

Teaching American History Grant: Learning Experience 2008-2009

Mr. Paul Bennis Participation in Government Goshen High School

Topic Title: Nixon's decision to bomb Cambodia

Date: 10/10/08

Grade Level: 11 U.S. History and Government and 12 Participation in Government. This lesson can be used in both classes to look at Presidential decision making during wartime, the historical period, checks and balances, and the war Powers Act of 1973.

Objective: Students are able to address the essential question at a commencement level and realize that the President as Commander in Chief is in charge of the Military but still answers to Congress.

Standards Addressed:

Students will:

- use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States.
- analyze the development of American culture, explaining how ideas, values, beliefs, and traditions have changed over time and how they unite all Americans
- describe the evolution of American democratic values and beliefs as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other important historical documents.
- analyze the United States involvement in foreign affairs and a willingness to engage in international politics, examining the ideas and traditions leading to these foreign policies.
- discuss several schemes for periodizing the history of the United States.
- develop and test hypotheses about important events, eras, or issues in United States history, setting clear and valid criteria for judging the importance and significance of these events, eras, or issues.

Essential Question

Is it justified for the president to expand executive power during war time?

Time Allotment:

2 – 3 Forty minute periods

Vocabulary:

President Nixon, Vietcong, Military Aggression, Saigon, Sanctuary, Injunction, Terminate

Materials Used:

LCD Projector, Computer (“Presidential Decision Making” Power Point presentation including photos, maps, political cartoons), Smart board

Pre-Viewing Activities:

Students should have already studied the Constitution, three branches of government, the powers of each branch and the concept of checks and balances. Have students attempt to complete the below matching activity before starting lesson.

Wilson _____

1. Japanese Internment

F.D.R. _____

2. Schenk v. U.S.

J.F.K. _____

3. Patriot Act

Bush _____

4. Bay of Pigs

Lesson:

The class will begin with the students attempting to match four presidents (Wilson, F.D.R., J.F.K. and Bush) with a constitutionally questionable act committed by that president's administration. After giving the students the correct answers to the matching questions and a brief history surrounding the events I will then have students look at a photo of the attack on Pearl Harbor and two political cartoons with questions that pertain to Japanese internment camps. The next photo will be of the Twin Towers on September 11th accompanied by political cartoons with questions that pertain to the Patriot Act. Students will then be taught a brief history of the Vietnam War and the impact of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and Cambodia. The students will learn about the loss of support for the war with special emphasis on the decision of President Nixon to bomb Cambodia and the court order to stop the President from bombing Cambodia.

This lesson will concentrate on the duality of the presidential obligation of being the Commander-In-Chief, the highest ranking military officer, yet subordinate to a civilian Congress under the direction of the Constitution.

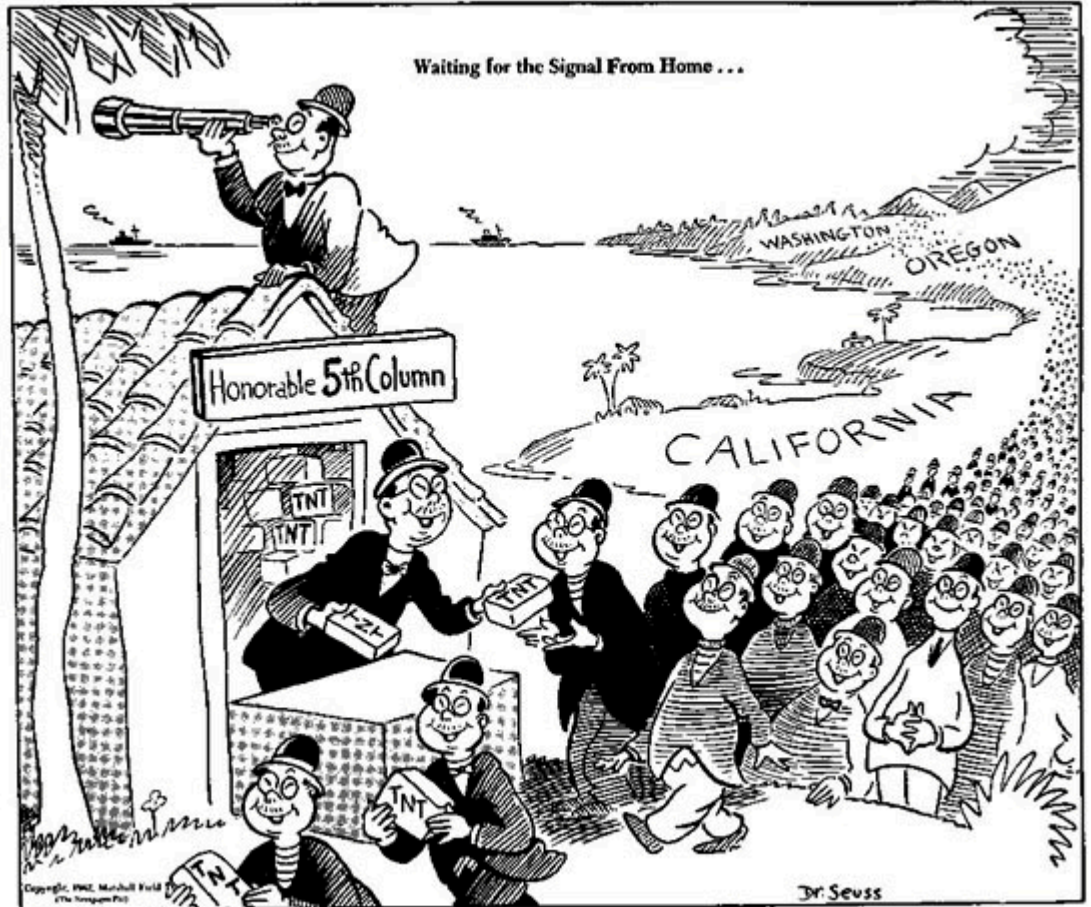
The essential question to the students is whether the role of Commander-in-Chief should allow the president during war time to expand his power as supreme military commander and allow him to act in a way that may disregard the civilian congress and/or the Constitution for the good of the country and the military.

Assessment:

In pairs the students will create an analytical political cartoon that shows their opinion, pro or con, of Nixon's decision to bomb Laos and Cambodia. The cartoon must be drawn at a high school commencement level and be accompanied by a one paragraph summary explaining the artists cartoon. The cartoon will be graded as one quiz grade.

Follow-up Activity:

Students research the War Powers Act of 1973 and have a Class discussion about the U.S military attacking across the Afghan border into Pakistan and Syria.



○ "Waiting for the Signal From Home..." Dr. Seuss. February 13, 1942. Box 18. Folder 16. PM Newspaper, Newspaper clippings of cartoons, 1942 January-April. Madeville Special Collections Library, University of California San Diego.

All Packed Up and Ready to Go



By Rodger



San Francisco News — March 6, 1942



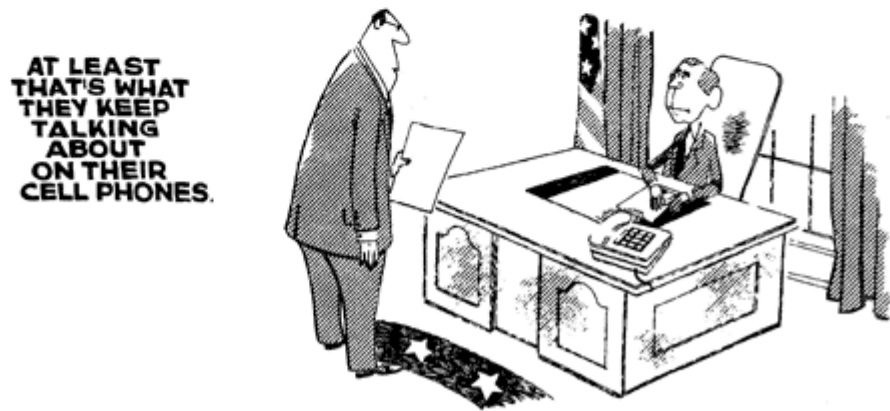
www.navy.mil/navsource.org/Naval/arph/htm





○ www.hobotraveler.com/156hochiminhtrail.html





<https://secure.aclu.org>



www.foureyes.com/towers/

Student Created Political Cartoons

CATEG ORY	4	3	2	1
Subject Matter	Student clearly shows understanding of political concept.	Student mostly shows understanding of political concept.	Student shows some understanding of political concept.	Student shows no understanding of political concept.
Way Topic is Conveyed	Student's point of view is clearly conveyed.	Student's point of view is mostly well conveyed.	Student's point of view is marginally conveyed.	Student's point of view is poorly conveyed.
Visual Presentati on of Political Cartoon	Text and graphics are clearly legible.	Text and graphics are mostly legible.	Text and graphics are somewhat legible.	Text and graphics are not legible.

Suggested Grading Scale	
10-12 points	A
7-9 points	B
4-6 points	C
1-3 points	D
Work not submitted	F

<http://kids-learn.org/cartoons/rubric.htm>