



*A soldier burns a hut in My Lai. On March 16, 1968, members of a U.S. platoon conducted mass executions of women and children, killing as many as 504 unarmed civilians.*

mass executions of women and children, killing as many as 504 unarmed civilians. A helicopter pilot and other members of Charlie Company confronted the killing soldiers, and their stories were eventually picked up in the United States by the nation's major newspapers. The investigation that followed charged a series of officers in the chain of command with covering up the massacre and Lt. Calley with the murder of twenty-two civilians.<sup>89</sup> Calley was court-martialed and dismissed from the Army, but served only three and a half years under house arrest before having his life sentence commuted. His commanding officer was found not guilty, as were all twenty-two of the soldiers under him.

## **THE UNITED STATES, EUROPE, AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD**

### *The Dominican Republic*

Although preoccupied with the war, Johnson also had to contend with foreign policy developments outside of Vietnam. Like his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson maintained an official commitment to the Alliance for Progress with Latin America; yet like many Presidents before, he undermined American lip service to the right to self-determination with military intervention. Johnson sent Marines to the Dominican Republic in 1965 to suppress a violent political conflict there. The president hesitated with the invasion for several months. He feared that his political enemies on the right at home would use the occasion to call for a strike against Fidel Castro's Cuba. He also recognized, though, that liberal critics on the left would align his decision with the long history of U.S. military intervention in the Caribbean since the beginning of the century. In the end, the situation of about one thousand Americans trapped at a hotel near a

projected clashing point between rebels and military loyal to the regime prompted Johnson to send in helicopters for the evacuation of the hotel and to send in troops to forestall even the appearance of a Communist takeover. Notably, throughout this process, he never consulted with Latin American neighbors, as was required by treaty.<sup>90</sup>

### *Israel and the Six-Day War of 1967*

Two years later, Johnson grappled with diplomatic challenges in the Middle East that dated back to Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency. In 1956 Israel had attacked Egypt in a standoff over control of the Suez Canal. Egyptian forces then promptly prevented Israeli-bound ships from accessing the Gulf of Aqaba—a narrow strait of strategic and commercial importance between Sinai and Saudi Arabia. In 1967 United Nations troops withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula where they had kept peace between Egypt and Israel.

The Johnson administration urged Israel to wait for an international naval force to reopen the Gulf, but the United States' European allies did not get on board out of doubt that Johnson would prioritize the Middle East over Vietnam. Impatient, Israel attacked Egypt, Syria, and Jordan on June 5, 1967, and captured the Sinai and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank of the river Jordan and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria by June 10.<sup>91</sup> Israel eventually withdrew from the Sinai after signing a peace treaty with Egypt, but the other territories remained hotbeds of conflict between Israeli settlers and Arab neighbors. In particular, Palestinian displacement in the contested territories has proven contentious to this day.

### *The Long Road to Détente: U.S.-Soviet Relations*

The **Six-Day War** was, in part, the result of American overextension in Vietnam and a loss of cohesion between the United States and its European allies, but the Middle Eastern conflict in turn shaped Cold War confrontations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Following the U.N. Security Council's discussion of Israel's land acquisition, President Johnson met with Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin in Vienna in 1967, hoping to win his support for a peaceful end to the Vietnam War. Kosygin, however, found himself in a bitter rivalry with Mao Zedong's People's Republic of China over North Vietnam's allegiance and did not want to alienate the regime in Hanoi.

Johnson and Kosygin did, however, make progress by



## TIMELINE

<b>April 7, 1954 -</b>	President Eisenhower commits the U.S. to an anti-Communist South Vietnam, invoking the “domino theory.”
<b>May 17, 1954 -</b>	The Supreme Court rules in <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas</i> , that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional and orders nationwide desegregation.
<b>February 1, 1960 -</b>	Black college student protesters stage the first sit-in at a Greensboro, North Carolina, Woolworth’s lunch counter.
<b>April 1960 -</b>	Ella Baker and other southern black student activists form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a civil rights group run by students.
<b>May 1960 -</b>	The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approves the first birth control pill.
<b>July 11, 1960 -</b>	Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy, in a speech at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, speaks of a “New Frontier.”
<b>September 1960 -</b>	The new conservative group Young Americans for Freedom forms.
<b>November 8, 1960 -</b>	John F. Kennedy defeats Richard Nixon in a historically close presidential election.
<b>April 17, 1961 -</b>	The Bay of Pigs invasion by 1,400 U.S.-trained Cuban exiles fails.
<b>May 1961 -</b>	Activists launch a series of Freedom Rides to protest segregation on interstate buses.
<b>May 1961 -</b>	President John F. Kennedy announces to Congress that the United States plans to send a man to the moon before 1970.
<b>March 1962 -</b>	Singer-songwriter Bob Dylan releases his first album.
<b>August 1962 -</b>	The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) hold their first national convention at Port Huron, Michigan. They write the <i>Port Huron Statement</i> , which outlines SDS’s goals.
<b>September 27, 1962 -</b>	Rachel Carson’s <i>Silent Spring</i> draws large public attention to the dangers of pesticides.
<b>September 30, 1962 -</b>	President Kennedy sends federal troops to the University of Mississippi after that state’s governor refuses to admit black students to the state university.
<b>October 22, 1962 -</b>	The Cuban Missile Crisis is underway. Evidence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba prompts Kennedy to order a naval blockade of the island.
<b>November 20, 1962 -</b>	The Soviets remove missiles from Cuba, and the U.S. ends its naval blockade.
<b>February 1963 -</b>	Betty Friedan publishes <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> , fueling the women’s movement.
<b>April 1963 -</b>	Martin Luther King Jr. launches a major civil rights campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. After attack dogs and fire hoses target children, public outcry forces whites in Birmingham to desegregate the city.
<b>June 12, 1963 -</b>	Civil rights activist Medgar Evers is assassinated in Jackson, Mississippi.
<b>August 28, 1963 -</b>	Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

