

CHAPTER  
**15**  
SECTION 1

## Section Summary

### KENNEDY AND THE COLD WAR

Democrat **John F. Kennedy** and Republican **Richard M. Nixon** ran against each other for the office of President in 1960. Kennedy won the election narrowly. He succeeded partly because of his good performance in a television debate.

As President, Kennedy expanded the military. He wanted a “**flexible response**” policy, which meant that the military would be able to fight many different kinds of battles. He also wanted to prevent the spread of communism in poor nations. He created the **Peace Corps**, a group that sent American volunteers to help poor countries.

Kennedy’s first major challenge came in Cuba. **Fidel Castro** took over Cuba in 1959. Castro aligned Cuba closely with the Soviet Union. In 1961, Kennedy approved a plan to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. A CIA-led force of Cuban exiles invaded Cuba with the **Bay of Pigs invasion**. Most of the invaders were killed or captured, creating a huge failure.

Kennedy’s next challenge was in Berlin. The Soviet premier **Nikita Khrushchev** demanded that America remove its troops from West Berlin. When Kennedy refused, Khrushchev ordered the construction of a wall between East and West Berlin. The **Berlin Wall** became a symbol of the divide between communism and democracy.

Kennedy’s third challenge was the **Cuban missile crisis**. The Soviets began building nuclear missile sites in Cuba in range of East Coast cities. Kennedy demanded that the Soviets remove the missiles. Nuclear war seemed possible. After several tense days, Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles. The event inspired the leaders to install a “**hot line**” between Moscow and Washington, D.C., to improve communication. A year later in 1963, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union signed the first nuclear-weapons agreement.

### Review Questions

1. Why did the United States want to overthrow Fidel Castro?

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2. Why did the Soviets build nuclear missile sites in Cuba?

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### READING CHECK

Who was the leader of the Soviet Union during the Cuban missile crisis?

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### VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *aligned* mean in the underlined sentence? What context clues can you find in the surrounding words or phrases? Circle any words or phrases in the paragraph that help you figure out what *aligned* means.

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### READING SKILL

**Understand Effects** What effects did the Cuban missile crisis have on the Soviet Union and the United States?

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