



# Nixon For America

## CIMUN XV

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## **Disclaimer:**

The Following guide assumes a historically accurate position on several racial issues in 1960's America. The opinions stated in this guide are purely for academic demonstration and do not, in any way, reflect the opinions of the Chicago International Model United Nations Conference (CIMUN) or the Model United Nations Development Organization (MUNDO).

### **1. Topic 1 - The Election of 1968**

## 1.1. Executive Summary

America is at a crossroads. The relative peace and prosperity this country saw post-World War II is threatened by radicals and dissidents seeking to disrupt the very core of what makes America the bastion of Western civilization. Liberal, leftist, and communist opposition to pillars of American life: capitalism, opposition to Soviet expansion, and law and order threaten to replace peaceful coexistence with violent opposition. This election has implications far beyond party politics. It is a battle for the very soul of America and the values it was established on.

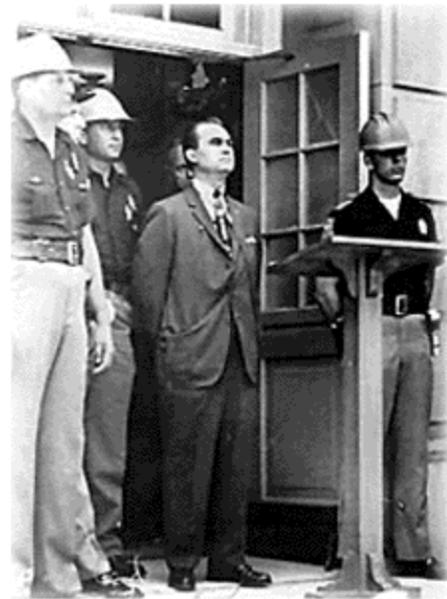
## 1.2. Historical Background

### 1.2.1. The Civil Rights Movement

The 1960s saw a number of movements coalesce all at once. The civil rights act, opposition to the Vietnam War, and general opposition to social conservatism caused seeming irreparable rifts throughout the country.

At the forefront of every American's mind during this election are race relations, and their looming threat to safety and stability of communities throughout the country. While efforts have been made to address the grievances of African Americans in America, urban communities are still extremely volatile and prone to erupting when any law-and-order is enforced.

The 1950s saw the emergence of a powerful movement for the advancement of African American civil rights. The landmark supreme court decision *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, establishing racial segregation as a violation of the Equal Protections Clause of the US Constitution, was one of the opening salvos in a battle for the very heart of American society. Southern rejection of the ruling saw a number of conflicts between the Federal Government and state government, painting the Federal Government as a tyrant in the eyes of many White southern voters and politicians.



George Wallace attempts to block integration of the University of Alabama

Racial resentment continued to simmer across the country. 1955 saw the lynching of Emmett Till, a 14 year old African American boy who was murdered for simply interacting with a white woman counter to Mississippi's deeply racist cultural norms. While this sort of vigilante justice was not unheard of at the time, this specific event became especially visible because of how the murder was handled by Emmett's mother. She very publicly put his body on display for all members of the community in Chicago to see. The poignancy of the murder was furthered by the rapid trial and acquittal of the alleged perpetrators of the crime by an all-white jury. The brutality of the crime and lack of justice was palpable for all who were paying attention, and Emmett's murder became another injustice in the growing dossier of American social crimes against African Americans.



Not long after Emmett Till's murderers were acquitted, Rosa Parks made her infamous stand on Montgomery Alabama's public transportation. Parks, already active with her local NAACP chapter, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person and was arrested as a result. Parks' arrest became a catalyst of the Montgomery Bus Boycotts.

Parks' non-violent resistance also set a precedent or the direction the proceeding movement would take. A common theme of the Civil Rights movement as a whole was non-violent protest and opposition to the violent and systematic racism in America. Parks simple act of refusing to give up her seat when asked sparked a movement that would have long-lasting implications, culminating in the Civil Rights act signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the result of a number of additional acts of non-violent action. Martin Luther King Jr. became the figurehead of the movement, and through organized events across the country in conjunction with countless other African American community leaders, he was able to highlight the injustice committed against African Americans daily in America. Peaceful sit-ins and marches were met with violent resistance from local governments and law enforcement agencies.

The solution to centuries of systematic racism and racial-violence in America was not simply solved by the stroke of a pen. While the Civil Rights Act was a substantive move towards amending the plight of African Americans in the United States, it did not account for or address the White backlash. A number of violent confrontations between law enforcement and citizens in African American communities after the Civil Rights Act was signed saw riots and other violent backlashes against formal power structures. Riots in Harlem, Watts, and across the nation showed that the tears in America's social fabric were far from being mended.

### 1.2.2. The Vietnam War

Domestic strife is not the only issue Americans must grapple with during this election. The end of World War II saw the United States emerge as the new steward of global stability. Through the threat of fascism subsided with the defeat of Hitler, the world saw a new threat arise in the form of aggressive and relentless Soviet expansion. America and its allies fought back initial Soviet aggression in the Koreas, but the threat reared its ugly head again in Southeast Asia with looming threat that Vietnam would be overrun by Soviet backed communist guerillas.

American involvement in Vietnam has a long and complex history. The communist threat initially arose in opposition to French occupation of the country. The first Americans were sent to Vietnam as military advisors to the French colonial authorities. As the conflict grew, and French efforts struggled to combat the Vietnamese communists, the American role in the conflict grew. Under President Kennedy's watch, the American role in the country grew to include more military advisors and troops.



The 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, in which an American destroyer was attacked by North Vietnamese naval vessels, saw a full escalation of the conflict between the American military and the Vietcong. Each year since the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was passed has seen increasing numbers of US troops sent to Vietnam, and a growing escalation of violence between US and

Vietcong forces.

The war in Vietnam had substantial implications for domestic politics in America. While the war was presented as an effort to roll back communist dominance over another region, many leftists opposed the war as illegitimate and unfocused. Implementation of the draft in 1965 further exacerbated the feelings amongst opponents of the war about its illegitimacy. The moral outrage expressed by war opponents has culminated in protests and other acts of opposition, resulting in numerous conflicts in American cities between authorities and radicals. Opposition to the war is especially prominent among students and artists. College campuses become hotbeds of the anti-war movement

Opposition to the war also tied in to the Civil Right Movement. Many Civil Rights leaders argued that the American imperial doctrine that lead to American intervention Vietnam had roots in the same institutions that subjugated and oppressed African Americans in the United States. The American war against the Vietcong was used to further the cause of Civil Right and the larger mission of fundamentally changing American society, with Martin Luther King Jr. stating “when profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered.” The Vietnam War, in conjunction with the Civil Rights Movement, was used to fan the flames of the counter-culture movement that now threatens the safety and stability of American society in 1968.

### 1.2.3. Social Unrest in the United States

The Civil Rights Movement, and formalized opposition movements to the war in Vietnam, were all symptoms of a larger change happening in America. The 1960s saw a coalescence of social movements. An inevitable clash between the status quo and those seeking to change it. Changing views on race, and greater sensitivity to global suffering and the United States’ role in it, coincided with a growing social awareness surrounding individuality, freedom of speech, and anti-authoritarianism. Youth movements rejected the status quo through drugs, music, and anti-authority protests. This movement was supplemented by a number of “liberal” supreme court decisions that established equality and freedom as something guaranteed to those outside the status quo dominated by white men.

This movement culminated in the 'Summer of Love,' which saw members of the counterculture flock to San Francisco to openly celebrate freedom to be one's self. While the specifics of this movement are hard to pin down, the general themes were individual freedom: one's right to love who they want, be them self, and live their lives unmolested by increasingly authoritarian law enforcement institutions.

This counterculture movement encapsulated the themes of the Civil Rights movement and anti-Vietnam War movement, with added emphasis on social liberalism and opposition to the domestic political and social status quo. Previously oppressed individuals found a voice and open audience for their grievances. Through these movements, focus shifted on to using the new-found influence to impact substantive and lasting social change through politics. To maintain momentum, the decades-old political orders that dominated urban, state, and federal politics would have to be confronted head on. And 1968 proved to be the watershed moment for this conflict. A weakened Lyndon Johnson proved to be a target ripe for this new leftist movement, but more conservative forces conspired behind the scenes to head-off the momentum of the counterculture and maintain the established order of the status quo.

### 1.3. Current Situation

With all the attention being paid to the potential for cultural and social change in America, it's easy to forget the people who do not support this shift. While these kinds of movements prove exciting in the moment, they very often lead to instability and uncertainty. With the Soviet threat ever-looming, it is important that America maintain its strength domestically and internationally. The coming election is proving to be extremely important as it relates to the direction his country will go. The Johnson administration has been weakened by its mismanagement of the Vietnam War and general opposition to the status quo. The Johnson administration has come to represent everything the counter culture is opposed to, and has also alienated conservative voters through its reliance on authoritarian, big-government tactics used to push through the Civil Rights Act and Great Society initiatives.

### 1.3.1. Developing a Coherent Strategy for the 1968 Election

A number of factors prove favorable for this campaign as we move in to the election season. Keys to victory include appealing to the silent but ignored citizens in the Southern United States who have seen their ways of life abruptly and violently changed at the whim of an increasingly liberal Supreme Court headed by Earl Warren. Appealing to the dejection and resentment these citizens feel offers a clear path to victory for the Nixon campaign.

To supplement the point above, we will also appeal to citizens' general feelings of insecurity and fear. The social and political upheaval caused by the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam protestors has often turned violent. Radicals are being empowered and emboldened by soft-handed opposition to their movements. The security and safety of our communities is of tantamount importance, and proves to be another issue that will help this campaign seal its victory. Under the guise of re-establishing "law and order", this campaign will take the Johnson administration to task for the strife and unrest it has allowed to foment around the country through its poor management of the various social movements that have arisen. Riots and crime are a constant threat to communities around the nation. Security of these communities is under constant threat from radicals and communists. Leftists and communists are using this insecurity to subvert American culture and threaten everything this country stands for. Securing American communities against the violence and subversion that the Johnson administration has allowed to foment will prove to be a salient issue during this election, and is one this campaign can exploit to victory.

The strategy will require substantial efforts be made in Southern states especially. Voters in the South have been ignored by the current administration, and the Democratic party in general. Their way of life has been abruptly and violently changed. Without overtly appealing to the racial underpinnings of this issue, this campaign can work out a strategy to appeal to the issues these voters are most worried about. Of ultimate sensitivity is the role the Supreme Court has played in overturning racial-discrimination laws. My couching our strategy in support for state's rights in the face of an activist Supreme Court and an increasingly authoritarian federal government, this campaign can appeal to Southern voters' grievances without appearing to be directly stoking racial tensions and white-resentment politics.

## 1.4. Discussion Questions

1. How can the Nixon campaign exploit the instability caused by unrest to appeal to enough American voters to win the general election? What groups of voters should be targeted? What are the most salient issues to these voters?
2. What campaign infrastructure is needed to most effectively pursue a strategy that targets southern voters, and socially conservative voters? How salient is the issue of the activist supreme court with these voters?
3. How can the racial tensions felt by white southern voters most effectively be leveraged without the campaign coming off as overtly appealing to white supremacists and segregationists?
4. Is it an effective strategy to present anti-Vietnam War activists as communists sympathizers? How can the antiwar movement be effectively included in the 'law-and-order' platform the campaign is devising?
5. What is the most effective communication strategy for this campaign's platform? How can this campaign use lessons from the 1962 campaign to devise a more effective strategy for Richard Nixon to communicate these issues in a way that maximizes voter concern and interest?

## 1.5. Resources

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13. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (2007)

## 2. Topic 2 - The Developing Party Platform

### 2.1. Topic Overview

1968 was a turbulent year in America's history. With the Vietnam War, massive social change, and the presidential election all happening at the same time, both the Republican and Democratic parties were struggling to find ways to cope. The presidency was on the line, and the Republican party needed to make sure that President Richard Nixon was the only viable choice for the 37th president of the United States.

### 2.2. Domestic Policy

"A peaceful, reunified America, with opportunity and orderly progress for all—these are our overriding domestic goals."<sup>1</sup> The Republican party was aiming catering to all Americans at this time, trying to ensure equal access to resources, eliminate poverty, and ensure the safety of Americans across the country.

Now, while the above quote is a nice sentence on paper, there were many real problems that needed to be solved in America, and this could not be done with wishful thinking and an eloquent message. Housing prices were unstable and fluctuating during 1967 and 1968<sup>13</sup>, and the rise in prices played on the nerves of the average American citizen. Indeed, housing prices were not the only thing on the rise in America; education prices were increasing as well. In the 1960s, enrollment in colleges increased by more than it had been in previous years. By 1968, over 7.5 million Americans were attending public or private college... the most in American history.<sup>16</sup> However, this mass of students was becoming increasingly upset by both the rising cost of tuition and the ongoing Vietnam War. On top of all of this, multiple civil rights movements were propagating through the nation at the time, and they showed no signs of stopping.

#### 2.2.1. Crime

Republicans at the time believed that "lawlessness" was the defining idea behind why crime was persistent in America.<sup>1</sup> This is an idea that is still prominent today, but was just starting to gain traction in politics back then. This "lawlessness" and abundant crime were central to the majority of America's problems, according to many Republicans of the time. Crime was especially believed to be responsible for rising housing prices in cities. In addition to lawlessness, drug use

was seen as a major concern in America, and many Republicans wanted improved local and state law enforcement.

Crime was something that disproportionately affected black neighborhoods, and this was acknowledged by Republicans.<sup>1</sup> This had many negative ramifications for the black community. Many people, especially conservatives, saw these anisotropic crime levels as a sign that black people were more “lawless” than whites, and this caused a backlash against civil rights movements. The history of black people being associated with crime is a story that goes back to America’s founding and is too much to cover in its entirety here; however, it is highly encouraged that you do additional research into how crime came to be associated with black neighborhoods.

The Democrats at the time were not taking a particularly strong stance on crime. Some believe that this is because the party had a fear of alienating their black voters.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the reason, the light approach did not sit well with Democratic conservatives.

### 2.2.2. Government

The Republican party in the 1960s was committed to blocking government expansion. Many Republicans saw welfare as “[stifling] work motivation<sup>1</sup>”; in other words, welfare was preventing people from taking the initiative to search for jobs. Many programs had been suggested in lieu of the welfare program, such as the Service Corps. Republicans emphasized these local programs to help people who were going through hard times or were having trouble finding work, rather than placing their trust in welfare.

### 2.2.3. Civil Rights

Many civil rights movements were ongoing in America in 1968. Many of these movements also addressed the topics in this guide, in addition to simply desiring equal rights for minorities.

One major incident of note was the Sanitation Strike, which campaigned against the terrible working conditions of sanitation workers, who were primarily black. The strike was initiated after two workers were killed in a work accident.<sup>6</sup> As part of the strike, many workers officially quit and began to live off of social security alone, which many conservatives looked down upon.

Another incident was the South Carolina Police Shooting in which students who were protesting segregation were attacked and brutally hurt by police officers.<sup>6</sup> Seven of the police involved in the incident were tried on charges of force, but ultimately they were acquitted, raising questions as to why they weren't charged. Racial privilege was the most proposed idea, and the one that inspired the most outcry, as violence against Black Americans was claimed to be a less persecuted crime than violence against white Americans.

An additional incident was when 15,000 Latino students walked out of their classrooms demanding a better education. Minorities historically had a lower quality education than white Americans and these Latino students were protesting this difference and demanding that their education be improved.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the civil rights movements and cries for change from minorities, many whites still feared integration, particularly the effects that it would have on them. Many white people worried about the quality of their community deteriorating with the addition of Black Americans or the quality of their children's education falling with forced school integration.

A hypocritical reality is that America was trying to fight communism by creating an image of itself abroad as the 'land of the free.' However, a country with major civil rights problems didn't look great championing itself against communism.<sup>12</sup>

## 2.3. Foreign Policy

Not only were turbulent things happening on the homefront, but America was dealing with many issues abroad as well. The world was still reeling from WWII, but the two countries that came out of the war stronger were the United States of America and The Soviet Union. The two nations promoted very different economic policies and types of government and it very quickly became evident that there would be a race to see which policy would come out on top: capitalism or communism.

### 2.3.1. Foreign Aid

After WWII, America began giving lots of foreign aid to other countries to try and stop the spread of communism. The biggest proponents of this were the Democrats with President John F. Kennedy, putting multiple plans into place to help spread economic support to countries affected by WWII.<sup>8</sup> President Truman as well had said that “US help...was necessary to stop the spread of communism.”<sup>16</sup>

Not everyone was convinced that aid was the best solution, however. Some opponents argued that, despite giving aid to Vietnam, America still ended up in the Vietnam War.<sup>8</sup> Thus, how beneficial could foreign aid possibly be? To this point, many Republicans believed that monetary foreign aid needed to be reduced and only given more specific direction.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.3.2. Vietnam War

The Vietnam War began in 1954 after Vietnam was split along the 17th parallel, and was still ongoing in 1968. By 1967, America had already begun to see a deterioration in its troops both physically and mentally. There were mutineers, drug use was rampant among soldiers and veterans, and the newly discovered PTSD was affecting hundreds of thousands of soldiers.<sup>17</sup> The conditions were only getting worse as the war went on and, berated with these negative images, people at home formed very negative opinions of the war. One of the major events that turned American opinion sour was the Tet Offensive launched by Northern Vietnam. This challenged the previous belief that America was winning the war and, by 1968, most Americans were anti-war, especially young Americans.<sup>6</sup> While thoughts on what to do concerning the Vietnam War varied, many Republicans and conservative Democrats believed that America wasn't doing enough to win the war.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.3.3. Disarmament

Many countries around the world were very pro-disarmament after seeing the damage done in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. America and Russia building their nuclear arsenals inspired fear across the globe and talks of nuclear war were abundant.

## 2.4. Voting Populations

### 2.4.1. The North

Black Americans in the north voted more frequently than in the south due to less blockades by the voter system in northern states.<sup>12</sup> Because of this, the black population had more influence on the outcome of elections in the North.

### 2.4.2. The South

The south had been historically Democratic after the Civil War but several acts surrounding civil rights caused black support of Democrats to grow while causing white support of Democrats to shrink. Much of this had to do with voter blocks that prevented Black Americans from voting, such as poll taxes and literacy tests.<sup>12</sup> Because of this, Black Americans had a much smaller voice in the south than in the north.

Another change to Southern voter demographics was the growth of the southern white middle class. They were a new group that grew out of the post-war economic boom after World War II. Before this, the south was a generally poor area largely because of the civil war and reconstruction; however, as the economics of the region improved, a middle class came with it.<sup>3</sup> This middle class wanted a good education that they could afford and the luxuries that had previously been associated more with northern cities.

### 2.4.3. Liberals

Liberalism was the dominant ideology in the 1950s and 60s. Liberalism went through major changes during this time, and the entire history will not be discussed here. Currently in 1968, the liberal view promoted free speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear, and, as President Roosevelt put it, “the freedom from want.”<sup>15</sup> The freedom from want stipulated that people should be able to participate in an economy such as to satisfy themselves. This freedom and the ideas behind it were the driving forces behind the liberal idea of government interference to create a better society and to help the economy. Liberals also tended to champion civil rights movements and insist upon equal rights for all people. Despite this, some civil rights leaders in the 60s began accusing white liberals of “procrastinating” on creating a better world and using the platform as simply a way to make themselves feel better without putting meaningful action into place.

### 2.4.4. The Rise of Conservatives

The conservative movement and their ideals grew throughout the 1900s. What was once seen as a passing fad became an established voter base in the 60s.<sup>3</sup> Conservatism was a backlash against progressive policies of liberals by people who felt they were being “left behind” or forgotten about. Many of the strong supporters of conservatism were poor or middle class Americans who felt that liberal policies didn’t help them. Much of the time conservatives also pushed against social change fearing that they would once again be forgotten about or pushed to the side. During this time as well, many Democratic conservatives felt alienated by the Democrats’ push towards liberal ideals, especially when it came to race relations.

## 2.5. Resources

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- 3. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1995/12/the-conservative-1960s/376506/> helping explain rise of conservatism in 1960s
- 4. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015046344738;view=1up;seq=5> “the conscious of a conservative” - book written in 60s describing popular conservative thought
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