

**CHAPTER 28** Section 1 (pages 876–884)

# Kennedy and the Cold War

## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the poverty that existed in the United States in the 1950s.

In this section, you will read how John F. Kennedy became president and how he handled a period of intense foreign affairs.

## AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the major foreign crises that the Kennedy administration faced.

### TERMS AND NAMES

**John F. Kennedy** 35th president of the United States

**flexible response** Policy of using nonnuclear weapons to fight a war

**Fidel Castro** Ruler of Cuba

**Berlin Wall** Barrier built to keep East Germans from fleeing to West Berlin

**hot line** Direct phone line between the White House and the Kremlin

**Limited Test Ban Treaty** Treaty that barred nuclear testing in the atmosphere

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>KENNEDY'S HANDLING</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>Bay of Pigs</b>	<i>okays invasion, promises air support</i>	<i>invaders are captured; Kennedy is embarrassed</i>
<b>Cuban Missile Crisis</b>		
<b>Berlin Crisis</b>		

## The Election of 1960; The Camelot Years

(pages 876–878)

### *How did Kennedy win the election?*

In 1960, President Eisenhower's term came to a close. By then, many Americans were worried about the future. The economy was in a *recession*. In addition, the Soviet Union was gaining strength. As a result, some wondered whether the United States was losing the Cold War.

**John F. Kennedy** and Richard M. Nixon faced off in the 1960 presidential election. Kennedy was a Democratic senator from Massachusetts. Nixon was Eisenhower's vice-president. Kennedy won

the election by a slim margin. Two main factors led him to victory.

During a televised debate, Kennedy impressed viewers with his strong, forceful personality. Nixon appeared nervous and ill at ease.

The second factor was Kennedy's response to the arrest of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in October 1960. Kennedy called King's wife to express sympathy and persuaded the judge to release King from jail. His actions won him the support of African-American voters.

President Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline charmed many Americans with their elegance and grace. Jacqueline Kennedy influenced fashion and culture. People talked of the Kennedy Administration as a kind of *Camelot*, the story of King Arthur

that was made into a popular Broadway musical. Kennedy surrounded himself with advisers that one journalist called “the best and brightest.”

**1. What two factors helped Kennedy win the 1960 presidential election?**

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**A New Military Policy;  
Crises Over Cuba** (pages 879–883)

*What two crises involving Cuba did Kennedy face?*

Upon entering the White House, Kennedy focused on foreign affairs. He urged a tough stand against the Soviet Union. He also supported a policy called **flexible response**. This policy called for the use of *conventional* weapons rather than nuclear weapons in the event of a war. Conventional weapons included jets, tanks, missiles, and guns. In order to build more conventional weapons, Kennedy increased defense spending.

Kennedy’s first foreign policy test came from Cuba. Cuba’s leader was **Fidel Castro**. Castro had seized power in 1959. Soon after that, he declared himself a Communist. He then formed ties with the Soviet Union.

Kennedy approved a plan to remove Castro from power. The plan called for Cuban exiles to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. The U.S. government would supply air support for the exiles.

The attack failed. Many exiles were captured. The failed invasion became known as the Bay of Pigs. It left the Kennedy administration greatly embarrassed.

A year later, the United States and Cuba clashed again. Pictures from U.S. spy planes revealed that the Soviets were building nuclear missile bases in Cuba. Some bases already contained missiles ready to launch. These weapons could be aimed at the United States.

President Kennedy demanded that the Soviets remove the missiles. In October 1962, he surrounded Cuba with U.S. Navy ships. These ships forced Soviet vessels trying to reach Cuba to turn around. A tense standoff followed. It appeared that war might break out. However, Soviet leader Nikita

Khrushchev finally agreed to remove the missiles.

The crisis damaged Khrushchev’s prestige in the Soviet Union and the world. Kennedy also endured criticism. Some Americans thought Kennedy had acted too boldly and nearly started a nuclear war. Others claimed he had acted too softly. These critics believed that Kennedy should have invaded Cuba and ousted Castro.

**2. Name the two Cuban crises that the Kennedy administration faced.**

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**Crisis Over Berlin**

(pages 883–884)

*How did the U.S. and Soviets try to ease tensions?*

Cuba was not Kennedy’s only foreign policy problem. In 1961, the president faced a growing problem in Berlin. The city was still divided. East Berlin was under Communist control. West Berlin was under the control of Great Britain, France, and the United States. By 1961, almost 3 million East Germans had fled into West Berlin.

Khrushchev threatened to block all air and land routes into West Berlin. Kennedy warned the Soviet leader against such action. As a result, Khrushchev changed his plan. He built a large concrete barrier along the border between East and West Berlin. It was known as the **Berlin Wall**. It prevented any more East Germans from fleeing to West Berlin.

Despite their battles, Kennedy and Khrushchev did attempt to reach agreements. They established a **hot line** between their two nations. This special telephone hookup connected Kennedy and Khrushchev. It allowed them to talk directly when a crisis arose. The two leaders also agreed to a **Limited Test Ban Treaty**. This treaty barred nuclear testing in the atmosphere.

**3. Name two ways the U.S. and Soviet Union worked to ease tensions between them.**

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