Challenges of the 1970s & 1980s

Unit 7
1968 Election

- Democrats—Very divided party
  - Eugene McCarthy — ANTI-WAR
  - RFK (Assassinated by Sirhan Sirhan)
- VP—Hubert Humphrey—supported Vietnam
- Chicago—(D) convention
  - Anti-war protesters gathered
  - When Humphrey elected; Violence erupted (Televised)
- Republicans—Nixon/Agnew
  - Call for peace in Vietnam, but not peace at any price
  - Nixon won narrow victory
- Ds retained control of Congress
Nixon Administration

- Domestic Policy = Realpolitik (Politics of the Real World)
- Democratic Congress passed the following:
  - 1970—Occupation Safety & Health Act
  - 1971—26th Amendment—Lowered voting age to 18 years of age
  - Increased Social Security benefits
  - Increased Federal aid to education
  - 1973—War Powers Act passed over Nixon’s veto
  - Continued APOLLO space program
    - 1969—Neil Armstrong walked on the moon
  - SCOTUS—Roe v. Wade (1973)
Nixonomics—Trying to manage an erratic US economy

Difficulties stemmed from:
- The large amounts of money LBJ spent on Vietnam without raising taxes
- Competition from other countries
- Work force grew by 40% (30 mill) & not enough jobs
- Economy depended heavily on cheap sources of energy
  - US wasn’t able to get enough oil because oil producing countries weren’t selling to the US
- Produced **stagflation**—Slow economic growth and high unemployment accompanied by a rise in prices (inflation)
Foreign Policy

- **Nixon Doctrine—1970**
  - US would no longer be the world’s policeman against communism
  - US would furnish economic & technological assistance, but not troops (No Vietnam or Korea)

- **The China Opening**
  - Since 1949, US pretended mainland China did not exist
  - Nixon responded positively to friendly signals from Beijing
  - April 1971—China invited the US table tennis team to China (“Ping Pong Gambit”)
    - This was a major breakthrough
Nixon stunned US when he announced he planned to visit
- US greeted announcement with much enthusiasm
- Nixon wanted improved relations with China
  - Most Western European nations had normalized relations with China
- UN pressures mounting to seat mainland China
  - 11/71 Taiwan expelled
- Use friendly relations with China as a weapon against USSR
- Hoped Chinese could persuade North Vietnam to negotiate a settlement
2/22/72—Nixon met with Premier Jou Enlai & Mao Tse Tung for 5 days

Shanghai Communiqué

- Each country agreed to open a legation (unofficial embassies) in the other’s capital
- Acknowledged Taiwan was part of China
- No agreement made on Vietnam

Within a year of Nixon’s visit—Americans flocked to China & Trade increased dramatically
Détente with USSR

- Basically reversed policy US had taken since 1945
- Wanted nuclear weapons to be major feature
- Sought détente with USSR b/c
  - Wanted peace in Vietnam
  - US industrial & financial interests wanted to enter Soviet & Eastern European markets
  - Concerned about danger from spiraling arms race

1969—Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty w/ USSR
- Prevent spread of nuclear weapons

1971—Berlin Agreement
- US recognized East Germany as legitimate state
5/72—Brezhnev & Nixon summit

- Limited each country to 2 anti-ballistic missiles (ABMs) sites & established a ceiling on the number of ABMs per site.

- SALT I [Strategic Arms Limitations Talks]—Froze the number of strategic missiles in both arsenals at 1972 levels for 5 years.

Most productive era in US/USSR relations.

Rivalry will continue, especially in the 3rd world.
Shuttle Diplomacy—Showed US recognized Arab power

- Henry Kissinger (Sec of State) “shuttled” between Middle Eastern capitals to try to create peace in the Middle East
- Shuttle Diplomacy won acclaim from all sides

**BUT** no comprehensive formula for peace & Ignored Palestinian problem
1972 Election

- R—Nixon & Agnew
- D—George McGovern
  - Party divided over Vietnam & Civil Rights
  - McGovern called the Nixon administration the “Most morally corrupt in history”

- Campaign boring & one-sided
  - McGovern never had chance
  - **BUT** Democrats swept Congress
6/17/72—Break-in @ Democratic National headquarters located at the Watergate hotel
- 5 men caught trying to steal documents & install electronic bugging equipment
- G. Gordon Liddy & E. Howard Hunt, who had directed operation, also arrested
- No direct evidence proving Nixon approved or knew about the break-in, HOWEVER, Nixon directly involved in cover-up
- John Dean was in charge of investigating the break-in for the White House
3/73—Trial began—Judge John J. Sirica

James McCord implicated CREEP & White House officials

Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein & Bob Woodward traced illegal campaign funds to CREEP

"Deep Throat"—Never gave specific info; ONLY confirmed info & suggested avenues to explore
John Dean fired because he told the Senate Watergate committee that Nixon was involved in cover-up from beginning

7/13/73—Discovered Nixon had recorded phone calls & conversations in oval office

- Senate Committee & Archibald Cox (replaced Dean) subpoenaed tapes
- Nixon rejected both subpoenas; cited “executive privilege”
- SCOTUS will tell Nixon to release the tapes
Nixon Administration learned Vice-President Agnew had taken bribes from construction companies while he was governor of Maryland.

- 8/73—Federal prosecutors charged Agnew w/ bribery, extortion, conspiracy, & income tax evasion.
- Nixon convinced Agnew to resign.
- Agnew fined $10,000 & received 3 years of unsupervised probation.
- Nixon chose Gerald Ford as Vice-President.
“SMOKING GUN”—A conversation where Nixon ordered Haldeman (CIA) to fabricate a national security operation to stop the FBI from investigating Watergate

- House voted on 3 articles of impeachment
- 8/9/74—Ford took the oath of office
- 378 officials—3 Cabinet & several top White House aides either pleaded guilty or were convicted
  - 31 went to prison
  - Only Ford’s pardon kept Nixon from prison
Ford Administration

- Ford kept Nixon’s advisers & vowed to continue his policies
  - Top priority was to restore national confidence
  - Ford granted Nixon a “full, free, and absolute pardon to spare the nation”
- More controversy when Ford pardoned draft dodgers—**IF** agreed to perform public service for 1-2 years
Economic problems
- Inflation soared
- Unemployment was at 7%
- Ford tried to fix, but brought worst downturn since the Great Depression
- WIN—Whip Inflation Now

Foreign Policy
- Tries to improve relations with China & USSR—NOT much success
1976 Election

- R—Ford
- D—Jimmy Carter
  - Unknown outsider from Georgia—served 1 term as Governor of Georgia
  - US needed a leader untainted by the corruptions of Washington, DC

Campaign was dull and unenlightening
Carter Administration

- Tried to restore popular faith in govt
- Included more women, African-Americans, & Hispanics in the federal govt
- Top priority was slashing size & cost of govt

Economic Problems
- Inflation = 6%
- Unemployment = 8%
- “Stagflation” in 1979 and 1980 was at its worst
Despite 1973 energy crisis, US continued to use more oil

- 1979—2nd oil crisis
- Gasoline shortages again forced angry motorists to line up at the pump
- Carter was baffled on how to solve these problems

- Carter never communicated effectively with Congress, the press, and the people
Foreign Policy

- No background in foreign affairs
  - “Soul of US foreign policy” should be the defense of human rights abroad
- Camp David Accords—Greatest Triumph—Built upon Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy
  - Carter invited leaders of Israel and Egypt to Camp David
  - Within 2 weeks they achieved a framework for peace in the Middle East
- 3/26/79—Signed historic peace agreement
- Carter hoped Accords would launch new era of peace, but obstacles persisted
  - No other Arab nation followed Egypt’s lead
4/78—Persuaded Senate to turn Canal over to Panama in 2000

Carter completed the opening of China in 1979, when the two nations agreed to exchange ambassadors.
Decline of Détente

- Began under Ford & continued under Carter
- SALT II did not get quick ratification
- Granting full diplomatic recognition to China annoyed USSR
- 12/79—85,000 USSR troops invaded Afghanistan to suppress Muslim rebellion
- 1980—US boycotted Moscow Olympics
1980—Carter Doctrine
- Called the Persian Gulf a vital western interest
- US would repel “by any means necessary” an attack in that region by outside force

Iran Hostage Crisis (this would ruin Carter)
- Iran major US ally
  - Helped contain USSR
  - Major supplier of oil
  - Purchased billions in US arms
- The Shah (leader of Iran) allowed the CIA to station electronic equipment along Iran’s border with USSR
Late 1970s—Shah overthrown by Islamic clergy
- Modern, westernized Iran replaced with Islamic republic
- Led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

1/16/79—Shah fled Iran
- Carter tried to establish relations with the Ayatollah, but he called the US the “Great Satan”
- Carter allowed the Shah to enter the US for medical treatment

- US froze Iranian assets in US, suspended arms sales, & boycot US trade with Iran
- Ransom for the release of the hostages was the return of the Shah & all of his wealth

4/80—US severed diplomatic relations & authorized military rescue

Late 1980—Shah died

1/21/81—Iran released hostages for the return of $8 billion in Iranian assets

Held for 444 days
1980 Election

D—Carter

- In trouble because of economic problems (stagflation), Iran hostage crisis, & unemployment

R—Reagan

- Called for deep tax cuts, a balanced budget, large increases in defense spending
- Also called for amendments banning abortion & restoring school prayer
- (R) also regained control of Congress

I—John Anderson
Reagan Administration

“Government is not the solution to our problems—government is the problem”

- Concentrated on Tax cuts, Military build-up, & Cuts in federal spending
Reaganomics

- Grounded his program for economic recovery in “supply-side” economic theory
- More $ in hands of the affluent would benefit ALL members of society
- Cuts in federal spending & taxes
- Called “Voodoo Economics” by the media
- Radical assault on welfare state
  - $41 billion cut—Food stamps, public service jobs, student loans, urban mass transit, & welfare
  - While increasing military spending

****Most generous tax cuts in the nation’s history****
After 1 year—Reaganomics brought about a recession (worst slump since GD)
- Unemployment over 9% (highest since 1941)
- Deep tax cuts & military spending drove the federal debt to over $100 billion (highest ever)
- The National debt tripled from $908 billion in 1980 to $2.9 trillion in 1989

10/19/87—“Black Monday”—Stock market experienced a massive selling similar to 1929
- Hit Tokyo, London, Paris
- Feared another Great Depression, but too many safeguards in place
Miscellaneous
- EPA budget cut heavily—Not an environmentalist
- Unresponsive to African-Americans concerns b/c few voted for him
  - Federal support of Civil Rights weakened
- Appointed first woman—Sandra Day O’Connor—to SCOTUS
- Wanted Roe vs. Wade overturned
1984 Election

- R—Reagan ("Teflon President")
  - Landslide for Reagan
  - (R) gained seats in Congress

- D—Walter Mondale/Geraldine Ferraro
Foreign Policy

- Cold War Revived
  - US in a struggle for survival with a ruthless, expansionist “evil empire”
  - 1983—US escalated arms race—Reagan ordered development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)
    - Nicknamed “Star Wars” by the media
    - Used high powered, space based lasers to destroy enemy missiles in flight
  - Reagan Doctrine—US would help anti-communist movements anywhere in the world
- Lebanon
  - Civil War between Christian and Muslim militias
  - US sent in troops to restore peace in Beirut
  - 10/23/83—Truck loaded w/ explosives, driven by Muslim terrorist, slammed into US Marine compound
    - 241 marines killed
Iran-Contra Affair

- Top priority for Reagan was to overthrow the Sandinista govt in Nicaragua
  - Not communist, but friendly w/ Cuba
- CIA will train “Contra” military forces, recruited from anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans
- 1982—Boland Amendment is passed by Congress
  - It forbid the CIA/Pentagon to provide funds/training to overthrow the Nicaraguan govt
  - CIA continued to train Contra forces
- Iran-Contra scandal originated from efforts to keep the CIA training of the Contras a secret
11/86—Discovered Reagan was selling arms for the release of 7 American hostages being held captive in Lebanon by Muslims

Also discovered profits from the arms sales were sent to the Contra forces fighting in Nicaragua

Reagan denied his involvement
In 1987 Congress held hearings regarding Iran-Contra scandal.

- 2 key witnesses, Poindexter & North of the NSC, stated President Reagan knew about both events.
- Investigating committee didn’t want to press the investigation too close to Reagan.
- 11/8/87—Report criticized President Reagan of not following his oath to uphold Constitution.
- Poindexter convicted of 5 felonies; 6 months in prison.
- North convicted of 2 felonies, but overturned on appeal.
The End of the Cold War

- 1985—Mikhail Gorbachev comes to power in the USSR
- Friendship developed between Reagan and Gorbachev
- 12/87—US signed INF Treaty (Intermediate Nuclear Forces)
  - Eliminated entire class of weapons—Intermediate range thermonuclear missiles
  - 1st agreement reached that required destruction of nuclear weapons systems
- USSR announced ending war w/ Afghanistan
- USSR urged its Eastern European nations to reform their economies & become involved with Western Europe
- 1988—Reagan visited the Soviet Union
  - 1990—Gorbachev visited US (Bush)

1988 Election
- R—George H.W. Bush/Dan Quayle
  - “Read my lips, no new taxes”
- D—Michael Dukakis/Lloyd Bentsen
- Gorbachev destroyed the USSR, while trying to save it
  - Gorbachev understood the USSR could no longer maintain the arms race & feed its people
  - To revive its system, Gorbachev proclaimed
    - Perestroika—Economic restructuring
    - Glasnost (openness)—Censorship lifted
  - HOWEVER, the Economy still continued to deteriorate
7/89—Cut Brezhnev Doctrine—Gave USSR right to intervene in Eastern European countries
11/9/89—Berlin Wall fell
10/3/90—East & West Germany reunited & Warsaw Pact disintegrates
US corporations quickly penetrated the USSR (McDonalds)

12/21/91—Death of USSR proclaimed

Boris Yeltsin announced formation of a new federation of sovereign states, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

12/26/91—Western Europe & the US officially recognized the CIS

US was world’s only remaining superpower

However, this will not guarantee US stability or security
Bush Administration

- Biggest Problem was the national debt
  - 1989 national debt = $2.6 trillion
- Difficult to reduce because Bush promised no new taxes in the 1988 election, **BUT** in 1990—Budget cuts & tax increases

- The Economy entered a recession
War on illegal drugs—Coke/Crack a major problem
US spent billions on fighting the war on drugs
Bush Administration created the office of National Drug Control Policy (Cabinet status)
China

1989—Students and intellectuals gathered to demand democracy

Govt mounted deadly assault on Beijing’s Tiananmen Square (1,000 killed)
The Gulf War
- 8/2/90—Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait
  - Kuwait had raised oil production, contrary to agreement with OPEC
  - Drop in oil prices offended Iraq (deep in debt)
  - Iraq claimed Kuwait belonged to Iraq based on maps predating 1919
8/22/90—Bush ordered mobilization of US reserves for Desert Shield
11/29/90—UN set 1/15/91 as the deadline for Iraqi withdrawal
1/12/91—Congress passed resolution for war
   - Over 30 nations committed
1/16—Desert Storm begins—air war only
   - Gen Schwarzkopf in charge of the Allied troops
2/24—Ground assault began & lasted 4 days
   - US followed war around clock on CNN (tightly controlled/censored)
2/28—6 weeks after fighting began, Bush called for cease-fire & Iraq accepted
   - 184 Americans killed; 467 wounded