The Jimmy Carter Presidency

1976-1980
(1977-1981)
The 1976 Election

- James Earl Carter (D) - Georgia governor (from Plains, GA)
  - VP Candidate - Walter Mondale (MN)

- A Washington “Outsider”

- Honest, Hardworking, Intelligent

- Born-again Christian (Southern Baptist)

- Moderate Southerner regarding social issues - especially race

- Appealed to small town America
1976 Election

1976 Presidential Election
Percent of Popular Vote

CANDIDATE
Gerald E. Ford
Jimmy Carter
Percent of Vote

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# Key Events and Issues of the Jimmy Carter Presidency

## Domestic Issues
- Washington Outsider
- Inaugural Address *
- Pardon of Vietnam War Draft Evaders
- On Civil Rights and Affirmative Action
- Deregulation of some selected industries
- National “Crisis of Confidence” - “Malaise” *
- Three-Mile Island Nuclear Accident

## Foreign Issues
- Panama Canal Treaty *
- Camp David Accords *
- Iran-Hostage Crisis
- SALT II Treaty (Nuclear Arms Talks) *
- Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan
- Boycott of 1980 Moscow Olympics
Jimmy Carter and Civil Rights

• Carter - Moderate Southern Democrat
• Amnesty to Vietnam era draft evaders
• Supported affirmative action by appointing more minorities to government posts than any president before him
• Unrelated to Carter was the Bakke decision handed down from the Supreme Court during his term.

• Bakke v. California (1978)
  – Bakke applied to UC-Davis medical school. - denied admittance
  – Filed suit - claimed ‘reverse discrimination’
  – Decision upheld school’s right to consider race as one factor
  – Disallowed numerical quotas
  – Bakke admitted to the University
  – Supported concept of affirmative action but limited ways to promote it.
Did the *Bakke* decision have anything to do with Jimmy Carter’s administration?

What qualifies a president as having a favorable record on civil rights issues? Is it a matter of numbers, who is appointed, their political viewpoint, or what? Discuss.

– How much does political party have to do with Civil Rights successes (both perceived and real)?
Carter Faces Domestic Challenges

- Jimmy Carter came across as an honest man of deep religious faith who promised not to lie to the American people.

- Carter immediately tried to help the nation heal some of the wounds of the past.
  - Ex. He issued a pardon to thousands of Vietnam War draft dodgers.

- Carter tackled problems in the economy and with energy.

- Finally, Carter tried to deal with environmental issues.
## Challenges Facing the Nation

### The Economy and Energy
- Inflation and unemployment were high.
- Carter made the development of a national energy policy a priority.
- Wanted to ease dependence on foreign oil through energy conservation, developing new energy supplies, and loosening government regulation of the American oil industry
- Asked Americans to conserve energy
- Promoted the development of alternative energy sources

### The Impact
- The economy added many new jobs to help battle unemployment.
- Carter was unable to bring down inflation, in fact, it got worse.
- Carter’s energy policies were successful at helping reduce American dependence on foreign oil.
- American production of energy increased under Carter.
## Environmental Concerns

### Environmental Wins
- Believed that conserving fuel was a key way to avoid plundering the environment
- Passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
- The act protected more than 100 million acres of land and doubled the size of the nation’s park and wildlife refuge system.

### Environmental Losses
- In 1979 a mishap at a nuclear power plant on Three Mile Island terrified the nation.
- Although little radiation was released, public concern about the safety of nuclear power grew.
- Chemicals that a company dumped in New York began to seep up through the ground at Love Canal and were linked to high rates of birth defects.
- Experts warned that there were likely many more toxic waste sites around the nation.
TIME - April 25, 1977

TIME ENERGY CONFERENCE: Kicking Off the Great Debate
The Energy Crises of the 1970s

- OPEC Oil Embargo of 1974
- Gas Shortages
- Gas-price inflation
- 1977- Carter proposes comprehensive National Energy Policy
- 1977 - Department of Energy - Cabinet position added to Executive Branch

- Effects:
  - Seeking of alternative fuel sources
  - More fuel-efficient autos
  - Recession
  - More domestic petroleum exploration and production
The Energy Crisis: Crude Oil Imports
Oil Consumption in the 1970s and Dependence on Oil Imports
The Energy Crisis: Gasoline Prices

Gasoline Prices

Price per gallon, regular gasoline

OPEC oil embargo

Year

The Energy Crisis: Crude-Oil Imports and Gasoline Prices
U.S. Energy Consumption, 1900–2000
Gas Guzzling “Muscle” Cars
No gas
The Department of Energy Organization Act brought the federal government's agencies and programs into a single agency. The Department of Energy, activated on October 1, 1977, assumed the responsibilities of the Federal Energy Administration, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Federal Power Commission, and parts and programs of several other agencies.

The Department provided the framework for a comprehensive and balanced national energy plan by coordinating and administering the energy functions of the federal government. The Department undertook responsibility for long-term, high-risk research and development of energy technology, federal power marketing, energy conservation, the nuclear weapons program, energy regulatory programs, and a central energy data collection and analysis program.”
The National Energy Act of 1978

- Higher tax on inefficient cars (gas-guzzlers)
- New utilities to use other non-petroleum fuel sources
- Deregulate oil prices
- Provide tax credits for homeowners seeking to make their homes more energy efficient
- Funding for alternative fuels research
- Focus on nuclear energy
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• How successful was Jimmy Carter’s administration at dealing with the energy crisis facing the country in the 1970s?
• Are we able to evaluate how successful Carter was on the issue of energy?
• Were the energy problems something that existed prior to Carter’s presidency and if so, why do people place blame on his shoulders for problems he didn’t create?
• Is it fair and/or accurate to evaluate presidents, their terms and their administrations based on events prior to their term that they had no control over?
  – Do presidents ever have control over events during their term(s)? If so, how much?
  – What control(s) do presidents have?
  – Why is setting/establishing policy such a big deal for a presidential administration?
TIME - April 9, 1979

Nuclear Nightmare
Three-Mile Island

- Spring 1979
- Middletown, Pennsylvania
- Nuclear Power station
- Media attention and public backlash to accident led to Nuclear Protests all over the world

[http://video.teacher.hotchalk.com/player/?id=0&nlcid=9266&vty=353444&ice=t&dataKey=121077581652#videooid=130767]
Three-Mile Island March 28, 1979: The Accident

“The accident at the Three Mile Island Unit 2 (TMI-2) nuclear power plant near Middletown, Pennsylvania, on March 28, 1979, was the most serious in U.S. commercial nuclear power plant operating history(1), even though it led to no deaths or injuries to plant workers or members of the nearby community. But it brought about sweeping changes involving emergency response planning, reactor operator training, human factors engineering, radiation protection, and many other areas of nuclear power plant operations. It also caused the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to tighten and heighten its regulatory oversight. Resultant changes in the nuclear power industry and at the NRC had the effect of enhancing safety.”
Nuclear Protests following TMI

- TMI led to anti-nuclear protests and demonstrations
- Safety of nuclear energy questioned
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Evaluate the government responses to the Three-Mile Island (TMI) accident. Consider both Federal and State government responses.

- Analyze and explain the public reaction to TMI.
  - Was the anti-nuclear activism spawned by TMI necessary? Understandable?
  - Was the reaction and subsequent press coverage an overreaction? Why or why not?
A “Crisis of Confidence” - *Malaise*

- Carter called a diverse group of leaders from around the country to Camp David in the summer of 1979.
- They shared candidly about the ‘estate’ and the ‘spirit’ of the American people.
- Carter’s speech on June 15, 1979 detailed a growing sense that American’s were experiencing a ‘crisis of confidence’.
- Generally and more popularly known as the “Malaise” speech although the word was not a part of his presentation.
A Crisis of Confidence

- The Iranian Hostage situation dragged on throughout the presidential election year of 1980.
- The situation in Iran also drove up gasoline prices so that prices of goods in the United States went up and inflation soared.
- Many voters held Carter responsible for the problems and the downcast mood of the country.
• Identify the principal figures on the cover of the magazine.
• Why are they depicted as lions?
• Who is Jimmy Carter being portrayed as in this painting? Why?
• How is that significant?
Jimmy Carter: Foreign Policy

• 1977
  – The Panama Canal Treaty *
• 1978
  – Camp David Accords *
• 1979
  – Carter Doctrine
  – Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II (SALT II) *
  – Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan
  – Iranian Hostage Crisis
• 1980
  – Continuing Hostage Crisis
  – Boycott of Moscow Summer Olympics
## Carter’s Foreign Policy

### Human Rights
- Basic ideas outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
- Carter expected friends and enemies alike to uphold the highest standards in the treatment of their citizens.

### Soviet Relations
- Carter wrote to Brezhnev about his concerns with Soviet human rights issues.
- Brezhnev politely said that each country should mind their own business.
- Concluded **SALT II** talks in 1979 that limited nuclear weapons

### Recognizing China
- Formally recognized the government of the Communist People’s Republic of China
- Ended recognition of the Republic of China on Taiwan
Carter’s Foreign Policy

• Carter came to office with little foreign-policy experience.
• Carter promised that the concept of human rights would be at the forefront of his foreign policy.
• Carter worked to strengthen ties between the United States and the Soviet Union and China.
• Carter gave control of the Panama Canal back to Panama.
• Carter helped Egypt and Israel deal with some of the divisions that caused conflicts between their countries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panama Canal</th>
<th>Camp David Accords</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American control of the Panama Canal had been a</td>
<td>Greatest foreign-policy achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>source of conflict between the two countries.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In 1977 Carter and Panama’s leader agreed that</td>
<td>Conflict between Egypt and Israel continued. Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama would take control of the canal by the</td>
<td>would not recognize Israel and Israel continued to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end of 1999.</td>
<td>occupy Egyptian territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Senate narrowly approved the treaties.</td>
<td>Carter guided Anwar el-Sadat and Menachem Begin to a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For some Americans, loss of control of the canal</td>
<td>historic agreement that came to be called the **Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>represented a decline in American power.</td>
<td>David Accords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin and Sadat won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TIME - August 22, 1977

Getting Out of The Canal (Slowly)
The Panama Canal Treaty

- http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rlnks/11936.htm
- Panama Canal - completed 1914
- Canal Zone run by United States since 1914
- Treaty would return control of Canal Zone to Panama
- “On September 7, 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed the Panama Canal Treaty and Neutrality Treaty promising to give control of the canal to the Panamanians by the year 2000.”
- Divisive and controversial
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• Why do you think the Panama Canal Treaty sparked such controversy within the United States?
• Consider the content of the treaty. What goal did the Carter administration hope to achieve by enacting the treaty?
• What criticism did conservatives have of the terms of the Panama Canal Treaty?
• Consider the roots of United States foreign expansion dating to the late 19th/early 20th century. How has our national perception of the United States’ identity in the world changed since then?
• Define “American self-awareness”. Discuss the evolution of “American self-awareness”.
Camp David Peace Accords

- Anwar el-Sadat (EGYPT)
- Menachem Begin (ISRAEL)
- September, 1978 at Camp David Presidential retreat center, Maryland.
Camp David Peace Accords

- Israel to withdraw from Sinai Peninsula (occupied since 6-day war in 1967)
- Egypt - 1st Arab country to recognize the existence of the nation of Israel
  - [Link to video](http://video.teacher.hotchalk.com/player/?id=0&nlcid=9266&vty=353444&ice=t&dataKey=121077581652#videoid=130982)
The Camp David Accords were a major breakthrough in relations between Egypt and Israel, two countries that had fought several costly, bloody wars. Anwar el-Sadat, Jimmy Carter, and Menachem Begin (left to right) shake hands at the successful conclusion of their meeting at Camp David. Key parts of the accords declared that:

- Egypt and Israel, along with Jordan and Palestinian representatives, would agree to work to resolve questions about the Palestinians’ future.

- Israel and Egypt would agree to work to negotiate a peace treaty.

- Egypt and Israel would agree to grant each other full recognition.
Quote on Camp David Accords

“The Camp David Accords rank as one of the most important achievements of the Carter administration. First, they opened the way to peace between Egypt and Israel, which transformed the entire political, military, and strategic character of the Middle East dispute. Genuine peace between Egypt and Israel meant there would be no major Arab-Israeli war, whatever the positions of [other Arab groups].”

– Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• Many historians and scholars consider the Camp David Accords the ‘crowning achievement’ of Jimmy Carter’s presidency. Why do you think this is?
• What did the Camp David Accords represent and signify for peace in the Middle East?
• Why is the recognition of the state of Israel so divisive?
Soviet-American Relations

- **Détente** - easing of tensions in foreign affairs - carried over from the Nixon and Ford administrations

- Carter’s stance on human rights angered Soviet leaders

- Carter spoke publicly in support of dissidents.

- Led to tension between the superpowers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Provisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Limited Test Ban Treaty</td>
<td>Prohibits atmospheric, underwater, and outer-space nuclear testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Outer Space Treaty</td>
<td>Prohibits weapons of mass destruction and arms testing in space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Non-Proliferation Treaty</td>
<td>Promotes peaceful international uses of nuclear energy; aims to stop the global proliferation of nuclear weaponry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I)</td>
<td>Limits for five years U.S. and Soviet deployment of strategic weapons systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty</td>
<td>Restricts U.S. and Soviet testing and deployment of defensive systems. (Allowed to expire, 2002.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Threshold Test Ban Treaty</td>
<td>Establishes limits on size of underground tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II)</td>
<td>Limits strategic launch vehicles and delivery craft and restricts the development of new missiles. (The treaty was never ratified, but the United States and the Soviet Union observed its terms.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START)</td>
<td>Sought a 50 percent reduction in U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty</td>
<td>Commits the United States and the Soviet Union to withdraw their intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Eastern and Western Europe and to destroy them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did international crises affect Carter’s presidency?

In 1979 a series of events occurred that seemed to overwhelm Carter’s presidency.

In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

On November 4, 1979, a mob attacked the American embassy in Tehran, Iran’s capital, and took several dozen Americans hostage.
**International Crises**

**Afghanistan**
- Soviets invaded Afghanistan to ensure continued Communist rule in the country.
- The attack threatened U.S.-Soviet relations and called into question Carter’s ability to respond to Soviet aggression.
- Carter blocked shipment of grain to the Soviet Union and said the United States would boycott the 1980 Olympics.
- Americans did not like the grain embargo or the Olympic boycott because they seemed to hurt the United States as much as the Soviet Union.

**Iran**
- Revolution in Iran overthrew the shah and replaced him with the Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini.
- The American government allowed the shah to enter the United States for medical treatment—this action enraged many Iranians.
- A mob attacked the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took Americans hostage.
- Carter’s attempts to negotiate the release of the hostages went nowhere.
- A military attempt to rescue the hostages failed.
TIME - September 18, 1978

Iran in Turmoil

The Shah
US-Iranian Relations

- US supported Shah (King) of Iran
- The Shah had modernized Iran
- Supplier of oil and pro-Western leadership in the region.
- US overlooked repression and corruption of his administration
The Iranian Revolution

• January, 1979
• Backed by Muslim Fundamentalists and liberal critics of the Shah
• The Shah fled Iran
• Replaced by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini - who had been exiled
  – Extremely anti-Western
Seizing the US Embassy in Tehran

- Nov. 4, 1979
- Followers of Khomeini seized US Embassy
- 52 American hostages taken
- Hostages terrorized and threatened

http://video.teacher.hotchalk.com/player/?id=0&nicid=9266&vty=353444&ice=t&dataKey=121077581652#videoid=136823
444 Days

- American public increasingly impatient for hostages release
- Nightline with Ted Koppel began nightly news updates and broadcasts
- Carter tried:
  - Broke diplomatic relations with Iran
  - Froze Iranian assets in the US
  - 1980 Commando Mission to rescue hostages (disastrous crash in Iranian desert)
    - 8 US soldiers died
    - US internationally humiliated
    - [Video link](http://video.teacher.hotchalk.com/player/?id=0&nlcid=9266&vty=353444&ice=t&dataKe)
Hostages released…

- Hostages released and sent home - January 20-21, 1981
- Inauguration of Ronald Reagan - same day
- Reagan sent Carter (as a private citizen) the day of the inauguration to greet the freed hostages
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• To what extent was the Carter administration responsible for the situation that developed in Iran in 1979?
• Could the United States have done something differently to rescue the hostages sooner?
• How much is a president able to really ‘control’ events that occur during the term (s) they serve?
• How much do prior events impact the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of a given presidential administration?
1980

- Carter’s administration gradually lost the confidence of the American public. (A Crisis of Confidence)
- Continued rising inflation rates
- Approval rating of 21%
- Unemployment nationally - 7% +
- Election year: Carter lost to Republican Ronald Reagan in November of 1980 by a wide margin.
Carter vs. Inflation

The President's Demand: “Discipline... Discipline... Discipline”
The Inflation Rate, 1960–2000 (p. 885)
Inflation, 1946–1993

[Graph showing the Consumer Price Index, with the index value of 1983 set at 100.]
Map 30.4 Presidential Election of 1980 (p. 903)
The Carter Administration

QuickTime™ and a Sorenson Video 3 decompressor are needed to see this picture.
CULMINATING CENTRAL UNIT QUESTION

Evaluate the successes and failures of Jimmy Carter’s Presidential Administration. Use the documents, the readings, and your knowledge of the period from 1973-1981 to construct your response.
Visual Summary: A Search for Order

The Search for Order 1968–1980

Nixon’s Presidency
- Conservative policies included New Federalism.
- Liberal policies included support for environment and wage and price controls.
- Sought détente with the Soviets, dialogue with Chinese.
- Shuttle diplomacy helped end Yom Kippur War and oil embargo.
- Moon landing a highlight.

Watergate and Ford
- Scandal with roots in the 1972 presidential campaign haunted Nixon.
- Nixon eventually forced to resign for lying and covering up White House crime.
- Ford became president, but lost support for pardoning Nixon.

Carter’s Presidency
- Elected for honesty and integrity.
- Focused on saving energy.
- Built foreign policy around human rights.
- Helped secure Camp David Accords.
- Response to Soviet actions in Afghanistan and Iran hostage crisis seen as weak.