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Chapter 20

The New Frontier and the Great Society

President John F. Kennedy's efforts to confront the Soviet Union and address social ills are cut short by his assassination. President Lyndon B. Johnson spearheads civil rights legislation and declares a "war on poverty."

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The New Frontier and the Great Society

Section 1: Kennedy and the Cold War

Section 2: The New Frontier

Section 3: The Great Society

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Section 1: Kennedy and the Cold War

The Kennedy administration faces some of the most dangerous Soviet confrontations in American history.

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Section 1: Kennedy and the Cold War

The Election of 1960

The Televised Debate Affects Votes

- Americans fear U.S. falling behind Soviets militarily
- **John F. Kennedy** discusses Catholicism openly, allays public worries
- First televised presidential debate between Kennedy, Richard Nixon
- Nixon is foreign policy expert
- Kennedy coached by TV producers, comes across better than Nixon

Kennedy and Civil Rights

- **JFK takes stand on arrest of Martin Luther King, Jr; wins black vote**

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The Camelot Years

The Kennedy Mystique

- Kennedy wins presidency in close election
- Critics argue his smooth style lacks substance

- Kennedy White House known as Camelot for its glamour, culture, wit
- First Lady admired for her elegance; constant articles about family

The Best and the Brightest

- JFK's advisers called "the best and the brightest"
- Brother Robert Kennedy named attorney general

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A New Military Policy

Defining a Military Strategy

- JFK believes must redefine nation's nuclear strategy
- **Flexible response**—fight conventional wars, keep nuclear arms balanced
- JFK increases defense spending in three areas:
 - strengthens conventional forces
 - creates army Special Forces (Green Berets)
 - triples nuclear capabilities

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Crises over Cuba

The Cuban Dilemma

- Revolutionary leader **Fidel Castro** declares himself communist
 - seizes U.S. properties; Eisenhower cuts off diplomatic relations
- 10% of Cuban population goes into exile; mostly to U.S.

The Bay of Pigs

- Cuban exiles, CIA plan invasion to topple Castro
- Plans go wrong; exile forces killed, taken prisoner
- JFK pays ransom in food, medicine; mission is public embarrassment

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Continued Crises over Cuba

The Cuban Missile Crisis

- Nikita Khrushchev sends weapons to Cuba, including nuclear missiles
- JFK warns Soviets that missile attack will trigger war on U.S.S.R.
- Soviets avoid confrontation at sea; reach agreement with U.S.

Kennedy and Khrushchev Take the Heat

- Khrushchev's prestige severely damaged in U.S.S.R.
- JFK criticized for brinkmanship, also for not ousting Castro

- Cuban exiles switch to GOP; Castro bans flights to and from Miami

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Crisis over Berlin

The Berlin Crisis

- By 1961 20% of Germans flee to West Berlin; economic drain on East
- Khrushchev wants to close access roads to West Berlin; JFK refuses
- **Soviets isolate West Berlin from East Germany with Berlin Wall**

Searching for Ways to Ease Tensions

- Khrushchev, Kennedy conscious of danger of quick decisions
- Establish **hot line**—direct phone between White House, Kremlin
- **Limited Test Ban Treaty** bans nuclear tests in atmosphere

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Section 2: The New Frontier

While Kennedy has trouble getting his ideas for a New Frontier passed, several goals are achieved.

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Section 2: The New Frontier

The Promise of Progress

Kennedy's Vision of Progress

- **New Frontier**—policies of the Kennedy administration
- JFK faces Republican-Southern Democrat coalition
- Lacks skill to get policies passed
- Also lacks **mandate**—clear voter support for his agenda

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***Continued* The Promise of Progress**

Stimulating the Economy

- By 1960, U.S. in recession; 6% unemployment
- JFK administration pushes for deficit spending to stimulate growth
- Gets 20% increase for defense; money for unemployment problems

Addressing Poverty Abroad

- **Peace Corps**—volunteers assist developing nations; great success

- **Alliance for Progress**—economic, technical assistance to Latin America
- in part meant to deter spread of communism in Latin America

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Continued The Promise of Progress

Race to the Moon

- April 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri A. Gagarin is first man in space
- Soon after, U.S. puts man in space, uses satellite communications
- July 1969 U.S astronaut Neil Armstrong is first man to walk on moon
- University science programs grow; new industries, technologies arise

Addressing Domestic Problems

- Michael Harrington's *The Other America* brings attention to poverty
- 1963, JFK begins to work on poverty, racial injustice, civil rights

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Tragedy in Dallas

Four Days in November

- November 22, 1963, JFK shot, killed riding in motorcade in Dallas
- Jack Ruby shoots alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald
- Vice president Lyndon Johnson succeeds JFK

Unanswered Questions

- **Warren Commission** investigates, concludes Oswald acted alone
- 1979 reinvestigation concludes Oswald part of conspiracy

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Section 3: The Great Society

The demand for reform helps create a new awareness of social problems, especially on matters of civil rights and the effects of poverty.

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Section 3: The Great Society

LBJ's Path to Power

From the Texas Hills to Capitol Hill

- As Congressman, **Lyndon Baines Johnson** mentored, helped by FDR
- 1948, LBJ narrowly wins Senate seat

A Master Politician

- 1955, LBJ becomes Senate majority leader
- “LBJ treatment”—ability to persuade senators to support his bills
- Gets Civil Rights Act of 1957 passed—voting rights measure
- LBJ helps Kennedy win key Southern states in presidential election

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Johnson’s Domestic Agenda

The War on Poverty

- 1964 tax cut spurs economic growth; lowers federal deficit
- 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination, allows enforcement
- LBJ declares “war on poverty”
- **Economic Opportunity Act**: education, training, small business loans
- Includes Job Corps, VISTA, Head Start, Community Action Program

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Continued Johnson’s Domestic Agenda

The 1964 Election

- Republicans nominate Senator Barry Goldwater
- Goldwater: government should not deal with social, economic problems
- Threatens to bomb North Vietnam, advocates intervention
- LBJ says will not send troops to Vietnam; wins by landslide
- Democrats big majority; Southern Democrats not needed to pass bills

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Building the Great Society

The Great Society

- **Great Society**—LBJ’s legislation to end poverty, discrimination
- Johnson gets Congress to pass 206 of his bills

Education

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds school materials

Healthcare

- **Medicare**—low-cost medical, hospital insurance for senior citizens
- **Medicaid**—health insurance for welfare recipients

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Continued Building the Great Society

Housing

- Legislation shifts political power from rural to urban areas
- Money set aside for public housing; low-, moderate-income homes
- Dept. of Housing and Urban Development created
- Robert Weaver is first African American in cabinet, HUD secretary

Immigration

- Existing immigration quotas discriminate against non-Western Europeans
- **Immigration Act of 1965** ends quotas based on nationality

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Continued Building the Great Society

The Environment

- Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* exposes dangers of pesticides
- Water Quality Act of 1965 requires states to clean up rivers
- LBJ orders government to search out worst chemical polluters

Consumer Protection

- Laws set standards for consumer labels, auto safety, food safety

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Reforms of the Warren Court

The Warren Court

- **Warren Court**—Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren
- Rejects loyalty oaths, affirms free speech, church-state separation

Congressional Reapportionment

- **Reapportionment**—way states redraw election districts by population
- Court rules districts must have approximately equal population
- Leads to shift in political power from rural to urban areas

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Continued Reforms of the Warren Court

Rights of the Accused

- Warren Court rulings expand rights of people accused of crimes:
 - illegally seized evidence cannot be used in court
 - courts must provide legal counsel to poor

- suspect must be read rights before questioning
- Some praise protection of right to a fair trial
- Others think rulings handicap police investigations

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Impact of the Great Society

Social and Economic Effects

- Post-WW II, LBJ extends federal power more than all other presidents
- Poverty drops from 21% of population in 1962 to 11% in 1973
- Massive tax cut spurs economy; Great Society contributes to deficit
- Debate over finances, effectiveness of programs, government role