

THIRTY-ONE FROM THE "AGE OF LIMITS" TO THE AGE OF REAGAN

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter Thirty-Three should enable the student to understand:

1. The efforts of President Gerald Ford to overcome the effects of Richard Nixon's resignation.
2. The rapid emergence of Jimmy Carter as a national figure and the reasons for his victory in 1976.
3. Carter's emphasis on human rights and its effects on international relations.
4. Carter's role in bringing about the Camp David agreement and the impact of this agreement on the Middle East.
5. Why the United States had so much difficulty in freeing the hostages held by Iran and the effect of this episode on the Carter presidency.
6. The nature of the "Reagan revolution" and the meaning of "supply-side" economics.
7. The staunchly anticommunist Reagan foreign policy.
8. The changing demography of America from 1970 to 1990.
9. The increasingly conservative mood of the American electorate.
10. The emergence of a new era in foreign policy with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Main Themes

1. That Gerald Ford managed to restore confidence in the presidency but remained unable to make significant breakthroughs in solving the nation's international and economic problems.
2. That the difficult problems faced by Jimmy Carter, including a sluggish economy, an energy crunch, and a Middle Eastern crisis, combined with his leadership style to ensure that he would be a one-term president.
3. That Ronald Reagan's personality soothed Americans and his brand of conservatism struck a responsive chord as he moved toward a reduced role for government in the economy and an increased emphasis on the military.
4. How the New Right challenged the liberal-moderate consensus that had dominated American politics since the New Deal.
5. How the end of the Cold War turned foreign policy focus to other matters, especially the Middle East.

Glossary

1. demography: The study of population, including birth and death rates, residence patterns, and regional shifts.
2. pentecostal Christianity: A type of fundamentalism that stresses faith healing and baptism by the Holy Spirit. The spirit manifests itself when followers speak in unknown tongues. Pentecost was an ancient Hebrew festival, and, according to the Book of Acts, on the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the apostles spoke in tongues when they heard a sound like the rush of a mighty wind.

Pertinent Questions

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY AFTER WATERGATE (894-897)

1. How did his pardon of Richard Nixon affect Gerald Ford's political standing?
2. What policies did the Ford administration employ to fight the recession of 1974-1975? How effective were they? How did the energy crisis complicate Ford's problems?
3. What themes and style did Jimmy Carter play on to win the nomination and presidency in 1976? How did that approach hamper him as president?
4. What role did "human rights" play in Carter's foreign policy?
5. How did Carter manage to help bring about a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel?
6. What led to the Iranian hostage crisis? What political effects did it have on the Carter administration? How was the crisis resolved?
7. How did the Carter administration react to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?

THE RISE OF THE NEW AMERICAN RIGHT (898-903)

8. Where is the "Sunbelt"? What were the political implications of its rise?
9. Describe the basis of Christian evangelicalism. How could it lead to both social liberalism, as in Jimmy Carter, and, more typically, cultural conservatism, as in Jerry Falwell?
10. What issues did the "Christian right" stress?
11. How did activists build the New Right? What was Ronald Reagan's role in the emergence of the movement? How did Gerald Ford's actions actually enhance the New Right even though he was not part of it?
12. To what extent was the tax revolt of the 1970s and 1980s as much an attack on government programs in principle as it was a frustration with high taxes?
13. Why did Ronald Reagan win such a decisive victory in 1980? What happened in the congressional races?

THE "REAGAN REVOLUTION" (903-910)

14. What were the key elements of the Reagan coalition? How did it differ from the traditional Republican constituency?
15. Explain the assumptions of supply-side economics ("Reaganomics") and how the Reagan administration implemented it. How did the economy respond?
16. Explain the concept of "deregulation." What steps were taken under Reagan.
17. What lifted the economy out of the 1982-83 recession? What contribution did Reagan's economic policy make to the recovery?
18. What long-term developments and short-term actions of the Reagan years led to the record federal budget deficits?
19. What stance toward the Soviets and communism in general constituted the so-called Reagan Doctrine? How was this approach applied in Latin America and the Caribbean?
20. How did the rise in terrorism as a political tactic shape American foreign policy in North Africa and the Middle East?
21. What did the election of 1984 reveal about the changing nature of American politics?

AMERICA AND THE WANING OF THE COLD WAR (910-915)

22. Describe the process by which the Soviet Union and its Eastern European bloc ceased to exist. What emerged in its place?
 23. How did Ronald Reagan react to Mikhail Gorbachev? What concrete agreement resulted?
 24. Describe the Iran-contra scandal and its political impact. What other scandals plagued the Reagan administration?
 25. What main campaign strategy did George Bush use to come from behind and defeat Michael Dukakis? What happened in the Congressional elections?
 26. Even though President Bush lacked a clear domestic agenda, what significant measures did pass during his term of office? What was the most serious domestic challenge that faced Bush?
 27. What precipitated the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf crisis and war? What role did the United Nations play? What was the outcome?
 28. What broad issue was the key to Bill Clinton's victory in 1992? What role did Ross Perot play?
- PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE: THE MALL (898-899)**
29. Why did shopping mall developers endeavor to control so many aspects of the environment? What did some observers perceive as the downside to the mall.

Identification

Identify each of the following, and explain why it is important within the context of the chapter.

1. Helsinki Conference
2. Mao Zedong
3. SALT II
4. Panama Canal Treaty
5. Camp David Accords
6. diplomatic relations with China
7. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini
8. Billy Graham
9. Christian Coalition
10. Nelson Rockefeller
11. Proposition 13
12. "Teflon president"
13. "neo conservatives"
14. "Star Wars"—SDI
15. "nuclear freeze"
16. Grenada
17. Sandinistas
18. Beirut barracks incident
19. Walter Mondale
20. Jesse Jackson
21. Geraldine Ferraro

22. Tiananmen Square
23. Savings and Loan crisis
24. Saddam Hussein

Document 1

Read the sections of the text dealing with the differing styles, personalities, and policies of Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. The excerpt below, the first from Carter's so-called malaise speech of July 15, 1979, and the second from Reagan's State of the Union Address on February 4, 1986, illustrate the contrasting styles. Carter's address was given at a time when he was under considerable attack for his leadership, whereas Reagan's was delivered while his popularity was at a high point. Both speeches contain specific legislative agendas, but the speeches are more memorable for their general messages than for their specific proposals. Consider the following questions: How do the two documents illustrate the differences between the leadership styles of Reagan and Carter? Each speech cites experiences or opinions of supposedly typical Americans; from that described by Carter in 1979, had America truly changed that much? Had Reagan restored national confidence through rhetoric or through long-term solutions to difficult problems? In light of the state of the nation and the world in the early 1990s, which speech was more realistic? Which was more prophetic?

[President Carter speaking, 1979. I want to speak to you tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation. I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy.]

I do not mean our political and civil liberties. They will endure. And I do not refer to the outward strength of America—the nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world with unmatched economic power and military might. The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will.

We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation.

The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America. The confidence that we have always had as a people is not simply some romantic dream or a proverb in a dusty book that we read just on the Fourth of July. It is the idea which founded our nation and which has guided our development as a people. Confidence in the future has supported everything else—public institutions and private enterprises, our own families and the very Constitution of the United States. Confidence has defined our course and has served as a link between generations.

We've always believed in something called progress. We've always had a faith that the days of our children would be better than our own.

Our people are losing that faith. . . . But just as we are losing our confidence in the future, we are also beginning to close the door on our past.

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does but by what one owns. . . .

Often you see paralysis and stagnation and drift. You don't like it. And neither do I.

What can we do? First of all, we must face the truth and then we can change our course. We simply must have faith in each other. Faith in our ability to govern ourselves and faith in the future of this nation. Restoring that faith and that confidence to America is now the most important task we face. . . .

Reagan won the 1980 election by riding this conservative crest and by exploiting deep-seated feelings of resentment over America's seeming weakness abroad. Congress quickly passed his supply-side economics plan of tax reductions and spending cuts, but a year later, the nation was mired in recession. However, the downturn proved brief and with the return of prosperity, Reagan won easy reelection.

Review Questions

These questions are to be answered with essays. This will allow you to explore relationships between individuals, events, and attitudes of the period under review.

1. Did Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon accomplish its purpose to "shut and seal the book" on Watergate? What else did Ford do to try to restore credibility to the presidency?
2. How effective was Jimmy Carter in applying the human-rights principle to American foreign policy? How did his approach differ from the actions taken by Ronald Reagan and George Bush?
3. How did the nation's energy needs complicate both the foreign and domestic policies of presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush?
4. What were the political, economic, and social implications of the marked demographic changes in the American population during the 1970s and 1980s?
5. Describe the various elements of the rise of conservative politics in the 1970s and 1980s. How did they come together around the figure of Ronald Reagan?

Chapter Self Test

After you have read the chapter in the text and done the exercises in the Study Guide, take the following self test to see if you understand the material you have covered. Answers appear at the end of the Study Guide.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Circle the letter of the response that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. President Gerald Ford's popularity with the American public fell dramatically as a result of his:
 - a. pardon of Richard Nixon.
 - b. handling of the "Mayaguez" incident.
 - c. vetoes of large numbers of congressional enactments.
 - d. appointment of Nelson Rockefeller as vice president.

2. The death of Mao Zedong in China:
 - a. led to a period of disruption, chaos, and violence
 - b. brought to power a more moderate government that wanted closer ties with the United States.
 - c. intensified Chinese pressure on Taiwan inspiring the United States to increase military aid to the island regime.
 - d. set off a wave of provincial revolutions that split China.
3. Ford's foreign policy included support for three of the following. Which is the exception?
 - a. the SALT II agreement
 - b. the Helms agreement on European boundaries
 - c. the continued rapprochement with China after the death of Mao Zedong
 - d. the abandonment of U. S. mediation efforts in the Middle East
4. Jimmy Carter's success in the election of 1976 resulted in large part because:
 - a. Ford refused to choose a running mate who appealed to the Republican right.
 - b. Carter's considerable service in Washington assured voters of an experienced administrator.
 - c. Ford's acerbic personality had generated an atmosphere of bitterness and acrimony in Washington.
 - d. Carter seemed to possess honesty, piety, and an outsider's skepticism of the federal government.
5. Which of the following best describes the nation's economy during Carter's final two years in office?
 - a. modest inflation and stable interest rates
 - b. modest inflation and declining interest rates
 - c. rapid inflation and record high interest rates
 - d. rapid inflation and stable interest rates
6. Carter had hoped to base American foreign policy on increased attention to:
 - a. flexible military response whenever democratic governments were challenged.
 - b. expansion of American economic interests overseas.
 - c. reduction of American responsibility for involvement in world conflicts.
 - d. the issue of how nations respect human rights.
7. The Camp David summit, hosted by President Carter, was a meeting between the leaders of Israel and:
 - a. Egypt.
 - b. Libya.
 - c. Lebanon.
 - d. the Palestine Liberation Organization.

8. Three of the following were significant features of Carter's foreign policy in the early years of his administration. Which is the *exception*?
- abandoning SALT II as futile
 - completing negotiations to transfer the Canal Zone to Panama
 - using diplomatic pressure to promote human rights in other countries
 - continuing progress toward improving relations with China
9. In November 1979, Iranian militants took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held fifty-three embassy personnel hostage for more than a year. The immediate provocation for their act was the fact that the Carter administration:
- began to support Iraq in its war with Iran.
 - refused to recognize Iran's new regime.
 - attempted to restore the pro-American Shah to power in Iran.
 - allowed the exiled former Shah of Iran to enter the United States.
10. In response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), President Carter did three of the following. Which is the *exception*?
- He imposed economic sanctions on the Soviet Union.
 - He called for a boycott of the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.
 - He withdrew SALT II from consideration by the Senate.
 - He invoked the SEATO treaty, by which member nations were to confer with one another in case of attack.
11. The rapid population growth in the "Sunbelt" shifted political power to the region and tended to strengthen which political viewpoint?
- conservative, antigovernment
 - liberal, government activist
 - moderate, middle-of-the-road
 - none of the above; effect basically neutral
12. Which of the following is a common thread of evangelical Christianity?
- belief in personal conversion through direct communication with God
 - conservative, right-wing politics, especially on social welfare issues
 - belief in the literal, inerrant interpretation of the Bible, especially on evolution
 - all of the above
13. Ronald Reagan and his administration received strong support from three of the following groups. Which is the *exception*?
- "neo-conservatives"
 - New Right
 - feminists and civil rights activists
 - conservative business leaders
14. The "supply-side" economic theory that President Reagan sought to implement early in his administration called for:
- increasing government spending to stimulate consumption.
 - maintaining high interest rates to control inflation.
 - cutting taxes to encourage new investment
 - all of the above.
15. During the Reagan administration, the federal budget:
- experienced severe deficits.
 - noticeably declined.
 - shifted from reliance on the income tax to a national sales tax.
 - rose markedly in domestic spending but remained flat on defense.
16. With respect to the civil war in El Salvador, the Reagan administration:
- maintained a strictly neutral position.
 - sent in a peacekeeping force of American combat troops.
 - supported the existing military regime with money and material.
 - supported the revolutionaries, who were seeking to overthrow the military regime.
17. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas were:
- pro-American forces.
 - anti-American forces.
 - essentially the same as the comras in Honduras.
 - supporters of the former Somoza regime.
18. Reagan's policy toward Lebanon involved:
- supporting Lebanon with military aid for its border conflict with Saudi Arabia.
 - sending in American marines as a peacekeeping force following Israeli-PLO clashes but removing them after over 200 were killed in a terrorist attack.
 - backing Israel in the United Nations in its effort to make Lebanon part of the Left Bank area controlled by Israel.
 - none of the above.
19. In the national elections of 1984, the Democrats made electoral history by, for the first time, nominating a vice presidential candidate who was:
- Jewish.
 - female.
 - African-American.
 - Hispanic.
20. The leader of the Soviet Union who presided over its dissolution was
- Nikita Khrushchev
 - Mikhail Gorbachev
 - Helinski Accord
 - Michael Dukakis

THE "AGE OF LIMITS"

Following the uninspired and unsuccessful administrations of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, this chapter turns to the rise of the New Right and the Reagan Revolution. Brinkley's discussion and analysis of why the New Right emerges at this time is particularly helpful. Analyzing the participants in the Reagan revolution is much easier than evaluating the effectiveness of Reagan's presidency, which is the focus of several activities suggested below. Students should learn the terms and concepts as the A.P. exam contains multiple-choice questions on this time.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Analyze the author's use of title "The Age of Limits" for this chapter heading.
2. Why was Jimmy Carter one of the "least popular presidents of the century?"
3. What are the various factors, economic, social, political that led to the so-called "Reagan Revolution?"
4. Evaluate the leadership of Ronald Reagan. To what degree did he fulfill the hopes of his new constituency?

TERMS, CONCEPTS, NAMES

Helsinki Conference	Edward Kennedy	Graamm-Rudman Bill
Panama Canal Turnover	John Anderson	"Evil Empire"
Camp David Accords	"The Reagan Coalition"	Strategic Defense Initiative
Ayatollah Khomeini	"Neo-conservatives"	The Reagan Doctrine
"Sunbelt"	Nancy Reagan	"Nuclear Freeze Movement"
Sagebrush Rebellion	"Teflon president"	Granada
Evangelicalism	"Supply-side economics" or	"Sandinistas" or "contras"
Billy Graham	"Reaganomics"	Muammar al-Quaddafi
Moral Majority	"Deregulation"	Walter Mondale
Jerry Falwell	James Watt	Jesse Jackson
New Right	"Energy glut"	Geraldine Ferraro
Proposition 13	"Entitlement"	

