

HIGHLIGHTS

of the Period

- ★ **Bay of Pigs** — U.S.-supported invasion of Cuba in April 1961; intended to overthrow Communist dictator Fidel Castro, the operation proved a fiasco. Castro's forces killed 114 of the invaders and took nearly 1,200 prisoners. The disaster shook the confidence of the Kennedy administration and encouraged the Soviet Union to become more active in the Americas.
- ★ **Camp David Accords (1979)** — agreement reached between the leaders of Israel and Egypt after protracted negotiations brokered by President Carter; Israel surrendered land seized in earlier wars and Egypt recognized Israel as a nation. Despite high hopes, it did not lead to a permanent peace in region, however.



- ★ **Chiang Kai Shek** — ineffective and corrupt leader of China in 1930s and 1940s; he was a wartime ally of the United States, but was unable to stop Communists from seizing power in 1949. Chiang's exile to Taiwan was a major American setback in the early days of the Cold War.
- ★ **Cuban Missile Crisis** — a confrontation between the United States and the USSR resulting from a Soviet attempt to place long-range nuclear missiles in Cuba (October 1962); Kennedy forced the Soviets to remove them with a blockade and the threat of force. The crisis enhanced Kennedy's standing but led to a Soviet arms buildup.
- ★ **Dien Bien Phu** — French fortress in northern Vietnam that surrendered in 1954 to the Viet Minh; the defeat caused the French to abandon Indochina and set the stage for the Geneva Conference, which divided the region and led to American involvement in South Vietnam.
- ★ **Domino Theory** — Eisenhower's metaphor that when one country fell to Communists, its neighbors would then be threatened and collapse one after another like a row of dominoes; this belief became a major rationale for U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

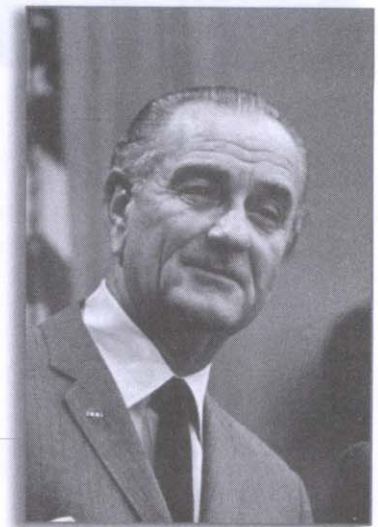


- ★ **Douglas MacArthur** — World War II hero who led United Nations forces during the Korean War; his outspoken opposition to President Truman's decisions to limit the war cost him his command. He wanted to bomb China, and Truman rejected the idea as too reckless.
- ★ **Dwight Eisenhower** — World War II hero and president, 1953–1961; his internationalist foreign policy continued Truman's policy of containment but put greater emphasis on military cost-cutting, the threat of nuclear weapons to deter Communist aggression, and Central Intelligence Agency activities to halt communism.
- ★ **Fidel Castro** — Communist leader of Cuba who led a rebellion against the U.S.-backed dictator and took power in 1959; President Kennedy tried to overthrow him with the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 but failed. Castro became closely allied with the Soviet Union, making the Kennedy Administration increasingly concerned about Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere.

HIGHLIGHTS

of the Period

- ★ **George Kennan** — State Department official who was architect of the containment concept; in his article “The Source of Soviet Conduct” he said the USSR was historically and ideologically driven to expand and that the United States must practice “vigilant containment” to stop this expansion.
- ★ **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)** — an authorization by Congress empowering President Johnson “to take all necessary measures” to protect U.S. forces in Vietnam; it was issued following reported attacks on U.S. destroyers off the Vietnam coast. Congress later regretted this action as the Vietnam War escalated, and questions emerged about the legitimacy of the attacks.
- ★ **Henry Kissinger** — advisor to Presidents Nixon and Ford; he was architect of the Vietnam settlement, the diplomatic opening to China, and détente with the Soviet Union.
- ★ **Ho Chi Minh** — Communist leader of North Vietnam; he and his Viet Minh/Viet Cong allies fought French and American forces to a standstill in Vietnam, 1946–1973. Considered a nationalist by many, others viewed him as an agent of the Soviet Union and China.
- ★ **Iran-Contra Affair (1986–1987)** — scandal that erupted after the Reagan administration sold weapons to Iran in hopes of freeing American hostages in Lebanon; money from the arms sales was used to aid the Contras (anti-Communist insurgents) in Nicaragua, even though Congress had prohibited this assistance. Talk of Reagan’s impeachment ended when presidential aides took the blame for the illegal activity.
- ★ **Iran Hostage Crisis (1979–1981)** — incident in which Iranian radicals, with government support, seized 52 Americans from the U.S. embassy and held them for 444 days; ostensibly demanding the return of the deposed Shah to stand trial, the fundamentalist clerics behind the seizure also hoped to punish the United States for other perceived past wrongs.
- ★ **Jimmy Carter** — president, 1977–1981; he aimed for a foreign policy “as good and great as the American people.” His highlight was the Camp David Accords; his low point, the Iran Hostage Crisis. Defeated for reelection after one term, he became very successful as an ex-president.
- ★ **John Foster Dulles** — Eisenhower’s secretary of state, 1953–1959; moralistic in his belief that Communism was evil and must be confronted with “brinkmanship” (the readiness and willingness to go to war) and “massive retaliation” (the threat of using nuclear weapons).
- ★ **Joseph Stalin** — ruthless leader of Soviet Union from 1925 to 1953; he industrialized the nation and led it in World War II and the early stages of the Cold War.
- ★ **Lyndon Johnson** — president, 1963–1969; his escalation of the Vietnam War cost him political support and destroyed his presidency. He increased the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam from 16,000 in 1963 to 540,000 in 1968. After the Tet Offensive, he decided to not seek reelection.



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of the Period

- ★ **Mao Zedong** — Communist Chinese leader who won control of China in 1949; a wary ally of the Soviet Union, Mao was an implacable foe of the United States until the 1970s.
- ★ **Marshall Plan (1947–1954)** — Secretary of State George Marshall's economic aid program to rebuild war-torn Western Europe; it amounted to an enlarged version of the Truman Doctrine, with billions of dollars going to revive European economies and contain Communism.
- ★ **Massive retaliation** — idea that United States should depend on nuclear weapons to stop Communist aggression; prompted by the frustration of the Korean War stalemate and the desire to save money on military budgets, the concept reduced reliance on conventional forces.
- ★ **Ngo Dinh Diem** — American ally in South Vietnam from 1954 to 1963; his repressive regime caused the Communist Viet Cong to thrive in the South and required increasing American military aid to stop a Communist takeover. He was killed in a coup in 1963.
- ★ **Nikita Khrushchev** — Soviet leader, 1954–1964; he was an aggressive revolutionary who hoped to spread Communism into Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Blame for the Cuban Missile Crisis eventually cost him his leadership position in the USSR.
- ★ **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (1949)** — military alliance of the United States, ten Western European countries, and Canada; it was considered a deterrent to Soviet aggression in Europe, with an attack on one NATO nation to be considered as an attack on all members.
- ★ **Peaceful coexistence (1955–1960)** — period in Soviet-American relations marked by less tension and by personal diplomacy between Khrushchev and Eisenhower; the two leaders recognized that, in a nuclear age, competition between their nations must be peaceful. This thaw in the Cold War was ended by the U-2 spy plane incident over the Soviet Union in 1960.
- ★ **Richard Nixon** — president, 1969–1974; he extracted the United States from Vietnam slowly, recognized Communist China, and improved relations with the Soviet Union. His foreign policy achievements were overshadowed by the Watergate scandal.
- ★ **Tet Offensive (January 1968)** — a series of Communist attacks on 44 South Vietnamese cities; although the Viet Cong suffered a major defeat, the attacks ended the American view that the war was winnable and destroyed the nation's will to escalate the war further.
- ★ **Truman Doctrine (1947)** — the announced policy of President Truman to provide aid to free nations who faced internal or external threats of a Communist takeover; announced in conjunction with a \$400 million economic aid package to Greece and Turkey, it was successful in helping those countries put down Communist guerrilla movements and is considered to be the first U.S. action of the Cold War.



HIGHLIGHTS

of the Period

- ★ **Yalta Conference (February 1945)** — meeting of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Winston Churchill to discuss postwar plans and Soviet entry into the war against Japan near the end of World War II; disagreements over the future of Poland surfaced. During the Red Scare of the 1950s, some Americans considered the meeting to have been a sellout to the Soviets.

HIGHLIGHTS

of the Period



- ★ **Alger Hiss** — State Department official accused in 1948 of spying for the Soviet Union; Richard Nixon became famous for his pursuit of Hiss, which resulted in a perjury conviction and prison for Hiss. Although long seen as a victim of Nixon's ruthless ambition and the Red Scare, recent scholarship suggests that Hiss was indeed a Soviet agent.
- ★ **Barry Goldwater** — unsuccessful presidential candidate against Lyndon Johnson in 1964; he called for dismantling the New Deal, escalation of the war in Vietnam, and the status quo on civil rights. Many see him as the grandfather of the conservative movement of the 1980s.
- ★ **Black Power** — rallying cry for many black militants in the 1960s and 1970s; it called for blacks to stand up for their rights, to reject integration, to demand political power, to seek their roots, and to embrace their blackness.
- ★ ***Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954)** — Supreme Court decision that overturned the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision (1896); led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Court ruled that "separate but equal" schools for blacks were inherently unequal and thus unconstitutional. The decision energized the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.
- ★ **Civil Rights Act of 1964** — proposed by John Kennedy and signed by Lyndon Johnson; it desegregated public accommodations, libraries, parks, and amusements and broadened the powers of federal government to protect individual rights and prevent job discrimination.
- ★ **Civil Rights Act of 1965** — sometimes called Voting Rights Act, it expanded the federal government's protection of voters and voter registration; it also increased federal authority to investigate voter irregularities and outlawed literacy tests.
- ★ **Earl Warren** — controversial Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1953–1969); he led the Court in far-reaching racial, social, and political rulings, including school desegregation and protecting rights of persons accused of crimes.
- ★ **Fair Deal** — Truman's legislative program; it was largely an extension of the New Deal of the 1930s, and Truman had little success convincing Congress to enact it.
- ★ **Federal Highway Act (1956)** — largest public works project in United States history; Eisenhower signed the law, which built over 40,000 miles of highways in the United States at a cost of \$25 billion and created the interstate highway system.
- ★ **Freedom rides** — civil rights campaign of the Congress of Racial Equality in which protesters traveled by bus through the South to desegregate bus stations; white violence against them prompted the Kennedy administration to protect them and become more involved in civil rights.

HIGHLIGHTS

of the Period

- ★ **George Wallace** — Alabama governor and third-party candidate for president in 1968 and 1972; he ran on a segregation and law-and-order platform. Paralyzed by an attempted assassination in 1972, he never recovered politically.
- ★ **House Un-American Activities Committee** — congressional committee formed in the 1930s to investigate perceived threats to democracy; in the 1940s, the committee laid foundation for the Red Scare as it investigated allegations of Communist subversion in Hollywood and pursued Alger Hiss.
- ★ **Hubert Humphrey** — liberal senator from Minnesota and Lyndon Johnson's vice president who tried to unite the party after the tumultuous 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago; he narrowly lost the presidency to Richard Nixon that year.
- ★ **John Kennedy** — president, 1961–1963, and the youngest president ever elected, as well as the first Catholic to serve; he had a moderately progressive domestic agenda and a hard-line policy against the Soviets. His administration ended when Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated him.
- ★ **Joseph McCarthy** — junior senator from Wisconsin who charged hundreds of Americans with working for or aiding the Soviet Union during the Cold War; he had no evidence but terrorized people from 1950 to 1954, ruining their lives and careers with his reckless charges until Senate censured him in December 1954.
- ★ **Julius and Ethel Rosenberg** — an engineer and his wife who were accused, tried, and executed in the early 1950s for running an espionage ring in New York City that gave atomic secrets to the Soviet Union; long considered unjustly accused victims of the Red Scare, recent evidence suggests that Julius was indeed a Soviet agent.
- ★ **Lyndon Johnson** — president, 1963–1969, who took over for Kennedy and created the Great Society, a reform program unmatched in the twentieth century; however, his Vietnam policy divided the country and his party, and he retired from politics in 1969.
- ★ **Malcolm X (Little)** — militant black leader associated with the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims); he questioned Martin Luther King's strategy of nonviolence and called on blacks to make an aggressive defense of their rights. He was assassinated by fellow Muslims in 1965.
- ★ **Martin Luther King, Jr.** — America's greatest civil rights leader, 1955–1968; his nonviolent protests gained national attention and resulted in government protection of African American rights. He was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.
- ★ **National Defense Education Act (1958)** — law that authorized the use of federal funds to improve the nation's elementary and high schools; inspired by Cold War fears that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in the arms and space race, it was directed at improving science, math, and foreign-language education.



HIGHLIGHTS

of the Period

- ★ **Richard Nixon** — controversial vice president, 1953–1961, and president, 1969–1974, who made his political reputation as an aggressive anti-Communist crusader; his presidency ended with his resignation during the Watergate scandal.
- ★ **Robert Kennedy** — John Kennedy's brother who served as attorney general and gradually embraced growing civil rights reform; later, as senator from New York, he made a run for the Democratic presidential nomination. An assassin ended his campaign on June 6, 1968.
- ★ **Rosa Parks** — NAACP member who initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 when she was arrested for violating Jim Crow rules on a bus; her action and the long boycott that followed became an icon of the quest for civil rights and focused national attention on boycott leader Martin Luther King, Jr.
- ★ **Sit-ins** — protests by black college students, 1960–1961, who took seats at “whites only” lunch counters and refused to leave until served; in 1960 over 50,000 participated in sit-ins across the South. Their success prompted the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.
- ★ **Sputnik** — Soviet satellite launched in September 1957; the launch set off a panic that the Communists were winning the space race and were superior in math and science education. It gave impetus for the Nation Defense Education Act of 1958 to improve schools.
- ★ **Strom Thurmond** — Democratic governor of South Carolina who headed the States' Rights Party (Dixiecrats); he ran for president in 1948 against Truman and his mild civil rights proposals and eventually joined the Republican Party.
- ★ **Taft-Hartley Act (1946)** — antilabor law passed over Truman's veto; it provided a “cooling off” period wherein the president could force striking workers back to work for 80 days. It also outlawed closed shops and allowed states to pass right-to-work laws.
- ★ **Thomas Dewey** — twice-defeated Republican candidate for president (1944, 1948); his overconfidence and lackadaisical effort in 1948 allowed Truman to overcome his large lead and pull off the greatest political upset in American history.
- ★ **Thurgood Marshall** — leading attorney for NAACP in 1940s and 1950s, who headed the team in *Brown vs. the Board of Education* case; later, Lyndon Johnson appointed him the first black justice on the United States Supreme Court.

