Chapter 22

The Kennedy and Johnson Years (1961–1969)

Section 1: The New Frontier

Section 2: The Great Society

Section 3: Foreign Policy in the Early 1960s
The New Frontier

Chapter 22, Section 1

• What factors affected the election of 1960?
• What domestic programs did President Kennedy pursue?
• What circumstances surrounded Kennedy’s assassination?
A New Type of Candidate

- Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy had served in the House and Senate for 14 years when he ran for President in 1960.
- Still, some questioned his candidacy because of his young age, 43, and his Roman Catholic religious beliefs.
- Kennedy proved to be an engaging television personality during the 1960 presidential debates, the first such debates to be televised.

A Narrow Kennedy Victory

- Kennedy won the 1960 election by an extremely close margin.
- Kennedy was separated from his opponent, Republican Richard Nixon, by fewer than 119,000 popular votes out of nearly 69 million cast.
- Because of the close election, Kennedy entered office without a mandate, or public endorsement of his proposals.
Kennedy’s Domestic Programs

In a speech early in his presidency, Kennedy said that the nation was poised at the edge of a “New Frontier.” This phrase came to refer to Kennedy’s proposals to improve the economy, assist the poor, and speed up the space program.

Kennedy’s efforts to improve the economy included ordering a federal investigation into steel price fixing and proposing a large tax cut. His tax cut proposal, however, became stuck in Congress.

Many of Kennedy’s proposals aimed to combat poverty and inequality. Although some were rejected by Congress, others were passed. These included an increase in the minimum wage, funding for urban renewal, abolishment of poll taxes, and the Equal Pay Act, which required all employees doing the same work in the same workplace to receive equal wages.
Although Kennedy served a shortened presidency, he was able to initiate a variety of programs, including:

• Improved surplus food to unemployed Americans
• Largest defense buildup in peacetime history
• Help to communities plagued by long-term unemployment
• Extension of Social Security benefits
• Expansion of National Park System
• Doubling of federal resources combating water pollution

• Construction of the world’s largest nuclear power plant
• Tightening of food and drug laws
• Encouragement of free trade
• Signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
• Changes in the welfare system
• Creation of first federal program to address juvenile delinquency
The Space Program

• The Soviet Union’s launch of the *Sputnik* satellite in 1957 inspired the United States to work toward placing a manned spacecraft in orbit.

• In April 1961, Soviet astronaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human to travel in space. Americans worried that their technology was falling behind that of the Soviet Union.

• Funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was increased. In 1961 and 1962, American astronauts made initial space flights.

• On July 20, 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first person to walk on the moon.
Kennedy Is Assassinated

On November 22, 1963, Kennedy was shot while riding in an open limousine through Dallas, Texas. He had traveled to Texas to mobilize support for his upcoming reelection campaign.

Shots fired from the sixth-floor window of the empty Texas School Book Depository mortally wounded Kennedy, making Vice President Lyndon Johnson the new President.

The prime suspect in Kennedy’s murder, Lee Harvey Oswald, was murdered by a man named Jack Ruby two days later, while being transferred from one jail to another.

To investigate Kennedy’s murder, President Johnson appointed The President’s Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, better known as the Warren Commission, after its chairman, Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren.

The Warren Commission determined that Oswald had acted alone. However, theories that Oswald and Ruby had belonged to a conspiracy persisted.
What was the New Frontier?

(A) A campaign slogan used in the 1960 election
(B) Kennedy’s proposal for a tax cut
(C) NASA’s program to put a manned spacecraft in orbit
(D) A collective term for many of Kennedy’s proposals

Which of these statements best describes the conclusion reached by the Warren Commission?

(A) Oswald and Ruby had acted together to assassinate Kennedy.
(B) Oswald had acted alone when assassinating Kennedy.
(C) Oswald and Ruby had participated in a conspiracy.
(D) Oswald had been framed, and Ruby had been the true assassin.
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The Great Society

Chapter 22, Section 2

• What was Lyndon Johnson’s path to the presidency?
• What were some of the goals and programs of the Great Society?
• What were some of the cases that made the Warren Court both important and controversial?
Lyndon Johnson became President unexpectedly following Kennedy’s assassination. However, his political career had been leading up to this position for many years.

While serving in the House and Senate, Johnson had established a reputation for both his political talent and his ambition. In 1954, he became Senate Majority Leader.

Kennedy had named Johnson his running mate in 1960 after Johnson’s own bid for the Democratic nomination had failed. Johnson became President immediately after Kennedy’s death, taking the oath of office an hour and a half later.
The Great Society

• Johnson used his talent in working with Congress to initiate many reforms on domestic issues.

• Johnson’s programs on poverty aid, education, healthcare, economic development, and conservation became collectively known as the Great Society.

The Election of 1964

• In the 1964 election, Johnson won a landslide victory over Republican opponent Barry Goldwater.

• A controversial television advertisement known as the “daisy” commercial took advantage of Americans’ fear of nuclear war to support Johnson’s campaign.
Great Society Reforms

• **The Tax Cut** — Like Kennedy, Johnson believed that a budget deficit could be used to improve the economy. A tax cut caused the deficit to shrink, since renewed prosperity generated new tax revenues.

• **The War on Poverty** — Johnson initiated new programs such as **Head Start**, a preschool program for low-income families, and **Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)**, which sent volunteers to help people in poor communities.

• **Aid to Education** — The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also initiated by Johnson, provided billions of dollars in aid to public and private schools.

• **Medicare and Medicaid** — Johnson helped Congress pass two new programs, **Medicare** and **Medicaid**. Medicare provides low-cost medical insurance to most Americans over age 65, while Medicaid provides similar services to poor Americans of any age.

• **Immigration Reform** — The **Immigration Act of 1965** replaced immigration quotas with overall limits from various parts of the world. Immigration rose during the 1960s and 1970s.
• During the Kennedy-Johnson years, the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, handed down many controversial landmark verdicts.

• The Court ruled on social issues including obscenity, prayer in public schools, and use of birth control.

• The Warren Court was also interested in safeguarding the rights of persons accused of committing crimes. The Miranda rule, a result of the 1966 case Miranda v. Arizona, required police to inform accused persons of their rights.

• A series of Warren Court decisions changed the nature of apportionment, or the distribution of the seats in a legislature among electoral districts.
Effects of the Great Society

Chapter 22, Section 2

Effects on Poverty

- During the 1960s and early 1970s, the number of Americans living in poverty in the United States was cut in half.
- However, some Americans complained that too many of their tax dollars were being spent on poor people. Others criticized the way Great Society antipoverty programs expanded the size of the federal government.

The End of the Great Society

- Johnson received both praise and criticism for Great Society reforms.
- A conflict in Southeast Asia, later to become the Vietnam War, began to consume the resources Johnson needed for his domestic programs.
- The Great Society came to an end when Johnson failed to contain the Southeast Asia conflict.
Which of following was a result of Johnson’s Great Society?

(A) The beginnings of a conflict in Southeast Asia
(B) The creation of the Head Start program
(C) The elimination of the Miranda rule
(D) An increase in the number of Americans living in poverty

Why did some Americans oppose Great Society antipoverty legislation?

(A) They felt it took funding away from international conflicts.
(B) They complained that too much of their taxes were spent on the poor.
(C) They felt it ran counter to the decisions of the Warren Court.
(D) They wanted more money for education instead.

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Foreign Policy in the Early 1960s

Chapter 22, Section 3

- What were the goals of the Bay of Pigs invasion, and what was the outcome?
- What events led to the Berlin crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis?
- What were the goals of the Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps?
- Which Cold War conflicts did Johnson become involved in?
The Bay of Pigs Invasion

Goals of the Bay of Pigs Invasion

- The United States government was disturbed when Fidel Castro took over Cuba in 1959 and developed ties to the Soviet Union.
- To overthrow Castro, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) trained a group of Cubans to invade Cuba.
- President Kennedy approved the resulting Bay of Pigs invasion, which took place on April 17, 1961.

Outcome of the Invasion

- The Bay of Pigs invasion proved to be both a military and diplomatic disaster.
- Airstrikes failed to destroy Cuba’s air force, and Cuban troops were more than a match for the invaders.
- The United States lost credibility for its clumsy invasion tactics as well as its violation of agreements not to interfere in the Western Hemisphere.
The Berlin Crisis

Chapter 22, Section 3

Causes of the Berlin Crisis

- As part of the post–World War II division of Germany, the city of Berlin in Communist East Germany had been divided into Communist and non-Communist zones.
- The division of Berlin was planned as a temporary measure. However, the Soviet Union demanded that the division of the city be made permanent, hoping this would reduce the flow of East Germans escaping through Berlin to West Germany.

Effects of the Berlin Crisis

- In response to Soviet demands, Kennedy increased funding to the military and expanded the size of the armed forces.
- To avoid a confrontation, the Soviets built a wall to separate the Communist and non-Communist sections of Berlin in August 1961.
- The Berlin Wall came to be a somber symbol of Cold War tensions.
On October 16, 1962, photographs taken from an American spy plane showed construction of Soviet missile bases in Cuba, about 90 miles from the coast of Florida.

The American response to this construction, and the resulting Soviet response, became known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Cuban Missile Crisis brought the superpowers to the brink of nuclear war.

After much consultation with his advisors, President Kennedy decided to authorize a naval “quarantine” around Cuba. He demanded that Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev cease construction of the missile bases.

On October 25, Soviet ships headed for Cuba suddenly reversed direction, called back by Khrushchev. This action led to tremendous relief since confrontation, and the threat of nuclear war, had been avoided.
The Cuban Missile Crisis did not end when Soviet ships reversed their course, however. The end of the crisis came several days later, when Kennedy responded to letters sent from Khrushchev, agreeing to some terms publicly and others in secret.

In the end, the Soviet Union agreed to remove its missiles from Cuba. In return, the United States agreed to end the quarantine, stay out of Cuba, and remove missiles of its own from Turkey.

As a result of the crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev established a “hot line” with which they could communicate quickly in case of further crises.

In addition, the United States and the Soviet Union, together with Great Britain, signed the **Limited Test Ban Treaty** in 1963. This treaty banned nuclear testing above the ground.
Kennedy feared that Communist movements would attract support in poor nations by promising people a better future.

To counter these movements, Kennedy encouraged people in the Western Hemisphere to join an Alliance for Progress. The Alliance would help build Western-allied stable governments that met the needs of their people. The United States pledged billions of dollars toward this goal.

However, many people in Latin America began to view the Alliance as only a tool of the United States to stop the spread of communism. Because of these doubts, the Alliance for Progress was not as much of a success as Kennedy had hoped.
• In 1961, Kennedy established the Peace Corps to further his goal of a world in which people worked together peacefully to solve problems.

• Peace Corps volunteers were Americans who agreed to work side by side with local citizens in poorer nations, teaching skills and improving living conditions.

• Today, Peace Corps volunteers continue to serve in nations around the world.
The Dominican Republic

- In 1965, rebels attacked the military-backed government of the Dominican Republic.
- Johnson believed that the rebels had been backed by Communist supporters. He sent thousands of marines to the Dominican Republic, tipping the balance against the rebels and installing a new provisional government.
- It turned out that the rebels had not received Communist support after all.

Vietnam

- Like Kennedy, Johnson was committed to preventing the spread of communism.
- The ongoing conflict in Southeast Asia between Communist North Vietnam and non-Communist South Vietnam continued during Johnson’s term.
- Although Johnson at first opposed further United States action in Vietnam, American involvement soon deepened.
Which of these events began the Cuban Missile Crisis?
(A) The CIA trained Cubans for an invasion to overthrow Castro.
(B) The United States learned of Soviet missile bases in Cuba.
(C) Fidel Castro took over Cuba and developed Soviet ties.
(D) American airstrikes attempted to destroy Cuba’s air force.

What was the Alliance for Progress?
(A) A treaty which banned nuclear testing above the ground
(B) A program which sent American volunteers overseas
(C) A coalition to build stable Latin American governments
(D) An international plan to overthrow the government of the Dominican Republic

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Foreign Policy in the Early 1960s—Assessment

Chapter 22, Section 3

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