

**REVIEW:  
PRESIDENTS & THE  
END OF THE  
“AMERICAN CENTURY”**

# Ending the 1960s: Division

- **Assassinations**
- **Anti-War Movement**
- **Generation Gap**
- **Student movement & clashes at college campuses**
- **Radical movements**
- **Clash of radical movements**
- **Chaos at the 1968 Democratic National Convention**



# **REQUIRED**

**Republicans will hold the Presidency for more than 20 years (with one exception).**

**The political shift reflected how unsettling the 1960s had been for mainstream Americans, a group sometimes called "Middle America." In a time of perceived chaos and confrontation, many Americans turned to the Republican Party for stability.**

# So who's next?

**Nixon + Watergate**

**Ford + no one remembers**

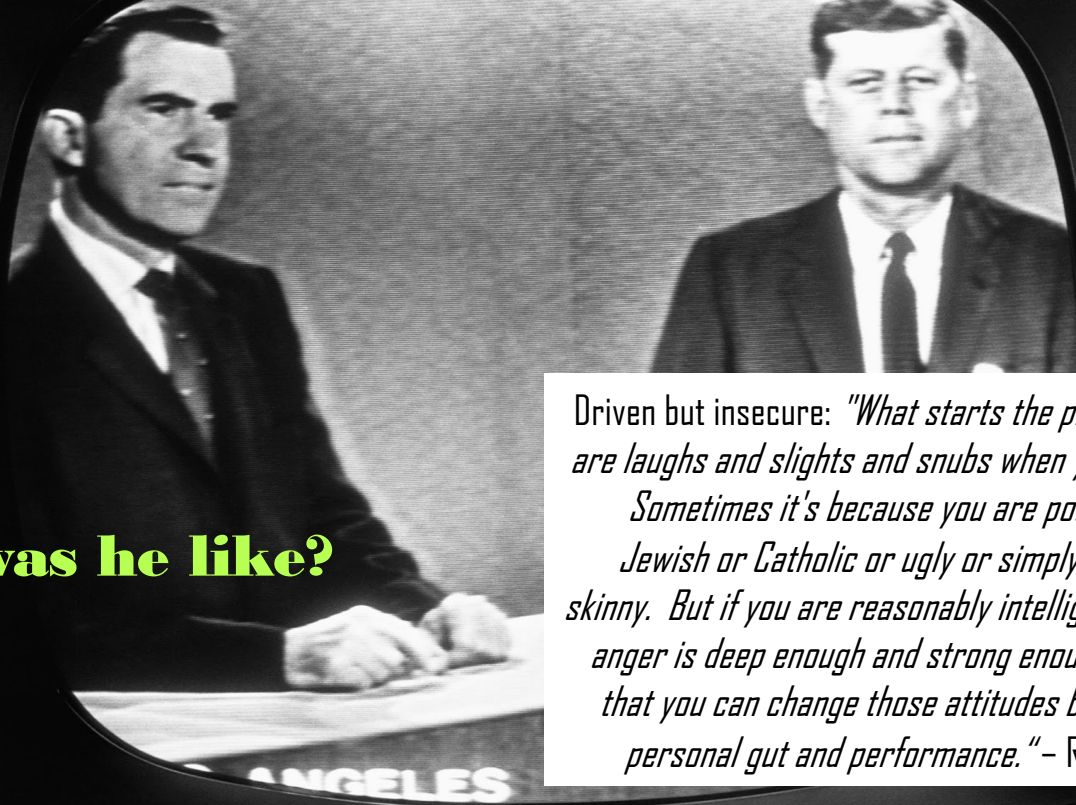
**Carter + The Middle East**

**The "Reagan Revolution"**

**The First George**

**Baby Boomer – Bill Clinton**

## What was he like?



Driven but insecure: *"What starts the process really are laughs and slights and snubs when you are a kid. Sometimes it's because you are poor or Irish or Jewish or Catholic or ugly or simply that you are skinny. But if you are reasonably intelligent and your anger is deep enough and strong enough, you learn that you can change those attitudes by excellence, personal gut and performance."* – Richard Nixon



"In some areas of politics, he seemed to know almost everything about anything - except about himself. His strengths and weaknesses fed upon each other. He was a small bitter man and a very grand diplomat. Who can read that riddle? Some of us have spent much of our lives trying to read it, with little better success than his own" - Garry Wills

**President from: 1969 – 1974**

**Republican**

• **Political Developments**

- **New Federalism** = states would take more responsibility using \$ from fed. as they wished
- Used "Southern Strategy" to appeal to segregationists (see next slide)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (1970)
- Watergate (1973-1974)

• **Economic Developments**

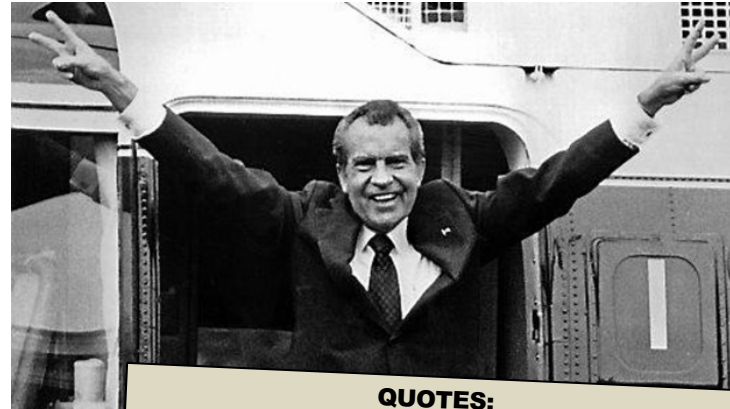
- Stagflation (high unemployment and inflation)
- Believed in deficit spending & set price controls
- OPEC oil embargo (1973)
- Result = recession

• **Social and Cultural Developments**

- Appealed to "silent majority"
- Cut govt. programs didn't like by "impounding"  
(but had mixed feelings about social programs – increased Social Security & Food Stamps)

• **Foreign Policy Developments**

- Promised to end Vietnam (Vietnamization) but dragged on 5+ yrs
- Initiated period of détente (relaxation of tensions with Communist countries)
- Visited China and Soviet Union



First and only President to resign!

**QUOTES:**

**"If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority, this nation has no future as a free society."**

**"I believe in the battle, whether it's the battle of the campaign or the battle of this office, which is a continuing battle. It's always there wherever you go."**

**"There are those who want instant integration and those who want segregation forever. I believe that we need to have a middle course between those two extremes."**

# Not in reading - based on your questions about changes in support for different political parties!

## Southern Strategy?

### Southern Strategy

**Definition:** Strategies that successfully contributed to the political realignment of many white, conservative voters in the South who had traditionally supported the Democratic Party rather than the Republican Party

In American politics, the **Southern strategy** was a Republican Party electoral strategy to increase political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racism against African Americans.

From 1948 to 1984, the Southern states, for decades a stronghold for the Democrats, became the swing states, providing the popular vote margins in the 1960, 68, and 76 elections. During this era, several Republican candidates expressed support for states' rights, a reversal of the position held by southern states prior to the Civil War.

### The Term

Nixon's political strategist Kevin Phillips, helped popularized the term. In an interview included in 1970, he stated his analysis based on studies of ethnic voting:

"From now on, the Republicans are never going to get more than 10 to 20 percent of the Negro vote and they don't need any more than that... but Republicans would be shortsighted if they weakened enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. The more Negroes who register as Democrats in the South, the sooner the Negrophobe whites will quit the Democrats and become Republicans. That's where the votes are. Without that prodding from the blacks, the whites will backslide into their old comfortable arrangement with the local Democrats."





*"After a period of confrontation, we are entering an era of negotiaton. Let all nations know that during this administration our lines of communication will be open. We seek an open world. Open to ideas, open to the exchange of goods and people. A world in which no people, great or small, will live in angry isolation. We cannot expect to make everyone our friend, but we can try to make no one our enemy."*

# Secret Lives of U.S. Presidents

“It’s quite sad, really. Despite his titanic potential as a shaper of international peace at time when the world needed it most, Nixon threw it all away, leaving behind a heap of lies that serve as a harsh reminder to us all: Unless we’re vigilant, the folks we elect to high office might just get away with anything.” – Cormac O’Brian

# **The Watergate Scandal**

## **Nixon's paranoia gets the best of him**



# Watergate

## Nixon's paranoia gets the best of him

- Determined to battle his political enemies (even had an "enemies" list)
- Organized "the Plumbers" to control leaks to the press (after the Pentagon Papers)
- During re-election campaign 1972, 5 men caught trying to wiretap phones in the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate hotel-office building in Washington, D.C.
  - From CREEP (Committee to Re-Elect the President)

Washington Post reporters Woodward and Bernstein



# Scandal Escalates

## Nixon & Watergate

- Nixon denied all involvement and tried to cover it up
  - Contacted CIA to stop FBI
  - Advisors offered hush money to bribe Watergate defendants
- Senate Select Committee begins hearings (televised)
- Judge decides there is more than being said and offers long, but negotiable prison sentences if men agree to help Senate Committee
  - Nixon's aides testified that he knew about the break-in
  - Also testified that Nixon kept audiotapes of all his conversations and phone calls in the Oval Office!
- When asked for the tapes, Nixon refused and fired Justice Department prosecutor
- The "Saturday Night Massacre"
  - Nixon initiated a series of resignations and firings

## *Optional: Nixon's Famous Phrase...*



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh163n1IJ4M&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh163n1IJ4M&feature=emb_logo)

# Scandal Escalates

- Congressional hearing began impeachment process
  - For what? Obstruction of justice, misuse of federal agencies, defying the authority of congress
- Tapes clearly showed his involvement (even though missing 18 minutes)
- August 9, 1974, he resigned.
  - The first (and only) president to ever do so.

*"The true crime of Richard Nixon was simple: he destroyed the myth that binds America together, and for this he was driven from power. The myth he broke was critical - that somewhere in American life there is at least one man who stands for law, the President... It was that faith that Richard Nixon broke, betraying those who voted for him even more than those who voted against him." - Theodore H. White*





THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 9, 1974

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I hereby resign the Office of President of the  
United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "Richard Nixon", is written below the word "Sincerely,".

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger  
The Secretary of State  
Washington, D. C. 20520

11.35 AM

HK





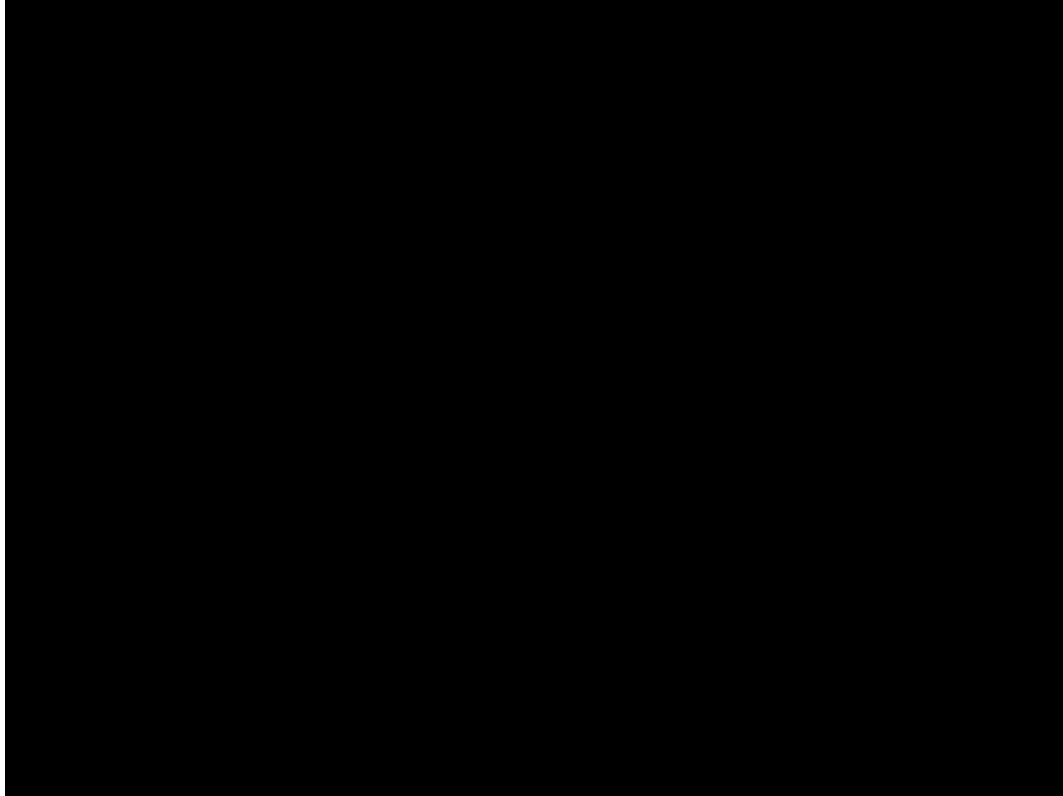
# IMPORTANT

## Nixon's Legacy

- Nixon was pardoned while 40 of his assistants were indicted
- Nixon had wanted to trim social programs, but government actually grew in size with further programs to protect the environment and regulate conditions in the work place
- Country felt betrayed by the government
- Congress felt it needed to check the power of the executive.
- BUT – Had also proved to some that the nation's constitutional system and balance of powers had worked. When members of the executive branch violated the law, the judicial and legislative branch stepped in to stop them, (after a free press helped reveal the issue). “Our Constitution works. Our great republic is a government of laws, not of men.”



# *Optional: Overview of Nixon's Presidency*

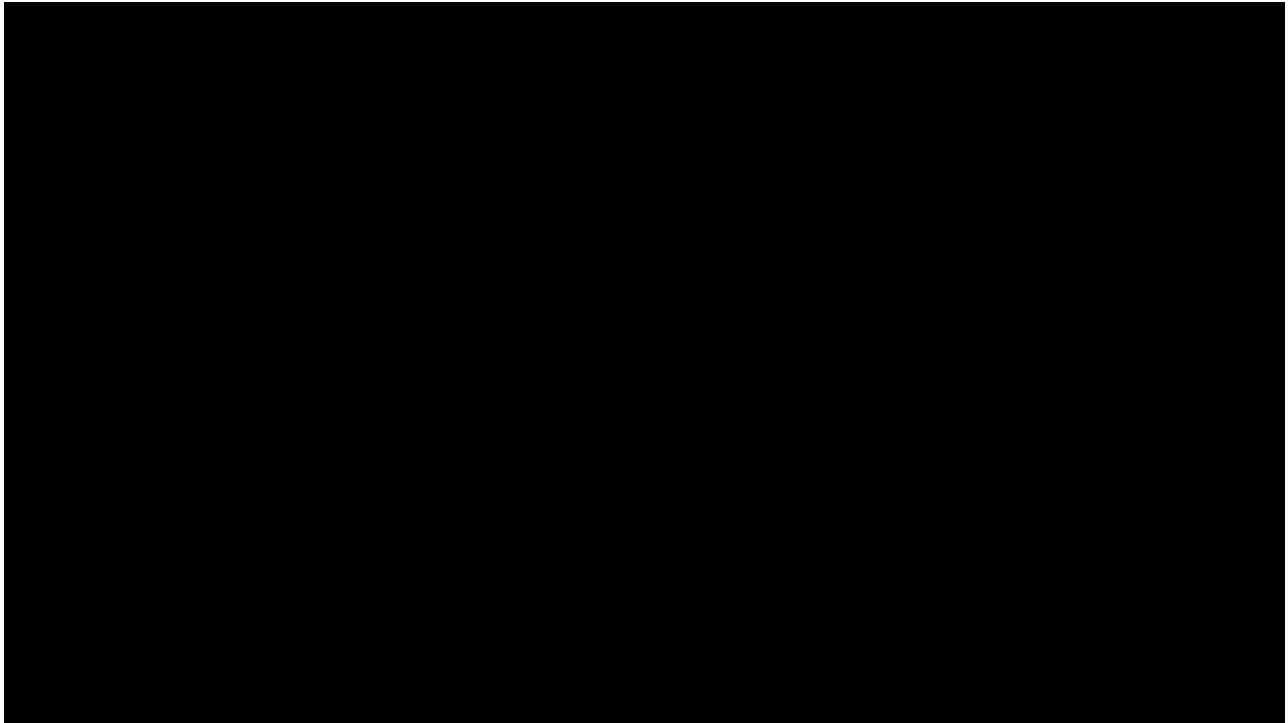


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzvF7DELtDY>

## *Optional:*

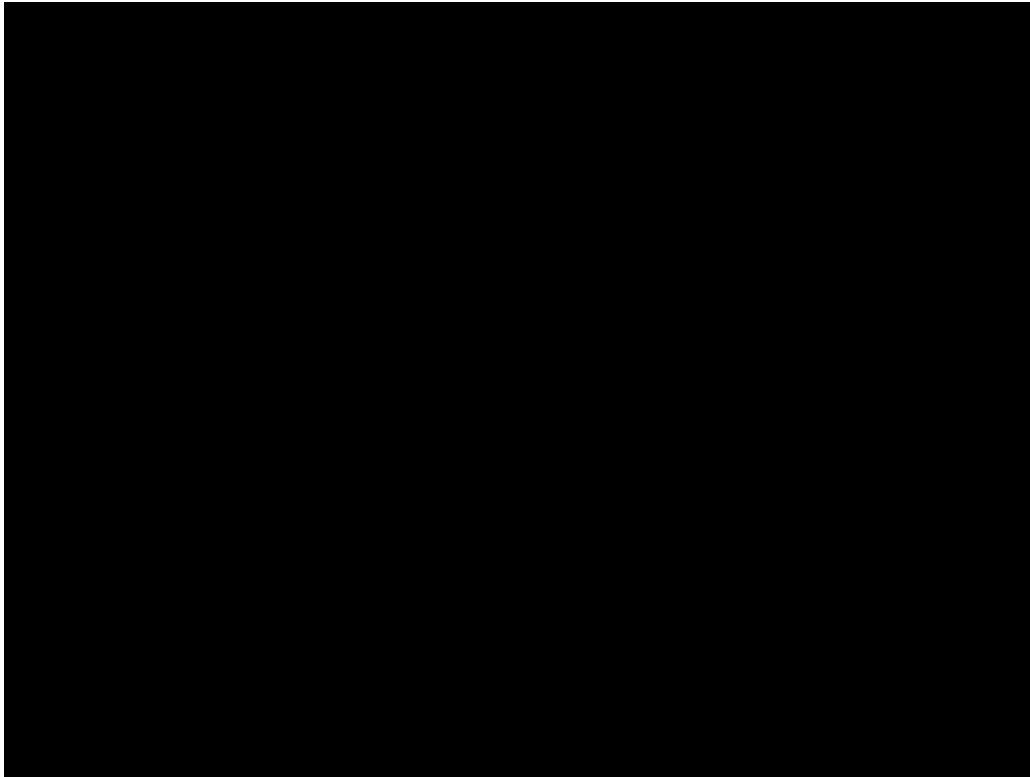
History vs. Richard Nixon (debate over our historical memory of him)

Reminds us how complex each political party, President, and person in history is!



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX\\_HYL6-0Co](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX_HYL6-0Co)

# *Optional: Overview of Presidency of Gerald Ford*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05yigFw8Mol&t=18s>

# Did Gerald Ford get a bad rap?



"If he saw a school kid in front of the White House who needed clothing, he'd give him the shirt off his back, literally. Then he'd go right in the White House and veto a school-lunch bill."

When sworn in said "I am a Ford, not a Lincoln"

- first non-elected President
- stepped into a bad situation
- underestimated negative reaction for pardoning Nixon

## Economic problems:

- inflation & unemployment = stagflation
- dependent upon voluntary action - didn't work
- backed an increase in unemployment benefits, but vetoed bills to fund programs for education, housing, and healthcare
- supported a multi-billion dollar tax cut
- believed in limited government, but Congress wanted to expand the role of fed gov in economy
- Presidency full of vetoes and overrides

## Foreign policy:

- **War Powers Act** limited President's ability to involve the US in foreign conflict without receiving a formal declaration of war from Congress (this was because they felt the Gulf of Tonkin had allowed the Presidents to go too far in Vietnam)
- 1975: North Vietnam attacks South... he asks to help and Congress says no way

President Ford | Republican

# Jimmy Carter, the peanut farmer?



## President from 77-81

- deeply religious, simple style
- appointed more women and minorities to his staff than previous administrations had done
- not great at working with Congress or getting legislation passed
- “never established a politically coherent administration”

## Economic Issues:

- First, started deficit spending to stimulate economy - inflation rose.
- Then cut fed. spending on social programs (angering liberal democrats).
- Overall, unsuccessful at solving unemployment issues.
- More success with deregulation: reduced govt. controls in several industries (oil and gas, RR, trucking, airlines)

## Domestic Issues:

- amnesty for draft dodgers
- weak support for social programs, but liberals were happy with his appointments
- supported Affirmative Action policies upheld by Supreme Court in 1978

## Energy Issues:

- created Department of Energy
- debate of Nuclear Energy begins (in hopes of avoiding foreign oil)

## Jimmy Carter & Foreign Affairs



Support for human rights = cornerstone of policy

### Camp David Accords 1978: gets leaders of Egypt and Israel meet

- Israel withdrew from Sinai peninsula & Egypt became the first country to recognize Israel's existence as a nation
- Did not solve the issue long term, but was significant

### Soviet American relations:

- supported dissidents, ending détente (increasing tensions)
- supported Afghanistan rebels (mujahideen) against USSR invasion
- Boycotted 1980 games



# *Optional - Camp David Accords*



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbc9EIB5vfQ&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbc9EIB5vfQ&feature=emb_logo)

## Argo... based on a true story?



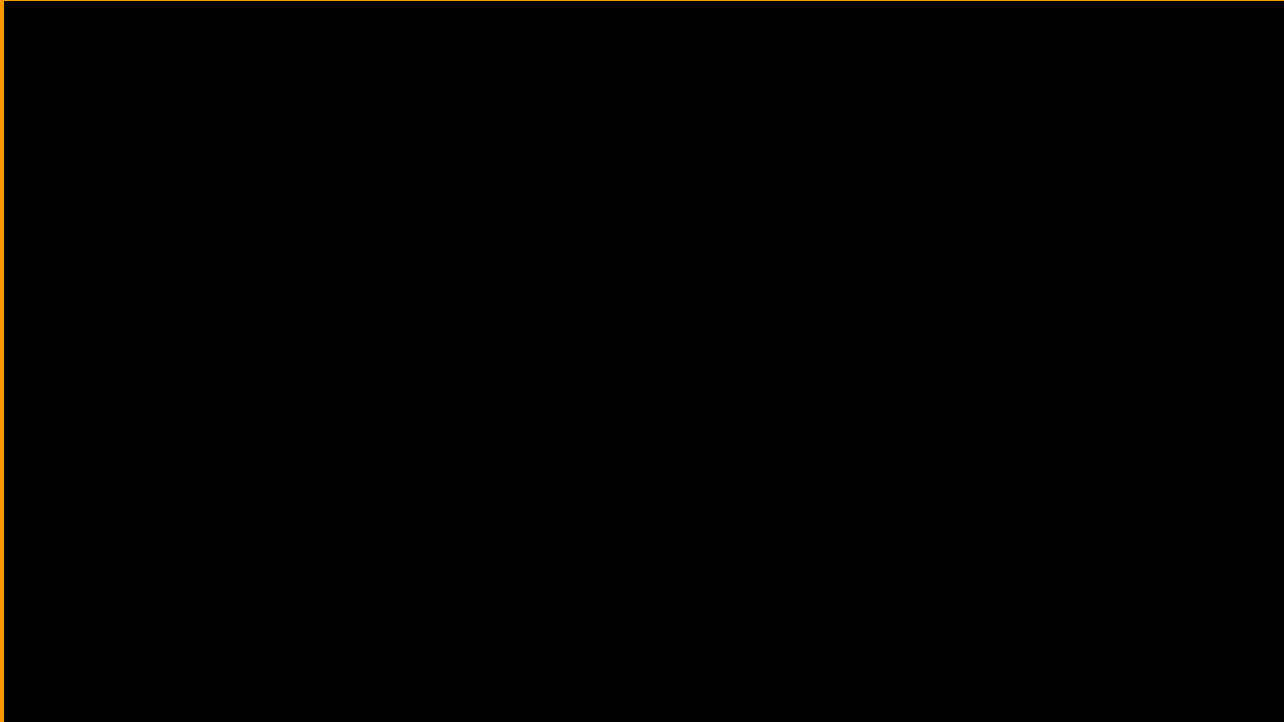
### Iran Hostage Crisis

- US had supported the Shah of Iran
  - He had taken steps to modernize Iran and was a reliable supplier of oil. Was a pro-Western force in the region.
  - Corruption and harsh repression was overlooked.
- 1979: revolution broke out, led by Muslim fundamentalists. Leader turned country into strict Islamic State.
- Carter let the Shah into US for medical treatment
- November 1979: US Embassy workers taken hostage by revolutionaries
  - 444 days - beaten, mock executions
- Eventually released in 1981

### In the end...

- rising inflation left Carter at only 21% approval ratings
- unemployment was over 7%
- even he noticed the "national malaise" or "crisis of confidence"

# *Optional - Iranian Hostage Crisis*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-WgNf6mn2k>

# Ronald Reagan



# The Conservative Revolution

After the political, social, and cultural upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, many Americans felt change had gone too far and wanted a return to “smaller government” and more conservative ideas.

The policies of Ronald Reagan and his successor, George H.W. Bush, carried out the social and economic goals of the “New Right” conservatives.

# Evolution of the "New Right"



## The New Right Coalition:

key concern = cutting size of federal government, proposed cutting government funded programs

## Where did the push for conservative change come from?

- New Deal opponents - argued high federal spending & budget deficits could not be sustained/afforded
- Great Society opponents - argued it had done wonderful things... BUT cost billions annually & raised expectations beyond what the government could meet
- Opponents of Nixon's expansion of government
- **Generally... opponents criticized these efforts for interfering with private enterprise**
- **Social issues disturbed conservatives:**
  - sexuality, drug-oriented society, violent protests, birth control pill, gay & lesbian rights, Roe v Wade, blamed women's movement for decline of traditional nuclear family
- Other issues:
  - against Affirmative action programs, calling them "reverse discrimination"
    - *note: (this issue attracts blue-collar democrats to Republican party aka **Reagan Democrats**)*
  - Moral Majority fought to bring Christian values back (beginning of televangelism)

# Reaganomics



## 1980 Election

- Reagan wins landslide victory (489-49)
- Goals: boost nations pride & prosperity by **cutting taxes**, **eliminating unnecessary government programs**, bolstering defense capability

## Reaganomics

- theory = **supply-side economics**
- opposite of Keynesian theory
  - *(fed govt gives people \$, they spend, purchase more, economy grows)*
- instead, focused on SUPPLY of goods, not demand.
  - *cutting taxes put more \$ in hands of businesses/investors who create new goods (consumers buy, then hire more people, produce more, etc.)*
- KEY = encouraging entrepreneurs to invest
  
- Makes tax cuts, but doesn't cut social programs as much as intended
  
- Result: Depends on who you ask! Economic boom but wealthy benefited the most and skyrocketing deficits.

President Reagan | Republican

# How to shrink the government?



- Continued deregulation, cut number & size (ex. EPA)
  - *argued regulations made life difficult for producers meaning less workers and higher prices for consumers and less they could spend on new supplies & equipment*
- Challenged power of labor unions
  - *Example: Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization called a strike win higher pay and improved working conditions. Gave strikers 2 days, then fired the rest.*
    - *"Convinced people who might have thought otherwise that I meant what I said."*
- Slowed Federal Growth:
  - *Examples: eliminate public service jobs that were part of employment training programs, reduced unemployment, lowered welfare benefits, reduced spending on food stamps, raised fees for Medicare...*
- New Federalism (never worked as planned)
- Note: **STILL** the total federal spending on social welfare rose between 1980 and 1982 (although maybe more slowly than it might have?)

"It is... my intention... to make government work - work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back.

Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it."

President Reagan | Republican



# Military Build-up Under Reagan



Tough approach to the "evil empire"

## Military Buildup:

- 5 yrs, \$1.1 trillion on defense
- contributed to growing budget deficits
- **Result: New weapons and new technology**
- 1983: Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) aka Star Wars - intercept and destroy incoming Soviet Missiles
  - Impractical but Soviets bought it
  - USSR complained about spending and new missiles
  - SDI felt like end of MAD (worried the Soviets that USA could strike first)

President Reagan | Republican

## Foreign Affairs under Reagan



Other issues abroad:

### Middle East:

- Lebanon = battleground, sent marines to keep peace, 1983 terrorist attack killed 241 Americans
- Libya = under General Qaddafi sponsored terrorist attacks on US and Israeli targets in Europe. Bombs the region on April 14, 1986 in retaliation for attacks.

### Communism in the Americas:

- El Salvador - supported repressive military regime (opposing Marxists guerrillas) - \$1 million a day!
- Nicaragua - supported guerrillas who were fighting to overthrow leftist govt.

# The economy under Reagan



- **Recession & Recovery**
  - first 2 yrs = worst economic downturn since Depression
  - Federal Reserve Bank tried to control inflation with high interest rates
  - Foreign competition
  - Unemployment reaches postwar high of 10.8
- **But... recession paves way for healthier economy**
  - did help with inflation
  - tax cuts took effect
  - consumer spending began to rise
  - by 1983, inflation and unemployment dropped below 10%
  - increased investments
  - stock market pushed up
  - 100,000 new millionaires each year

## Other economic issues of the 80s



When farmers were in trouble, Congress did respond with aid:

- America's farmers grew more than enough to feed America and sell excess crops abroad, faced oversupply
- falling prices hurt because in debt for machinery
- Congress agrees to \$20 billion/yr on agriculture
- supplied 30% of Americas farm income
- an expensive and temporary solution that didn't solve the long-term problems

Several industries lost to foreign competition (metal industry, textile industry)

Result = HISTORIC SHIFT AWAY FROM MANUFACTURING

- Most cases, workers found new jobs and companies got stronger

**President Reagan | Republican**

## Goal accomplished?



### Criticisms:

- Unequal wealth
  - top fifth of households rose 23%
  - bottom fifth rose 4%
- Growth in income inequality occurred across the globe
- Poverty and homelessness remained high
- Goal of decreasing deficit didn't happen
  - Had hoped tax revenues increase enough to help despite cuts
  - Cuts + defense spending increased deficit
  - did not reduce domestic programs as much as hoped
    - *Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, grew faster than they thought*
  - Went from \$80 billion in 1980 to \$221 billion in 1986
- National debt rose from \$909 billion in 1980 to \$3.2 trillion in 1990

**Reminder:**  
Federal Deficit = the amount by which the government's spending exceeds its income in a given year

**Reminder:**  
Nation Debt = total amount owed by the government

**President Reagan | Republican**

## What was Reagan's legacy?



Clinton on Reagan "His unwavering hopefulness reminded us that optimism is one of our most fundamental virtues."

### 60% liked him at the end

- made many feel optimistic and confident for the first time since Kennedy years

### Foreign Policy Success:

- success with Gorbachev, pushing the Cold War over the edge

President Reagan | Republican

# How did the Cold War end?



# Cold War in the 1970s

- In the 1970s, USA & USSR had entered a period called “Détente” (relaxation of tension)
  - The USA & USSR briefly began getting along better than in the past
  - Discussed limiting nuclear weapons and increasing trade
  - USA & China began better communication
- BUT This relaxation was “short-lived”





# Cold War “Freezes Up” Again!

- The sending of Soviet troops into Afghanistan in 1979 marked the end of détente
- 1981: President Reagan ends détente & encouraged confrontation
  - Harsh policy against the USSR & increased tension = Some call this the Second Cold War
  - Initiates new arms race w/ the USSR (one they couldn't keep up with!)
  - As a result, USSR began diverting huge proportion of national income to defense (lowering living standards even more)
- Meanwhile, “many countries (outside the United States) began encouraging free-market economic policies and promoted economic liberalization [during these decades]” – AP Course Framework



**IMPORTANT**

# **Why was this confidence in capitalism taking place?**

“That socialism was falling behind at an accelerating rate after 1960 was clear. It was no longer competitive.”

– Hobsbawm (Marxist historian)

# **IMPORTANT**

## **Why was this confidence in capitalism taking place?**

“On the other side of the Berlin Wall, capitalism was succeeding.

No single event, date, or statistic marks the point at which it became clear: what was significant instead was what had not happened since the end of WWII.

For contrary to the fears of capitalists based on history and the hopes of communists based on theory, the Great Depression had not returned.

And the claim that soon capitalists would find another war with one another – as Stalin, and Lenin, had predicted – had become ludicrous.

...

# IMPORTANT

## Why was this confidence in capitalism taking place?

It was left, years later, to one of the great Marxist historians, Eric Hobsbawm to state that

**“The problems which had been predicted by Karl Marx to haunt capitalism appeared, instead, to dissolve and disappear:**

World manufacturing output quadrupled between the early 1950s and 1970s

Trade in manufacturing products increased by a factor of ten

Food production rose faster than population growth.

Consumer goods, once considered luxuries – automobiles, refrigerators, telephones, radios, televisions, washing machines – became standard equipment.

Unemployment in Western Europe, almost disappeared.

“Of course most of humanity remained poor,” Hobsbawm acknowledged, “ but in the old heartlands of industrial labor what meaning could be gained from the communist saying “Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers” have for workers who wondered why they couldn’t have a car, paid vacations, and the freedom to choose a life for themselves...”

# IMPORTANT

“But to emphasize capitalism’s success is only part of the story. That is putting it rather narrowly, for Marxism and its successors, Leninism, Stalinism, and Maoism, cannot be judged on their economic performance [or lack of performance] alone.

The human costs were far more horrendous. **These ideologies, when put into practice, may well have brought about the premature deaths, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, of almost 100 million people.** The number who survived but who lives were stunted by these ideas and the repression they justified is beyond estimation. There can be few examples in which greater misery resulted from better intentions.”

— Historian John Lewis Gaddis

# The Collapse of the Soviet Union & End of the Cold War

## The Setting: The Standard of Living

Economy in crisis

- Gap between communist & capitalist economies growing
- Unable to compete with West in new industries or production
- Workforce was inefficient and unmotivated
- Spending way too much on arms race
- Locked in a costly and unwinnable war in Afghanistan by 1979 (\$8 billion a year!)
- No new thinking about how to run the Soviet economy since the days of Stalin

**PROBLEM:  
EACH LEADER FOLLOWED  
THE SAME POLICIES AND  
IGNORED THE WARNING  
SIGNS THAT THINGS WERE  
GOING WRONG.**

*Proof is in the  
pudding... or  
grain?*

**Even with rich land at its disposal, could not produce enough food to feed own people!**

Proof of inefficiency:  
20% of workforce in farming (compared with 3% in the USA).  
On average, US farmer produced 7 times more food than each Soviet farmer  
USSR was having to import millions of tons of grain from USA!

# THE LOSS OF RESPECT FOR COMMUNISM

## IMPORTANT

“Ordinary people” had lost respect for communism. Why?

The Soviet system had guaranteed a job and a home – but it gave them no incentive to work harder or better. In the days of Stalin, they had worked out of loyalty or fear. Those days were gone and were replaced with cynicism (no loyalty to the government, did not believe what the government said, and worse, *they did not care*).

The divide between the “east” and the “west” was becoming obvious, state-run industries couldn’t keep up with innovation in the west, and **the people who lived in the Eastern bloc began to revolt.**

**NOTE:** These revolts would be as much about democracy and self-determination as they would be about the economy.

*In twenty years not one human problem has been solved in our country, from primary needs like flats, schools, to the more subtle needs such as fulfilling oneself . . . the need for people to trust one another . . . development of education.*  
*I feel that our Republic has lost its good reputation.*

From a speech given by Ludvík Vaculík, a leading figure in the reform movement, in March 1968.

# Poland

- The events that unfolded leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War were in many ways initiated by events in Poland.
- Poland had long been dissatisfied with Soviet control. Living standards were very poor in the 1970s
- In 1980, a powerful non-communist controlled organization known as **Solidarity** challenged the government and set off a chain reaction
- Wanted political and religious freedom and an end to corruption.
  - 1/3 of workers in the country joined! (9 million members!)
- Communist party in Poland in tough position – if don't support Solidarity, would be despised by people. If do accept this non-communist group, would risk provoking an armed invasion by the USSR.
- Communists decide to institute "martial law" (emergency powers of the army). They brutally suppressed the revolt for a few years, **BUT it would gain international attention & support (even from the Pope!)**
  - Lech Walesa imprisoned – but made him a hero!
  - Opposition was actually broadened and strengthened over the next year



## SOURCE 4

*Inequality and injustice are everywhere. There are hospitals that are so poorly supplied that they do not even have cotton, and our relatives die in the corridors; but other hospitals are equipped with private rooms and full medical care for each room. We pay fines for traffic violations, but some people commit highway manslaughter while drunk and are let off. . . . In some places there are better shops and superior vacation houses, with huge fenced-in grounds that ordinary people cannot enter.*

Extract from 'Experience and the Future', a report drawn up in 1981 by Polish writers and thinkers who were not members of the Communist Party. They are describing the inequality in Poland between Communist Party members and ordinary people.

## EXAMPLES OF DISCONTENT THAT LED TO END OF COLD WAR



# RIPPLE EFFECTS ON THE SOVIET UNION

- New leader in 1985 named Mikhail Gorbachev
- Wants to reform (not replace) communist system w/**perestroika** (restructuring)
  - GOAL: revive economy by adopting some free-market practices
    - Think of it as *limited capitalism*
- Introduces **glasnost** (openness)
  - GOAL: introduce free speech & other civil liberties
  - RATIONALE: Encourages open political discussion and demonstrations
- Retreats from using force to control countries within their "sphere of influence" and removes troops from Afghanistan in 1989

" Force or the threat of force neither can nor should be instruments of foreign policy. The principle of the freedom of choice is mandatory. Refusal to recognize this principle will have serious consequences for world peace. To deny a nation the choice, regardless of any excuse, is to upset the unstable balance that has been achieved. Freedom of choice is a universal principle. It knows no exception." – Gorbachev

There are three kinds of person in the Soviet Union:

The optimists - they believe what Gorbachev says

The pessimists - they are learning English and planning to emigrate

The realists - they are taking rifle lessons and getting ready for civil war

There are two ways of resolving the crisis of the Soviet Union:

The realistic way - aliens from outer space will land and straighten out the mess:

The fantastic way - the Soviet people will sort it out for themselves.

- Gorbachev had been popular at first (and definitely in foreign policy) but...
- policies were not successful at home (*or not in the way he intended*)
- economy could not be modernized as quickly as people wanted (levels of corruption & inefficiency were too great, managers of economy saw reforms as a threat to their jobs and blocked changes)
- By 1989, seemed Gorbachev had no real idea which way to go
  - Couldn't really turn back. Reforms had released a pent-up longing for freedom all across the Communist world.
  - Leaders of other countries in the communist bloc looked on in confusion.



# So what happened? GORBACHEV IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY

# FINALLY... 1989: YEAR OF REVOLUTION

In summary: An extraordinary chain of events leads to collapse of Communism in eastern Europe.

*Context: Throughout Europe there was no popular support for communism. Without the threat of Soviet tanks, communism fell apart.*

It begins...

- March: Gap in the iron curtain opens up: Hungarians dismantle barbed-wire fence between Hungary and non-Communist Austria.
- June: Free elections are held in Poland (first time in Eastern Europe since 1940!)
  - Disaster for communists
  - *"For the first time in 45 years, a Polish government is to be formed on Polish soil, by non-communist forces. The monopoly of the party which ruled Poland against the will of the people has been broken." – Solidarity activist*
- September/October: Thousands of East Germans "on holiday" in Hungary and Czechoslovakia refuse to go home. Escape to West Germany (made nonsense of the Berlin Wall). Enormous demonstrations when Gorbachev visits East Germany. Tells East German leaders he will not move in to restore order and that they, too, should reform.



# 1989: YEAR OF REVOLUTION CONTINUED

- November: East Germans march in thousands to the checkpoints of the Berlin Wall. Guards throw down their weapons and join the crowds. Berlin Wall is dismantled.
- November: Demonstrations in Czechoslovakia lead the govt to open its borders and allow formation of other parties. Collapse of communism there!
- December: In Romania a bloody revolution begins and they execute the dictator.
- In 1990 the two halves of Germany were re-united. Germany reunified as a modern, capitalist-leaning, democratic nation.





"For most west Europeans now alive, the world has always ended at the East German border and the Wall; beyond lay darkness... The opening of the frontiers declares that the world has no edge any more. Europe is becoming once more round and whole." – *The Independent*, November '89



Picture taken from Helen Walford

# **STRONGLY STRONGLY RECOMMENDED!**

[Click here](#) or copy this link for a GREAT CLIP on 1980s America and  
the collapse of the Berlin Wall

*(with an awesome clip of David Hasselhoff dancing and singing on the Berlin Wall haha)*

<https://www.loom.com/share/6cbcbab9b116467eb51c7b6648432e6e>

# THE SOVIET UNION COLLAPSES

This tidal wave of change was impossible to reverse.

Communism was being rejected by Eastern Europe & **inside USSR**. Poland and other states (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) had declared their separation from the USSR.

The Soviet Union announced itself disintegrated in 1991. It went back to its old self: Russia, while other parts of the Soviet Empire such as Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, became independent nations.

Since then? The development in these nations has been rocky. What is for sure though, is that **by 1991, the Cold War was over. The Warsaw Pact was disbanded. And the US found itself as the world's only superpower.**



**Above: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia demand independence. 2 mil people made human chain across all three states! (on the 50th anniversary of Nazi-Soviet Pact).  
Look up the "Baltic Way"**

- End of Cold War removes last obstacle to true global interaction and trade.
- Deregulation & new communication technology (the internet!) resulted in globally integrated financial networks.
- Commercial interdependence also increased as East Asia modified its economic policies.
- The ease with which goods & ideas are transported across the world resulted in cultures that are more homogenous and integrated (globalization!)

**INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE?**



# DECLINE OF COMMUNISM ELSEWHERE?

- Decline of communism and its authoritarian methods affected Latin America in that most military dictatorships were replaced by democratic governments starting in the 1980s. Argentina and Chile are two examples.
- BUT not all political movements were in the direction of democratic rule after the Cold War:
  - In the Middle East, dictatorships and kingdoms remained in many nations (e.g., Saudi Arabia and Iran)
  - In China, a prodemocracy movement led by students in 1989 was brutally crushed by the government in [Beijing's Tiananmen Square](#), even as the communist regime there was beginning to permit limited capitalism.

# The Information Age



## Technological Revolution Leads to New Economy

- greatest period of economic expansion in history during the 1990s thanks to the technology boom
- centerpiece = computer and then Internet boom
- businesses scrambled to set up website as a way to reach customers
- investors and entrepreneurs created new businesses focused around internet and other digital technologies
- “dot-com” companies appeared

## Result:

- boom ended in 2001, but computer-based economy had been established
- high-tech industry = demand for workers with advanced skills
- fewer positions exist for unskilled workers, making education more important to economic success than ever before
- new problems = privacy, security, unreliable information, ownership rights

## The first George Bush



- reputation as a moderate and loyal republican
- promised "no new taxes"

### Domestic Issues:

- approval rating 89%
- not a clear plan at home...
- slowed on spending for social programs
- deficit reduction plan based on new taxes
- recession in the early 1990s
- allowed govt to spend less on defense with end of cold war
  - (but that also meant laid off workers... these guys can't win!)

President George H. W. Bush | Republican

## The first George Bush



### Foreign policy:

- Berlin Wall falls, Chain of Freedom in Eastern Europe, the end of the Soviet Union
- Dramatic reduction of long-range nuclear weapons
- Tiananmen Square 1989 incident in China
- Negotiated and encouraged trade with China despite issues. Made people feel he was careless about human rights.

**President George H. W. Bush | Republican**

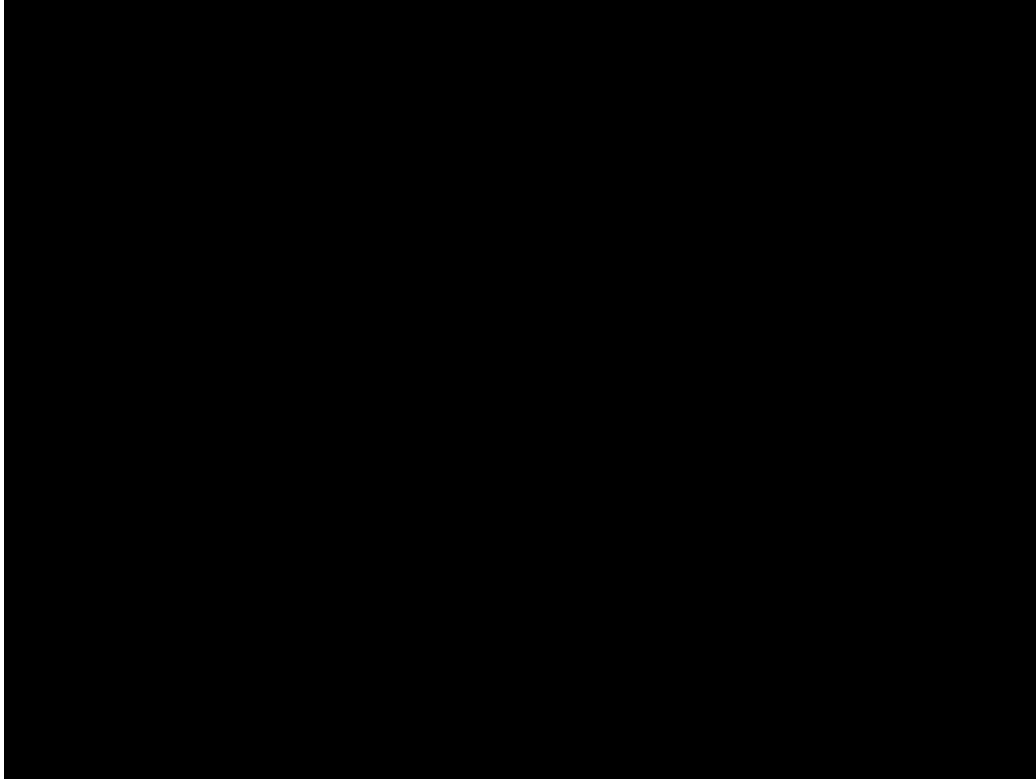
## Persian Gulf War



- 1990 Iraq
- Saddam Hussein - sudden invasion of Kuwait (had eyes on Kuwait's oil but claimed it was centuries old territorial conflict)
- At first reluctant to get involved with drama of Arab nations but needed oil and friendship with Saudi Arabia
- Diplomatic efforts last for months but fail. Worked through UN & 28 nations & launch war.
- "Operation Desert Storm" = series of air strikes 1991
- Liberated Kuwait in 6 weeks
- Opted not to send troops deep into Iraq, expecting that Saddam's opponents would overthrow him

**President George H. W. Bush | Republican**

***Optional:  
Overview of Presidency of George Bush***



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw9UhBIFUDA&t=15s>

# Bill Clinton – 1st Baby Boomer in the WH



## Elected in 1992

- promised to end recession, address federal budget and deficit and healthcare
- government was necessary to “make America work again” but wanted to reduce the size of it
- called himself a “**New Democrat**” that could reconcile the views of Rep and Dem
- appealed to people tired of the bickering

## • Economy

- plan: increasing spending, cutting taxes (but needed to reduce the budget deficit which meant cutting spending or raising taxes)
- ended up....
- cutting spending and increasing taxes
- deregulated telecommunications
- initiated Healthcare reform debate
- 37 million had no health insurance
- asks for creation of a government supervised health insurance program - guarantee coverage to every American

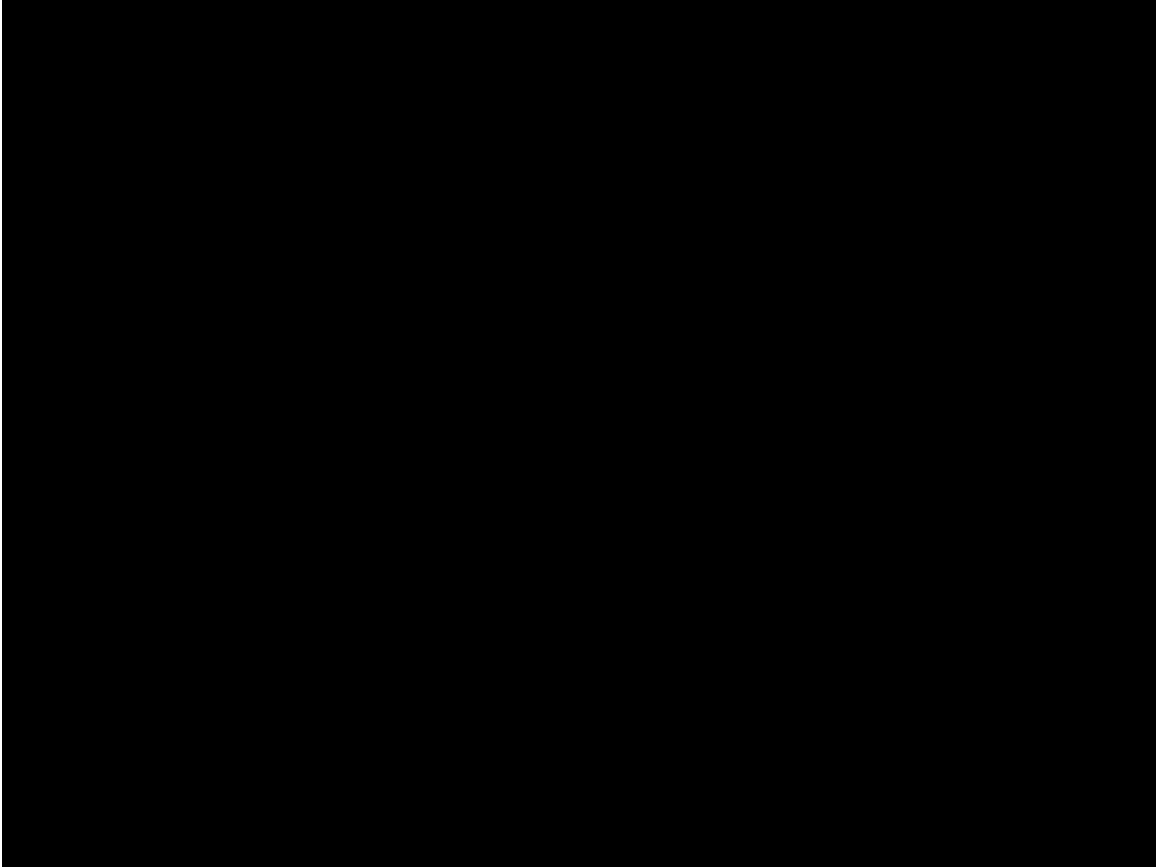
## Bill Clinton... what else did he do?



- Congress and President became deadlocked
- In the end...
  - Reputation for being a “tax-and-spend” liberal but strong economy and raises of minimum wage helped
  - 1998: first budget surplus in years. Bolstered by a period of economic expansion.
    - *Longest period of economic expansion in American history!*
- Remembered more for scandal than anything else:
  - Accusations of adultery, sexual harassment, money laundering and then...
  - Monica Lewinsky (relationship with 21 yr old intern)
- Impeachment Process:
  - charges: fooling around with Lewinsky and then lying about it (aka obstructing justice, tampering with witnesses, lying under oath)
  - disagreed on whether it constituted “high crimes and misdemeanors”
  - 1999: voted to acquit



*Optional:  
Overview of Presidency of Bill Clinton*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8MIJRfeTck>

## Final Thought – The Study of History



**REQUIRED**

Sadly, this is where we have to stop our course.

But trust me, there so much more to learn!

I hope that your curiosity about the past isn't hindered by the limitations of this particular course.

**Before leaving, PLEASE READ this FINAL THOUGHT from Historian Robert Strayer:**

## Final Thought – The Study of History



# REQUIRED

“ All of us engaged in the study of history describe changes, make global comparisons, assess connections among distant people, and explain as best we can (and sometimes amid intense controversy) why things turned out as they did.

**But to put it mildly, these are not easy tasks, and the entire study of history is subject to various challenges and outright limitations...**

## Final Thought – The Study of History



# REQUIRED

... [Despite the challenges and limitations when studying history], **we persist in the task**, seeking what knowledge we can achieve, what insights we can gain, and what perspective on our own lives we can generate [in the time we have].

We have at our disposal the marvelous human capacity [to gain access to information] and the ability to empathize with others based on our common humanity and our knowledge of their particular circumstances...

**REQUIRED**

## Final Thought – The Study of History



**So we accept that historical understanding is always incomplete, relative, and subject to change.**

**But we remember, nonetheless, that the achievements of historical study are impressive and enormously enriching.**

## Final Thought – The Study of History



Our subject – the study of history – makes us witnesses to the broad contours of the human journey and **provides a context in which our individual lives can find a place and perhaps a measure of meaning.** It serves to open us to and inform us about the wider world that shapes our daily experience.

If we base our understanding of life only on what we personally experience in our own lives, we **render ourselves both impoverished and ineffective...**

## Final Thought – The Study of History



... The study of history opens a window into the unfamiliar. It allows us some **modest entry into the lives of people far removed from us in time and place.** And it offers us **company for the journey** of our own lives.

Pondering the past with a **receptive heart** and an **open mind** can assist us in enlarging and **deepening our sense of self.** In exposing us to the wider experience "of all under heaven," as the Chinese put it, history can aid us in becoming **wiser more mature persons.**

**That is among the many gifts that the study of the past, despite its various challenges and limitations, offer to us all."**

*– Historian Robert Strayer*