Containment Under Pressure

Trace how Cold War choices shaped conflict and public opinion.

SS24.US2.13 "Explain the evolution of America's Cold War policy to defend democracy and contain communism around the world and how this led to an escalation in armed conflict during the 1960s. 13a Assess the effectiveness of John F..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three U.S. policy choices in the passage. Give each choice and one of its consequences a matching number to show how the choice shaped events.

From Cuba to Vietnam

1 After World War II, U.S. leaders sought to contain communism, often by supporting governments they considered allies. President Kennedy carried this policy into Cuba. In 1961, a U.S.-backed invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs failed, strengthening Fidel Castro's position. In 1962, Kennedy responded to Soviet missiles in Cuba with a naval quarantine and negotiations. The missiles were withdrawn, but the standoff brought the nuclear powers close to war. His Cuba policy combined a costly failure with a negotiated success.

2 In Vietnam, the domino theory warned that a communist victory in one country could lead neighboring countries to fall. U.S. leaders used that prediction to justify backing South Vietnam. After reported attacks on U.S. ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, Congress passed a resolution granting President Johnson broad authority to use force. The second reported attack probably did not occur. Johnson then expanded bombing and sent combat troops. A policy meant to limit communism had become a large-scale ground war.

3 In 1968, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces launched the Tet Offensive. Although U.S. and South Vietnamese forces repelled the attacks, their scale challenged official claims that victory was near, weakening public support. Antiwar activists in the New Left questioned the draft and government authority; some counterculture participants criticized the war as part of a wider rejection of conventional values. War coverage and rising casualties fueled protest, while televised protests made dissent more visible. Some Americans saw protesters as principled; others saw them as disloyal.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might Kennedy's Cuba policy be judged both a failure and a success?

2. How did the domino theory help justify U.S. involvement in Vietnam?

3. How did the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution change the scale of U.S. involvement?

4. How did the Tet Offensive and antiwar movements each affect public views of the war?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a brief advisory note to President Johnson in 1968 recommending one change to U.S. Vietnam policy. Support it with lessons from two different events or developments in the passage, and predict one effect on public trust.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.13

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three U.S. policy choices in the passage. Give each choice and one of its consequences a matching number to show how the choice shaped events. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might Kennedy's Cuba policy be judged both a failure and a success?	**The Bay of Pigs invasion failed and strengthened Castro, but the quarantine and negotiations helped secure the withdrawal of Soviet missiles.**
2	How did the domino theory help justify U.S. involvement in Vietnam?	**Leaders feared that a communist victory in Vietnam would lead neighboring countries to fall, so they backed South Vietnam.**
3	How did the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution change the scale of U.S. involvement?	**It gave Johnson broad authority to use force; he expanded bombing and sent combat troops.**
4	How did the Tet Offensive and antiwar movements each affect public views of the war?	**Tet challenged claims that victory was near and weakened support. Antiwar movements made dissent more visible, though Americans differed in how they viewed protesters.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

President Johnson, limit further troop deployments and seek negotiations instead of expanding the ground war. The Bay of Pigs shows that a forceful anticommunist move can fail, while the Cuban Missile Crisis shows that negotiation can help avert a larger conflict. In Vietnam, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution allowed rapid escalation, yet Tet challenged official claims of progress. Explain the change publicly and acknowledge the war's costs. That honesty might reduce distrust among protesters, though some Americans would still oppose a compromise.

Accept other defensible policy recommendations if students use two distinct developments from the passage and explain a plausible effect on public trust. For the marking job, choices may include the Bay of Pigs invasion, the naval quarantine, or the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.