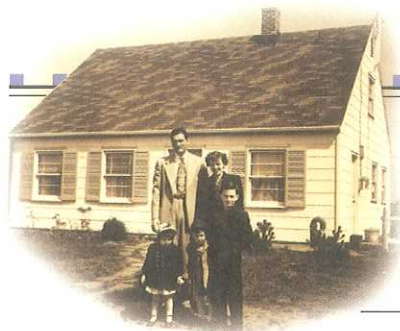


# 28



## THE CONFIDENT YEARS 1953-1964



**HOW DID** the “Decade of Affluence”  
alter social and religious life in America?

**WHAT IMPACT** did  
Dwight Eisenhower’s foreign policy have on  
U.S. relations with the Soviet Union?



**WHAT WAS** John F. Kennedy’s  
approach to dealing with the Soviet Union?

**WHAT WAS** the significance  
of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*?

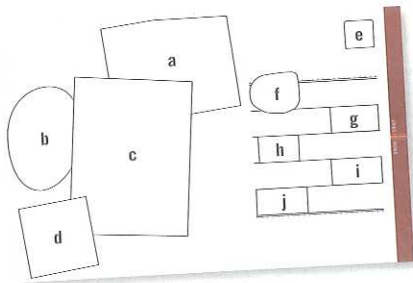


**HOW DID** Lyndon B. Johnson  
continue the domestic agenda inherited  
from the Kennedy administration?



## IMAGE KEY

for pages 736–737



- a. Russian nuclear missiles photographed at Mariel Port facility in Cuba, with illustrative tags describing various equipment.
- b. A drawing of the Sputnik satellite appears on a playing card from a card game about the space race.
- c. Elvis Presley swivels onto his toes while singing into a microphone on stage with his band.
- d. The album cover of “We Insist!” by Max Roach depicts African American men at a lunch counter during a sit-in.
- e. 1960 Presidential candidates Richard Milhous Nixon and John F. Kennedy during a televised debate.
- f. Suburban family standing in front of their 1948 Levittown house in 1950.
- g. Children huddle below their desks in an elementary school classroom during an air raid drill.
- h. President Kennedy’s TV address on the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- i. Elizabeth Eckford is heckled by a white student while integrating Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. Many other white students surround the girl.
- j. LBJ takes the oath of office on the ride back to Washington, D.C. from Dallas, after the assassination of JFK.

*The first day I was able to enter Central High School [in Little Rock, Arkansas, September 23, 1957], what I felt inside was terrible, wrenching, awful fear. On the car radio I could hear that there was a mob. I knew what a mob meant and I know that the sounds that came from the crowd were very angry. So we entered the side of the building, very, very fast. Even as we entered there were people running after us, people tripping other people. . . . There has never been in my life any stark terror or any fear akin to that.*

*I’d only been in the school a couple of hours and by that time it was apparent that the mob was just overrunning the school. Policemen were throwing down their badges and the mob was getting past the wooden sawhorses because the police would no longer fight their own in order to protect us. So we were all called into the principal’s office, and there was great fear that we would not get out of this building. We were trapped. And I thought, Okay, so I’m going to die here, in school. . . . Even the adults, the school officials, were panicked, feeling like there was no protection. . . . [A] gentleman, who I believed to be the police chief, said . . . “I’ll get them out.” And we were taken to the basement of this place. And we were put into two cars, grayish blue Fords. And the man instructed the drivers, he said, “Once you start driving, do not stop.” And he told us to put our heads down. “This guy revved up his engine and he came up out of the bowels of this building, and as he came up, I could just see hands reaching across this car; I could hear the yelling, I could see guns, and he was told not to stop. “If you hit somebody, you keep rolling, ’cause the kids are dead.” And he did just that, and he didn’t hit anybody, but he certainly was forceful and aggressive in the way he exited this driveway, because people tried to stop him and he didn’t stop. He dropped me off at home. And I remember saying, “Thank you for the ride,” and I should’ve said, “Thank you for my life.”*

Melba Pattillo Beals in Henry Hampton and Steve Frayer, eds., *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* (New York: Bantam, 1990).

**MELBA PATTILLO** was one of the nine African-American students who entered previously all-white Central High in 1957. Her enrollment in the high school, where she managed to last through a year of harassment, was a symbolic step in the journey toward greater racial equality in American society. School integration in Little Rock implemented the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which declared that racially segregated schools violated the mandate that all citizens receive equal protection of the law. The violence with which some white residents of Little Rock responded, and the courage of the students, was a key episode in the civil rights revolution that spanned roughly a decade from the *Brown* decision to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The struggle for full civil rights for all Americans was rooted in national ideals, but it was also shaped by the continuing tensions of the Cold War. President Dwight Eisenhower acted against his own inclinations and sent federal troops to keep the





peace in Little Rock in part because he worried about public opinion in other nations. As the United States and the Soviet Union maneuvered for influence in Africa and Asia, domestic events sometimes loomed large in foreign relations. Few Americans questioned the necessity of the Cold War—or of America's ultimate triumph. This consensus gave U.S. policy an overarching goal of containment but also narrowed American options by casting issues at home and abroad in terms of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry.

Melba Pattillo's life after Little Rock also reflects the increasing economic opportunities available to most Americans. She eventually graduated from San Francisco State University, earned a master's degree from Columbia University, and became a television reporter and writer. San Francisco State, which was rapidly expanding, was itself part of the great expansion of higher education that helped millions of Americans move into middle-class jobs and neighborhoods. The prosperous years from 1953 to 1964 spread the economic promise of the 1940s across American society. Young couples could afford large families and new houses. Labor unions grew conservative because cooperation with big business offered immediate gains for their members.

Despite challenges at home and abroad, Americans were confident during the decade after the Korean War. They expected corporations to use scientific research to craft new products and medical researchers to conquer diseases. When the USSR challenged U.S. preeminence and launched the first artificial space satellite in 1957, Americans redoubled efforts to regain what they considered their rightful world leadership in science and technology.

## A DECADE OF AFFLUENCE

Americans in the 1950s believed in the basic strength of the United States. Examples of self-assurance were everywhere. Television's *General Electric Theater* was third in the ratings in 1956–1957. Every week, its host, Ronald Reagan, a popular Hollywood lead from the late 1930s, stated, "At General Electric, progress is our most important product." Large, technologically sophisticated corporations were introducing new marvels: Orlon sweaters and Saran Wrap, long-playing records and Polaroid cameras.

Social and intellectual conformity assured a united front. National leaders argued that strong families were bulwarks against Communism and that church-going inoculated people against subversive ideas. Under the lingering cloud of McCarthyism, the range of political ideas that influenced government policy was narrower than in the 1930s and 1940s. Nevertheless, disaffected critics began to voice the discontents that exploded in the 1960s and 1970s.

### WHAT'S GOOD FOR GENERAL MOTORS

Dwight Eisenhower presided over the prosperity of the 1950s. Both Democrats and Republicans had courted him as a presidential candidate in 1948. Four years later, he picked the Republicans and easily defeated Democrat Adlai Stevenson, the moderately liberal governor of Illinois.

Publicists tried a variety of labels for Eisenhower's domestic views: "progressive moderation," "New Republicanism," "dynamic conservatism." Satisfied with postwar America, Eisenhower accepted much of the New Deal but saw little need for further reform. In a 1959 poll, liberals considered him a fellow liberal and conservatives thought him a conservative.

Eisenhower's first secretary of defense, "Engine Charlie" Wilson, had headed General Motors. At his Senate confirmation hearing, he proclaimed, "For years,

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HOW DID the "Decade of Affluence" alter social and religious life in America?

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I thought what was good for the country was good for General Motors and vice versa.” Wilson’s statement captured a central theme of the 1950s.

The economy in the 1950s gave Americans much to like. Between 1950 and 1964, output grew by a solid 3.2 percent per year. Automobile production, on which dozens of other industries depended, neared 8 million vehicles per year in the mid-1950s; less than 1 percent of new car sales were imports.

In the 1950s American workers’ productivity, or output per worker, increased steadily. Average wages rose faster than consumer prices in nine of eleven years between 1953 and 1964. The steel and auto industries gave their workers a middle-class way of life. In turn, labor leaders lost interest in radical changes in American society. In 1955, the older and politically more conservative American Federation of Labor absorbed the younger Congress of Industrial Organizations. The new AFL-CIO positioned itself as a partner in prosperity and foe of Communism at home and abroad.

Industrial cities offered members of minority groups factory jobs at wages that could support a family. African Americans worked through the Urban League, the National Association of Colored Women, and other race-oriented groups to secure fair employment laws and jobs with large corporations. Many Puerto Rican migrants to New York found steady work in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Mexican-American families in San Antonio benefited from maintenance jobs at the city’s military bases.

However, there were never enough family-wage jobs for all of the African-American and Latino workers who continued to move to Northern and Western cities. Many Mexican Americans were still migrant farm laborers and workers in nonunionized sweatshops. Minority workers were usually the first to suffer from the erosion of industrial jobs that began in the 1960s.

To cut costs and accelerate Native American assimilation, Congress pushed the policy of termination between 1954 and 1962. The government sold tribal land and assets, distributed the proceeds among tribal members, and terminated its treaty relationship with the tribe. Termination cut thousands of Indians adrift from the security of tribal organizations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs also encouraged Indians to move to large cities, but jobs were often unavailable.

#### QUICK REVIEW

##### America's Economy in the 1950s

- ◆ 1950–1964: U.S. economy grew at a rate of 3.2 percent per year.
- ◆ Productivity increased steadily.
- ◆ Wages rose faster than consumer prices.

#### RESHAPING URBAN AMERICA

If Eisenhower’s administration opted for the status quo on many issues, it nevertheless reshaped American cities around an agenda of economic development. In 1954, Congress transformed the public housing program into urban renewal. Cities used federal funds to replace low-rent businesses and run-down housing on the fringes of their downtowns with new hospitals, civic centers, sports arenas, office towers, and luxury apartments.

Los Angeles demolished the seedy Victorian mansions of Bunker Hill, just northwest of downtown, for a music center and bank towers. A mile to the north was Chavez Ravine, whose Mexican-American population lived in substandard housing but maintained a lively community. When conservative opposition blocked plans for public housing, the residents were evicted, and Dodger Stadium was built. Here as elsewhere, urban showplaces rose at the expense of minority groups.

The Eisenhower administration also revolutionized American transportation. The **Federal Highway Act of 1956** created a national system of Interstate and Defense Highways. The legislation wrapped a program to build 41,000 miles of free-ways in the language of the Cold War. The roads would be wide and strong enough for trucks hauling military hardware; they were also supposed to make it easy to evacuate cities in case of a Soviet attack.

##### Federal Highway Act of 1956

Measure that provided federal funding to build a nationwide system of interstate and defense highways.





Interstates halved the time of city-to-city travel. They were good for General Motors, the steel industry, and the concrete industry, requiring the construction equivalent of sixty Panama Canals. The highways promoted long-distance trucking at the expense of railroads. As with urban renewal, the bulldozers most often plowed through African-American or Latino neighborhoods.

The beltways or perimeter highways that began to ring most large cities made it easier and more profitable to develop new subdivisions and factory sites than to reinvest in city centers. Federal grants for sewers and other basic facilities further cut suburban costs. Continuing the pattern of the late 1940s, suburban growth added a million new single-family houses per year.

### COMFORT ON CREDIT

The 1930s had taught Americans to avoid debt. The 1950s taught them to buy on credit. Families financed their new houses with 90 percent FHA mortgages and 100 percent VA mortgages. They filled the rooms by signing installment contracts at furniture and appliance stores and charging the drapes and carpeting on department store credit cards. The value of consumer debt, excluding home mortgages, tripled from 1952 to 1964.

New forms of marketing facilitated credit-based consumerism. The first large-scale suburban shopping center was Northgate in Seattle, which assembled all the pieces of the full-grown mall. By the end of the decade, developers were building malls with 1 million square feet of shopping floor. At the start of the 1970s, the universal credit card (Visa, MasterCard) made shopping even easier.

Where cities of the early twentieth century had been built around the public transportation of streetcars and subways, the 1950s depended on private automobiles. Interstate highways sucked retail business from small-town main streets to interchanges on the edge of town. Nationally franchised motels and fast-food restaurants sprang up along suburban shopping strips, pioneered by Holiday Inn (1952) and McDonald's (nationally franchised in 1955).

More extreme than the mall were entirely new environments for high-intensity consumption and entertainment that appeared in the Southwest, such as Las Vegas with its hotel-casinos. Opening in Orange County, California, in 1955, Disneyland was safe and artificial—a never-ending state fair without the smells and dust.

### THE NEW FIFTIES FAMILY

Family life in the Eisenhower years departed from historic patterns. Prosperity allowed children to finish school and young adults to marry right after high school. Young women faced strong social pressure to pursue husbands rather than careers. The proportion of single adults reached its twentieth-century low in 1960. At all social levels, young people married quickly and had an average of three children spaced closely together. Family activities replaced the street corner for kids and the neighborhood tavern for men. Strong families, said experts, defended against Communism by teaching American values.

Television was made to order for the family-centered fifties. By 1960, fully 87 percent of households had sets. Popular entertainment was now enjoyed in the privacy of the home, rather than in a crowd. Situation comedies were the most popular programs. Successful shows depicted families who had northern European names and lived in single-family houses with friendly neighbors representing the 1950s ideal of American success.



Television sets were major pieces of living room furniture in the 1950s. This 1951 Motorola ad from *Woman's Home Companion* emphasizes television as a source of family togetherness, a popular theme in the 1950s.

Gaslight Advertising Archives, Inc. NY



28-1

Ladies Home Journal, "Young Mother" (1956)

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Family Life

- ◆ Young women faced pressure to marry early and forego careers.
- ◆ Young people married young and had an average of three kids.
- ◆ Television took on a central role in family life.





Television programming helped limit women's roles by power of example. Women in the fifties had a smaller share of new college degrees and professional jobs. Despite millions of new electric appliances, the time spent on housework *increased*. Magazines proclaimed that proper families maintained distinct roles for dad and mom, who was urged to find fulfillment in a well-scrubbed house and children.

But in reality the number of employed women reached new highs. By 1960, nearly 35 percent of all women held jobs, including 7.5 million mothers with children under 17.

### INVENTING TEENAGERS

Teenagers in the 1950s joined adults as consumers of movies, clothes, and automobiles. Advertisers tapped and expanded the growing youth market by promoting a distinct "youth culture," an idea that became omnipresent in the 1960s and 1970s. While psychologists pontificated on the special problems of adolescence, many cities matched their high schools to the social status of their students: college-prep curricula for middle-class neighborhoods, vocational and technical schools for future factory workers, and separate schools or tracks for African Americans and Latinos.

All teenagers shared rock-and-roll, a new music of the mid-1950s that adapted the rhythm-and-blues of urban blacks for a white mass market. Rock music drew vitality from poor white Southerners (Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley), Hispanics (Richie Valens), and, in the 1960s, the British working class (the Beatles). Record producers played up the association between rock music and youthful rebellion.

#### QUICK REVIEW

##### Teenagers

- ◆ Teenagers became consumers in the 1950s.
- ◆ Advertisers directed their message at the youth market.
- ◆ Teenagers developed a shared culture.

### TURNING TO RELIGION

Leaders from Dwight Eisenhower to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover advocated churchgoing as an antidote for Communism. Regular church attendance grew from 48 percent of the population in 1940 to 63 percent in 1960. Congress created new connections between religion and government when it added "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 and required currency to bear the phrase "In God We Trust" in 1955.

Radio and television preachers added a new dimension to religious life. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen brought vigorous anti-Communism and Catholic doctrine to millions of TV viewers who would never have entered a Catholic church. Norman Vincent Peale blended popular psychology with Protestantism. His book *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952) told readers to "stop worrying and start living" and sold millions of copies.

Another strand in the religious revival was revitalized evangelical and fundamentalist churches. During the 1950s, the theologically and socially conservative Southern Baptists became the largest Protestant denomination. Evangelist Billy Graham continued the grand American tradition of the mass revival meeting. Graham was a pioneer in the resurgence of evangelical Christianity that stressed an individual approach to belief and social issues. "Before we can solve the economic, philosophical, and political problems in the world," he said, "pride, greed, lust, and sin are going to have to be erased."

African-American churches were community institutions as well as religious organizations. Black congregations in Northern cities swelled in the postwar years and often supported extensive social service programs. In Southern cities, churches were centers for community pride and training grounds for the emerging civil rights movement.

Boundaries between many Protestant denominations blurred as church leaders emphasized national unity. Supreme Court decisions sowed the seeds for later





## CHRONOLOGY

<p><b>1953</b> CIA-backed coup returns the Shah to power in Iran. USSR detonates hydrogen bomb.</p>	<p><b>1961</b> Bay of Pigs invasion fails. Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps. Vienna summit fails. Freedom rides are held in the Deep South. Berlin crisis leads to construction of the Berlin Wall.</p>
<p><b>1954</b> Vietnamese defeat the French. Geneva conference divides Vietnam. United States and allies form SEATO. Supreme Court decides <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i>. CIA overthrows the government of Guatemala. China provokes a crisis over Quemoy and Matsu.</p>	<p><b>1962</b> John Glenn orbits the earth. Cuban missile crisis brings the world to the brink. Michael Harrington publishes <i>The Other America</i>.</p>
<p><b>1955</b> Salk polio vaccine is announced. Black riders boycott Montgomery, Alabama, bus system. USSR forms the Warsaw Pact. AFL and CIO merge.</p>	<p><b>1963</b> Civil rights demonstrations rend Birmingham. Civil rights activists march in Washington. Betty Friedan publishes <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>. Limited Test Ban Treaty is signed. Ngo Dinh Diem is assassinated in South Vietnam. President Kennedy is assassinated.</p>
<p><b>1956</b> Interstate Highway Act is passed. Soviets repress Hungarian revolt. Israel, France, and Britain invade Egypt.</p>	<p><b>1964</b> Civil Rights Act is passed. Freedom Summer is organized in Mississippi. Office of Economic Opportunity is created. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution is passed. Wilderness Act launches the modern environmental movement.</p>
<p><b>1957</b> U.S. Army maintains law and order in Little Rock. Soviet Union launches <i>Sputnik</i>.</p>	<p><b>1965</b> Medical Care Act establishes Medicare and Medicaid. Elementary and Secondary Education Act extends direct federal aid to local schools. Selma-Montgomery march climaxes era of nonviolent civil rights demonstrations. Voting Rights Act suspends literacy tests.</p>
<p><b>1958</b> United States and USSR voluntarily suspend nuclear tests.</p>	
<p><b>1959</b> Fidel Castro takes power in Cuba. Nikita Khrushchev visits the United States.</p>	
<p><b>1960</b> U-2 shot down over Russia. Sit-in movement begins in Greensboro, North Carolina.</p>	

political activism among evangelical Christians. In *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), the Court said that public schools could not require children to start the school day with group prayer. *Abington Township v. Schempp* (1963) prohibited devotional Bible reading in the schools. Such decisions alarmed many evangelicals.

### THE GOSPEL OF PROSPERITY

Writers and intellectuals often marveled at the prosperity of Eisenhower's America. William H. Whyte Jr. searched American corporations for the changing character of the United States in *The Organization Man* (1956). Historian David Potter brilliantly analyzed Americans in *People of Plenty* (1954), contending that their national character had been shaped by the abundance of natural resources. In *The Affluent Society* (1958), economist John Kenneth Galbraith predicted that the challenge of the future would be to ensure the fair distribution of national wealth.

Officially, the American message was that abundance was a natural by-product of a free society. In fact, it was easy to present prosperity as a goal in itself, as Vice President Richard Nixon did when he represented the United States at a technology exposition in Moscow in 1959. The American exhibit included a complete six-room ranch house. In its "miracle kitchen," Nixon engaged Soviet Communist party chairman Nikita Khrushchev in a carefully planned "kitchen debate." The vice president claimed that the "most important thing" for Americans was "the right to choose": "We have so many different manufacturers and many different kinds of washing machines so that the housewives have a choice."



## THE UNDERSIDE OF AFFLUENCE

The most basic criticism of the ideology of prosperity was the simplest—that affluence concealed vast inequalities. Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America* (1962) to remind Americans about the “underdeveloped nation” of 40 to 50 million poor people who had missed the last two decades of prosperity.

C. Wright Mills found dangers in the way that the Cold War distorted American society at the top. *The Power Elite* (1956) described an interlocking alliance of big government, big business, and the military. The losers in a permanent war economy, said Mills, were economic and political democracy.

Other critics targeted the alienating effects of consumerism and the conformity of homogeneous suburbs. Sociologist David Riesman saw suburbia as the home of “other-directed” individuals who lacked inner convictions.

There was far greater substance to increasing dissatisfaction among women. In 1963, Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique* followed numerous articles in *McCall’s*, *Redbook*, and the *Ladies’ Home Journal* about the unhappiness of college-educated women who were expected to find total satisfaction in kids and cooking. What Friedan called “the problem that has no name” was a sense of personal emptiness. “I got up one morning,” remembered Geraldine Bean, “and I got my kids off to school. I went in to comb my hair and wash my face, and I stood in front of the bathroom mirror crying . . . because at eight-thirty in the morning I had my children off to school. I had my housework done. There was absolutely nothing for me to do the rest of the day.” She went on to earn a Ph.D. and win election to the board of regents of the University of Colorado.

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Critique of the Ideology of Prosperity

- ◆ Some critics argued that affluence concealed inequality.
- ◆ Others were concerned about the alienating effects of consumerism.
- ◆ Many women became dissatisfied with their assigned role in society.

### WHAT IMPACT did

Dwight Eisenhower’s foreign policy have on U.S. relations with the Soviet Union?

## FACING OFF WITH THE SOVIET UNION

Americans got a reassuring new face in the White House in 1953, but not new policies toward the world. The United States pushed ahead in an arms race with the Soviet Union, stood guard on the borders of China and the Soviet empire, and judged political changes in Latin America, Africa, and Asia for their effect on the global balance of power.

### WHY WE LIKED IKE

In the late twentieth century, few leaders were able to master both domestic policy and foreign affairs. Some presidents, such as Lyndon Johnson, were more adept at social problems than diplomacy. In contrast, Richard Nixon and George H.W. Bush were more interested in the world outside the United States.

Dwight Eisenhower was one of these “foreign policy presidents.” He had helped hold together the alliance that defeated Nazi Germany and built NATO into an effective force in 1951–1952. He then sought the Republican nomination, he said, to ensure that the United States kept its international commitments. He sealed his victory in 1952 by emphasizing foreign policy expertise, telling a Detroit campaign audience that “to bring the Korean war to an early and honorable end . . . requires a personal trip to Korea. I shall make that trip . . . I shall go to Korea.”

Many of the Eisenhower administration’s accomplishments were things that didn’t happen. Eisenhower refused to dismantle the social programs of the New Deal. He exerted American political and military power around the globe but avoided war.

It helped Eisenhower’s political agenda if Americans thought of him as a smiling grandfather. The “Ike” who gave rambling, incoherent answers at White House press conferences was controlling information and keeping the opposition





guessing. When his press secretary advised him to duck questions at one press conference, Ike replied, “Don’t worry, I’ll just confuse them.” He was easily re-elected in 1956.

### A BALANCE OF TERROR

The backdrop for U.S. foreign policy was the growing capacity for mutual nuclear annihilation. The old balance of power had become a balance of terror.

The Eisenhower administration’s doctrine of massive retaliation took advantage of superior American technology while economizing on military spending. Eisenhower compared uncontrolled military spending to crucifying humankind on a “cross of iron.” “Every gun that is fired,” he warned, “every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies . . . a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.” The administration concentrated military spending where the nation already had the greatest advantage—on atomic weapons, instead of attempting to match the land armies of the Soviet Union and China. In response to any serious attack, the United States would direct maximum force against the homeland of the aggressor. The National Security Council in 1953 made reliance on “massive retaliatory damage” by nuclear weapons official policy.

The doctrine grew even more fearful as the Soviet Union developed its own hydrogen bombs. The chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission terrified the American people by mentioning casually that the Soviets could now obliterate New York City. Signs for air raid shelters posted on downtown buildings, air raid drills in schools, and appearance of radioactivity in milk supplies in the form of the isotope strontium 90 carried by fallout made the atomic threat very immediate.

The USSR added to worries about atomic war by launching the world’s first artificial satellite. On the first Sunday of October 1957, Americans discovered that *Sputnik*—Russian for “satellite”—was orbiting the earth. The Soviets soon lifted a dog into orbit while U.S. rockets fizzled on the pad. Soviet propagandists claimed that their technological “first” showed the superiority of Communism, and Americans wondered if the United States had lost its edge. The new **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** took over the satellite program in 1958.

The crisis was more apparent than real. The combination of Soviet rocketry and nuclear capacity created alarm about a missile gap. The USSR was said to be building hundreds of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to overwhelm American air defenses designed to intercept piloted bombers. Although there was no such gap, Eisenhower was unwilling to reveal secret information that might have allayed public anxiety.

### CONTAINMENT IN ACTION

Someone who heard only the campaign speeches in 1952 might have expected sharp foreign policy changes under Eisenhower, but there was more continuity than change. John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower’s secretary of state, had attacked the Democrats as defeatists and appeasers. He demanded that the United States liberate eastern Europe from Soviet control and encourage Jiang Jieshi to attack Communist China. In 1956, Dulles proudly claimed that tough-minded diplomacy had repeatedly brought the United States to the verge of war: “We walked to the brink and looked it in the face. We took strong action.”

In fact, Eisenhower viewed the Cold War in the same terms as Truman. Caution replaced campaign rhetoric about “rolling back” Communism. Around the periphery of the Communist nations, from eastern Asia to the Middle East to Europe, the United States accepted the existing sphere of Communist influence but attempted to block its growth, a policy most Americans accepted.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Kansas Cosmosphere,  
Hutchinson, Kansas  
[www.cosmo.org](http://www.cosmo.org)

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



National Air and Space Museum,  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.nasm.edu](http://www.nasm.edu)

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** Federal agency created in 1958 to manage American space flights and exploration.





The American worldview assumed both the right and the need to intervene in the affairs of other nations, especially in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Policymakers saw these nations as markets for U.S. products and sources of vital raw materials. When political disturbances arose in these states, the United States blamed Soviet meddling to justify U.S. intervention. If Communism could not be rolled back in eastern Europe, the CIA could still undermine anti-American governments in the third world. The Soviets themselves took advantage of local revolutions even when they did not instigate them.

Twice during Eisenhower's first term, the CIA subverted democratically elected governments that seemed to threaten U.S. interests. In Iran, which had nationalized British and U.S. oil companies in an effort to break the hold of western corporations, the CIA in 1953 backed a coup that toppled the government and helped the young Shah, or monarch, gain control. The Shah then cooperated with the United States until his overthrow in 1979. In Guatemala, the leftist government was upsetting the United Fruit Company. When the Guatemalans accepted weapons from the Communist bloc in 1954, the CIA imposed a regime friendly to U.S. business (see Map 28–1).

For most Americans in 1953, democracy in Iran was far less important than ending the war in Korea and stabilizing relations with China. Eisenhower declined to escalate the Korean War by blockading China and sending more U.S. ground forces. Instead he shifted atomic bombs to Okinawa, only 400 miles from China. The nuclear threat, along with the continued cost of the war on both sides, brought the Chinese to a truce that left Korea divided into two nations.

In Vietnam, on China's southern border, France was fighting to maintain its colonial rule against rebels who combined Communist ideology with fervor for national independence under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. The United States picked up three-quarters of the costs, but the French military position collapsed in 1954. The French had had enough, and Eisenhower was unwilling to join another Asian war. A Geneva peace conference in 1954 "temporarily" divided Vietnam into a Communist north and a non-Communist south and scheduled elections for a single Vietnamese government.

The United States then replaced France as the supporter of pro-Western Vietnamese in the south. Washington's client was Ngo Dinh Diem, an anti-Communist from South Vietnam's Roman Catholic elite. U.S. officials encouraged Diem to put off the elections and backed his efforts to construct an authoritarian South Vietnam. Ho meanwhile consolidated the northern half as a Communist state that claimed to be the legitimate government for all Vietnam. The United States further reinforced containment in Asia by creating the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)** in 1954.

Halfway around the world, there was a new crisis when three American friends—France, Britain, and Israel—ganged up on Egypt, each for its own reasons. On October 29, 1956, Israel attacked Egypt. A week later, British and French forces attempted to seize the canal. The United States forced a quick cease-fire, partly to maintain its standing with oil-producing Arab nations. The war left Britain and France dependent on American oil that Eisenhower would not provide until they left Egypt.

In Europe, Eisenhower accepted the status quo because conflicts there could result in nuclear war. In 1956, challenges to Communist rule arose in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary and threatened to break up the Soviet empire. The Soviets replaced liberal Communists in East Germany and Poland with hard-liners. In Hungary, however, open warfare broke out. Hungarian freedom fighters in Budapest used rocks and fire bombs against Soviet tanks while pleading in vain for Western aid. NATO would not risk war with the USSR. Tens of thousands of Hungarians died and 200,000 fled when the Soviets crushed the resistance.

### QUICK REVIEW

#### U.S. Intervention Abroad

- ◆ Many Americans assumed the U.S. had a right to intervene abroad.
- ◆ Eisenhower used the CIA to subvert democratically elected governments in Iran and Guatemala.
- ◆ The U.S. replaced France as the supporter of pro-Western Vietnamese in the south.

**Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)** Mutual defense alliance signed in 1954 by the United States, Britain, France, Thailand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand.





## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map28.1>



MAP 28-1

**U.S. Intervention around the Caribbean since 1954** The United States has long kept a careful eye on the politics of neighboring nations to its south. In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States has frequently used military assistance or force to influence or intervene in Caribbean and Central American nations. The most common purpose has been to counter or undermine left-leaning governments; some interventions, as in Haiti, have been intended to stabilize democratic regimes.

**WHAT WAS** the effect of U.S. involvement in the Caribbean?

### GLOBAL STANDOFF

As documents from both sides of the Cold War become available, historians have realized what dangerously different meanings the two sides gave to confrontations between 1953 and 1964.

A good example was the U-2 affair of 1960, which derailed progress toward nuclear disarmament. Both countries voluntarily suspended nuclear tests in 1958 and prepared for a June 1960 summit meeting in Paris, where Eisenhower intended to negotiate a test ban treaty.



But on May 1, 1960, Soviet air defenses shot down an American U-2 spy plane over the heart of Russia and captured the pilot, Francis Gary Powers. Designed to soar above the range of Soviet antiaircraft missiles, U-2s had assured American officials that there was no missile gap.

When Moscow trumpeted the news of the downing, Eisenhower took personal responsibility in hopes that Khrushchev would accept the U-2 as an unpleasant reality of international espionage. Unfortunately, the planes meant something very different to the Soviets, touching their festering sense of inferiority. They had stopped protesting the flights in 1957 because complaints were demeaning. The Americans thought that silence signaled acceptance. When Eisenhower refused to apologize in Paris, Khrushchev stalked out. Disarmament was set back for years.

The most important aspect of Eisenhower's foreign policy was continuity. The administration pursued containment as defined under Truman. The Cold War consensus, however, prevented the United States from seeing the nations of the developing world on their own terms. By viewing every independence movement and social revolution as part of the competition with Communism, American leaders created unnecessary problems.

## JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE COLD WAR

**J**ohn Kennedy was a man of contradictions. A Democrat, he presided over policies whose direction was set under Eisenhower. Despite stirring rhetoric about leading the nation toward a **New Frontier** of scientific and social progress, he recorded his greatest failures and successes in the continuing Cold War. (See American Views, “Two Presidents Assess the Implication of the Cold War.”)

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### WHAT WAS John F.

Kennedy's approach to dealing with the Soviet Union?

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#### WHERE TO LEARN MORE

★ John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, Boston, Massachusetts  
[www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/](http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/)

### THE KENNEDY MYSTIQUE

Kennedy won the presidency over Richard Nixon in a cliffhanging 1960 election that was more about personality and style than substance (see Map 28–2). Both candidates were determined not to yield another inch to Communism. The charming and eloquent Kennedy narrowly skirted scandal in his personal life. Well publicized as a war hero from World War II, he tempered ruthless ambition with respect for public service. His forthright campaigning allayed voter concern about his Roman Catholicism. Nixon had wider experience and was a shrewd tactician, but he was also self-righteous and awkward.

Television was crucial to the outcome. The campaign featured the first televised presidential debates. In the first session, Nixon actually gave better replies, but his nervousness and a bad makeup job turned off millions of viewers who admired Kennedy's energy. Nixon never overcame the setback. Kennedy's televised inauguration was the perfect setting for his impassioned plea for national unity: “My fellow Americans,” he challenged, “ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

Kennedy brought dash to the White House. His beautiful and refined wife, Jackie, outshined previous first ladies. Kennedy's staff and large family played touch football, not golf. No president had shown such verve since Teddy Roosevelt. People began to talk about Kennedy's “charisma,” his ability to lead by sheer force of personality.

### KENNEDY'S MISTAKES

Talking tough to satisfy more militant countrymen, Kennedy and Khrushchev pushed each other into corners, continuing the problems of mutual misunderstanding. When Khrushchev promised in January 1961 to support “wars of national liberation,”

**New Frontier** John F. Kennedy's domestic and foreign policy initiatives, designed to reinvigorate a sense of national purpose and energy.





he was really fending off Chinese criticism. But Kennedy overreacted in his first State of the Union address by asking for more military spending.

Three months later, Kennedy fed Soviet fears of American aggressiveness by sponsoring an invasion of Cuba. At the start of 1959, Fidel Castro replaced another Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista.

When fourteen hundred anti-Castro Cubans landed at Cuba's **Bay of Pigs** on April 17, 1961, they were following a plan from the Eisenhower administration. The CIA had trained and armed the invaders and convinced Kennedy that the landing would trigger spontaneous uprisings. But when Kennedy refused to commit American armed forces to support them, Cuban forces captured the attackers.

Kennedy followed the Bay of Pigs debacle with a hasty and ill-prepared summit meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna in June that left the Soviets with the impression that the president was weak. To exploit Kennedy's perceived vulnerability, the USSR renewed tension over Berlin, deep within East Germany. The divided city served as an escape route from Communism for hundreds of thousands of East Germans. Khrushchev now threatened to transfer the Soviet sector in Berlin to East Germany, which had no treaty obligations to France, Britain, or the United States. If the West had to deal directly with East Germany for access to Berlin, it would have to recognize a permanently divided Germany. Kennedy sounded the alarm; he doubled draft calls, called up reservists, and warned families to build fallout shelters. Boise, Idaho, families paid \$100 for a share in a community shelter with its own power plant and hospital.

Rather than confront the United States directly, however, the Soviets and East Germans on August 13, 1961, built the **Berlin Wall** around the western sectors of Berlin while leaving the access route to West Germany open. In private, Kennedy accepted the wall as a clever way to stabilize a dangerous situation: "A wall," he said, "is a hell of a lot better than a war."

## GETTING INTO VIETNAM

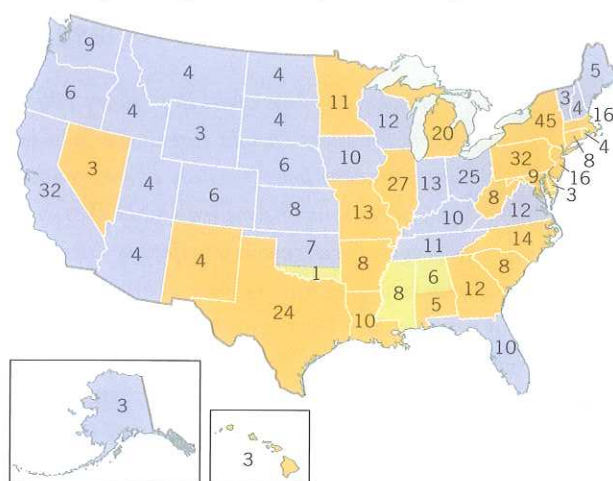
American involvement in Vietnam dated from the mid-1950s when the United States replaced France, the former colonial power there, as the supporter of the anti-Communist Vietnamese who had established a government in the southern part of Vietnam. North Vietnam was ruled by Communists under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh who had defeated the French in 1954.

An international conference that negotiated the French withdrawal had called for elections for a single Vietnamese government. The Eisenhower administration, however, encouraged its client in the south, Ngo Dinh Diem from the country's Catholic elite, to put off elections and to establish an independent South Vietnam. Meanwhile, Ho's Communist state in the north claimed to be the legitimate government for all Vietnam.

Kennedy saw U.S. support for Diem as an opportunity to reassert America's commitment to containment. Although Diem's forces controlled the cities with the help of a Vietnamese elite that had also supported the French, Communist insurgents,

## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map28.2>



	Electoral Vote (%)	Popular Vote (%)
<b>JOHN F. KENNEDY (Democrat)</b>	<b>303 (56)</b>	<b>34,226,731 (49.9)</b>
Richard M. Nixon (Republican)	219 (41)	34,108,157 (49.7)
Other	15 (3)	197,029 (.4)

Note: Fifteen electors voted for Harry Byrd, although he had not been an active candidate. Minor party candidates took a tiny percentage of the popular vote.

### MAP 28-2

**The Election of 1960** The presidential election of 1960 was one of the closest in American history. John Kennedy's victory depended on his appeal in Northern industrial states with large Roman Catholic populations and his ability to hold much of the traditionally Democratic South. Texas, the home state of his vice presidential running mate Lyndon Johnson, was vital to the success of the ticket.

**WHY DID** most Western states not support Kennedy?

**Bay of Pigs** Site in Cuba of an unsuccessful landing by fourteen hundred anti-Castro Cuban refugees in April 1961.

**Berlin Wall** Wall erected by East Germany in 1961 that isolated West Berlin from the surrounding areas in Communist-controlled East Berlin and East Germany.





## ◆ AMERICAN VIEWS ◆

### TWO PRESIDENTS ASSESS THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COLD WAR

**I**n speeches two days apart in January 1961, outgoing President Dwight Eisenhower and incoming President John Kennedy offered contrasting interpretations of America's Cold War crusade.

*Eisenhower spoke with concern about the effects of defense spending on American society. Kennedy promised an unlimited commitment of resources to achieve national goals.*

**WHY DID** Kennedy define the American mission to the world so broadly? Why did Eisenhower warn about the dangers of pursuing that mission? Do the selections show basic agreement or disagreement about the goals of national policy?

Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Farewell Address,  
January 18, 1961

Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime. . . . This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. . . .

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals.

John F. Kennedy  
Inaugural Address,  
January 20, 1961

Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world. Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friends, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

known as the **Viet Cong**, were gaining strength in the countryside. The United States sent Diem more weapons and increasing numbers of civilian and military advisors.

U.S. aid did not work. Despite overoptimistic reports and sixteen thousand American troops, Diem's government was losing the loyalty—"the hearts and minds"—of many South Vietnamese. North Vietnam's support for the Viet Cong offset the effect of U.S. assistance. Diem further weakened his position by crushing opposition from Vietnamese Buddhists. In frustration, Kennedy's administration tacitly approved a coup that killed Diem and his brother on November 1, 1963 and replaced them with an ineffectual military junta.

### MISSILE CRISIS: A LINE DRAWN IN THE WAVES

On October 15, 1962 reconnaissance photos revealed Soviets at work on launching sites in Cuba from which Soviet-operated nuclear missiles could hit the United States. Top officials spent five exhausting and desperate days sorting through options. Doing nothing meant political disaster. Full-scale invasion of Cuba was

**Viet Cong** Communist rebels in South Vietnam who fought the pro-American government established in South Vietnam in 1954.





infeasible on short notice, and “surgical” air strikes were technically impossible. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara suggested demanding removal of the missiles and declaring a naval “quarantine” against the arrival of further offensive weapons. A blockade would buy time for diplomacy.

Kennedy imposed the blockade in a terrifying speech on Monday, October 22. He emphasized the “deceptive” deployment of the Soviet missiles and raised the specter of nuclear war. Americans would have been even more afraid had they known that some of the missiles were operational and that Soviets in Cuba were authorized to use them in self-defense. On Friday, Khrushchev offered to withdraw the missiles in return for an American pledge not to invade Cuba. On Saturday, a second communication raised a new complaint about American missiles on the territory of NATO allies. The letter was the result of pressure by Kremlin hard-liners and Khrushchev’s own wavering. Kennedy decided to accept the first letter and ignore the second. The United States pledged not to invade Cuba and secretly promised to remove obsolete Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

Why did Khrushchev risk the Cuban gamble? One reason was to protect Castro as a symbol of Soviet commitment to anti-Western regimes in the developing world. Kennedy had tried to preempt Castroism in 1961 by launching the **Alliance for Progress**, an economic development program for Latin America that tied aid to social reform. However, the United States had also orchestrated the Bay of Pigs invasion and funded a CIA campaign to sabotage Cuba and assassinate its leaders. Castro and Khrushchev had reason to fear the worst.

Khrushchev also hoped to redress the strategic balance. Intermediate-range rockets gave the USSR a nuclear club over western Europe, but in October 1962, the USSR had fewer than fifty ICBMs to aim at the United States and China. The United States was creating a defensive triad of a thousand land-based Minuteman missiles, five hundred long-range bombers, and six hundred Polaris missiles on nuclear submarines targeted on the USSR. The strategic imbalance had sustained NATO during the Berlin confrontation, but forty launchers in Cuba with two warheads each would have doubled the Soviet capacity to strike at the United States.

Soviet missiles in Cuba thus flouted the Monroe Doctrine and posed a real military threat. In the end, both sides were cautious. Khrushchev backed down rather than fight. Kennedy fended off hawkish advisers who wanted to destroy Castro. The world had trembled, but neither nation wanted war over “the missiles of October.” In the long run, the crisis accelerated the global arms race. Never again, Soviet leaders vowed, would they submit to American nuclear superiority.

## SCIENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The two superpowers competed through science as well as diplomacy. A Russian, Yuri Gagarin, was the first human to orbit the earth, on April 12, 1961. American John Glenn did not match Gagarin’s feat until February 1962. Kennedy committed the United States to placing an American astronaut on the moon by 1970.

The Soviet Union and the United States were also fencing about nuclear weapons testing. After the three-year moratorium, tests resumed in 1961–1962. Both nations worked on multiple targetable warheads, antiballistic missiles, and other innovations that might destabilize the balance of terror.

After the missile crisis showed his toughness, however, Kennedy had enough political maneuvering room to respond to pressure from liberal Democrats and groups like Women Strike for Peace and the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy by giving priority to disarmament. In July 1963, the United States, Britain, and the USSR signed the **Limited Test Ban Treaty**, which outlawed nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water, and invited other nations to join in. A more comprehensive



The Kennedy family in Hyannis Port in August of 1962.

Cecil Soughton, White House/John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, Boston

## QUICK REVIEW

### The Cuban Missile Crisis

- ◆ October 15, 1962: U.S. acquires evidence of construction of missile launching sites in Cuba.
- ◆ In response, Kennedy imposed a blockade.
- ◆ The Soviets removed the launchers in exchange for removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey and a U.S. promise not to invade Cuba.



28–2  
John F. Kennedy, Cuban Missile Address (1962)

**Alliance for Progress** Program of economic aid to Latin America during the Kennedy administration.

**Limited Test Ban Treaty** Treaty, signed by the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, outlawing nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water.





treaty was impossible because the Soviet Union refused on-site inspections. France and China, the other nuclear powers, refused to sign, and the treaty did not halt weapons development, but it was the most positive achievement of Kennedy's foreign policy and a step toward later disarmament treaties.

## RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY STREAM: THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

WHAT WAS the significance of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*?

Linda Brown of Topeka, Kansas, was a third-grader whose parents were fed up with sending her past an all-white public school to attend an all-black school a mile away. The Browns volunteered to help the NAACP challenge Topeka's school segregation by trying to enroll Linda in their neighborhood school, beginning a legal challenge that reached the Supreme Court. Three years later, on May 17, 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the justices reversed the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* by ruling that sending black children to "separate but equal" schools denied them equal treatment under the Constitution.

### GETTING TO THE SUPREME COURT

The *Brown* decision climaxed a twenty-five-year campaign to reenlist the federal courts on the side of equal rights. The work began in the 1930s when Charles Hamilton Houston, dean of Howard University's law school, trained a corps of civil rights lawyers. Working on behalf of the NAACP, he hoped to erode *Plessy* by suits focused on interstate travel and professional graduate schools (the least defensible segregated institutions because states seldom provided alternatives). In 1938, Houston's student Thurgood Marshall, a future Supreme Court justice, took over the NAACP job.

The *Brown* case combined lawsuits from Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, the District of Columbia, and Kansas. In each instance, students and families braved community pressure to demand equal access to a basic public service. Viewing public education as central for the equal opportunity that lay at the heart of American values, the Court weighed the *consequences* of segregated school systems and concluded that separate meant unequal.

*Brown* also built on efforts by Mexican Americans in the Southwest to assert their rights of citizenship. In 1946, the federal courts had prohibited segregation of Mexican-American children in California schools. Eight years later, the Supreme Court forbade Texas from excluding Mexican Americans from juries.

### DELIBERATE SPEED

Racial segregation by law was largely a Southern problem, the legacy of Jim Crow laws from early in the century. At first, Americans elsewhere thought of racial injustice as a regional issue.

Southern responses to *Brown* emphasized regional differences. Few Southern communities desegregated schools voluntarily. Their reluctance was bolstered in 1955 when the Supreme Court allowed segregated states to carry out the 1954 decision "with all deliberate speed" rather than immediately. The following year, 101 Southern congressmen and senators issued the **Southern Manifesto**, which asserted that the Court decision was unconstitutional. President Eisenhower privately deplored the desegregation decision, which violated his sense of states' rights and upset Republican attempts to gain southern votes.

The first crisis came in Little Rock, Arkansas, in September 1957. The city school board admitted nine African Americans to Central High, only to be upstaged by Governor Orval Faubus. Claiming to fear violence, he surrounded Central with

***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*** Supreme Court decision in 1954 that declared that "separate but equal" schools for children of different races violated the Constitution.

**Southern Manifesto** A document signed by 101 members of Congress from Southern states in 1956 that argued that the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* itself contradicted the Constitution.





the National Guard and turned the new students away. Meanwhile, segregationists stirred up white fears. Under intense national pressure, Faubus withdrew the Guard, and a howling crowd surrounded the school. When the black students entered anyway, the mob threatened to storm the building. The police had to sneak them out after two hours. Fuming at the governor's defiance of federal authority, which bordered on insurrection, Eisenhower reluctantly nationalized the National Guard and sent in the 101st Airborne Division to keep order. Eight of the students endured a year of harassment in the hallways of Central.

The breakthrough in school integration did not come until the end of the 1960s, when the courts rejected further delays and federal authorities threatened to cut off education funds. As late as 1968, only 6 percent of African-American children in the South attended integrated schools. By 1973, the figure was 90 percent.

## PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Most Southern states separated the races in bus terminals and movie theaters. They required black riders to take rear seats on buses. They labeled separate restrooms and drinking fountains for "colored" users. Hotels denied rooms to black people, and restaurants refused them service.

The struggle to end segregated facilities started in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress who worked at a downtown department store, refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger and was arrested. Parks acted spontaneously, but she was part of a network of civil rights activists who wanted to challenge segregated buses and was the secretary of the Montgomery NAACP. As news of her action spread, the Women's Political Council, a group of college-trained black women, initiated a mass boycott of the privately owned bus company. Martin Luther King Jr., a twenty-six-year-old pastor, galvanized a mass meeting with a speech that quoted the biblical prophet Amos: "We are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

A car pool substituted for the buses despite police harassment. As the boycott survived months of pressure, the national media began to pay attention. After nearly a year, the Supreme Court agreed that the bus segregation law was unconstitutional.

Victory in Montgomery depended on the steadfastness of African-American involvement. Participants cut across the class lines that had divided black Southerners. Success also revealed the discrepancy between white attitudes in the Deep South and national opinion. For white Southerners, segregation was a local concern best defined as a legal or constitutional matter. For other Americans, it was increasingly an issue of the South's deviation from national moral norms.

The Montgomery boycott won a local victory and made King famous. King formed the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, but four African-American college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, started the next phase of the struggle. On February 1, 1960, they sat down at the segregated lunch counter in Woolworth's, waiting through the day without being served. Their patient courage brought more demonstrators; within two days, eighty-five students packed the store. Nonviolent sit-ins spread throughout the South.

In a comparatively sophisticated border city like Nashville, Tennessee, sit-ins integrated lunch counters. Elsewhere they precipitated white violence and mass arrests. Like soldiers on a battlefield, nervous participants in sit-ins and demonstrations drew strength from one another. "If you don't have courage," said one young woman in Albany, Georgia, "you can borrow it." SCLC leader Ella Baker helped the students form a new organization, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



National Afro-American Museum  
and Cultural Center,  
Wilberforce, Ohio  
[www.ohiohistory.org/places/afroam/](http://www.ohiohistory.org/places/afroam/)

**Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** Black civil rights organization founded in 1957 by Martin Luther King Jr., and other clergy.

**Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** Black civil rights organization founded in 1960 and drawing heavily on younger activists and college students.





The year 1961 brought “freedom rides” to test the segregation of interstate bus terminals. The idea came from James Farmer of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. Two buses carrying black and white passengers met only minor problems in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, but Alabamians burned one of the buses and attacked the riders in Birmingham, where they beat demonstrators senseless and clubbed a Justice Department observer. The governor and police refused to protect the freedom riders. The riders traveled into Mississippi under National Guard protection but were arrested at the Jackson bus terminal. Freedom rides continued through the summer.

### MARCH ON WASHINGTON, 1963

John Kennedy was a tepid supporter of the civil rights movement and entered office with no civil rights agenda. He appointed segregationist judges to mollify Southern congressmen and would have preferred that black protestors stop disturbing the fragile Democratic party coalition.

In the face of slow federal response, the SCLC concentrated for 1963 on rigidly segregated Birmingham. April began with sit-ins and marches that aimed to integrate lunch counters, restrooms, and stores and secure open hiring for some clerical jobs. Birmingham’s commissioner of public safety, Bull Connor, used fire hoses to blast demonstrators against buildings and roll children down the streets. When demonstrators fought back, his men chased them with dogs. Continued marches brought the arrest of hundreds of children. King’s own “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” stated the case for protest: “We have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. . . . Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

The events in Alabama had forced President Kennedy to board the freedom train with an eloquent June 11 speech and to send a civil rights bill to Congress. “Are we to say . . . that this is the land of the free, except for Negroes, that we have no second-class citizens, except Negroes . . . ? Now the time has come for the nation to fulfill its promise.”

On August 28, 1963, a quarter of a million black and white people marched to the Lincoln Memorial. The day gave Martin Luther King Jr. a national pulpit. His call for progress toward Christian and American goals had immense appeal. Television cut away from afternoon programs for his “I Have a Dream” speech. The March on Washington demonstrated the mass appeal of civil rights and its identification with national values.

### “LET US CONTINUE”

**T**he optimism of the March on Washington shattered with the assassination of John Kennedy in November 1963. In 1964 and 1965, however, President Lyndon Johnson pushed through Kennedy’s legislative agenda and much more.

### DALLAS, 1963

In November 1963, President Kennedy visited Texas to patch up feuds among Texas Democrats. On November 22, the president’s motorcade took him near the Texas School Book Depository building in Dallas, where Lee Harvey Oswald had stationed himself at a window on the sixth floor. When Kennedy’s open car swung into the sights of his rifle, Oswald fired three shots that wounded Texas Governor John Connally and killed the president. As doctors vainly treated the president in a hospital emergency room, Dallas police arrested Oswald. Vice President Lyndon Johnson took the oath of office as president on Air Force One while the blood-spattered Jacqueline Kennedy looked

#### QUICK REVIEW

##### Civil Rights During the Kennedy Administration

- ◆ Kennedy was a tepid supporter of the civil rights movement.
- ◆ 1963: activists focused their attention on segregation in Birmingham.
- ◆ August 28, 1963: quarter of a million people marched to the Lincoln Memorial in support of civil rights.



28-3

John Lewis, Address at the March on Washington (1963)

##### Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)

Civil rights group formed in 1942 and committed to nonviolent civil disobedience.

**HOW DID** Lyndon Johnson continue the domestic agenda inherited from the Kennedy administration?





on. Two days later, as Oswald was being led to a courtroom, Texas nightclub owner Jack Ruby killed Oswald with a handgun, in full view of TV cameras.

Lee Oswald was a twenty-four-year old misfit. He had served in the Marines and worked maintaining U-2 spy planes before defecting to the Soviet Union. He returned to the United States after three years with a fervent commitment to Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution. He visited the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City in September trying to drum up a job, but neither country thought him worth hiring.

Some Americans believe there is more to the story. Why? One possibility is that Oswald seems too insignificant to be responsible on his own for the murder of a charismatic president. The sketchy job done by the Warren Commission, appointed to investigate the assassination, calmed fears in the short run but left loose ends that have fueled conspiracy theories.

All of the theories remain unproved. Logic holds that the simplest explanation for cutting through a mass of information is usually the best. Oswald was a social misfit with a grievance against American society. Ruby was an impulsive man who told his brother on his deathbed that he thought he was doing the country a favor.

## WAR ON POVERTY

Five days after the assassination, Lyndon Johnson claimed Kennedy's progressive aura for his new administration. "Let us continue," he told the nation, promising to implement Kennedy's policies. Lyndon Johnson was a professional politician who had reached the top through Texas politics and congressional infighting. Johnson's presence on the ticket in 1960 had helped elect Kennedy by attracting Southern voters, but he lacked Kennedy's polish and easy relations with the Eastern elite. He had entered public life with the New Deal in the 1930s and believed in its principles. Johnson, not Kennedy, was the true heir of Franklin Roosevelt.

Johnson inherited a domestic agenda that the Kennedy administration had defined but not enacted. Initiatives in education, medical insurance, tax reform, and urban affairs had stalled or been gutted by conservatives in Congress.

When Michael Harrington's study *The Other America* became an unexpected bestseller, Kennedy had taken notice. As poverty captured public attention, Kennedy's economic advisers devised a community action program that emphasized education and job training, a national service corps, and a youth conservation corps.

Johnson made Kennedy's antipoverty package his own. Adopting Cold War rhetoric, he declared "unconditional war on poverty." The core of Johnson's program was the **Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)**. Established under the direction of Kennedy's brother-in-law R. Sargent Shriver in 1964, the OEO operated the Job Corps for school dropouts, the Neighborhood Youth Corps for unemployed teenagers, the Head Start program to prepare poor children for school, and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a domestic Peace Corps. OEO's biggest effort went to Community Action Agencies. By 1968, more than five hundred such agencies provided health and educational services. Despite flaws, the **War on Poverty** improved life for millions of Americans.

## CIVIL RIGHTS, 1964–1965

In Johnson's view, segregation not only deprived African Americans of access to opportunity but also distracted Southern white people from their own poverty and underdevelopment.

One solution was the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which Kennedy had introduced but Johnson got enacted. The law prohibited segregation in public accommodations, such as hotels, restaurants, gas stations, theaters, and parks, and outlawed employment discrimination on federally assisted projects. It also created

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas, Texas  
[www.jfk.org](http://www.jfk.org)

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



National Civil Rights Museum,  
Memphis, Tennessee  
<http://www.civilrights museum.org>

**Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)** Federal agency that coordinated many programs of the War on Poverty between 1964 and 1975.

**War on Poverty** Set of programs introduced by Lyndon Johnson between 1963 and 1966 designed to break the cycle of poverty by providing funds for job training, community development, nutrition, and supplementary education.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964** Federal legislation that outlawed discrimination in public accommodations and employment on the basis of race, skin color, sex, religion, or national origin.



the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and included gender in a list of categories protected against discrimination, a provision whose consequences were scarcely suspected in 1964.

Even as Congress was debating the 1964 law, **Freedom Summer** moved political power to the top of the civil rights agenda. Organized by SNCC, the Mississippi Summer Freedom Project was a voter registration drive that sent white and black volunteers to the small towns and back roads of Mississippi. The target was a Southern political system that used rigged literacy tests and intimidation to keep black people from voting. In Mississippi in 1964, only 7 percent of eligible black people were registered voters. Freedom Summer gained sixteen hundred new voters and taught two thousand children in SNCC-run Freedom Schools at the cost of beatings, bombings, church arson, and the murder of three project workers.

Another outgrowth of the SNCC effort was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), a biracial coalition that bypassed Mississippi's all-white Democratic party, followed state party rules, and sent its own delegates to the 1964 Democratic convention. To preserve party harmony, President Johnson refused to expel the "regular" Mississippi Democrats and offered instead to seat two MFDP delegates and enforce party rules for 1968. The MFDP walked out. Fannie Lou Hamer, a MFDP delegate, remembered, "We learned the hard way that even though we had all the law and all the righteousness on our side— that white man is not going to give up his power to us. We have to build our own power."

Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King Jr. agreed on the need for federal voting legislation when King visited the president in December 1964 after winning the Nobel Peace Prize. For King, power at the ballot box would help black Southerners take control of their own communities. For Johnson, voting reform would fulfill the promise of American democracy. It would also benefit the Democratic party by replacing with black voters the white Southerners who were drifting toward anti-integration Republicans.

The target for King and the SCLC was Dallas County, Alabama, where only 2 percent of eligible black voters were registered, compared with 70 percent of white voters. Peaceful demonstrations started in January 1965. By early February, jails in the county seat of Selma held 2,600 black people whose offense was marching to the courthouse to demand the vote. The campaign climaxed with a march from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery. SNCC leader John Lewis remembered, "I don't know what we expected. I think maybe we thought we'd be arrested and jailed, or maybe they wouldn't do anything to us. I had a little knapsack on my shoulder with an apple, a toothbrush, toothpaste, and two books in it: a history of America and a book by [Christian theologian] Thomas Merton."

On Sunday, March 7, five hundred marchers crossed the bridge over the Alabama River to meet a sea of state troopers. The troopers gave them two minutes to disperse and then attacked on foot and horseback "as if they were mowing a big field." The attack drove the demonstrators back in bloody confusion while television cameras rolled.

As violence continued, Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress to demand a voting rights law: "Our mission is at once the oldest and the most basic of this country: to right wrong, to do justice, to serve man." He ended with the refrain of the civil rights movement: "We shall overcome."

Johnson signed the **Voting Rights Act** on August 6, 1965. The law outlawed literacy tests and provided for federal voting registrars in states where registration or turnout in 1964 was less than 50 percent of eligible population. It applied initially in seven southern states. Black registration in these states jumped from 27 percent to 55 percent within the first year. In 1975, Congress extended coverage to Hispanic voters in the Southwest. By the end of 1992, Virginia had elected a black governor, and nearly

**Freedom Summer** Voter registration effort in rural Mississippi organized by black and white civil rights workers in 1964.

**Voting Rights Act** Legislation in 1965 that overturned a variety of practices by which states systematically denied voter registration to minorities.





every southern state had sent black representatives to Congress. Less obvious but just as revolutionary were the thousands of African Americans and Latinos who won local offices and the new moderation of white leaders who had to satisfy black voters.

## WAR, PEACE, AND THE LANDSLIDE OF 1964

Johnson had maintained Kennedy's commitment to South Vietnam. On the advice of Kennedy hold-overs like Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, he stepped up commando raids and naval shelling of North Vietnam. On August 2, North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked the U.S. destroyer *Maddox* in the Gulf of Tonkin while it was eavesdropping on North Vietnamese military signals. Two days later, the *Maddox* and the *C. Turner Joy* reported another torpedo attack (probably false sonar readings). Johnson ordered a bombing raid and asked Congress to authorize "all necessary measures" to protect American forces and stop further aggression. Congress passed the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution** with only two nay votes.

Johnson's Republican opponent, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, a former Air Force pilot, wanted aggressive confrontation with Communism. Campaign literature declared that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," raising visions of vigilantes and mobs. Goldwater's campaign made Johnson look moderate. Johnson pledged not "to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves" while Goldwater proposed an all-out war:

Johnson's 61 percent of the popular vote was the greatest margin ever recorded in a presidential election. Democrats racked up two-to-one majorities in Congress. For the first time in decades, liberal Democrats could enact their domestic program without begging votes from conservative Southerners or Republicans, and Johnson could achieve his goal of a **Great Society** based on freedom and opportunity for all.

The result in 1965 was a series of measures that Johnson rushed through Congress before his political standing began to erode and Vietnam distracted national attention. The National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and highway beautification were part of the Great Society for the middle class. The Wilderness Act (1964), an early success of the modern environmental movement, preserved 9.1 million acres from all development.

More central to Johnson's vision were efforts to increase opportunity for all. As he told a July 1965 news conference, "When I was young, poverty was so common that we didn't know it had a name. An education was something that you had to fight for. . . . It is now my opportunity to help every child get an education, to have every family get a decent home, and to help bring healing to the sick and dignity to the old." The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was the first general federal aid program for public schools, allocating \$1.3 billion for textbooks and special education. The Higher Education Act funded low-interest student loans and university research facilities. The Medical Care Act created federally funded health insurance for the elderly (**Medicare**) and helped states offer medical care to the poor (**Medicaid**). The Appalachian Regional Development Act funded economic development in the depressed mountain counties of twelve states from Georgia to New York and proved a long-run success.

The United States came closer to winning the war on poverty than the war in Vietnam. New or expanded social insurance and income support programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and food stamps, cut the proportion of poor people from 22 percent of the American population in 1960 to 13 percent in 1970. Infant mortality dropped by a third because of improved nutrition and better access to health care for mothers and children. Taken together, the political results of the 1964 landslide moved the United States far toward Lyndon Johnson's vision of an end to poverty and racial injustice.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Birmingham Civil Rights Institute  
Museum, Birmingham, Alabama  
[www.bcri.bham.al.us](http://www.bcri.bham.al.us)

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Martin Luther King, Jr., National  
Historical Site, Atlanta, Georgia  
<http://www.nps.gov/malu/>

**Gulf of Tonkin Resolution** Request to Congress from President Lyndon Johnson in response to North Vietnamese torpedo boat attacks in which he sought authorization for "all necessary measures" to protect American forces and stop further aggression.

**Great Society** Theme of Lyndon Johnson's administration, focusing on poverty, education, and civil rights.

**Medicare** Basic medical insurance for the elderly, financed through the federal government; program created in 1965.

**Medicaid** Supplementary medical insurance for the poor, financed through the federal government; program created in 1965.





## CONCLUSION

**F**rom 1953 to 1964, consistent goals guided American foreign policy including vigilant anti-Communism and the confidence to intervene in trouble spots around the globe. At home, the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision introduced a decade-long civil rights revolution. However, many patterns of personal behavior and social relations remained unchanged. Women faced similar expectations from the early fifties to the early sixties. Churches showed more continuity than change.

In retrospect, it is remarkable how widely and deeply the Cold War shaped U.S. society. Fundamental social institutions, such as marriage and religion, got extra credit for their contributions to anti-Communism. The nation's long tradition of home-grown radicalism was virtually silent in the face of the Cold War consensus. Even economically meritorious programs like more money for science and better roads went down more easily if linked to national defense.

## SUMMARY

**A Decade of Affluence** President Eisenhower presided over the prosperity of the 1950s. He claimed the “political middle” and accepted much of the New Deal but saw little need for further reform. Under Eisenhower, workers had more disposable income and credit-based consumerism expanded; suburbs and the “car culture” grew. Families were seen as part of the anti-Communist crusade. The “youth culture” emerged, but religious affiliation, the belief in prosperity, and social conformity characterized the era. Vast inequalities were concealed; many had missed out on “affluent America” and many women were unhappy in their “perfect” world.

**Facing Off with the Soviet Union** The actions of the United States and Soviet Union created a bipolar world: Each was a magnetic pole with countries aligning themselves or attempting to remain neutral. The Soviet launching of the *Sputnik* satellite concerned Americans who thought they were technologically superior; America's worldview of the right and need to intervene in areas that were possible Communist takeover targets resulted in an expansion of containment. “Brinkmanship” characterized this period in the Cold War.

**John F. Kennedy and the Cold War** John F. Kennedy won over Richard Nixon in a close election in 1960; television was a critical element. Kennedy's administration dealt with the Bay of Pigs invasion, a new Berlin crisis and the building of the Berlin Wall, growing American involvement in Vietnam, and the Cuban Missile crisis. Kennedy supported science as well as diplomacy; he committed the United States to placing an American astronaut on the moon and signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty which was a step toward later disarmament treaties.

**Righteousness Like a Mighty Stream: The Struggle for Civil Rights** The Supreme Court's *Brown* decision made the growing effort to secure equal legal treatment for African Americans a challenge to American society. The first phase of the civil rights struggle built from the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 to a vast gathering at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. In between African Americans chipped away at racial segregation of schools, universities, and public facilities with boycotts, sit-ins, and lawsuits, forcing segregationists to choose between integration and violent defiance.

**“Let Us Continue”** After President Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Johnson inherited a domestic agenda that was based on the knowledge that poverty was a widespread American problem. Johnson's passionate commitment to economic betterment accompanied a commitment to civil rights. War on Poverty and Great Society measures were passed before Johnson's enlargement of the Vietnam War eroded his political standing; the United States moved closer to addressing the effects of poverty and racial injustice than ever before.








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## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the sources of prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s? How did prosperity shape cities, family life, and religion?
  2. What did American leaders think was at stake in Vietnam, Berlin, and Cuba?
  3. Who initiated and led the African-American struggle for civil rights?
  4. In what new directions did Lyndon Johnson take the United States?
  5. Why was school integration the focus of such strong conflict?
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## KEY TERMS

**Alliance for Progress** (p. 751)

**Bay of Pigs** (p. 749)

**Berlin Wall** (p. 749)

**Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka**  
(p. 752)

**Civil Rights Act of 1964** (p. 755)

**Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**  
(p. 754)

**Federal Highway Act of 1956**  
(p. 740)

**Freedom Summer** (p. 756)

**Great Society** (p. 757)

**Gulf of Tonkin Resolution** (p. 757)

**Limited Test Ban Treaty** (p. 751)

**Medicaid** (p. 757)

**Medicare** (p. 757)

**National Aeronautics and Space  
Administration (NASA)** (p. 745)

**New Frontier** (p. 748)

**Office of Economic Opportunity  
(OEO)** (p. 755)

**Southeast Asia Treaty Organization  
(SEATO)** (p. 746)

**Southern Christian Leadership  
Conference (SCLC)** (p. 753)

**Southern Manifesto** (p. 752)

**Student Nonviolent Coordinating  
Committee (SNCC)** (p. 753)

**Viet Cong** (p. 750)

**Voting Rights Act** (p. 756)

**War on Poverty** (p. 755)

## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

-  **National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C.** Part of the Smithsonian Institution's complex of museums in Washington, the Air and Space Museum is the richest source for artifacts and discussion of the American space program. [www.nasm.edu](http://www.nasm.edu)
-  **Kansas Cosmosphere, Hutchinson, Kansas.** A rich collection of artifacts and equipment from the U.S. space program. [www.cosmo.org](http://www.cosmo.org)
-  **Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas, Texas.** Occupying the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository building, exhibits examine the life, death, and legacy of John F. Kennedy. [www.jfk.org](http://www.jfk.org)
-  **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute Museum, Birmingham, Alabama.** This museum and archive deal with the background of Southern racial segregation, civil rights activism, and the 1963 demonstrations in Birmingham. [www.bcri.bham.al.us](http://www.bcri.bham.al.us)
-  **Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historical Site, Atlanta, Georgia.** The birthplace and grave of Reverend King are the nucleus of a park set in the historic black neighborhood of Auburn. <http://www.nps.gov/malu/>
-  **National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, Tennessee.** Located in the Lorraine Motel, where Martin Luther King, Jr., was killed, the museum traces the participants, background, and effects of key events in the civil rights movement. <http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org>
-  **National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Wilberforce, Ohio.** The exhibit "From Victory to Freedom: Afro-American Life in the Fifties" looks at home, family, music, and religion. [www.ohiohistory.org/places/afroam/](http://www.ohiohistory.org/places/afroam/)
-  **John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, Boston, Massachusetts.** Exhibits offer a sympathetic view of Kennedy's life and achievements. [www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/](http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/)

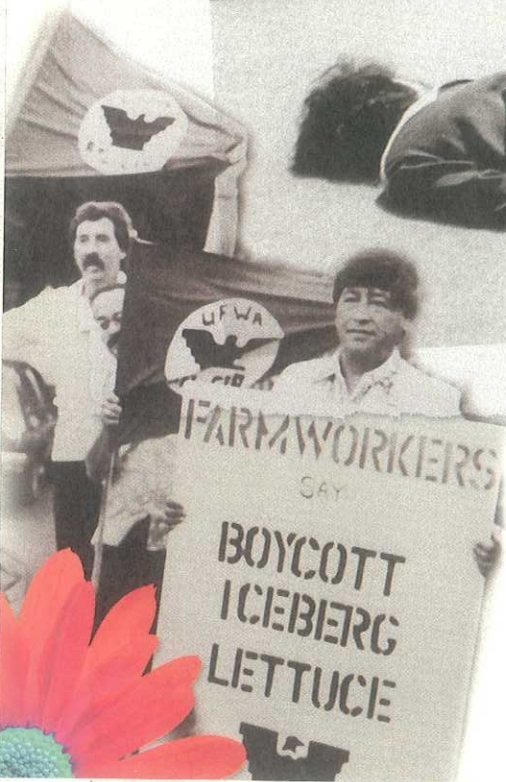
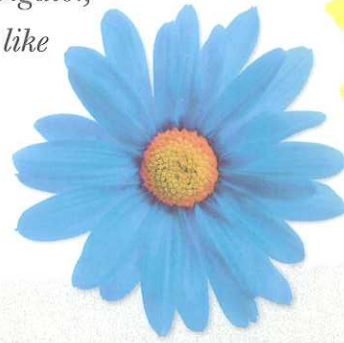


For additional study resources for this chapter, go to:

[www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter28](http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter28)



*We opened the hatch and Neil, with me as navigator,  
began backing out the tiny opening. It seemed like  
a small eternity before I heard Neil say,  
"That's one small step for man . . .  
one giant leap for mankind."*



**The shootings at Kent State University in May 1970** reflected the deep divisions in American society created by the Vietnam War, including those between antiwar college students and young people serving in the armed forces.

