PART NINE

The Cold War at Full Tide, 1953–1979

During the third quarter of the twentieth century, the Cold War cast a long shadow over the United States and the rest of the world. Tensions mounted at home and abroad as the United States and the Soviet Union vied for power among the world’s nations. In poor Third World countries, insurgents attempted to throw off the yoke of colonialism and play the two superpowers against each other. The United States used different strategies to counter Soviet influence in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, including military force in Korea and Vietnam, white-knuckle diplomacy in Cuba, extensive aid to nonaligned countries, and covert operations worldwide.

Soviet advances in science and technology spurred the U.S. government to sponsor bold new domestic initiatives in public education and space exploration. The Cold War even helped to shape a post–World War II domestic ideal: a nuclear family living in a suburban house, with a breadwinner father and a full-time homemaker mother. Many Americans believed that their prosperous, consumer-oriented economy, with its emphasis on individualism and personal choice, was a key weapon in the fight against communism.

In a feverish arms race, both the United States and the USSR rushed to stockpile weapons of mass destruction. Innovations in nuclear weapons technology (such as intercontinental ballistic missiles) made the bombers used in World War II obsolete. The hydrogen bomb, tested successfully for the first time in 1953, dwarfed the power of the atomic bomb that had leveled Hiroshima. Nevertheless, citizens who criticized the arms buildup risked being branded unpatriotic. More than ever before, domestic policy was intertwined with foreign policy.

The rise of multinational corporations meant that large, impersonal institutions, whether government or private, were shaping American life. Middle-level managers—men in “grey flannel suits”—represented the corporate ethos of loyalty to the company above all else. At the same time, many Americans sought to work within their local communities for social and political change. In the South, African-American men and women
launched a dramatic assault on the system of legal segregation known as “Jim Crow.” Working at the grassroots level, these activists boycotted buses, marched, engaged in sit-ins at lunch counters, and went to jail. Their efforts provoked the courts and Congress to act, culminating in the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. For the first time in American history, the federal government assumed responsibility for eliminating discrimination in the workplace and guaranteeing all its citizens the right to vote.

Other groups also organized and entered the political arena. Indians, disabled Americans, California farm workers, and gay men and lesbians all formed organizations to counter discrimination and advance their civil rights. The women’s movement affected all aspects of American society, enabling women to play a fuller role in the nation’s political and economic life. A new environmental movement secured legislation protecting wilderness areas and endangered species and ensuring that Americans had clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency after John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Johnson hoped to revitalize the New Deal legacy by expanding social welfare programs. His program, the Great Society, sought to address seemingly intractable problems such as poverty, lack of health care for the elderly, and the deterioration of inner-city neighborhoods. But Johnson also expanded the U.S. military presence in Vietnam, an effort that cost an increasing number of American lives. Even constant bombing proved futile to stem the civil war that pitted Americans and anticomunist Vietnamese against the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and their comrades in the north. Johnson’s successor, Richard M. Nixon, was also mired in a war that was increasingly unpopular among Americans.

Protests against the war in the late 1960s and early 1970s highlighted an emerging youth culture. The baby boom generation, born in the two decades after World War II, embraced sexual freedom and new forms of music (such as rock ‘n’ roll) in an apparent attempt to defy their parents and “the Establishment” in general. Many Americans felt betrayed by both Johnson and Nixon, believing that tens of thousands of American soldiers had died in vain in Vietnam. The Watergate break-in at Democratic headquarters, leading eventually to Nixon’s resignation, contributed to a growing, widespread disenchantment with government authority.

By the late 1970s, developments abroad had greatly complicated Cold War politics. Middle Eastern oil-producing nations imposed an oil embargo on the United States, highlighting U.S. dependence on fossil fuels. Islamic fundamentalists were beginning to retaliate violently against the spread of American influence and culture in Muslim countries. And at home, a conservative backlash emerged to counter the expansion of the welfare state, the heightened visibility of the feminist movement, and widening civil rights protests.
In 1959, Vice President Richard M. Nixon traveled to Moscow in the Soviet Union to visit the American National Exhibition, a showcase of American consumer goods and leisure equipment. The main attraction of the exhibition was a full-size, six-room, ranch-style house. In a heated debate with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at the opening of the exhibition, Nixon extolled the virtues of the American way of life while his opponent promoted the communist system. The two leaders did not discuss missiles, bombs, or government. Rather, they argued over the relative merits of American and Soviet washing machines, televisions, and electric ranges in what came to be known as the "Kitchen Debate," one of the most noted verbal sparring matches of the century.

The model home filled with consumer goods and appliances offered tangible proof, Nixon claimed, of the superiority of free enterprise over communism: “To us, diversity, the right to choose, . . . is the most important thing. We don’t have one decision made at the top by one government official. . . . We have many different manufacturers and many different kinds of washing machines so that the housewives have a choice. . . . Would it not be better to compete in the relative merits of washing machines than in the strength of rockets?”

Nixon called attention to a built-in, panel-controlled washing machine. "In America," he said, "these [washing machines] are designed to make things easier for our women." Khrushchev countered Nixon’s boast of comfortable American housewives by expressing pride in productive Soviet female workers. The Soviets, he claimed, did not share that “capitalist attitude toward women.”

According to American journalists, Nixon’s knock-out punch in his verbal bout with the Soviet premier was his description of the American postwar domestic dream: successful breadwinners supporting attractive homemakers in well-appointed, comfortable homes. The American National Exhibition in Moscow seemed to demonstrate the superiority of the American way of life.

Scientific discoveries in the 1950s also inaugurated the modern era of exploration beyond Earth’s atmosphere, fueled by the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), established in 1958, sent the first American into space in 1961. But science also brought pesticides, smog, and other pollutants. Americans at the time rarely considered the environmental consequences of consumer goods, cars, petrochemicals, or nuclear power.

The decade from 1953 to 1963, under the presidencies of Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy, was a time of expansive optimism.
about the future. Hawaii and Alaska became states in 1959. The baby boom demonstrated widespread faith in the future for American children. It was also a decade of growth for U.S. influence abroad, the domestic economy, consumer culture, and television. Suburbs, highways, and shopping malls expanded to meet the needs of increasing numbers of families with young children. Some teenagers and others rebelled against what they saw as conformity in American life. But African Americans organized in the civil rights movement to gain full access to the freedoms and comforts of this increasingly middle-class society.

It was also a decade of anxiety. Americans worried about the perils of the atomic age as the nuclear arsenals of both superpowers continued to grow. Science fiction films about alien invaders reflected concerns about foreign dangers. The Soviet Union’s 1957 launching of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth, alarmed Americans and forced the nation to confront the possibility of Soviet technological superiority. The United States appeared to be at the height of its strength and power, yet at the same time, more vulnerable than ever before.

Cold War, Warm Hearth

The postwar era was a time of deep divisions in American society, yet in certain ways Americans behaved with remarkable conformity. This is especially evident in the overwhelming embrace of the nuclear family. The GI Bill, with its provisions for home mortgage loans, enabled veterans of modest means to purchase homes. Although residential segregation prevailed throughout the postwar era, limiting most suburban developments to prosperous white middle- and
working-class families, many veterans of color were able to buy their first homes. Americans of all racial, ethnic, and religious groups, of all socioeconomic classes and educational levels, brought the marriage rate up and the divorce rate down. The "American way of life" embodied in the suburban nuclear family, as a cultural ideal if not a universal reality, motivated countless postwar Americans to strive for it, to live by its codes, and—for Americans of color—to demand it.

**Consumer Spending and the Suburban Ideal**

Between 1947 and 1961, national income increased more than 60 percent. Rather than putting this money aside for a rainy day, Americans were inclined to spend it. Investing in one's home, along with the trappings that would enhance family life, seemed the best way to plan for a secure future.

Between 1950 and 1970, the suburban population more than doubled, from 36 million to 74 million. Fully 20 percent of the population remained poor during this prosperous time. But most families of ample as well as modest means exhibited a great deal of conformity in their consumer behavior, reflecting widely shared beliefs about the good life. They poured their money into homes, domestic appliances, televisions, automobiles, and family vacations.

Nuclear families who settled in the suburbs provided the foundation for new types of community life and leisure pursuits, sometimes at the expense of older ones grounded in ethnic neighborhoods and kinship networks. Family-oriented amusement parks such as Disneyland in Anaheim, California, which opened in 1955, catered to middle-class tastes, in contrast to older venues such as Coney Island, known for thrill rides, class and ethnic mixing, and romantic environments. Religious affiliation rose to an all-time high as Americans built and joined suburban churches and synagogues, complete with youth programs and summer camps.
In 1949 fewer than 1 million American homes had a television. Within the next four years, the number soared to 20 million.

The Cold War made a profound contribution to suburban sprawl. Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which provided $100 billion for building 41,000 miles of national highways. When President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the bill into law, he stated one of the major reasons for the new highway system: “[In] case of atomic attack on our key cities, the road net must permit quick evacuation of target areas.”

The worst-case scenario was communist takeover and the defeat of the United States in the Cold War. Pentagon strategists and foreign policy experts feared that the Soviet Union might gain the military might to allow its territorial expansion and, eventually, world domination. But observers also worried that the real dangers to America were internal: racial strife, emancipated women, class conflict, and family disruption. Most postwar Americans longed for security after years of economic depression and war, and they saw family stability as the best bulwark against the new dangers of the Cold War.

**Race, Class, and Domesticity**

After World War II, the nation faced a severe housing shortage. The federal government gave developers financial subsidies to build affordable single-family homes and offered Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loans and income tax deductions to homebuyers. These benefits enabled white working-class and middle-class families to purchase houses. Postwar prosperity, government subsidies, and the promise of assimilation made it possible for white-skinned Americans of immigrant background to blend into the suburbs.

Despite the expansion of the black and Latino middle class and the increase in home ownership among racial minorities, most suburban developments excluded nonwhites. The FHA and lending banks maintained policies known as red lining, which designated certain neighborhoods off limits to racial minorities. Although Americans of color remained concentrated in urban and rural areas, some did move to the suburbs, usually into segregated communities.

For Americans of color, suburban home ownership offered inclusion in the postwar American dream. In her powerful 1959 play *A Raisin in the Sun*, African-American playwright Lorraine Hansberry eloquently articulated the importance of a suburban home, not to assimilate into white America but to live as a black family with dignity and pride. Asian Americans also had good reason to celebrate home and family life. With the end of the exclusion of Chinese immigrants during World War II, wives and war brides began to enter the country, helping to build thriving family-oriented communities. After the disruptions and anguish of internment, Japanese Americans were eager to put their families and lives back together. Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, including braceros, established
flourishing communities in the Southwest. Puerto Ricans migrated to New York and other eastern cities, where they could quadruple their wages on the island.

Racial segregation did not prevail everywhere. In Shaker Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, white residents decided, as a community, to integrate their neighborhood. Drawing on postwar liberal ideals of civil rights and racial integration, they welcomed black homeowners. Their effort succeeded by emphasizing class similarity over racial difference. White residents encouraged other white families to move into Shaker Heights, pointing out that their prosperous black neighbors were “just like us.”

As residents and businesses migrated to the suburbs, slum housing and vacant factories remained in the central cities. The Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 granted funds to municipalities for urban renewal. However, few of those federal dollars provided low-income housing. Mayors, bankers, and real estate interests used the money to bulldoze slums and build gleaming office towers, civic centers, and apartment complexes for affluent citizens, leaving the poor to fend for themselves in the remaining dilapidated corners of the cities.

Although intended to revitalize cities, urban renewal actually accelerated the decay of inner cities and worsened conditions for the urban poor. Federally funded projects often disrupted and destroyed ethnic communities. In Los Angeles, the Dodgers’ stadium built in Chavez Ravine offered baseball fans access to the national pastime, but it destroyed the historically rooted Mexican-American neighborhood in its path. The $5 million project displaced 7,500 people and demolished 900 homes.

Along with the urban poor, rural Americans reaped few benefits of postwar affluence. The 1950s marked the greatest out-migration from the South as the mechanization of farms—particularly the mechanical cotton picker—reduced the number of workers on the land. More than one-fourth of the population left Kentucky and West Virginia, where unemployment in some areas reached 80 percent.
Women: Back to the Future

The nuclear family ideal of the 1950s included a full-time wife and mother and a breadwinner husband. This vision of domesticity marked a giant step backward for many women, whose opportunities and experiences had expanded dramatically during World War II. The elevation of the housewife as a cultural icon contrasted sharply with the reality. The proportion of women who fit the mold of full-time homemaker was rapidly shrinking. Although most American women married, had children, and carried the lion’s share of responsibility for housework and child-rearing, increasing numbers of married women also held jobs outside the home. The employment of married women began to rise during World War II and kept rising after the war, even though most of the well-paying and highly skilled jobs returned to men at the war’s end.

Many women worked part-time while their children were at school, as they considered themselves homemakers not wage earners. With few other opportunities for creative work, women embraced their domestic roles and turned homemaking into a profession. Many fulfilled their role with pride and satisfaction and extended their energies and talents into their communities, where they made important contributions as volunteers in local parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and other civic organizations. Some expanded part-time employment into full-time occupations when their children left the nest. Others felt bored and frustrated and drowned their sorrow with alcohol or tranquilizers. In 1963 author Betty Friedan described the constraints facing women as the “problem that has no name” in her feminist manifesto *The Feminine Mystique*.

Education was one avenue available to women, as students as well as teachers. But higher education did not open its doors fully to women. Because few women gained access to graduate and professional schools and most well-paying jobs were reserved for men, college degrees for white women did not necessarily open up career opportunities or greatly improve their job and earning prospects. By 1956 one-fourth of white female students married while still in college. Many of these women dropped out of school to take jobs to support their husbands through college. But the situation was different for black women. Like their mothers and grandmothers, most black women had to work to help support their families. Job prospects for black women generally were limited to menial, low-paying occupations. Young black women knew that a college degree could mean the difference between working as a maid for a white family and working as a secretary, teacher, or nurse. Although few in number, more than 90 percent of black women who entered college completed their degrees.

Black women also aspired to the role of homemaker, but for very different reasons than white women. Although poverty still plagued large numbers of black citizens, the black middle class expanded during the 1950s. Postwar prosperity enabled some African Americans, for the first time, a family life in which the earnings of men were adequate to allow women to stay home with their own children rather than tending to the houses and children of white families. For black women, domesticity meant “freedom and independence in her own home.” It is no wonder that in the early 1960s, women of color bristled when white feminists such as Betty Friedan called upon women to break free from the “chains” of domesticity.

The Civil Rights Movement

As the civil rights movement gained momentum in the South, African-American activists faced fierce opposition from local white authorities and contempt from national leaders. Persistent racial discrimination proved to be the nation’s worst embarrassment throughout the Cold War. The Soviet Union pointed to American race relations as an indication of the hypocrisy and failure of the American promise of freedom for all. Yet national leaders paid only
lip service to racial justice and failed to provide the strong support necessary to defeat the system of racial segregation in the South known as “Jim Crow,” a legal, or de jure, set of institutions that prevailed throughout the South. Although the nation’s leaders acknowledged the need to address Southern segregation, they did nothing to address the unofficial, or de facto, segregation that prevailed throughout the country.

Nevertheless, at the grassroots level, racial minorities continued to work for equal rights. For example, Mexican Americans in the Southwest pressed for desegregation of schools, residential neighborhoods, and public facilities through organizations such as the middle-class League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Asociacion Nacional México-Americana (ANMA), a civil rights organization that emerged out of the labor movement. It was not until 1963 that the power of the civil rights movement—and the violence of southern white opposition—finally compelled the federal government to take action.

Brown v. Board of Education

The first major success in the struggle to dismantle the Jim Crow system in the South came in the 1954 Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education. Civil rights strategists decided to pursue their cause in the courts rather than through Congress. They knew that southern Democrats in Congress, who held disproportionate power there, would block any civil rights legislation that came before the House or Senate. They believed that they had a better chance of success through the courts.

NAACP lawyers filed suit against the Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education on behalf of Linda Brown, a black child in a segregated school. They were targeting the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision, which justified Jim Crow laws on the grounds that they provided “separate but equal” facilities. The case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, where NAACP general counsel Thurgood Marshall argued that separate facilities, by definition, denied African Americans their equal rights as citizens.

In 1953, during the three-year period that the Supreme Court had the Brown case before it, President Eisenhower appointed Earl Warren as chief justice. Warren had been state attorney general and then governor of California during World War II and had approved the internment of Japanese Americans—a decision he later deeply regretted. He now used his political and legal skills to strike a blow for justice. He knew that such a critical case needed a unanimous decision to win broad political support. One by one, he persuaded his Supreme Court colleagues of the importance of striking down segregation. On May 17, 1954, Warren delivered the historic unanimous ruling: “To separate [black children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone... Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”
White Resistance, Black Persistence

The Brown case was a great triumph, but it was only the first step. Desegregation would be meaningful only when it was enforced, and that was another matter entirely. At first, there seemed to be cause for optimism as many white officials in the South seemed resigned to accept the decision. However, few were willing to initiate action to implement desegregation. Even the Supreme Court delayed its decision on implementation for a full year and then simply called for the process to begin “with all deliberate speed” but specified no timetable. Political leaders did not begin to work on the task, leaving sympathetic educators and eager black Americans with no support. President Eisenhower was not enthusiastic about racial integration. He said, “I don’t think you can change the hearts of men with laws or decisions.”

In 1955, the year after the Brown decision, white Mississippians murdered fourteen-year-old Emmett Till for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Till was from Chicago but was visiting relatives in Mississippi. His mutilated body was found in the Tallahatchie River. Although Till’s killers later confessed to the murder, an all-white jury found them not guilty. Eisenhower remained silent about Till’s murder and the travesty of justice, even when E. Frederick Morrow, his one black adviser, beseeched him to condemn the lynching.

Eisenhower’s hands-off policy emboldened southern segregationists to resist the Supreme Court’s desegregation decision. When it became clear that the federal government would not enforce the ruling, white resistance spread across the South. State legislatures passed resolutions vowing to protect segregation, and most southern congressmen signed the 1956 “Southern Manifesto,” promising to oppose federal desegregation efforts.

A crisis at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, finally forced Eisenhower to act. Under a federal court’s order to desegregate, school officials were prepared to comply and had carefully mobilized community support. But Arkansas Governor Orville Faubus, facing re-election, instructed National Guard troops to maintain “order” by blocking the entry of black students into the school. Eisenhower initially refused to intervene in the crisis. Hoping for a compromise, he met with Faubus, who agreed to allow the school to integrate peacefully. But Faubus broke his word, withdrew the National Guard troops, and left Little Rock, leaving the black students unprotected.

On September 23, 1957, as nine black students attempted to enter Central High, a huge angry crowd of whites surrounded them. With international news cameras broadcasting pictures of the shrieking and menacing mob, Eisenhower was forced to federalize the Arkansas National Guard and send 1,000 paratroopers to Little Rock. Eisenhower acted to maintain federal authority rather than to support integration.

Boycotts and Sit-Ins

Under Jim Crow laws in the South, black passengers were required to sit in the back section of buses, leaving the front of the bus for whites. If the “white” section at the front of the bus filled up, black passengers were required to give up their seats for white passengers. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks and the black community of Montgomery, Alabama, were ready to take on the system. Parks, who worked as a seamstress, was a widely respected leader in Montgomery’s black community, active in her church, and secretary of the local NAACP. On her way home from work, sitting in the first row of the “colored” section of the bus when the front of the bus filled with passengers, she refused to move when a white man demanded her seat. Parks was arrested, and black Montgomery sprang into action.

Literally overnight, the Montgomery bus boycott was born. For 381 days, more than 90 percent of Montgomery’s black citizens sacrificed their comfort and convenience for the sake of their rights and dignity. As one elderly black woman replied when a white reporter offered her a ride as she walked to work, “No, my feets is tired but my soul is rested.”
Martin Luther King Jr., pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was a newcomer to Montgomery when the bus boycott began. He embraced the opportunity to become the leader of the boycott and, eventually, the most powerful spokesperson for the civil rights movement. As he told the 5,000 listeners who gathered in his church on the first night of the boycott, “If you will protest courageously and yet with dignity and Christian love, in the history books that are written in future generations, historians will have to pause and say, ‘there lived a great people—a black people—who injected a new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.’ This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility.”

The bus boycott ended a year later when the Supreme Court ruled that Montgomery’s buses must integrate, but the momentum generated by the boycott galvanized the civil rights movement. King and other leaders formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which united black ministers across the South in the cause of civil rights. The boycott tactic spread to other southern cities. As boycotts continued, a new strategy emerged: the sit-in.

On February 1, 1960, four African-American students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, inspired by the bus boycott, entered the local Woolworth store and sat down at the lunch counter. When they were told “We do not serve Negroes,” they refused to leave, forcing the staff at Woolworth’s to physically remove the nonviolent protesters. Undaunted, they returned to the lunch counter the next day with twenty-three classmates. By the end of the week, more than a thousand students joined the protest. By this time, white gangs had gathered, waving Confederate flags and menacing the black undergraduates. But the students responded by waving American flags.

In May 1961, members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized the Freedom Rides, in which black and white civil rights workers attempted to ride two interstate buses from Washington, D.C., to New Orleans in an effort to challenge segregation at facilities used in interstate travel. Their journey began peacefully, but when they reached Rock Hill, South Carolina, a group of whites beat John Lewis, one of the young black riders, for entering...
a whites-only rest room. In Anniston, Alabama, a mob slashed the tires of one of the buses, threw a fire bomb through a window, and pummeled the riders with fists and pipes. After the brutal beatings, reinforcements from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) arrived to continue the Freedom Rides. They persevered, facing beatings along the way until they reached Jackson, Mississippi, where they were immediately arrested and jailed. The spirit and strength of the civil rights workers inspired many others to join them in the movement.

**The Eisenhower Years**

Dwight D. Eisenhower’s presidency was notable for moderation, with few major new initiatives and leadership that rested more on his personal stature than his actions. Ike, as he was known, presided during a time of great prosperity and his policies encouraged business expansion. However, the former general did try to stem the defense buildup. In his farewell address as president, Eisenhower warned the nation against the growing power of the military-industrial complex, the term he coined to describe the armed forces and the politically powerful defense industries that supplied arms and equipment to them.

**The Middle of the Road**

As president, Eisenhower pursued a path down the middle of the road. His probusiness legislative agenda and appointments pleased conservatives, and he placated liberals by extending many of the policies of the welfare state enacted during the New Deal. He agreed to the expansion of Social Security and unemployment compensation and an increase in the minimum wage. He also made concerted efforts to reduce defense spending, believing that continued massive military expenditures would hinder the nation’s economic growth. In December 1953, Eisenhower announced the New Look, a streamlined military that relied less on expensive conventional ground forces and more on air power and advanced nuclear capabilities.

Eisenhower’s plans to reduce defense spending derailed in 1957 when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial Earth satellite. Although Sputnik could not be seen with the naked eye—it was only 22 inches in diameter—it emitted a beeping noise that was broadcast by commercial radio stations in the United States, making its presence very real and causing near hysteria among the public. The Soviet’s launching of Sputnik II a month later confirmed widespread fears that the United States was behind in the space race and, more significantly, in the arms race. Eisenhower’s popularity in the polls suddenly dropped 22 points.

Acquiescing to his critics, the president increased funds for military, scientific, and educational spending. NASA, which developed the program of space exploration, was one result. But Eisenhower believed that “the most critical problem of all” was the lack of American scientists and engineers. He led the federal government to subsidize additional science and math training for both teachers and students.

Eisenhower’s secretary of defense, former head of General Motors Charles Wilson, commented that “what’s good for General Motors business is good for America.” But not everyone agreed. Eisenhower’s probusiness policies often harmed the nation’s environment. He promoted the Submerged Land Act, which removed from federal jurisdiction more than $40 billion worth of oil-rich offshore lands. Under the control of state governments, oil companies...
could—and did—gain access to them. The New York Times called the act “one of the greatest and surely the most unjustified give-away programs” in the nation’s history. The administration’s willingness to allow businesses to expand with little regulation, and with virtually no concern for the environment, contributed to increasing pollution of the air, water, and land during the 1950s and helped spark the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Eisenhower also supported the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. As the largest public works project the nation had ever mounted, this centrally planned transportation system contributed to the national pastime of family road vacations and tourism. Cheap gas fueled America’s car culture. Cars gave Americans increased mobility and enabled suburban dwellers to drive to work in the cities. But reliance on the automobile doomed the nation’s passenger train system and led to the decline of public transportation. Cars also contributed to suburban sprawl, air pollution, and traffic jams.

**Eisenhower’s Foreign Policy**

The New Look, while containing military spending, shifted American military priorities from reliance on conventional weapons to nuclear deterrence and covert operations. During Eisenhower’s presidency, the United States and the Soviet Union both solidified their separate alliances. The twelve original NATO nations agreed that an attack on any one of them would be considered an attack on all, and they maintained a force to defend the West against a possible Soviet invasion. NATO expanded in 1952 to include Greece and Turkey, and West Germany joined in 1955. The Soviet Union formed a similar alliance, the Warsaw Pact, with the countries of eastern Europe. Confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union over the fate of Europe gave way to subtle maneuvers regarding the Third World—a term originally referring to nonaligned nations in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

After Joseph Stalin died in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev became the new leader of the Soviet Union and called for peaceful coexistence with the United States. To limit military expenditures and improve relations, the superpowers arranged high-level summit meetings. In 1955 delegates from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France met in Geneva. Although the meeting achieved little of substance, it set a tone of cooperation. In 1959 Khrushchev came to the United States, met with Eisenhower, and toured the country. Despite the Soviet downing of an American U-2 spy plane in 1960, the superpowers began to discuss arms limitation. Both countries agreed to limit aboveground testing of nuclear weapons because of the health and environmental risks such tests posed. Soviet negotiations with the United States did not, however, mean greater liberty in eastern Europe, where Soviet forces crushed a 1956 uprising in Hungary.

The Eisenhower administration distrusted countries that maintained neutrality in the Cold War, fearing that those not aligned with the United States might turn to communism and become allies of the Soviet Union. Through covert operations including coups and assassinations, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) manipulated governments around the world. In 1953 the CIA helped to overthrow the elected government in Iran—which had seized control of Western-owned oil fields in the country—and to restore the dictatorship of Shah Reza Pahlavi, whose unpopular Western-leaning regime would be overthrown by Muslim fundamentalists in 1979. The CIA helped overthrow the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954. U.S. officials considered Arbenz a communist because he sought to redistribute large tracts of land, much of it owned by the Boston-based United Fruit Company. In 1959 revolutionary leader Fidel Castro established a regime in Cuba based on socialist principles. His government took control of foreign-owned companies, including many owned by Americans, alarming U.S. officials and investors in Cuba. Eisenhower’s hostility encouraged Castro to forge an alliance with the Soviet Union. The CIA then launched a plot to overthrow Castro. In 1960–1961, the CIA also helped orchestrate the

*Anticommunism became the guiding principle behind nearly all U.S. foreign policy, taking precedence over other American ideals.*
overthrow and assassination of the charismatic left-leaning Patrice Lumumba, the first minister of the Republic of the Congo in Africa, soon after its independence from Belgium.

The Middle East became a focus for U.S. foreign policy under Eisenhower. When Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser nationalized the British-controlled Suez Canal in 1956, arguing that canal tolls would provide funds for a dam, the British government, with the help of France and Israel, launched an attack against Egypt to regain control of the canal. Although he distrusted Nasser, Eisenhower criticized Britain for trying to retain its imperial position in the Middle East, a move applauded by leaders in Africa and Asia. The episode weakened U.S. relations with Nasser, who forged ties with the Soviet Union. Eisenhower now feared that "Nasserism" might spread throughout the Middle East.

In the spring of 1957, Congress approved the Eisenhower Doctrine, a pledge to defend Middle Eastern countries "against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism." However, U.S. policymakers rarely distinguished between nationalist movements and designs by "international communism," which they defined as Soviet aggression. Because American leaders believed that struggles for national self-determination in Third World countries were inspired and supported by the Soviet Union, they used the Eisenhower Doctrine to provide justification for U.S. military intervention to support pro-Western governments.

Cultural Diplomacy

In addition to political and military interventions, American foreign policy during the early Cold War era promoted cultural relationships. Initiatives to promote international friendship and a positive view of the United States, especially in the developing world, were part of American "cultural diplomacy."

One of the earliest and most successful diplomats for American culture was Dr. Tom Dooley, known as the "jungle doctor." Dooley joined the U.S. Navy medical corps during World War II and remained in the navy reserves until 1950. After earning his medical degree, he moved to Southeast Asia, where he set up clinics to provide medical care for impoverished villagers. He quickly became a major celebrity. In a 1960 Gallup poll, Dooley was among the ten most admired Americans.

Dooley personified the complex legacy of U.S. cultural diplomacy during the early years of the Cold War. A practicing Catholic, he rejected the role of the religious missionary—a role tied to racism and imperialism in the anticolonial post–World War II years. Rather, Dooley promoted modernization and development, embracing an internationalist vision grounded in respect and appreciation for the local culture and customs of the people with whom he lived. As a result, he was the nation's most effective ambassador.

Dooley's zeal to help the people of Southeast Asia went beyond medical care. A passionate anticommunist, in 1956 he assisted the CIA and the U.S. Navy in leading the exodus of 900,000 Catholic refugees from newly created communist North Vietnam to South Vietnam, where the United States backed a noncommunist dictatorship under Ngo Dinh Diem. The CIA supported Dooley's efforts and helped publicize his cultural diplomacy.

Dooley's work in Southeast Asia provided essential medical care to people in need and also served American interests in the early years of the Cold War. But his decision to live and work in the remote villages of Laos was not based simply on self-sacrifice. As a homosexual, Dooley would have had a difficult life within the United States in the 1950s. Anticommunist crusaders purged homosexuals from government employment, and gay men and lesbians faced harassment, ostracism, and often the loss of their jobs. Dooley escaped this intense homophobia by creating communal living situations with other men in remote areas of Laos, far from public view. There he could keep his sexual orientation private. If he had remained in the United States, the anticommunists whose political passions he shared would have purged him from their ranks.
Outsiders and Opposition

The 1950s often are remembered for political and cultural complacency among white Americans, with opposition to the nation’s institutions emanating from people of color. But an increasing number of young whites, in the South as well as North, joined the struggle for civil rights. Others were drawn to the music and dance of black America, especially the fusion of...
rhythm-and-blues with country-and-western, a form of early rock 'n' roll. Distinct types of protest also emerged from the white middle class: the rebellion of the Beats who rejected staid conformity, the stirrings of discontent among women, and the antinuclear and environmental movements. The arts rejected mainstream values, as Jackson Pollock and other abstract expressionist painters challenged artistic conventions and shifted the center of the art world from Paris to New York. Even the sexual revolution of the 1960s had its roots in widespread defiance of the rigid sexual codes of the 1950s.

One clue that all was not tranquil was the widespread panic that the nation's young were out of control. Adults worried about an epidemic of juvenile delinquency, blaming everything from parents to comic books. New celebrities such as movie stars Marlon Brando and James Dean portrayed misunderstood youth in rebellion against a corrupt and uncaring adult world. In their films, and in J. D. Salinger's now-classic novel *Catcher in the Rye*, young women and men strain against the authority and expectations of their parents and the adult world, dreaming of freedom and personal fulfillment.
Sexual mores were rigid in the 1950s—and widely violated. Single young women who became pregnant faced disgrace and ostracism unless they married quickly, which many did. Abortion, which had been illegal since the late nineteenth century but tacitly accepted until after World War II, became increasingly difficult to obtain, with hospitals placing new restrictions on legal therapeutic abortions. A double standard encouraged men to pursue sexual conquest as a mark of manhood and virility but tarnished the reputation of women who engaged in sexual intercourse prior to marriage.

In many ways, the youth of the 1950s were already undermining the constraints that toppled in the next decade. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the explosion of rock ’n’ roll, with its roots in African-American rhythm-and-blues, its raw sexuality, and its jubilant rebelliousness. Rock ’n’ roll emerged from the fusion of musical traditions among artists from many ethnic backgrounds. Jewish songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote songs such as “Hound Dog” for black artists such as Willie Mae Thornton that were later recorded by white Southerner Elvis Presley. The first Mexican-American rock ’n’ roll star, Ritchie Valens, sang ballads such as “Donna” along with jazzed-up versions of Mexican folk songs such as “La Bamba.”

**Rebellious Men**

Men, too, were in revolt. According to widely read studies of the time, such as William Whyte’s *The Organization Man* and David Reisman’s *The Lonely Crowd*, middle-class men were forced into boring, routinized jobs, groomed to be “outer-directed” at the expense of their inner lives, and saddled with the overwhelming burden of providing for ever-growing families with insatiable consumer desires.

A few highly visible American men provided alternative visions. Hugh Hefner built his Playboy empire by offering men the trappings of the “good life” without its burdensome responsibilities. The Playboy ethic encouraged men to enjoy the sexual pleasures of attractive women without the chains of marriage and to pursue the rewards of consumerism in well-appointed “bachelor flats” rather than appliance-laden homes. *Playboy* magazine celebrated this lifestyle.
Beat poets, writers, and artists offered a different type of escape. In literary works such as Allen Ginsberg’s poem *Howl* and Jack Kerouac’s novel *On the Road*, and in their highly publicized lives, the Beats celebrated freedom from conformity, eccentric artistic expression, playful obscenity, experimentation with drugs, open homosexuality, and male bonding. While eschewing the luxurious consumerism Hefner extolled, the Beats shared with *Playboy* a vision of male rebellion against conformity and responsibility. The mainstream men who indulged in these fantasies were more likely to enjoy them vicariously than to bolt from the breadwinner role. The dads who were honored on the new consumer holiday of Father’s Day far outnumbered the freewheeling Beats and bachelors.

**The Kennedy Era**

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the first American president born in the twentieth century and the first Roman Catholic president. In his inaugural address, he claimed that “the torch has been passed to a new generation.” It was a fitting metaphor for a young man who had been reared to compete and to win, whether the contest was athletic, intellectual, or political. But at the time of his election, it was not clear that a new generation had grabbed the torch. The young candidate was largely the creation of his father, Joseph, who rose to power and wealth as a financier, Hollywood executive, and ambassador to England. Ambitious and demanding, the elder Kennedy was known for his ruthlessness in business and politics and for his blatant philandering. He groomed his oldest son, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., for greatness, specifically for the presidency. But when young Joe was killed in World War II, the father’s ambitions settled on the next in line, John.

John (Jack) Kennedy became a hero during World War II, winning military honors for rescuing his crewmates on his patrol boat, PT-109, when it was rammed by a Japanese destroyer. The rescue left him with a painful back impairment and exacerbated the symptoms of Addison’s disease, which plagued him all his life and necessitated daily cortisone injections. His father coached him to bear up under the pain, hide his infirmity, and project an image of health and vitality. “Vigor” was a word Kennedy used often and an aura he projected, inspiring a national craze for physical fitness that survives to this day. Young JFK also emulated his father’s brash sexual promiscuity, even after his marriage to Jacqueline Bouvier in 1953.

In 1946 Kennedy won election to the House of Representatives, and in 1952 he defeated incumbent Republican Henry Cabot Lodge to become the Democratic senator from Massachusetts. JFK’s father financed all of his political campaigns, and in 1960 the elderly Kennedy bankrolled and masterminded JFK’s narrowly successful run for the White House. Kennedy selected as his running mate the powerful Senate majority leader, Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, whom he had battled for the nomination.

**How did Kennedy’s foreign domestic policies differ from those of Eisenhower?**

**TABLE 25-2**

The Election of 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Popular Vote (%)</th>
<th>Electoral Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard M. Nixon</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On November 1, 1961, 50,000 women in communities across the country took to the streets to protest nuclear testing. Under the sponsorship of Women Strike for Peace, these demonstrators used their authority as mothers, and brought along their children, to highlight their stake in the future. Participants lobbied government officials to “End the Arms Race—Not the Human Race.” Within a year their numbers grew to several hundred thousand.
INTERPRETING HISTORY

Rachel Carson, Silent Spring

In 1962, Silent Spring, Rachel Carson’s eloquent exposé of the chemical industry’s deadly impact on the health of the planet, landed on the best-seller list, where it stayed for months. The book, which eventually sold 1.5 million copies and remains in print today, galvanized the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Carson called the chemical industry “a child of the Second World War” and creator of “elixirs of death.” She reported that annual pesticide production increased from 124 million pounds in 1947 to 637 million pounds by 1960. Twenty years later it had reached 2.4 billion pounds. “In the course of developing agents of chemical warfare,” she noted, “some of the chemicals created in the laboratory were found to be lethal to insects. The discovery did not come by chance: insects were widely used to test chemicals as agents of death for man.”

It took hundreds of millions of years to produce the life that now inhabits the earth—eons of time in which that developing and evolving and diversifying life reached a state of adjustment and balance with its surroundings. The environment, rigorously shaping and directing the life it supported, contained elements that were hostile as well as supporting. Certain rocks gave out dangerous radiation; even within the light of the sun, from which all life draws its energy, there were short-wave radiations with power to injure. Given time—time on the scale that is nature’s; it would require not merely the years of a man’s life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream, almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. The figure is staggering and its implications are not easily grasped—500 new chemicals to which the bodies of men and animals are required some-how to adapt each year, chemicals totally outside the limits of biologic experience.

Among them are many that are used in man’s war against nature. Since the mid-1940s over 200 basic chemicals have been created for use in killing insects, weeds, rodents, and other organisms described in the modern vernacular as “pests”; and they are sold under several thousand different brand names.

These sprays, dusts, and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests, and homes—nonselective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the “good” and the “bad,” to still the song of the birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film, and to linger on in the soil—all this though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects. Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called “insecticides” but “biocides.”

Questions

1. What connection does Carson make between time and the environment?
2. Why does Carson believe insecticides should be called biocides?

Kennedy’s Domestic Policy

With a thin margin of victory, Kennedy lacked a popular mandate for change. But he quickly established himself as an eloquent leader. In his inaugural address, the new president inspired the nation with his memorable words, “My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” Focusing his address on foreign policy, he declared, “Let every nation know . . . that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any
hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.” He initially sought to avoid division at home and to wage the Cold War forcefully abroad. He believed that prosperity was the best way to spread the fruits of affluence, rather than government programs that would redistribute wealth. Accordingly, he supported corporate tax cuts to stimulate the economy, which grew at a rate of 5 percent each year from 1961 to 1966.

Although Democrats held strong majorities in both houses, powerful southern conservatives often teamed up with Republicans Congress to defeat reform legislation. Kennedy knew that it would be futile to champion the cause of civil rights in the face of that alliance. But he did support issues important to his working-class constituents and proposed a number of legislative initiatives, including increasing the minimum wage, health care for the aged, larger Social Security benefits, and the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Kennedy’s Foreign Policy**

Kennedy was the first U.S. president to understand and recognize the legitimacy of movements for national self-determination in the Third World. He supported movements to end colonial rule while at the same time containing the spread of communism. His efforts earned him a great deal of good will among Africans and other non-Europeans. But if nationalist movements appeared friendly to the Soviet Union, Kennedy worked against them. He sharply increased military spending and nuclear arms buildup as a show of strength and preparedness against possible Soviet aggression.

One of Kennedy’s most popular initiatives was the Peace Corps, a program that sent Americans, especially young people, to nations around the world to work on development projects. In 1961 Kennedy signed the Charter of Punta del Este with several Latin American countries, establishing the Alliance for Progress, a program designed to prevent the spread of anti-Americanism and communist insurgencies in Latin America. The alliance offered $20 billion in loans to Latin American countries for democratic development initiatives.

Kennedy continued the strategies of Truman and Eisenhower to fight communism in South Vietnam by supporting the corrupt regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. But the National Liberation Front (NLF), founded in 1960 and supported by Ho Chi Minh’s communist regime in North Vietnam, gained the upper hand in its struggle against Diem. In response, Kennedy increased the number of military advisers there from 800 to 17,000. By 1963 it was obvious that Diem’s brutal regime was about to fall to the NLF, and Kennedy allowed U.S. military advisers and diplomats to encourage Diem’s dissenting generals to depose Diem.

Kennedy also faced a crisis in Cuba. Fidel Castro’s revolution initially represented the sort of democratic insurgency that Kennedy wanted to support. But Castro’s socialism turned the United States against him, and he established close ties with the Soviet Union. During the Eisenhower administration, the CIA began planning an invasion of Cuba with the help of Cuban exiles in Florida. Kennedy’s national security advisers persuaded Kennedy to allow the invasion to proceed.

On April 17, 1961, U.S.-backed and -trained anticommunist forces, most of them Cuban exiles, landed at the Bahia de Cochinas (Bay of Pigs) on the southern coast of Cuba. Castro expected the invasion—his agents in Florida had infiltrated the Cuban exiles—so his well-prepared troops quickly surrounded and captured the invaders. No domestic uprising against Castro occurred to support the invasion. Kennedy pulled back in humiliating defeat but continued to support covert efforts that tried but failed to destabilize Cuba and assassinate Castro.

Another crisis soon erupted in Berlin. Located 200 miles deep in East Germany, with only two highways connecting it to West Germany, West Berlin was a showcase of western material superiority and an espionage center for the western powers. In June 1961, Khrushchev threatened to end the western presence in Berlin and unite the city with the rest of East Germany. In part, Khrushchev wanted to stop the steady stream of East Germans into West Berlin.
Kennedy refused to relinquish West Berlin. On August 13, 1961, the East German government constructed a wall to separate East and West Berlin. Two years later, Kennedy stood in front of the wall and pledged to defend the West Berliners.

The most serious foreign policy crisis of Kennedy's presidency came in 1962, when the Soviet Union, at Castro's invitation, began to install nuclear missiles in Cuba. Kennedy's advisers presented a series of possible responses. The most dramatic and dangerous would be a full-scale military invasion of the island, which would topple Castro but would surely have prompted military retaliation by the Soviet Union. Another option was a more limited military intervention, an air strike to destroy the missiles before they became operational. Others proposed a blockade of Cuban ports to prevent the missiles from entering. Another possibility was to negotiate secretly with Castro, Soviet leaders, or both. Kennedy decided against behind-the-scenes negotiations as well as the drastic move of military intervention and instead established a "quarantine" around the island to block Soviet ships from reaching Cuba, hoping that the Soviet Union would back down and withdraw the missiles. A quarantine, unlike a blockade, was not considered an act of war; nevertheless, Kennedy put the Strategic Air Command on full alert for possible nuclear war.

It was a risky move. On national television, Kennedy warned the Soviet Union to remove the missiles or face the military might of the United States. For the next five days tensions mounted, as Russian ships hovered in the water beyond the quarantine zone. Finally Khrushchev proposed an agreement, offering to remove the missiles if the United States would agree not to invade Cuba. Kennedy also privately promised to remove Jupiter missiles in Turkey as soon as the crisis was over. The two leaders managed to diffuse the crisis, but they were both sobered by the experience of having come to the brink of nuclear war. In 1963 they signed a nuclear test ban treaty.

1963: A Year of Turning Points

In 1963 the President's Commission on the Status of Women published a report that documented widespread discrimination against women in jobs, pay, education, and the professions. In response, Kennedy issued a presidential order requiring the civil service to hire people "without regard to sex," and he supported passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

Also in 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr. led a silent and peaceful march through the city. Chief of Police Bull Connor unleashed the police, who blasted the demonstrators with fire hoses and attacked them with vicious police dogs. Four black children were later killed when segregationists bombed an African-American church. The Kennedy administration responded by bringing the full force of its authority to bear on the officials in Birmingham. But the crisis intensified. Alabama's segregationist governor, George Wallace, refused to admit two black students to the University of Alabama, threatening to stand in the doorway to block their entrance.

Finally, on June 10, 1963, Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard and for the first time went before the American people to declare himself forcefully on the side of the civil rights protesters and to propose a civil rights bill. A few months later, on August 28, more than 250,000 people gathered at the nation's capital in front of the Lincoln Memorial for the culmination of the March on Washington, a huge demonstration for jobs as well as freedom, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his inspiring "I Have a Dream" speech.

In the fall of 1963, a confident Kennedy began planning his reelection campaign for the next year. To mobilize support, he visited Texas. "Here we are in Dallas," he said on November 22, 1963, "and it looks like everything in Texas is going to be fine for us." Within an hour of uttering those optimistic words, the president lay dying of an assassin's bullet.

As shock and grief spread across the nation, a bizarre series of events confounded efforts to bring the assassin to justice. Police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald, who had previously lived in...
the Soviet Union and who had loose ties to organized crime and to political groups interested in Cuba. Oswald claimed he was innocent. But before he could be brought to trial, Oswald was murdered. Jack Ruby, a nightclub owner who also had links to organized crime, shot Oswald while he was in the custody of the Dallas police—an event witnessed by millions on live television. Ruby later died in prison. The newly sworn-in president, Lyndon B. Johnson, appointed a commission to investigate the assassination under the leadership of Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren. The Warren Commission eventually concluded that Oswald and Ruby had both acted alone, although the report failed to end speculation about a possible conspiracy.

CONCLUSION

During the decade between the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the nation experienced unprecedented prosperity. Increasing numbers of Americans moved into middle-class suburbs and enjoyed the fruits of a rapidly expanding consumer economy. Men and women rushed into marriage and childbearing, creating the baby boom and a powerful domestic ideology resting on distinct gender roles for women and men. At the same time, fears of nuclear war, intense anticommunism, and pressures to conform to mainstream political and cultural values contributed to anxieties and discontent.

Beneath the apparently tranquil surface, some Americans began to resist the limitations and exclusions of the widely touted “American way of life.” African Americans in the South demanded their rightful place as full citizens, challenging the Jim Crow system and accelerating the civil rights movement through nonviolent protests, boycotts, and sit-ins. Young people created a vibrant youth culture to the pulsating rhythms of rock ‘n’ roll. Beatniks, peace activists, and environmentalists expressed incipient political and cultural dissent. The rumblings of vast social change had already begun and would explode in the years ahead, pushed along by a divisive war in Vietnam.

For Review

1. Who had access to the postwar suburban ideal? Who was excluded, and why?
2. What strategies did civil rights activists develop and use? How effective were they? What resistance did they encounter?
3. How did Eisenhower steer a path down the “middle of the road”?
4. What marked Kennedy as a new type of president?

Chronology: 1953–1963

1953 CIA engineers coup in Iran, restores shah to power.
1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* outlaws school segregation.
1956 Interstate Highway Act.
1957 Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, integrated. USSR launches satellite *Sputnik*.
Key Terms

**Baby boom**  The period of increased U.S. childbirths from roughly the early 1940s to the early 1960s. p. 577

**Military-industrial complex**  The term given by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to describe the armed forces and the politically powerful defense industries that supplied arms and equipment to them. p. 585

**Redlining**  Policies maintained by the Federal Housing Authority and lending banks which designated certain neighborhoods off limits to racial minorities. p. 579

**Sit-in**  A form of civil disobedience in which activists sit down somewhere in violation of law or policy in order to challenge discriminatory practices or laws. The tactic originated during labor struggles in the 1930s and was used effectively in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. p. 584