**Chapter 28, Section 2: JFK and the Cold War**

**I. Kennedy Confronts Global Challenges** *(pages 846–848)*

**A.** President Kennedy focused much of his time on foreign policy as the nation’s rivalry between the Soviet Union deepened. Through a variety of programs, Kennedy attempted to curb communism and reduce the threat of nuclear war.

**B.** Kennedy felt that Eisenhower had relied too heavily on nuclear weapons. Instead, Kennedy supported a **“flexible response”** where he asked for a buildup of conventional troops and weapons. This was costly but allowed the United States to fight a limited style of warfare. Kennedy also supported the Special Forces, a small army unit established in the 1950s to wage guerrilla warfare.

**C.** To improve Latin American relations, Kennedy proposed the **Alliance for Progress,** a series of cooperative aid projects with Latin American governments. Over a 10-year period, $20 billion was promised to aid Latin America. In Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, and the Central American republics, real reform took place. In other countries, the governing rulers used the money to remain in power.

**D.** The **Peace Corps,** created to help less developed nations fight poverty, trained young Americans to spend two years assisting in a country. The Peace Corps is still active today and has become one of Kennedy’s most important and withstanding legacies.

**E.** During this time of increased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two countries engaged in a **space race,** with each country hoping to dominate space to enhance their positions on Earth. Kennedy wanted Americans to be the first to reach the moon, and he pushed Congress to make it a reality.

**Discussion Question**

How did President Kennedy confront the global challenges he faced? *(Kennedy supported a “flexible response” where he asked for a buildup of conventional troops and weapons to allow the United States to fight a limited style of warfare. Kennedy also supported the Special Forces, a small army unit established in the 1950s to wage guerrilla warfare. To improve Latin American relations, Kennedy proposed the Alliance for Progress, a series of cooperative aid projects with Latin American governments. The Peace Corps was created to help less developed nations fight poverty. The United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a space race. Kennedy wanted Americans to be the first to reach the moon, and he pushed Congress to make it a reality.)*

**II. Crises of the Cold War** *(pages 848–850)*

**A.** Cuba and its leader, Fidel Castro, began forming an alliance with the Soviet Union and its leader, Nikita Khrushchev. During Eisenhower’s presidency, the CIA had secretly trained and armed Cuban exiles known as La Brigada. Kennedy’s advisers approved a plan to invade Cuba using La Brigada. On April 17, 1961, 1,400 armed Cuban exiles landed at the **Bay of Pigs** on the south coast of Cuba. Disaster struck as Kennedy cancelled air support for the exiles in order to keep United States involvement a secret.

Most of the La Brigada were either killed or captured by Castro’s army.

**B.** After meeting with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Kennedy refused to recognize East Germany or to have the United States—along with Great Britain and France— withdraw from Berlin. The Soviet leader retaliated by constructing a wall through Berlin, stopping movement between the Soviet sector and the rest of the city. For the next 30 years, the **Berlin Wall** symbolized the Cold War division between East and West.

**C.** During the summer of 1962, American intelligence agencies discovered that Soviet technicians and equipment had arrived in Cuba, and that military construction was in progress. Photographs proved that the Soviets had placed long-range missiles in Cuba. Kennedy ordered it stopped, but work on the site continued. Nuclear holocaust was feared. Neither Kennedy nor Khrushchev wanted World War III. Kennedy agreed not to invade Cuba and to remove missiles in Turkey. The Soviets agreed to remove missiles in Cuba.

**D.** The Cuban missile crisis, as it became known, brought the world to the edge of a nuclear war. Both sides agreed to work out a plan to ease tension. In 1963 the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to a treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. The missile crisis led to the demise of Nikita Khrushchev, and the new Soviet leadership was less interested in reaching agreements with the West. The result was a huge Soviet arms buildup.

**Discussion Question**

Why was the Bay of Pigs a dark moment for the Kennedy administration? *(The action revealed the American plot to overthrow a neighbor’s government. It made the United States appear weak and disorganized.)*

**III. The Death of a President** *(pages 850–851)*

**A.** On November 22, 1963, John F. Kennedy was shot twice while riding in a presidential motorcade. He was pronounced dead a short time later. Lee Harvey Oswald, a Marxist, was accused of killing Kennedy and was shot and killed himself two days later by Jack Ruby. It was suspected that Ruby killed Oswald to protect others involved in the murder. Chief Justice Warren concluded that Oswald was the lone gunman. The report of the **Warren Commission** left a few questions unanswered, and a conspiracy theory has persisted, although none has gained wide acceptance.

**B.** Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon Johnson, continued to promote many of Kennedy’s programs.

**Discussion Question**

What was the result of the Warren Commission report? *(Chief Justice Warren concluded that Oswald was the lone gunman. The report of the Warren Commission left a few questions unanswered, and a conspiracy theory has persisted, although none has gained wide acceptance.)*