

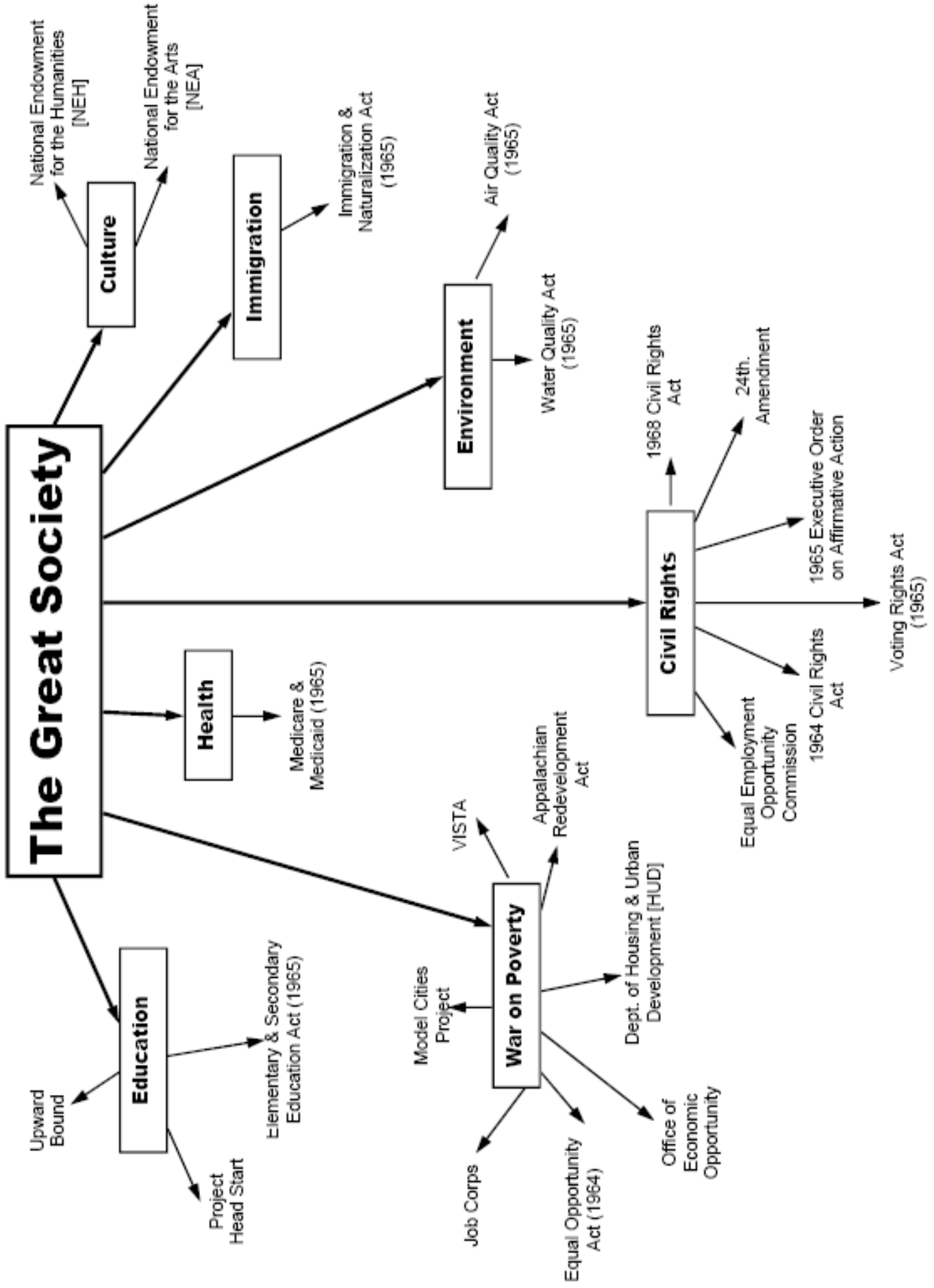
**Foreign & Domestic Policy of the 1960s: John F. Kennedy & Lyndon B. Johnson****I. John F. Kennedy & the New Frontier**

- A. The 1960 election between Nixon & Kennedy was one of the closest in history & was 1<sup>st</sup> to use TV debates
- B. JFK's "New Frontier" domestic agenda
1. Promised a return to FDR-era liberal social reforms
  2. Most social reforms, like education and health care, were blocked by Congress
  3. The economy was stimulated by new jobs due to industry, government spending, & tax cuts
  4. JFK & the "New Frontiersmen" strengthened the power of the president & executive staff
- C. Kennedy intensified the Cold War
1. Contain communism, close the missile gap, & increase U.S. defenses were JFK's 1<sup>st</sup> priorities
  2. JFK shifted from Eisenhower's "brinkmanship" to a "flexible response" & "first strike" policy
  3. Fighting Communism:
    - a. The Peace Corps and Alliance for Progress helped underdeveloped nations
    - b. Committed the USA to winning the space race by beating the USSR to the moon (the USA did it in 1969)
    - c. The Berlin crisis led to the Berlin Wall in 1961
    - d. JFK committed the U.S. to Vietnam after South Vietnam's leader, Ngo Dinh Diem, was killed in 1963
    - e. JFK failed to overthrow Castro in Cuba during the CIA-led Bay of Pigs invasion
    - f. The Cuban Missile Crisis brought the U.S. & Soviet Union to near nuclear war
      - i. The U.S. successfully quarantined Cuba & forced a Soviet withdrawal of nuclear missiles
      - ii. The Cuban Missile Crisis led to better U.S./Soviet communication & more negotiation

**II. Lyndon Johnson & the Great Society**

- A. JFK was assassinated in Dallas in November 1963 & Lyndon Johnson became president
1. LBJ quickly passed 2 JFK bills: a \$10 billion tax cut & the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  2. LBJ effectively waged "war on poverty" by creating the Job Corps, Head Start, & technical training
- B. The 1964 election was a landslide victory for LBJ over Repub Barry Goldwater & Segregationist George Wallace
- C. LBJ's "Great Society" domestic agenda
1. Created Medicare & Medicaid, improved schools, & protected black with the Voting Rights Act of 1965
  2. The Great Society was the largest series of liberal legislation ever but many did not like LBJ
- D. LBJ escalates the Cold War
1. LBJ applied Eisenhower's & JFK's "Cold Warrior" stance regarding Communism to the conflict in Vietnam
    - a. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964 gave LBJ unlimited funds & discretion for military intervention
    - b. Full-scale U.S. involvement began in 1965 with bombing raids into North Vietnam & 50,000 U.S. troops
    - c. Military stalemate, high casualties, & the media portrayal made the Vietnam conflict unpopular at home

### **III. Conclusions**



## Vietnam

### Historical Overview

The Vietnam War was the United States' longest and most divisive war.

Between 1945 and 1954, the Vietnamese waged an anti-colonial war against France, which received \$2.6 billion in financial support from the United States. The French defeat at the Dien Bien Phu was followed by a peace conference in Geneva, in which Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam received their independence and Vietnam was temporarily divided between an anti-Communist South and a Communist North.

In 1956, South Vietnam, with American backing, refused to hold the unification elections. By 1958, Communist-led guerrillas known as the Viet Cong had begun to battle the South Vietnamese government. To support the South's government, the United States sent in 2,000 military advisors, a number that grew to 16,300 in 1963.

It was during Kennedy's presidency that the United States made a fateful new commitment to Vietnam. By 1963, Buddhist priests had begun to set themselves on fire to protest corruption in the South Vietnamese government. The American response was to help engineer the overthrow of the South Vietnamese president. In 1963, South Vietnamese generals murdered President Diem. President Kennedy sanctioned Diem's overthrow, partly out of fear that Diem might strike a deal to create a neutralist coalition government including Communists, as had occurred in Laos in 1962.

President Johnson campaigned in the 1964 election with the promise not to escalate the war. "We are not about to send American boys 9 or 10,000 miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves," he said. But following reports that the North Vietnamese had attacked an American destroyer off the Vietnamese coast, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Lyndon Johnson power to "take all necessary measures." By 1965, convinced that the communists were escalating the war, Johnson began the bombing campaign against North Vietnam that would last for 2 ½ years. He also sent the first U.S. ground combat troops to Vietnam. He ordered 210,000 American ground troops to Vietnam.

Johnson justified the use of ground forces by stating that it would be brief, just six months. But the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese were able to match our troop build-up and neutralize the American soldiers. In North Vietnam, 200,000 young men came of draft age each year. It was very easy for our enemy to replenish its manpower. By April 1967, we had a force of 470,000 men in Vietnam. We were learning that there was no light at the end of the tunnel. The Johnson administration's strategy--which included search and destroy missions in the South and calibrated bombings in the North--proved ineffective, though highly destructive. Despite the presence of 549,000 American troops, the United States had failed to cut supply lines from the North along the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail, which ran along the border through Laos and Cambodia. By 1967, the U.S. goal was less about saving South Vietnam and more about avoiding a humiliating defeat.

Then, everything fell apart for the United States. The size and strength of the 1968 Tet Offensive undercut the optimistic claims by American commanders that their strategy was succeeding. Communist guerrillas and North Vietnamese army regulars blew up a Saigon radio station and attacked the American Embassy, the presidential palace, police stations, and army barracks. Tet, in which more than 100 cities and villages in the South were overrun, convinced many policymakers that the cost of winning the war, if it could be won at all, was out of proportion to U.S. national interests in Vietnam. The former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who had assured Johnson in 1965 that he was "entirely right" on Vietnam, now stated, "I do not think we can do what we wish to do in Vietnam." Two months after the Tet Offensive, Johnson halted American bombing in most of North Vietnam and called for negotiations.

The next president, Richard Nixon, advocated Vietnamization, withdrawing American troops and giving South Vietnam greater responsibility for fighting the war. His attempt to slow the flow of North Vietnamese soldiers and supplies into South Vietnam by sending American forces to destroy Communist supply bases in Cambodia in 1970 in violation of Cambodian neutrality provoked antiwar protests on the nation's college campuses.

From 1968 to 1973 efforts were made to end the conflict through diplomacy. In January 1973, an agreement reached and U.S. forces were withdrawn from Vietnam and U.S. prisoners of war were released. In April 1975, South Vietnam surrendered to the North and Vietnam was reunited.