Choices Under Pressure

Compare Cold War threats, responses, and risks

9-12.US2.24 "Analyze various foreign policy events through the lens of the Cold War, military engagements, and covert actions during this period. These may include: • Berlin Blockade • Rise of the Communist regime in China • Korean War • Central..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one U.S. action in each of the four crises. Circle a nearby phrase that shows the threat or risk that shaped each action.

Four Crises, Different Choices

1. In 1948, the Soviet Union cut road and rail access to West Berlin, a Western-controlled part of a city inside Soviet-occupied eastern Germany. Soviet leaders hoped the Western powers would abandon the city. Instead, the United States and its allies flew food and coal into West Berlin. The airlift kept residents supplied without attacking Soviet forces, and the blockade ended in 1949. The choice showed how leaders could resist pressure while trying to avoid a direct U.S.-Soviet war. Yet avoiding direct conflict did not mean avoiding war everywhere: in 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea.

2. The United Nations authorized a military response, led by the United States, to defend South Korea. Chinese forces later entered the war on North Korea's side. Fighting stopped with a 1953 armistice, not a peace treaty; Korea remained divided near its earlier border. The Korean War illustrates containment by force, at immense human cost, without an official U.S. war against the Soviet Union. In Iran that same year, American leaders used a less visible method. Fearing that political instability might increase Soviet influence, the CIA helped organize a coup against Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, whose government had nationalized Iran's oil industry. The shah's rule grew stronger.

3. Covert action avoided an open U.S. invasion of Iran, but it undermined an elected government and helped deepen Iranian distrust of the United States. In October 1962, U.S. reconnaissance photographs revealed Soviet nuclear missiles under construction in Cuba. President Kennedy ordered a naval quarantine to prevent additional offensive weapons from reaching the island and demanded removal of the missiles already there. The standoff risked nuclear war. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles after the United States pledged not to invade Cuba; the United States also secretly agreed to remove its missiles from Turkey. These events show that methods and risks shifted with each crisis.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Berlin airlift answer Soviet pressure while limiting the risk of direct war?

2. How was the U.S.-led response in Korea different from the response in Berlin, and what did the 1953 armistice leave unresolved?

3. Why did U.S. leaders support a coup in Iran, and what was one cost of using covert action?

4. Compare the threats in Berlin and Cuba. How did each threat shape the U.S. response?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine it is 1963 and Soviet forces threaten to close a shared shipping route. Write a five- to six-sentence memo recommending a U.S. response. Use two events from the passage as evidence and explain one risk of your recommendation or an alternative.

ANSWER KEY

Choices Under Pressure

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.24

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one U.S. action in each of the four crises. Circle a nearby phrase that shows the threat or risk that shaped each action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Berlin airlift answer Soviet pressure while limiting the risk of direct war?	**It supplied West Berlin despite the Soviet cutoff of road and rail access, without attacking Soviet forces.**
2	How was the U.S.-led response in Korea different from the response in Berlin, and what did the 1953 armistice leave unresolved?	**The United States led a military response in Korea rather than an airlift. The armistice stopped fighting, but Korea remained divided without a peace treaty.**
3	Why did U.S. leaders support a coup in Iran, and what was one cost of using covert action?	**They feared political instability might increase Soviet influence. The coup undermined an elected government and helped deepen Iranian distrust of the United States.**
4	Compare the threats in Berlin and Cuba. How did each threat shape the U.S. response?	**The cutoff of access to West Berlin prompted an airlift to supply residents. Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba prompted a naval quarantine and a demand that the missiles be removed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If Soviet forces threaten to close the shipping route, the United States should seek talks while sending essential supplies by an alternate route. The Berlin airlift shows that supplying people can resist a blockade without attacking Soviet troops. The Cuban Missile Crisis shows that a confrontation involving military forces can bring the superpowers close to nuclear war. The United States should ask neutral countries to observe the route and report any interference. A direct attack could turn a dispute over access into a wider war, so military force should remain a last resort.

Accept other supported comparisons and recommendations. For the memo, look for evidence from two distinct events, a workable response to the new threat, and an explained risk.