea and Vietnam?

Standard:

SS7H3e. Explain the reasons for foreign involvement in Korea and Vietnam in terms of containment of Communism.

Lesson Intent: The intent of this lesson is for students to discover the reason for U.S. involvement in Korea and Vietnam through a variety of primary source documents. Groups will use different primary sources to reach the same conclusion. This activity should be considered the bulk of the lesson. It is not intended to be just an activating strategy. It introduces the information to students through higher order thinking.

- Students will be placed into small groups
- Give each group or individuals the Primary Source Reflection Sheet
- Each group will then be given one of the 6 Primary Source Packets (Teachers may want to consider having groups evaluate multiple packets because each packet is different, but they should all get to the same or similar conclusion about the U.S. involvement in Korea and Vietnam)
- Groups or individuals should fill out the Primary Source Reflection Sheet after evaluating a Primary Source Packet(s)
- Teachers may consider having students move around the room to have a 1 minute conversation with students from other groups about their Primary Source Packet and their findings.
- Teachers can then lead a classroom discussion of the findings.

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam Primary Source Packet 1

Excerpt from: The President's News Conference of April 7, 1954...

Q. Robert Richards, Copley Press: Mr. President, would you mind commenting on the strategic importance of Indochina to the free world? I think there has been, across the country, some lack of understanding on just what it means to us.

The President: You have, of course, both the specific and the general when you talk about such things.

First of all, you have the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs.

Then you have the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical [hostile] to the free world.

Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences...

Then with respect to more people passing under this domination, Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to the Communist dictatorship, and we simply can't afford greater losses.

Political Cartoon:



Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam Primary Source Packet 1

Excerpt from: **The President's Message to Congress, August 5, 1964**

Last night I announced to the American people that the North Vietnamese regime had conducted further deliberate attacks against U.S. naval vessels operating in international waters, and therefore directed air action against gunboats and supporting facilities used in these hostile operations.

This air action has now been carried out with substantial damage to the boats and facilities. Two U.S. aircraft were lost in the action.

After consultation with the leaders of both parties in the Congress, I further announced a decision to ask the Congress for a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in southeast Asia...

Our policy in southeast Asia has been consistent and unchanged since 1954. I summarized it on June 2 in four simple propositions:

1. *America keeps her word.* Here as elsewhere, we must and shall honor our commitments.
2. *The issue is the future of southeast Asia as a whole.* A threat to any nation in that region is a threat to all, and a threat to us.
3. *Our purpose is peace..* We have no military, political, or territorial ambitions in the area.
4. *This is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity.*

Our military and economic assistance to South Vietnam and Laos in particular has the purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and strengthen their independence.

The threat to the three nations of southeast Asia has long been clear. The North Vietnamese regime has constantly sought to take over South Vietnam and Laos. This Communist regime has violated the Geneva accords for Vietnam...

As I have repeatedly made clear, the United States intends no rash-ness, and seeks no wider war. We must make it clear to all that the United States is united in its determination to bring about the end of Communist subversion [rebellion] and aggression in the area...

I assure the Congress that we shall continue readily to explore any avenues of political solution that will effectively guarantee the removal of Communist subversion [rebellion] and the preservation of the independence of the nations of the area.

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam Primary Source Packet 2

Excerpts of CIA Intelligence Memoranda and Weekly Summaries

Intelligence Memorandum No. 302 July 8, 1950

Apart from immediate strategic advantages, the basic Soviet objectives in launching the Northern Korean attack probably were to: (1) test the strength of U.S. commitments implicit in the policy of containment of Communist expansion; and (2) gain political advantages for the further expansion of Communism in both Asia and Europe by undermining the confidence of non-Communist states in the value of U.S. support...

Intelligence Memorandum No. 304 July 10, 1950

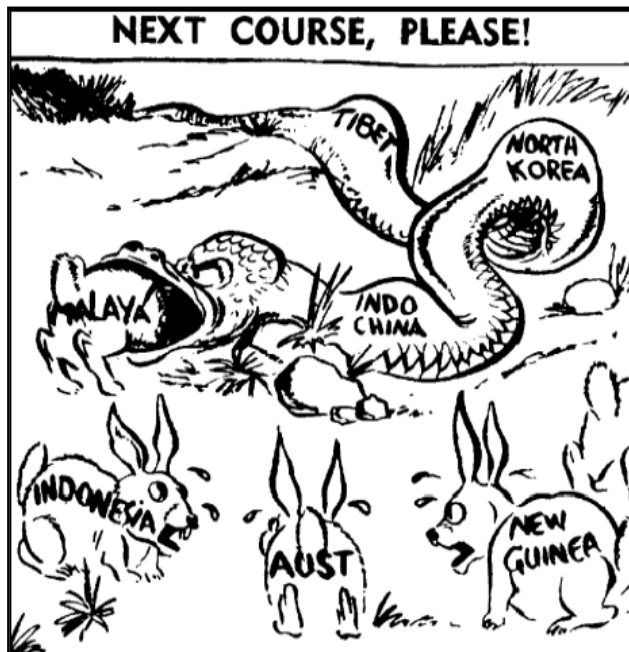
Voluntary withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea would be a calamity [disaster], seriously handicapping efforts to maintain U.S. alliances and build political influence among the nations on whose strength and energetic cooperation the policy of containment of Soviet-Communist expansion depends...

Weekly Summary Excerpt July 7, 1950

The Korean invasion has had its most immediate and compelling impact on the Far East, particularly as it has affected international Communist intentions to speed the expansion of Communism throughout the area...

Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist regime will continue and probably increase its efforts short of military aggression to further the spread of Communism throughout Southeast Asia.

Eisenhower on Vietnam War 1953 audio clip (about 52 seconds)



News-Weekly 21 July 1954

Source: http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/activities/viet_war/images/vietnam_war.pdf

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam Primary Source Packet 3

Quotes from significant figures or groups

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

Truman Doctrine, 1947

The security of the United States would again be seriously endangered if the entire European continent were once more to come under the domination of a power or an association of powers antagonistic to the United States....Today, the weakened condition in which the nations of Europe find themselves as a result of the destruction and privation of war has afforded a golden opportunity for a new aggressor....It is believed essential to the security of the United States, therefore, that it consolidate the friendship and support which it now enjoys from free and friendly nations.

State Department

In Korea the Government forces, which were armed to prevent border raids and to preserve internal security, were attacked by invading forces from North Korea....The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war.

President Harry Truman

It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest, and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words; that if we lose the war to communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable, win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom.

General Douglas MacArthur

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam Primary Source Packet 3

Excerpts from Chapter 2 Communism, Guerillas and Falling Dominoes by Thomas Ladenburg

The Second War for Vietnam

During the waning months of World War II, U.S. officials asked their British counterparts to occupy South Vietnam and disarm the Japanese. The British took over the southern part of Vietnam...They disarmed the Japanese, put down a Vietnamese rebellion, and turned South Vietnam over to the French. But in the North... the Japanese surrendered to Vietminh troops under the command of Ho Chi Minh.

When the French made an agreement with Ho Chi Minh...it seemed that fighting over the control of Vietnam might be avoided. Under this agreement, France promised to leave Vietnam with the Vietminh in charge. But fighting broke out... before the last French troops left. This began what will be referred to...as the second war for Indochina...

When the Vietnam War started in 1946 the U.S. opposed France's efforts to re-impose colonial rule...However, after the French fought the Vietnamese for four years, the United States changed its mind and began to help France...

In 1949, Mao Zedong and the Communist Party beat the Nationalists...As a result, all of mainland China came under Communist rule, raising American fears that communism would soon spread throughout Asia. This fear was heightened in 1950 when communist North Korea attacked an unsuspecting non-communist South Korea. Soon U.S. soldiers were fighting North Korean as well as Chinese Communist troops in the hills of Korea...Just as North Korea, with the support of the Soviet Union's, was trying to take South Korea, it seemed, Ho Chi Minh, with communist China's help, was seeking to control North Vietnam. After that, people believed, communism could spread to the rest of French Indochina, i.e., South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, followed by Thailand, Burma, and maybe even India, the Philippines and so on.

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam Primary Source Packet 4

Statement from President Truman's address to Congress on June 7, 1949

Korea has become a testing ground in which the validity and practical value of the ideals and principles of democracy which the Republic is putting into practice are being matched against the practices of communism which have been imposed on the people of North Korea. The survival and progress of the Republic toward a self-supporting, stable economy will have an immense and far-reaching influence on the people of Asia. Moreover, the Korean Republic, by demonstrating the success and tenacity of democracy in resisting communism, will stand as a beacon of the people of northern Asia in resisting the control of communist forces which have been them.

If we are faithful to our ideals and mindful of our interests in establishing peaceful and prosperous conditions in the world, we will not fail to provide the aid which is so essential to Korea at this critical time.

Excerpt from: The Pentagon Papers: Report by the National Security Council on the Position of the United States with Respect to Indochina (27 February 1950)

THE PROBLEM: To undertake a determination of all practicable United States measures to protect its security in Indochina and to prevent the expansion of communist aggression in that area...

ANALYSIS: The Governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were officially recognized by the United States and the United Kingdom on February 7, 1950. Other Western powers have, or are committed to do likewise. The United States has consistently brought to the attention of non-communist Asian countries the danger of communist aggression which threatens them if communist expansion in Indochina is unchecked. As this danger becomes more evident it is expected to overcome the reluctance that they have had to recognize and support the three new states...

The newly formed States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia do not as yet have sufficient political stability nor military power to prevent the infiltration into their areas of Ho Chi Minh's forces. The French Armed Forces, while apparently effectively utilized at the present time, can do little more than to maintain the status quo. Their strength of some 140,000 does, however, represent an army in being and the only military bulwark in that area against the further expansion of communist aggression from either internal or external forces...

CONCLUSIONS: It is important to United States security interests that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina is a key area of Southeast Asia and is under immediate threat.

The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indochina were controlled by a Communist-dominated government. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave hazard.

Accordingly, the Departments of State and Defense should prepare as a matter of priority a program of all practicable measures designed to protect United States security interests in Indochina.

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam
Primary Source Packet 5

Excerpts from Southeast Asia Collective Defensive Treaty: The Manila Pact (8 September 1954)

The Parties to this Treaty,

...Reaffirming that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, they uphold the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and declaring that they will earnestly strive by every peaceful means to promote self-government and to secure the independence of all countries whose peoples desire it and are able to undertake its responsibilities,

Desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace and freedom and to uphold the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, and to promote the economic well-being and development of all peoples in the treaty area...

Article IV 2. If, in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the treaty area or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article from time to time apply is threatened in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense...

The United States of America in executing the present Treaty does so with the understanding that its recognition of the effect of aggression and armed attack and its agreement with reference thereto in Article IV, paragraph 1, apply only to communist aggression but affirms that in the event of other aggression or armed attack it will consult under the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 2.

Political Cartoons



Calendar No. 757

81ST CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2319

[Report No. 748]



IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 22 (legislative day, JUNE 2), 1949

Mr. CONNALLY, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, reported the following bill; which was read twice and placed on the calendar

A BILL

To promote world peace and the general welfare, national interest, and foreign policy of the United States by providing aid to the Republic of Korea.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 That this Act may be cited as the "Korea Aid Act of 1949".

4 SEC. 2. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the
5 people of the United States to continue, on terms consonant
6 with the independence of the Republic of Korea and the
7 security of the United States, to assist the people of Korea in
8 their endeavors to establish a sound economy, to support
9 the growth of individual liberty, free institutions, genuine
10 independence, and representative government in Korea, to
11 strengthen the ties of friendship between the American and

Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam
Primary Source Packet 6



Southern & Eastern Asia: U.S. Involvement in Korea and Vietnam
Primary Source Reflection

Essential Question: What were the reasons for foreign involvement in Korea and Vietnam?

Group Members: _____

Briefly identify your primary sources _____

Based on these sources, why do you think the U.S. became involved in Korea and Vietnam?

Identify 2 examples from the primary source document(s) to support your statements.

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