



*The U.S. & The World: SS.7.CG.4.3*  
**International Conflicts**  
**VIDEO #2 SCRIPT**



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## **Military Action (Korean War, Vietnam War and the Bay of Pigs) Video #2**

1. Remember that according to the Constitution, Congress declares war. But sometimes, as commander-in-chief, the US president will deploy troops or use other forms of military force without actually declaring war. So we can use the military to deal with international conflict without actually declaring war.
2. Much of the conflict after World War Two was driven between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union was communist and the United States was capitalist, and though they never fought each other directly, many of the conflicts after World War Two were over whose worldview of government, economics, and society would be victorious.
3. In this video, we're going to look at Korea, Vietnam, and the Bay of Pigs, three times the US used military action to deal with international conflict rather than just declaring war through Congress.
4. After watching the video, you will be able to:
  - Understand one method used by the United States to deal with international conflicts;
  - Identify specific examples of international conflicts in which the United States has been involved; and
  - Explain why the United States became involved in each conflict and how that conflict was resolved.
5. Be sure to check out the other three videos in this module to make sure you really understand how the United States has approached international conflict. But in this video, we're going to look at one method, military action, in relation to three conflicts: Korea, Vietnam, and the Bay of Pigs.
6. **Korean War 1950-1953**

The Korean War was a civil war for control of the peninsula of Korea, in Asia. After World War II, the Korean Peninsula was split into two: North Korea and South Korea. North Korea was communist and South Korea was democratic and capitalist. They were fighting against each other for control of the entire peninsula.
7. In June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The United States initially got involved in the conflict through military action to defend South Korea and make sure communism did not spread there.

8. The United States did not officially declare war against North Korea, but instead the president authorized military force there. The Korean War ended in 1953 when an agreement to end the fighting was signed between North and South Korea. Both countries would remain independent and a two-mile zone was created in between them as a barrier to prevent future wars.

9. Let's check in. Try to answer each of the following questions in your own words.

10. Why did the United States become involved in the Korean War?

11. ANSWER TO QUESTION

12. What methods did the United States use to deal with the Korean War?

13. ANSWER TO QUESTION

14. What was the outcome of the Korean War?

15. ANSWER TO QUESTION

That's a lot of stuff. Did you get it all? Great. But we're not done in Asia however. We got one more international conflict to look at: the Vietnam War.

#### 16. **Vietnam War 1964-1975**

The Vietnam War, from 1964 to 1975 in Asia, was a civil war for control of Vietnam. This was between communist North Vietnam, supported by China and the Soviet Union, and the non-communist South Vietnam, supported by the United States.

17. So, why did we get involved in this international conflict? Well, in 1964, a U.S. destroyer ship reported being fired on by the North Vietnamese in the Gulf of Tonkin, a body of water near North Vietnam and China. Although even today there is some question about whether this actually happened.

18. In response to the Gulf of Tonkin incident and in an effort to reduce the spread of communism, the president was authorized by Congress to send large numbers of troops to Vietnam. This started the beginning of many years of sending troops there until 1973. This was a military action on the part of the United States, as Congress did not officially declare war on Vietnam.

19. While the United States already had some troops in Vietnam, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution allowed the United States to become more aggressive in fighting the communist North and sending thousands and thousands of more troops. This expansion was not always popular in the United States and did not always go well in Vietnam.

20. The United States involvement in the Vietnam War ended in 1973 with the Paris Peace Accords. This agreement temporarily ended the fighting, although in 1975 North Vietnam captured Saigon, South Vietnam's capital and Vietnam became one communist country.

21. Let's check in. We've certainly learned a lot. Try to answer each of the following questions in your own words.

22. Why did the United States become involved in the Vietnam War?

23. ANSWER TO QUESTION

24. What methods did the United States use to deal with the Vietnam War?

25. ANSWER TO QUESTION

26. What was the outcome of the Vietnam War?

27. ANSWER TO QUESTION

Did you get them all? Fantastic. Well, don't forget that while the United States was facing the Soviet Union and China in a fight between communism and capitalism in Asia, we were also having to deal with these issues a little closer to home. Let's go ahead and turn our attention now to Cuba.

### 28. **Bay of Pigs Invasion 1961**

In 1959, Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba and made Cuba a communist country. Remember, Cuba is an island nation only 90 miles south of Florida, and Cuba became allies with the Soviet Union. The United States did not like the relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union and feared having communism so close to the United States.

29. The United States decided it had to take military action to get rid of Castro, get rid of communism in Cuba, and break the alliance between Cuba and the Soviet Union, but didn't actually want to go to war with the Soviets so it had to come up with a plan.

30. The secret plan for military action involved training and supporting Cuban exiles to invade Cuba through the Bay of Pigs on the coast. They would invade Cuba, take the capital of Havana, overthrow Castro, and defeat communism on the island.

31. The invasion was launched in 1961 and it ended in disaster. Ultimately, the failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion made the relationship between the United States and Cuba even worse and made the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba even closer. And the Castros and communism remained in power in Cuba for at least another half century.

32. Let's check in. We've certainly learned a lot. Try to answer each of the following questions in your own words.

33. Why did the United States become involved in the Bay of Pigs invasion?

34. ANSWER TO QUESTION

35. What methods did the United States use in 1961 to try and deal with communism in Cuba?

36. ANSWER TO QUESTION

37. What was the outcome of the Bay of Pigs invasion?

38. ANSWER TO QUESTION

39. So taking military action without declaring war is definitely one of the ways that the United States has to deal with international conflict. Be sure to check out other videos in this module to get a sense of other conflicts the United States has been involved in in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

40. Additional videos in this module include Video One: Declaring War (World War One and World War Two). Video Three: Military Action in the Middle East (Gulf War One and Gulf War Two), and Video Four: Diplomatic Action (the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Iran Hostage Crisis).