

The Cold War

Part Two



Part One

Part Two

Part Three

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.



In the late 1950s and early 1960s, tensions between the East and West were strained by a series of confrontations across the world. This caused the Cold War to heat up:

Latin America:

Cuban Revolution
1953–59; Cuban
Missile Crisis
1962

Southeast Asia:

Vietnam War
1955–75



Middle East:

Suez Crisis
1956

Europe:

Berlin Crisis
1958–61

Why did the U.S. get involved in so many conflicts?



Kennedy and the Cold War



In 1961, Democrat **John F. Kennedy** became the youngest president ever elected to office. Kennedy believed massive retaliation was inflexible and he would not risk using nuclear weapons over a minor conflict.

Instead, his Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, developed a policy of **flexible response**, building up conventional forces to avoid relying solely on nuclear weapons.



Although he was in office for only a short time, Kennedy's presidency oversaw several significant foreign policy events.





The **Cuban Revolution** began in 1953 with a failed rebel attack against the corrupt Cuban President, **Fulgencio Batista**. Among the attackers was **Fidel Castro**, who was imprisoned, exiled and returned in 1956 to lead the revolution.



The rebels overthrew Batista in January 1959 and Castro became Prime Minister of Cuba a month later. By 1960, Castro had formed close ties with the Soviet Union and was accepting aid.

In 1961 he declared himself a **Marxist** and Cuba a communist state. The U.S immediately withdrew diplomatic recognition and imposed an **embargo** in 1962.

Why was Castro's victory a problem for the U.S.?

The Bay of Pigs invasion

The U.S. **CIA** immediately began to plan the assassination and overthrow of Castro. It began to recruit and train Cuban exiles. On April 17, 1961, about 1,400 CIA-trained Cubans landed at the **Bay of Pigs**, hoping to spark an uprising. Castro was forewarned and easily crushed the invasion.

Critics said Kennedy should have supported the invasion of Cuba with air power, which may have helped it succeed.



He accepted full responsibility for the embarrassing episode and vowed never to be seen as weak on communism again.





The Berlin Wall



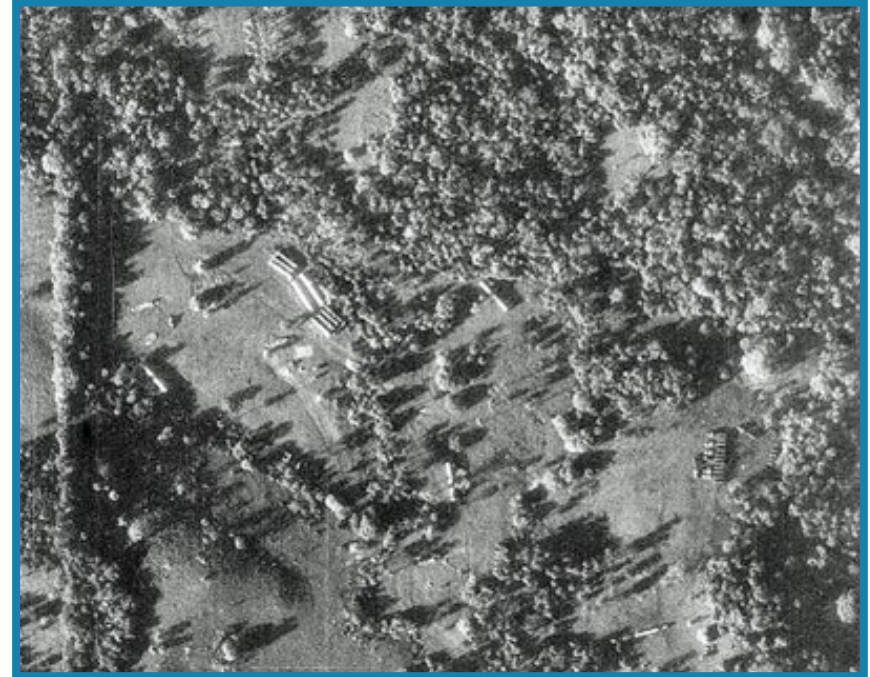


The Cuban Missile Crisis



On October 14, 1962, a U.S. spy plane photographed the construction of Russian medium-range missiles in Cuba.

The presence of these missiles only 90 miles from Florida seriously destabilized the relationship between the U.S. and Soviet Union and almost led to nuclear war.



The discovery of the missiles and the response of both sides is known as the **Cuban Missile Crisis**.

Why were the missiles considered such a threat?

The American government had various options on how to deal with the Cuban Missile Crisis:

- **Do nothing** – Allow the construction to continue and accept the threat to prevent war.
- **Pursue diplomacy** – Negotiate with the Soviet Union and Cuba to remove the missiles.
- **Naval blockade** – Prevent the arrival of materials necessary to make the missiles operational.
- **Full scale invasion** – Invade Cuba, destroy the missiles and overthrow Castro using full force.
- **Surgical airstrike** – Attack only the missile bases and destroy them with a tactical airstrike.

What did Kennedy decide to do?



On the brink of war





How did Vietnam's history affect the Vietnam War?





The Vietnam War



The start of American involvement



The Gulf of Tonkin incident



Expanding U.S. involvement



The war was the first to be televised on the news, so it was constantly in the media spotlight. The reality it portrayed helped to shape public opinion. Public support for the war declined significantly in 1967 fueled by mounting casualties, enormous costs and a feeling that there was no end in sight.



In an effort to build up public opinion, the government launched a media campaign to alter the perception that the war had reached a stalemate. The media was inundated with a surge of positive reports.

 **What does the photo say about the morality of war?** 

The Tet Offensive



The peace process begins



In response to the Tet Offensive, President Johnson halted bombing in March 1968 in order to encourage Hanoi to enter negotiations. The first meetings were held in Paris in May.

North Vietnam insisted that the U.S. halt all bombing. Johnson resisted for five months but, in a shocking move, finally agreed in October, allowing serious negotiations to begin.

In March 1968 Johnson announced he would not seek another term in office. Frustrated by the failure of his policies and burdened by massive opposition to the war, he retired to his home in Texas, broken by a war he never wanted.



