The 1966 Ghana Coup and United States Involvement

Research Simulation Task | Grades 6–12

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

Central Investigation

How did the United States seek to influence the removal of Kwame Nkrumah and Ghana's political direction? Use at least three sources, including a Ghanaian perspective and records from before and after the coup. Distinguish documented actions, policy proposals, and conclusions requiring further evidence.

Objective

Analyze primary sources to explain U.S. knowledge, contacts, economic pressure, and diplomatic responses surrounding Ghana's February 24, 1966 coup.

Demonstration of Learning

Complete 15 multiple choice questions and a RACE argument using accurate chronology, three sources, and one explained evidence limitation.

Standards and Literacy Connections

NJSLS Social Studies 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.d addresses colonial legacies in national and economic development. 6.2.12.GeoGI.5.a addresses geography, economics, and Cold War spheres of influence. These high school content expectations serve as an enrichment case for Grades 6–8 with scaffolds. NJSLS ELA RI.CR.6.1, RI.PP.6.5, RI.AA.6.7, and W.AW.6.1 connect evidence, perspective, argument, and writing; use corresponding expectations for Grades 7–12. CCSS/CCLS RH.6–8.1, RH.9–10.1, RH.11–12.1 and WHST.6–8.1, WHST.9–10.1, WHST.11–12.1 support disciplinary evidence and argument.

Interdisciplinary and Amistad Connections

African sovereignty and resistance to external domination connect with Amistad study. Geography traces international relationships, mathematics measures chronology, and ELA evaluates perspective and evidence. Days 1–4 develop the investigation; Day 5 assesses learning.

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Day 1 Ghanaian Sovereignty and the Cold War

Do Now Why might a newly independent nation resist pressure to join a powerful country's political bloc?

Source A Nkrumah Explains Ghana's Position

Kwame Nkrumah to Lyndon Johnson, February 26 1964. Original instructional synthesis of the primary records listed on page 13.

Ghana became independent from British colonial rule in 1957 under Kwame Nkrumah's leadership. His government pursued industrial development and African unity. During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union competed for influence. Ghana's choices about investment, diplomacy, and economic organization therefore attracted international attention.

In his February 26, 1964 letter to President Lyndon Johnson, Nkrumah defended nonalignment. Ghana wanted relations with countries with different political systems while protecting its own choices. He argued that colonialism had limited economic development and that expanding public ownership could help Ghana gain economic independence. He also welcomed foreign investment under terms intended to support education, health, housing, and living standards.

Nkrumah complained that the U.S. embassy conducted diplomacy while the CIA engaged in activities that damaged relations. His letter directly documents his warning about interference. It is also a persuasive statement by a leader defending his government. Students should compare his claims with internal U.S. records rather than treating either government's statements as a complete account.

This perspective matters because Ghana was more than a location for Cold War competition. Ghanaian people and leaders had their own political goals. Evaluating U.S. involvement requires asking whose interests shaped policy and how foreign pressure affected the ability of Ghanaians to determine their country's future.

Quick Write Explain how Nkrumah connected political sovereignty with economic independence. Use two details from Source A.

Exit Ticket What is one difference between nonalignment and refusing all international cooperation?

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