

# The Vietnam Era 1960-1975



After spending five years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Stirm is reunited with his family.

**1960**

**1961** ★ Berlin Wall erected

**1962** ★ Cuban missile crisis erupts

**1964**

**1964** ★

- Gulf of Tonkin resolution passes
- Johnson elected president

**1965** ★ U.S. sends troops to Vietnam

**1966** ★ Mao Zedong launches Cultural Revolution

**PRESIDENTS**

**U.S. Events**

**World Events**

## Section 1: Kennedy's Foreign Policy

**Essential Question** What were the key foreign policy challenges the United States faced during the Kennedy administration?

## Section 2: War in Vietnam

**Essential Question** How and why did America involve itself in the war in Vietnam?

## Section 3: The Vietnam Years at Home

**Essential Question** How did the Vietnam War affect the political and social climate in the United States?

## Section 4: Nixon and Vietnam

**Essential Question** How did President Nixon remove the United States from the Vietnam War?



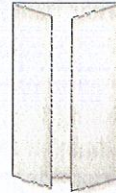
American soldier equipped for battle ▶

### FOLDABLES® Study Organizer

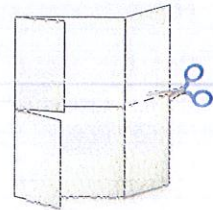
#### Organizing Information

Make this Foldable to help

organize what you learn about foreign policy challenges during the Vietnam years.

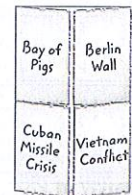


**Step 1** Fold the sides of a piece of paper into the middle to make a shutterfold.



**Step 2** Cut each flap at the midpoint to form four tabs.

**Step 3** Label the tabs as shown.



**Reading and Writing** As you read the chapter, list key people, events, and outcomes for each of these foreign policy issues.

1968 ★ 1968

Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated

Robert Kennedy assassinated; Nixon elected president



RICHARD M. NIXON

★ 1969

Neil Armstrong becomes first human on the moon



★ 1973

Last U.S. troops leave Vietnam

1968

1972

1976

★ 1967

Arab-Israeli Six-Day War fought

★ 1971

Idi Amin seizes power in Uganda

★ 1972

11 Israeli athletes killed at Munich Olympic Games

★ 1975

Vietnam War ends after fall of Saigon

# Section

# 1

# Kennedy's Foreign Policy



Section Audio



Spotlight Video

## Essential Question

What were the key foreign policy challenges the United States faced during the Kennedy administration?

## Reading Guide

### Content Vocabulary

guerrilla warfare (p. 905)

executive order (p. 906)

flexible response (p. 905)

blockade (p. 908)

### Academic Vocabulary

respond (p. 905)

occur (p. 907)

### Key People and Events

Fidel Castro (p. 906)

Bay of Pigs (p. 907)

Berlin Wall (p. 907)

Cuban missile crisis (p. 908)

### Reading Strategy

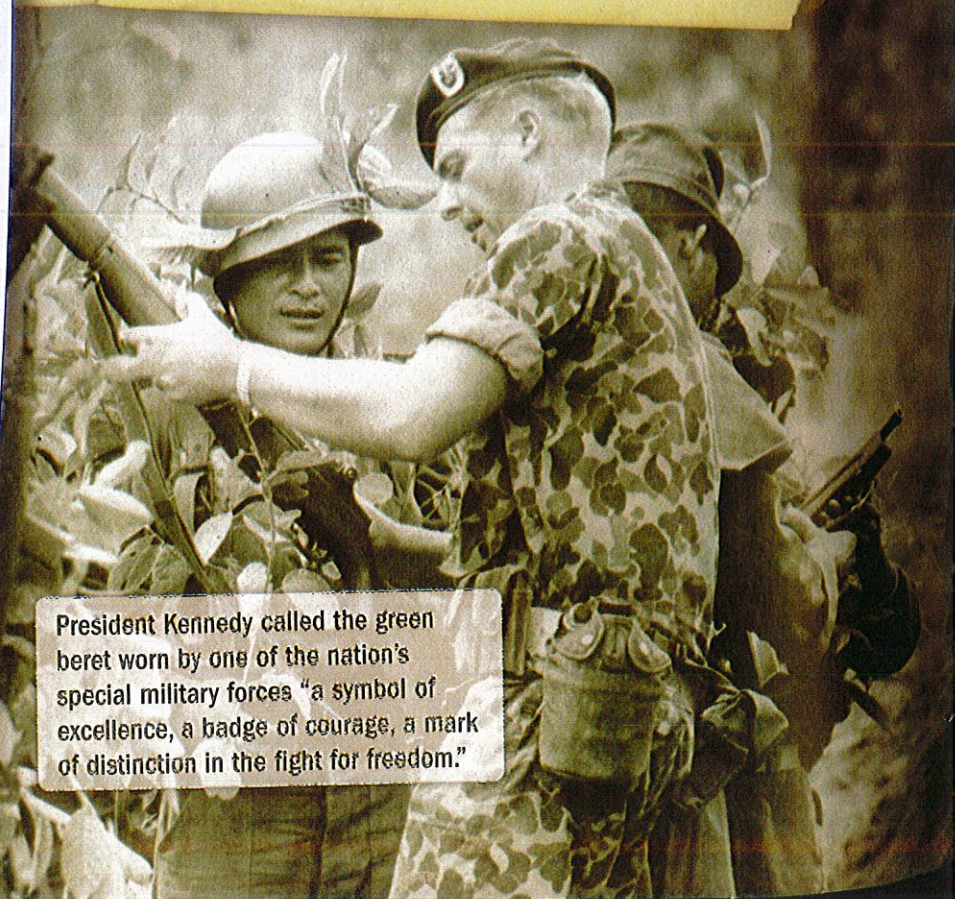
**Taking Notes** On a diagram like the one below, note the different areas of work in which Peace Corps volunteers were involved.

Peace Corps Work


## American Diary

*"In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it." Although President Kennedy talked of approaching this responsibility with "energy" and "devotion," events unfolding around the world—in Cuba, Eastern Europe, and Vietnam—would challenge his determination. The new president and the nation soon faced a series of crises.*

—from Kennedy's Inaugural Address



President Kennedy called the green beret worn by one of the nation's special military forces "a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom."

## New Directions

**Main Idea** President John F. Kennedy sought new ways to deal with the challenges and fears of the Cold War.

**History and You** Have you ever heard the phrase “winning hearts and minds”? It means convincing people to support you rather than just forcing them to obey. Read on to learn how the United States used “good works” to convince the world’s poor countries to reject communism.

.....

When Kennedy became president in 1961, America’s dangerous rivalry with the Soviets continued to be a major challenge. As a result, the new president had to devote much of his energy in foreign policy to guiding the nation through the deepening Cold War. President Kennedy continued the anti-Communist foreign policy begun under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower. In pursuing that policy, though, Kennedy tried some new approaches.

During the presidential campaign, Kennedy led Americans to believe that the nation had fewer nuclear missiles than the Soviet

Union. As president, Kennedy increased spending on nuclear arms. At the same time, he tried to convince Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, to agree to a ban on nuclear testing.

### Strength Through Flexibility

Kennedy also worked to improve America’s ability to **respond**—or reply with action—to threats abroad. In certain areas of the world, Communist groups fought to take control of their nations’ governments. Many of these groups received aid from the Soviet Union. They employed **guerrilla warfare**, or fighting with small bands of soldiers who use tactics such as sudden ambushes.

The United States needed a new approach for fighting guerrilla wars. Kennedy introduced a plan called **flexible response**, to provide help to nations fighting Communist movements. This plan relied on special military units trained to fight guerrilla wars. One of these units was the Special Forces, known as the Green Berets. The Special Forces provided the president with troops that were ready to fight guerrilla warfare anywhere around the world.

### Primary Source U.S.–Soviet Relations

In a letter to Premier Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union, President Kennedy expressed the need for direct communication between the leaders. “I think we should recognize, in honesty to each other, that there are problems on which we may not be able to agree.”

Kennedy suggested a “hot line” to communicate quickly and directly between the United States and the Soviet Union in times of crisis. The original hot line was a teletypewriter. The hot line today uses two satellite systems and an undersea cable link. The American end of the hot line is located in the Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Teletype used for hot line ►



### Critical Thinking

**Speculating** In what ways might use of the hot line lessen a crisis?



## Strength Through Aid

President Kennedy understood that the poverty in Latin America, Asia, and Africa made the Communist promises of economic equality seem attractive. He decided to provide aid to countries in those areas to counteract the appeal of communism. For example, to help Latin America's economic growth, Kennedy set up a 10-year development plan called the Alliance for Progress.

In 1961 the president signed an **executive order**, or presidential directive, creating an organization called the Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers worked in other countries as teachers, health workers, and advisers in farming, industry, and government. Volunteers spent two years in countries that had asked for assistance. By 1963 some 5,000 volunteers were working in more than 40 countries around the world. Today, the Peace Corps is still active and remains one of Kennedy's most lasting legacies.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** What was the purpose of the Alliance for Progress?

## Cold War Confrontations

**Main Idea** The Kennedy administration responded to Cold War crises in Cuba and Berlin.

**History and You** How do you think the U.S. government should deal with threats from other countries? Read to learn how the Kennedy administration dealt with Soviet threats in various parts of the world during the early 1960s.

**I**n 1961, just a few months after taking office, President Kennedy had to deal with a foreign policy crisis in Latin America. That same year, tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union arose in Europe.

### Cuba

The United States faced a new challenge in Cuba, an island country in the Caribbean Sea. This challenge had begun during the last months of the Eisenhower administration. In January 1959, rebel leader **Fidel Castro** seized power and formed a new Cuban government. He soon set up a Communist dictatorship.

## Primary Source Soviet Influence

**Footholds and Fences** The United States began to see the influence of communism spreading around the world. The U.S. tried to shut down the threat closest to home with the invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. Half a world away, the U.S. could only watch as Communist East Germany isolated Democratic West Berlin with a cinder block and barbed wire wall.

**Invasion of Cuba** CIA-trained Cuban exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961. Within two days, Cuban President Fidel Castro's troops had captured more than 1,000 of the exiles and stopped the attempt at overthrowing his government.

Armed militia of the Castro government ▶

◀ Exiles taken prisoner

The Berlin Wall ▶



Cuba also became an ally of the Soviet Union. These actions worried many Americans because Cuba lies only 90 miles (145 km) south of Florida.

Late in Eisenhower's presidency, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) forged a plan to overthrow Castro. The CIA recruited Cuban refugees who had settled in the United States. The plan called for them to land in Cuba and spark an uprising that would overthrow Castro's rule. When Kennedy became president, he learned about the plan and had doubts about it. However, he accepted the advice of military advisers and the CIA and allowed the plan to go forward.

On April 17, 1961, about 1,500 CIA-trained Cuban exiles landed at the **Bay of Pigs** on the south coast of Cuba. Many blunders occurred, and at a crucial moment, Kennedy refused to provide American air support. Within days Cuban forces crushed the invasion and captured the survivors.

The Bay of Pigs embarrassed Kennedy, who took the blame for the failure. The disaster had three effects. First, Kennedy never

again completely trusted military and intelligence advice. Second, nations in Latin America lost trust in Kennedy. Third, Soviet premier Khrushchev concluded that Kennedy was not a strong leader and could be bullied.

## The Berlin Wall

Although 16 years had passed since the end of World War II, the wartime Allies had still not settled the status of Germany. West Germany became a full member of the Western alliance, and the Soviet Union continued to control East Germany.

The location of Berlin—fully within East Germany—posed special problems. American, British, and French troops still remained in the western part of the city, and they sometimes had difficulty getting into West Berlin and maintaining control there. Meanwhile a steady flow of people fled to West Berlin from Communist East Berlin, hoping to escape economic hardship and find freedom.

At a June 1961 summit conference in Vienna, Austria, Premier Khrushchev told President Kennedy that the West must move out of Berlin, and he insisted on an agreement by the end of the year. Kennedy rejected Khrushchev's demand. To emphasize the West's right to stay in West Berlin, the United States later sent more troops to the city.

Later that summer, a large number of East Germans fled to the West. On August 13, the East German government, with Soviet backing, closed the border between East and West Berlin and built a wall of concrete blocks with barbed wire along it. The Soviets posted armed guards along the wall to stop more East Germans from fleeing to the West. The **Berlin Wall** cut communications between the two parts of the city.

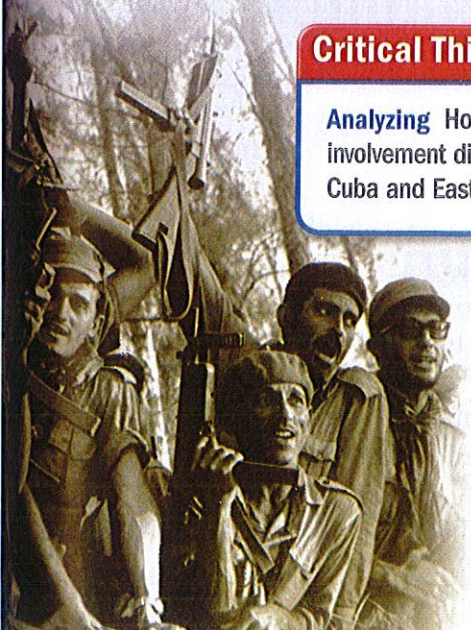
The Western Allies remained in West Berlin. They could do little, however, to stop the building of the wall, which came to symbolize Communist repression.

**August 1961** To stop the flow of skilled workers, professionals, and intellectuals from leaving East Germany, the Communist country began building the Berlin Wall on August 13. By the 1980s, it had been made taller and wider and stretched 28 miles (45 km) through the middle of Berlin and another 75 miles (120 km) around West Berlin.

### Critical Thinking

**Analyzing** How did Soviet involvement differ between Cuba and East Germany?

**✓ Reading Check Explaining** What kind of government did Fidel Castro establish in Cuba?



## Chance & Error in History



### What if the Soviets Had Ignored the Blockade?

Just days after President Kennedy ordered a U.S. blockade to prevent Soviet deliveries of missiles to Cuba, Soviet ships abruptly turned away. When the Soviets offered a deal, Kennedy took it. The Soviets would withdraw their missiles in exchange for a U.S. pledge to never invade Cuba. While it seemed like a victory at the time, it left a Communist government intact just miles from the U.S. coastline. The humiliation of giving in also prompted the Soviets to begin the largest peacetime military buildup in history.

#### Critical Thinking

**Theorizing** What might have happened if the Soviets had chosen to ignore the blockade and steamed forward to Cuba?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

## The Cuban Missile Crisis

**Main Idea** The United States forced the Soviet Union to withdraw Soviet missiles that had been placed in Cuba.

**History and You** Have you ever been in a situation that was so scary, you thought that you would never get through it alive? Read to learn how another crisis in Cuba left Americans and people in many other nations wondering whether the world would survive.

The most dangerous Cold War dispute between the Americans and Soviets came in 1962. Once again the dispute involved Cuba.

In mid-October 1962, an American spy plane flying over Cuba made a disturbing discovery. Photographs revealed that the Soviets were building launching sites for nuclear missiles. These missiles could easily reach the United States in a matter of minutes.

For the next week, President Kennedy met secretly with advisers to determine how to deal with the **Cuban missile crisis**. They explored several options, including invading Cuba and bombing the missile sites. New spy photographs showed the bases nearing completion much faster than expected. Kennedy and his advisers needed to reach a decision quickly.

On October 22, President Kennedy, speaking on national television, revealed the "secret, swift, and extraordinary buildup" of Soviet missiles in Cuba. Kennedy ordered the navy to **blockade**, or close off, Cuba until the Soviets removed the missiles. He threatened to destroy any Soviet ship that tried to break through the blockade and reach the island. The president declared: "It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States."

The United States would respond, he warned, with a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union.

As the two superpowers neared the brink of nuclear war, people all over the world waited nervously. After five agonizing days, the Soviet ships turned back. Soviet leaders also agreed to withdraw their missiles from Cuba. The United States agreed not to invade Cuba. Nuclear war had been avoided.

Having come so close to nuclear disaster, the two nations worked to establish better relations. In the summer of 1963, Kennedy and Khrushchev created the hot line between Moscow and Washington to allow the leaders to communicate instantly in times of crisis. That same summer, the two nations signed a treaty banning nuclear tests aboveground and underwater.

## Rivalry in Space

Americans and Soviets continued their rivalry in space. In April 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (guh•GAHR•uhn) became the first person to orbit the Earth. One month later, Alan Shepard, Jr., became the first American to make a spaceflight.

Shortly after Shepard's spaceflight, Kennedy committed the nation to the goal of landing a man on the moon by the end of the decade. He asked Congress for more money for NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), which ran the space program. NASA expanded its launching facility in Florida and built a control center in Houston, Texas.

Astronaut John Glenn thrilled the country in February 1962 when he orbited the Earth in a spacecraft, the first American to do so. An even greater triumph for the space program came on July 20, 1969, with the Apollo project. Awestruck television viewers around the world watched the spacecraft *Eagle* land on the surface of the moon.

Hours later, with millions still watching, astronaut Neil Armstrong took the first human step on the moon and announced: "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." By the end of the Apollo project in 1972, 10 more Americans had landed on the moon.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** How was the Cuban missile crisis resolved?

## Section 1 Review

**History ONLINE**  
Study Central™ To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

### Vocabulary

1. Write a sentence that explains the meaning of each of the following terms: *respond*, *guerrilla warfare*, *flexible response*, *executive order*, *occur*, *blockade*.

### Main Ideas

2. **Describing** What was the relationship between guerrilla warfare and Kennedy's flexible response plan?
3. **Explaining** Why did the Soviet Union build the Berlin Wall?

4. **Summarizing** What was the responsibility of NASA?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Analyzing** Re-create the diagram below and identify strategies that the Kennedy administration considered to stop the buildup of missiles in Cuba.



6. **Expository Writing** Take the role of a recruiter for the Peace Corps. Write a speech that describes the creation and mission of the Peace Corps and encourages people to apply.

7. **Answer the Essential Question** What were the key foreign policy challenges the United States faced during the Kennedy administration?