Bringing Korea into the classroom: Lesson Plan
Name: Gretchen Williams
Lesson Title: Containment and International Politics
Time Range: 1-2 class periods (45 minutes)
Ohio Standard: American History

Topic: The Cold War (1945-1991)

The United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) emerged as the two strongest powers in international affairs. Ideologically opposed, they challenged one another in a series of confrontations known as the Cold War. The costs of this prolonged contest weakened the USSR so that it collapsed due to internal upheavals as well as American pressure. The Cold War had social and political implications in the United States.

Content Standard: 26
The Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics.

Content Elaborations:
The Korean War also fed into the communist hysteria of the late 1940s and 1950s. The United States was able to secure support from the United Nations for the defense of South Korea while the Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council.

Grade Level Indicators: American History 10

Introduction/ Lesson Summary:
This lesson will focus on the idea of containment and how this influenced international politics concerning United States and the United Nations involvement in Korea and Vietnam. We will be looking at the following primary sources:
1. Blair House Meetings, June 26, 1950
2. Memorandum of the Blair House Meeting
3. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
4. Draft Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to the President
5. Video: History Channel

Students will read the material and answer questions, in a think, pair, share form, as well as class discussion.

Materials:

Primary Sources:
Korea:
Memorandum of conversation, State Department, June 26, 1950, regarding the first meeting on the Korean crisis at Blair House. Papers of Dean Acheson. (Read pages 4-8 or all 8 pages if background was not given)

Document B:


Vietnam:

Document C:

https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v01/d173
Draft Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to the President¹ - May 1964

Document D:
Gulf of Tonkin Resolution- August 1964

Video:
https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/gulf-of-tonkin-resolution
History Channel- Gulf of Tonkin Incident

Lesson:
We will begin with a brief background of the idea of containment and what this policy meant. Since chronologically the Korean War comes first background information should be provided on the Vietnam War if you choose to use this before starting the Korean War. Otherwise it would work well for ending the Korean War and introducing the Vietnam War. After the discussion of containment, you will tell students they will be looking at various primary sources that show the United States dealing with foreign policy and the United Nations.

1. Watch History Channel video to provide entire class with background information about Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and its involvement in escalating the Vietnam War.
2. Break students into pairs. (Eventually they will end up in groups of four)
3. Give one set of the pairs the two documents pertaining to the Korean War, and the other pair will receive the Vietnam War documents.
4. Have them read, highlight, and annotate the documents. Once they are finished they will match up with their other pairs and discuss the materials while answering questions that pertain to all the documents.
5. Go through documents and questions as a class and discuss findings and the videos.
Reading and discussion questions:

Document A:
1. When was this document written? Who is involved in this meeting?
2. Why is the United Nations and Security council being discussed? What issues are they discussing? What would be their ideal outcome?
3. What is the United States concerns with Northern and Southern Korea?

Document B:
1. When was this document written? Who is involved with this document?
3. What major points were kept and what was left out?

Document C:
1. When was this document written? Who wrote it?
2. What did Bundy suggest to the President?
3. What are three reasons why Bundy made this recommendation?
4. According to this document, was the U.S. planning to go to war in Vietnam before August 1964? Explain your answer.

Document D:
1. According to this document, what did the North Vietnamese do?
2. Why did the United States feel compelled to respond at this point?
3. According to this document, was the U.S. planning to go to war in Vietnam before August 1964? Explain your answer.

Class discussion or extension questions:
1. How do these documents and sources back up the idea of containment?
2. How did the United States deal foreign policy when it came to these two instances?
3. What differences and similarities do you see in how President Truman reacts to the threat of Communism and President Johnson’s reaction?