January 3 - President [Dwight Eisenhower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight_Eisenhower) announces that the United States has severed diplomatic and consular relations with [Cuba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba).

January 20 – [John F. Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) is sworn in as the 35th [president of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States), and [Lyndon B. Johnson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyndon_B._Johnson) is sworn in as the 37th [vice president](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_United_States).

April 17 - The [Bay of Pigs Invasion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Pigs_Invasion) of [Cuba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba) begins; it fails by April 19.

May 4 – U.S. [Freedom Riders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Riders) begin [interstate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstate_Highway_System) bus rides to test the new [U.S. Supreme Court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Supreme_Court) [integration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination) [decision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boynton_v._Virginia).

May 5 – [Mercury program](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercury_program): [Alan Shepard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Shepard) becomes the first American in space aboard [Mercury-Redstone 3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercury-Redstone_3).

May 14 – [American civil rights movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_civil_rights_movement): A [Freedom Riders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Riders) bus is fire-bombed near [Anniston, Alabama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anniston,_Alabama) and the [civil rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_rights) protestors are beaten by an [angry mob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angry_mob) of [Ku Klux Klan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku_Klux_Klan) members.

May 21 – [American civil rights movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_civil_rights_movement): [Alabama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama) Governor [John Patterson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Malcolm_Patterson) declares [martial law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_law) in an attempt to restore order after [race riots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_riot) break out.

May 24 – [American civil rights movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_civil_rights_movement): [Freedom Riders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Riders) are arrested in [Jackson, Mississippi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson,_Mississippi) for "disturbing the peace" after disembarking from their bus.

May 25 – [Apollo program](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_program): [President Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) announces before a special joint session of Congress his goal to put a man on the [Moon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon) before the end of the decade.

June 4 – [Vienna summit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna_summit): [John F. Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) and [Nikita Khrushchev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) meet during two days in [Vienna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna). They discuss nuclear tests, [disarmament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disarmament) and [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany).

October 1 – Baseball player [Roger Maris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Maris) of the New York Yankees hits his 61st home run in the last game of the season, against the Boston Red Sox, beating the 34-year-old record held by [Babe Ruth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babe_Ruth).

October 27 – A standoff between [Soviet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) and American tanks in [Berlin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin), [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) heightens [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) tensions.

November 18 – U.S. President [John F. Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) sends 18,000 military advisors to South Vietnam.

December 11 – The [Vietnam War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War) officially begins, as the first American helicopters arrive in Saigon along with 400 U.S. personnel.