War on Poverty: now, unlike New Deal, democrats didn’t think poverty caused by income gap – caused by lack of trying/motivation. So didn’t use most obvious ways to get rid of poverty – guarantee income, allow unions, prevent job out-sourcing to overseas, etc (although did have food stamps as direct aid to poor); instead, tried to increase motivation among people (e.g. VISTA, Head Start, taught people vocational skills). Poverty levels 22--→ 13%, but minority average household wealth 10x smaller than whites, unemployment ¼ black children in poverty.

Describe the rights revolution and Vietnam.

Black movement:

With the 1964/65 laws, many whites thought that they had done enough for the blacks and didn’t have to help anymore; blacks on the other hand wanted economic help at this point – overcoming economic, not political boundaries. Rise of Ghetto Uprisings: first in Harlem in 1964, then Watt Uprising (50,000 vs 15,000 police) 1965; 1967 Detroit and Newark; racial civil war? Johnson asked Otto Kerner to conduct a study, blamed segregation and poverty, but didn’t have any alternative. MLK launched Chicago Freedom Movement, but most people were just frustrated by the lack of progress.

Malcolm X – represented the next stage of the civil rights movement. Preached white evil, black self-dependence. Blacks are better than whites. Black muslims went to Mecca, saw Muslims coexisting, thought interracial harmony was possible in the US, but killed in 1965>>not possible for him to advocate this.

Black Power – anywhere from thinking Civil War necessary to decolonize blacks to simply electing blacks for political office. New black pride; stopped calling selves negroes in place of Afro-Americans. Black Panthers Party 1966 – taught self defense against police brutality. But ended by the CIA.

New Left:

1968 7 million in college b/c baby boom, new jobs require skill. College students begin to reject mainstream culture/capitalism/consumerism (though not straight communist); talk about loneliness, inauthenticity, etc. Only way to have freedom is to participate actively in democracy. Influenced by black freedom movement. || 1962 Port Huron Statement forms Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); advocates participation in democracy, criticizes institutions, outlines new social vision (actually mainly socialist). By 1962 end they have 800,000 members. 1964 University of California – no political groups allowed on campus. Thousands of students protest this, their goal becomes to change the educational system.

Vietnam:

Complex situation, we simplified it to a test of containment. We didn’t realize that communism had popular support (though Diem lost countryside to Viet Cong). Didn’t want to back out because would be accused of “losing Vietnam,” e.g. China. 1963 Buddhist demonstration vs Diem>>we supported coup, ousted Diem. Government was corrupt, but there was nothing we could do about it. Johnson didn’t want to send troops in, but didn’t want to “lose” Vietnam so
Nixon had a reputation for being a hard cold warrior because of the Alger Hiss case. Still supported noncommunist governments even if oppressive. E.g. Phillipines, Argentina – Pinochet. Nevertheless, he was a realist, and saw that stability is more important than power. Thus, his foreign policy was based on détente – decreasing the hostility of the cold war. 1972 trip to China resulted in Beijing taking UN seat from Taiwan, trade relations fully started up in 1979. 1972 first trip to Russia by a president; resulted in Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) – limited ballistic missiles and nukes – and Anti-ICBM Treaty – banned defense systems so that everyone would have to fear retaliation.

Vietnam:

Nixon said he had a new strategy = Vietnamization: taking out US troops slowly and replacing them with trained Vietnamese troops. 1970 began bombing Cambodia to break Viet Cong supply lines, ended up leading to Khmer Rouge (extremely oppressive regime).

Protests – 1974 four killed at Kent State, Ohio, 2 killed at Jackson State University, Mississippi. Blacks upset that they were disproportionately in the army (because college students were excluded from the draft, so army was made up mostly of minorities), so Nixon decreased black soldiers. Morality of troops went down; started using peace signs, doing drugs, disobeying commanders, etc. Extremely hard to command. Tons started deserting – 1000s. 1969 NYTimes published My Lai Massacre – US troops killed hundreds of Vietnamese civilians without provocation. 1971 NYTimes published Pentagon Papers – showed successive presidents had lied about Gulf of Tonkin. 1973 War Powers Act – President needs permission of congress before he sends troops anywhere.

By 1973 peace talks began. Treaty of Paris left both governments in power in respective regions; Viet Cong controlling some of the countryside. But 1975 last North Vietnamese offensive – all of South Vietnam fell, all the US did was get its own people out of the area. Terrible war: millions of Vietnamese died, 58,000 U.S. Resulted in trust in government going way down.

Describe the fall of Nixon and the “end of the Golden Age”

Election 1972 Nixon was able to beat George McGovern. He was the kind of politician who viewed everybody who criticized him as an enemy, had an “enemies” list; put together the plumbers to investigate the person who leaked the Pentagon Papers. 1972 Caught trying to break into DNC headquarters at Watergate. 1973 judge wanted to trace it to source, two journalists found out a lot more, discovered Nixon had recordings of conversations, the investigation demanded them. By 1974 it was discovered that even if Nixon hadn’t authorized Watergate he had authorized the coverup and paid people to keep silent; impeached. Resigned – first in history. Also, Spiro Agnew, VP, resigned, because accused of bribery while governor of his state. BUT Nixon said he had done nothing wrong – tons of presidents during the cold war had lied. Resulted in trust in government decreasing even more. Freedom of Information Act 1966, FBI and CIA can’t do covert ops without government knowledge. Liberals celebrated Nixon’s fall, though it showed decreasing trust in big government.

End of the Golden Age: