



Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome



Unit Notes





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1968: Game Changer

The year 1968 is considered by historians as being as profound of a year in American history as 1776. Major political events that unfolded in 1968 eroded faith in the Federal Government (and the country as a whole) and forced the U.S. to head in a new direction.

On January 30, 1968, the North Vietnamese launched the Tet Offensive, which consisted of surprise attacks against military command centers throughout South Vietnam. While the U.S. eventually turned back the attacks by the end of February, the Tet Offensive showed the American public that the U.S. was, despite what the U.S. Government was telling it, actually losing the Vietnam War (1964-1975). The My Lai Massacre on March 16, 1968 (in which 300-500 Vietnamese civilians were killed) only made matters worse.

On March 31, 1968, and with approval ratings slumping to 34%, President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969) decided to not run for reelection. The news sent shock waves through a stunned American public. At the same time, his withdrawal from the upcoming Election of 1968 solidified that the war had deeply split the country along ideological, racial, and class lines.

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. The death of the most prominent Civil Rights leader sparked a nationwide outbreak of race riots in more than 125 cities. Over 300,000 people attended MLK's funeral.

John F. Kennedy's brother, Robert "Bobby" Kennedy (RFK), who served as Attorney General for JFK, campaigned for the Democratic Party nomination. (In fact, it was his great voter appeal that caused Johnson to drop out of the race.) But tragedy soon struck RFK as it had his brother. After leaving a celebration in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles following his victory in California's Democratic Primary on June 5, 1968, RFK was shot by a Jerusalem-born Jordanian named Sirhan Sirhan while walking through the kitchen to greet the hotel's busboys and dishwashers. RFK was shot once in the head and twice in the back, and a fourth bullet passed through his jacket. RFK died the following day. Sirhan grew up hating Israel and killed RFK to prevent RFK from sending U.S. troops to Israel "to do harm to the Palestinians".





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1968: Game Changer

Sirhan is currently serving life in jail in San Diego, California and has been denied parole over 15 times. Multiple conspiracy theories exist today concerning the assassination. RFK's son, Robert Kennedy, Jr., met with Sirhan in 2018 and believes Sirhan did not kill his father and that a second gunman was involved.

As a result, the Election of 1968 was conducted against a backdrop that included an unpopular war, the murders of a Civil Rights leader and a Presidential candidate, large-scale race riots, and clashes between anti-war protesters and police at the Democratic National Convention. In the end, Richard M. Nixon ran for the Republicans, Hubert H. Humphrey (Johnson's Vice President) ran for the Democrats, and George C. Wallace (the racist Governor of Alabama) ran as an Independent.

** 1968 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (60.7% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Nixon: 31,783,783 (43.4%)	Nixon: 301 (55.95%)
Humphrey: 31,271,839 (42.7%)	Humphrey: 191 (35.50%)
Wallace: 09,901,118 (13.5%)	Wallace: 046 (08.55%)**

** A "Faithless Elector" from North Carolina cast his Electoral Vote for Wallace instead of Nixon. He stated he would have voted for Nixon if his vote would have altered the outcome.

The Nixon Years

Richard Milhous Nixon served as the 37th President from 1969-1974.

Nixon, a Republican, had plenty of political experience before winning the White House. He served as a Representatives from California (1947-1950), a Senator from California (1950-1953), and Dwight D. Eisenhower's Vice President (1953-1961). In 1960, however, he narrowly lost the Election of 1960 to John F. Kennedy. He then was defeated in a race for Governor of California to Pat Brown in 1962. Frustrated following his gubernatorial loss, Nixon famously said to the press "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore. Because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference." Clearly, it wasn't.





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The Nixon Years

Nixon's inauguration speech was widely praised, and he remarked, "The greatest honor history can bestow is the title of peacemaker." He spoke about turning partisan politics into a new age of unity: "We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another, until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard as well as our voices." Nixon's Presidency was shaped by 5 major events: ending the Vietnam War, visiting China and the Soviet Union, the 1973 Oil Crisis, and the Watergate scandal.

1. Vietnam

When Nixon took office, he inherited the Vietnam War (1964-1975), a devastating conflict that had overwhelmed his predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969). Roughly 300 American soldiers were dying each week in Vietnam, the war was broadly unpopular, and there were ongoing protests, many of which turned violent. (In 1965, 24% were against the war. The percentage climbed to 35% in 1955, 46% in 1967, 53% in 1968, and 58% by 1969.) Nixon believed that the Vietnam War could not be won, and he was determined to bring home U.S. troops. (He had also campaigned on ending the war.) However, he wanted an arrangement that would permit American forces to withdraw but also leave South Vietnam secure against attack.

To accomplish this, Nixon approved a secret bombing campaign (called "Operation Menu") of North Vietnamese positions in the nearby country of Cambodia in March 1969. In July, he visited South Vietnam to meet with U.S. military commanders and the President of South Vietnam Nguyen Van Thieu. Nixon began replacing American troops with South Vietnamese troops, a policy known as "Vietnamization". While this happened, Nixon authorized incursions into the country of Laos to attack the "Ho Chi Minh Trail", which passed through Laos and Cambodia and was used to supply North Vietnamese forces. When Nixon announced a ground invasion of Cambodia on April 30, 1970, protests erupted against what was perceived as an expansion of the conflict. Nixon's campaign promise to curb the war contrasted with the escalated bombing and led to claims that Nixon had a "credibility gap" on the issue. (The term is used by journalists to refer to lies told to the public by politicians.) Between 50,000 and 150,000 people were killed during the Cambodia bombings between 1970-1973.





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The Nixon Years

1. Vietnam (continued...)

Things took a massive turn for the worse on May 4, 1970 when Ohio National Guard troops killed 4 students and wounded 9 more when they shot into an anti-war protest at Kent State University. Two of the 4 killed had been at the protest, while the other 2 were walking to class. On May 15, 1970, police shot into a group of students at Jackson State College in Mississippi, killing 2 and injuring 12. The Kent State and Jackson State shootings led to additional protests and the only student strike in U.S. history. Some 4 million students protested, closing over 900 colleges.

In 1969, a U.S. military analyst named Daniel Ellsberg photocopied a top-secret 7,000-page Pentagon study of the Vietnam War. Later known as the "Pentagon Papers", he leaked them to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* in 1971. The papers revealed that the actual aim of the war was not to protect non-communist South Vietnam... it was to contain China. The U.S. feared that China had aspirations similar to Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan and would try to turn Asia against America. To encircle the Chinese, the U.S. hoped to establish 3 fronts: Japan-Korea, India-Pakistan, and Southeast Asia (Vietnam). It was surmised that the containment of China would cost the U.S. a significant amount of time, money, and lives. Even though the government believed the Vietnam War was unwinnable, it proceeded anyway. Additionally, the papers proved that President Johnson had "systematically lied, not only to the public, but also to Congress." The papers also revealed Nixon's secret bombings of Cambodia and Laos (neither of which had been reported in the mainstream media).

Ellsberg was charged with conspiracy, espionage, and theft of government property and faced up to 115 years in prison. However, in 1973, charges were dropped when prosecutors investigating the Watergate scandal discovered that staff members in the Nixon Administration had ordered the so-called "White House Plumbers" to engage in unlawful efforts to discredit Ellsberg. These "Plumbers" were a covert White House Special Investigations Unit established a week after the Pentagon Papers were published to stop the leaking of additional classified information.





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The Nixon Years

1. Vietnam (continued...)

As U.S. troop withdrawals continued, the draft was ended in 1973 (the Armed Forces became all-volunteer at that time), and on January 27, 1973, the Paris Peace Accords were signed. The agreement implemented a cease fire and called for the remaining U.S. soldiers to leave and for the end all military operations in Cambodia and Laos. However, the 160,000 remaining North Vietnamese soldiers located in South Vietnam were permitted to stay. Once American combat support ended, there was a brief truce, but fighting broke out again. South Vietnam was defeated on April 30, 1975. The 2 Vietnams were now united under communism. The U.S. suffered 58,220 deaths (40,934 KIA), and 303,644 wounded. South Vietnam suffered 400,000 civilian deaths, 300,000 soldiers deaths, and 1.17 million wounded. The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong saw 182,000 civilians killed, between 660,000-950,000 military deaths, and 600,000 wounded.

2. China

One of Nixon's goals as President was to repair the country's relationship with China. The U.S. had a long history with China. In 1784, the U.S. sent a diplomat to China, but he was not received by the Chinese Government. Not until the Treaty of Wanghia in 1844 did the U.S. and China form diplomatic relations. A desire to expand business overseas saw the U.S. take a bigger interest in China toward the end of the 19th Century. In 1899, U.S. Secretary of State John Milton Hay proposed a series of agreements to help China "open up" to Western trade in what became the "Open Door Policy". Soon, however, and out of concern that China was becoming "too Western", a group called *Yihetuan* ("Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fist") began attacking foreigners in China. Known by Westerners as "Boxers" (because of a loose translation of their name), this group was denounced by the Chinese Government (but still secretly supported). The ensuing crisis became known as the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901). After the Boxers began attacking missionaries (killing 18,730 Christians), a multi-national force of 20,000 soldiers from Britain, France, Japan, Russia, Germany, and the U.S. was sent in. Europe wanted to carve up China in a fashion similar to what it had done to Africa, but the U.S. got them to take reparations instead.





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2. China (continued...)

In 1931, Imperial Japan invaded and seized resource-rich Manchuria in Northeast China. Soon Japan and China were at war, and in 1937, the Japanese Army murdered 300,000 Chinese civilians in the capital (at the time) of Nanking. For 6 weeks they engaged in mass rape, murder, torture, theft, and arson in what became known as the "Rape of Nanking". When World War II (1939-1945) broke out, the U.S. supported the Chinese in their efforts against Japan. After the war ended, hostilities resumed between the Chinese Government and communist forces (led by Mao Zedong) in the Chinese Civil War, which had been waged intermittently since 1927. The U.S. sent the nationalists (who were fighting the communists) over \$3 billion in aid in order to save the Republic of China (ROC). Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party, however, were victorious by 1949 and established the People's Republic of China (PROC). The defeated nationalists retreated to the island of Taiwan. The U.S. refused to recognize Zedong's new communist government and instead allied with, and recognized, the ROC in Taiwan as the sole government of China. During the Korean War (1950-1953), the PROC supplied North Korea with weapons before entering the war itself. During the Vietnam War, the PROC provided resources and training to North Vietnam and supplied them with over 90,000 guns "free of charge".

After 25 years with no communication and no diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China, Nixon wanted to change that. In 1972, he became the first President to travel to the communist county, visiting from February 21-28th. (This trip is often ranked by historians as the most important visit by a President.) Nixon met with Mao Zedong, while First Lady Pat Nixon toured schools, factories, and hospitals in multiple cities, including Beijing (now the capital). Repercussions of his visit were immense. It caused an immediate shift in the balance of the Cold War (1945-1991) by driving a wedge between the Soviet Union and China. The trip also re-opened China to the world economically. The relationship between the U.S. and China is now the world's most important bilateral relationship, and every successive President (except for Carter) has visited China. On January 1, 1979, the U.S. changed its diplomatic recognition of China from Taipei (the capital of Taiwan) to Beijing.





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3. Soviet Union

After his successful trip to China, Nixon next traveled to the Soviet Union on May 22, 1972, becoming the first U.S. President to visit the communist country. He engaged in intense negotiations with the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. Out of this summit came agreements for increased trade and 2 landmark arms control treaties: SALT I and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitations Talks) let the U.S. and the Soviet Union keep what nuclear weapons they had but outlawed the building or buying of new weapons. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty limited the number of defensive systems that both countries could have to 2 sites each. It was hypothesized that the more missile defense systems a country had the more likely it might provoke a first-strike against it. This would also help reduce the number of nuclear missiles in the world.

Nixon and Brezhnev proclaimed a new era of "peaceful coexistence". The two meet again in 1974. On that trip, Nixon arrived in Moscow to a welcome ceremony and cheering crowds. While there were no significant breakthroughs during this round of negotiations, it demonstrated that Nixon's policy of détente (a French word meaning "release from tension") could work with the Soviets.

The trips to China and Russia let Nixon keep public attention on his foreign policy achievements rather than his domestic problems, and he easily won re-election against the Democrat George McGovern.

** 1972 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (55.1% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Nixon: 47,168,710 (60.7%)	Nixon: 520 (96.65%)
McGovern: 29,173,222 (37.5%)	McGovern: 017 (03.16%)
Hospers: 00,003,674 (<0.1%)	Hospers: 001 (00.19%)**

** John Hospers and Tonie Nathan ran for the newly formed Libertarian Party. They appeared on the ballot in only two states (Washington and Colorado) and received 3,674 Popular Votes. A "Faithless Elector" from Virginia cast his Electoral Vote for them instead of Nixon. This made Nathan the first woman and first Jewish candidate to receive an Electoral Vote.





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4. Oil Crisis

In 1925, oil had accounted for 20% of American energy use. By the time World War II started, 33% of America's energy needs were met by oil. Oil replaced coal as a preferred fuel source. It was used to heat homes and generate electricity, and it was the only fuel that could be used for air travel. From 1920-1945, American oil-fields accounted for 67% of global oil production. While the U.S. had been able to meet its own energy needs, domestic demand drove the country to begin importing 350 million barrels of foreign oil a year by the late 1950s. Soon, U.S. production declined to just 16.5% of global output. By 1959, and in response to pressure from American oil producers, President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) placed import restrictions on oil as a way to prevent dependence on foreign oil. In 1971, Nixon imposed a price ceiling on oil as demand was increasing and production was declining. This resulted in a greater dependence on foreign oil imports.

However, in 1973, an Oil Embargo was enacted by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as a way to punish Western nations friendly to Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War fought by a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria against Israel. (OPEC was founded in Iraq in 1960 by five countries: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. They control two-thirds of the world's oil.) Their embargo caused the 1973 Oil Crisis, which saw brown outs, fuel shortages, long lines at gas stations, and higher prices. The cost of fuel rose 43% from \$0.38/gallon to \$0.55/gallon (which would be jumping from \$2.21 to \$3.21 in today's money). Drivers of vehicles with odd-numbered license plates were allowed to purchase gasoline on odd-numbered days (even-numbers on even-days). Nixon forced gas stations to close on Sundays and limited people to 10 gallons at a time. A nationwide speed limit of 55mph went into effect (repealed in 1995). In Detroit, production of giant, gas guzzling cars was halted. Japanese car sales increased because they were more fuel efficient. Daylight Savings Time was issued year round to reduce electrical use. School districts turned off lights in hallways or reduced the school week. Americans were asked to not put up Christmas lights. The crisis ended in 1974, but another Oil Crisis occurred in 1979 under President Carter.





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5. Watergate

On June 17, 1972, 5 men were caught in the offices of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) at the Watergate apartment and office complex in Washington, D.C. They were gathering information illegally about Larry O'Brien, the chairman of the DNC (who was in Florida at the time). Specifically, they were trying to set up a way to monitor O'Brien's telephone conversations and photograph documents about Democratic donors and financial records.

Initially, the break-in garnered little media attention and was back-page news. However, an investigation by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, reporters for *Washington Post*, uncovered a White House-sponsored plan of espionage and attempts to cover up how the burglary was planned and financed.

The reporters relied heavily on anonymous sources, including a key source known as "Deep Throat". Not until 2005 was "Deep Throat" revealed to be Mark Felt, Associate Director of the FBI at the time of the Watergate investigation. Felt linked the men from the break-in to the Nixon Administration. In February 1973, the U.S. Senate established the Senate Watergate Committee to investigate the growing Watergate scandal.

Nixon downplayed the scandal as mere politics, calling news articles biased and misleading. On July 13, 1973, White House aide Alexander Butterfield unlocked the investigation when he testified before the Watergate Committee (on nationwide TV) that Nixon had ordered a sound-activated taping system installed in the Oval Office and other rooms in the White House and Camp David in February 1971. As a result, *what* Nixon said and *when* he said it could be verified.

Nine tapes were subpoenaed by the Watergate Special Counsel Archibald Cox on July 23, 1973. Nixon initially refused to release the tapes, claiming they were vital to National Security. However, on October 19th, he offered a compromise in which the White House would prepare transcripts of the tapes and Senator John C. Stennis, a Democrat, would be asked to listen to the tapes and make a comparison between the transcripts and the tapes.





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5. Watergate (continued...)

The White House wanted to empower Stennis to paraphrase anything that might be embarrassing to Nixon (like coarse language and racial slurs). The White House expected assurance from Cox that no other tapes would be subpoenaed by his office. When Cox turned down the compromise, Nixon ordered Elliot Richardson, the Attorney General and head of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to fire Cox. Richardson refused and resigned. Nixon then asked William Ruckelshaus, the Deputy Attorney General (who had become the new Attorney General) to fire Cox. He refused and resigned. Nixon then demanded that Robert Bork, the Solicitor General (who had become the new Attorney General) fire Cox. Bork, who had been rushed to the White House in a limousine and sworn in as acting Attorney General, considered refusing and resigning but ultimately fired Cox. All of this happened on Saturday, October 20th and became known as the "Saturday Night Massacre". (Leon Jaworski was appointed the new Special Counsel by Nixon on November 1st.)

Congress was furious by what it saw as a gross abuse of Presidential power, as were many Americans. The actions of Nixon and his aides that night produced precisely the opposite of what he had anticipated. Instead of simply removing Cox, Nixon raised a firestorm of protest that permanently scarred his credibility with the public and, most damagingly, with members of the Republican Party. Public reaction was swift and overwhelming. About 450,000 telegrams reached the White House and Congress calling for impeachment. Polls showed that 44% of the public was now in favor of such action.

Outside the White House, marchers held signs saying "Honk For Impeachment". Car horns were heard in downtown D.C. day and night for the next 2 weeks. George H. W. Bush, then Chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), was so concerned over the electoral consequences that he visited the White House, hoping to persuade Nixon to rehire Elliot Richardson (for damage control) as Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Nixon never did.

With the White House paralyzed, Nixon agreed to comply with the subpoena by handing over the tapes on October 23rd.





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5. Watergate (continued...)

On October 30th, just 10 days after the “massacre”, the impeachment process against Nixon began in the House of Representatives. The House Judiciary Committee, the committee responsible for impeachments of Federal officials, set up an inquiry staff and began investigations (although not formally until February 6, 1974).

On November 17, 1973, Nixon gave a televised press conference and Q&A session with 400 Associated Press editors gathered at Disney World in Florida. While he was repeatedly grilled about efforts to cover up the fact that members of his re-election committee had funded the break-in, it was in response to a question about him profiting from his public service that resulted in Nixon famously saying, “I have earned every cent. And in all my years of public life, I have never obstructed justice. People have got to know whether or not their President is a crook. Well, I’m not a cook. I’ve earned everything I’ve got.” At one point he gave a morbid response about why he chose not to fly to Orlando on Air Force One without a backup plane, the usual security protocol for Presidential flights. Nixon said, “If this one goes down, they don’t have to impeach me.”

On November 21st, the Senate Watergate Committee announced the discovery of an 18 and a half minute “gap” on a recording of a conversation from June 20, 1972 in which Nixon and his Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman discuss the break-in. Rose Mary Woods, Nixon’s secretary, testified that while she was making a transcript of that tape, she recorded over 5 minutes of the conversation by accident when she answered a phone call. She claimed that she was not responsible for the remaining 13 minutes that had gone missing. Her story was widely mocked. Nixon insisted he had no prior knowledge of the burglary and did not learn of the cover-up until early 1973.

The legal battle over the tapes continued through early 1974, and on April 16th, Special Counsel Leon Jaworski issued subpoenas for 64 more tapes. When Nixon responded by giving 1,200 pages of tape transcripts, the matter wound up before the U.S. Supreme Court. On July 24th, the Supreme Court voted 8-0 in *United States v. Nixon* that Nixon must turn over the tapes and not just transcripts.





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5. Watergate (continued...)

Six days later, on July 30th, the House Judiciary Committee adopted 3 articles of impeachment against Nixon: obstruction of justice in attempting to impede the Watergate investigation, abuse of power, and contempt of Congress by defying Judiciary Committee subpoenas. The articles were sent to the full House of Representatives for a vote scheduled for August 20th.

On August 5th, the infamous "Smoking Gun" tape was revealed to the public. It came from the tapes the White House had turned over following the Supreme Court ruling. The tape was from June 23, 1972, just 6 days after the break-in, and showed that Nixon had been told of the White House connection to the burglaries... and that he had approved plans to have his administration approach the Director of the CIA to ask the Director of the FBI to halt its investigation into Watergate. Jaworski believed that Nixon, in so agreeing, had entered into a criminal conspiracy to obstruct justice. Nixon accepted blame for misleading the country about when he had been told of White House involvement, stating that he had a lapse of memory.

At that point, 53% of Americans supported his impeachment and removal. His approval rating (which had peaked at 68% the previous January) slumped to 24%. Nixon's remaining political support dried up. The 10 Republican members of the Judiciary Committee who had voted *against* impeachment announced that they would now vote *for* impeachment. Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott, a Republican, told Nixon that he had only 15 votes in his favor in the Senate (far fewer than the 34 Nixon would need to avoid removal from office).

Impeachment means to be put on trial for removal. The House of Representatives approves the articles of impeachment, and the Senate votes on guilt. You need 67 Senators (or 2/3) to vote "guilty" on any of the articles in order to remove a President. Only 3 Presidents have been impeached, but none have been found guilty/removed. Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868 with 11 articles of impeachment (but acquitted in the same year). Bill Clinton was impeached in 1998 with 2 articles (but acquitted in 1999). Donald Trump was impeached in 2019 with 2 articles (but acquitted in 2020).





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5. Watergate (continued...)

Rather than face a vote in the full House on August 20th that would have resulted in his impeachment and then removal by the Senate, Nixon resigned from office on August 9, 1974, becoming the first U.S. President to do so. The night before, he addressed the nation. Nixon said he hoped that by resigning, "I will have hastened the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America" and asked the nation to support the new President, Gerald Ford (who was his Vice President). Nixon went on to review the accomplishments of his Presidency, especially in foreign policy. The speech contained no admissions of wrongdoing and didn't mention the articles of impeachment pending against him.

Following his resignation, the Nixons flew to their home in San Clemente, California. According to his biographer, "Nixon was a soul in torment."

The Ford Years

Gerald Rudolph Ford served as the 38th President from 1974-1977.

Nicknamed "Mr. Nice Guy" or "Jerry", Ford is the only person to serve as both Vice President and President without being elected to either office. His 895-day long Presidency is the shortest in U.S. history for any President who did not die in office.

Nixon's first Vice President, Spiro Agnew (served 1969-1973), had (ironically) resigned on October 10, 1973 for reasons unrelated to Watergate. He had been convicted on charges of bribery, tax evasion, and money laundering during his tenure as Governor of Maryland from 1967-1969. Believing his first choice, John Connally (the former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury appointed by Nixon and the former Governor of Texas who had been in the limo when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated), would not be confirmed by Congress, Nixon chose Ford. Ford, a Republican, had served in the House for 25 years as a Representative from Michigan and was the House Minority Leader. When Nixon resigned, Ford became President.





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The public enjoyed Ford and his family because they were a "normal, middle-class" family. Ford even played football for the University of Michigan and won national titles in 1932 and 1933.

Nixon's resignation, however, had not put an end to the desire by many to see him punished. In fact, 58% said Nixon should be tried for criminal charges and 53% felt that Ford should not pardon Nixon if he was found guilty.

Nixon never had to face a trial as a private citizen because, on September 8, 1974, a month after he had resigned, Ford issued Proclamation 4311. By it, Ford granted Nixon a full and unconditional pardon for any "crimes he committed or may have committed". In a televised speech, Ford explained that he felt the pardon was in the best interest of the country and that the Nixon Family's situation was "a tragedy in which we all have played a part. It could go on and on and on, or someone must write the end to it. I have concluded that only I can do that, and if I can, must."

Ford's approval rating literally dropped overnight, going from 71% to 50% (and would hit a low point of just 36% by March 1975). It also effectively ended Ford's chances for winning the Election of 1976. Both the decision and its timing came under severe criticism. The pardon was announced by Ford on a Sunday morning, taking advantage of an "off-beat" time for the Washington media in an attempt to minimize the political fallout. It was a vain attempt, and the decision set off the media and those who wanted to see Nixon jailed.

Oddly enough, the decision to pardon evoked some sympathy *for* Nixon. Many saw Nixon as a victim of political infighting in D.C. and considered much of Nixon's behavior no worse than that of his predecessors in the Oval Office. The result was a further polarization of a nation already traumatized by Watergate. Years later, Nixon made somewhat of a comeback, writing books and granting TV interviews about Watergate and international politics. Nixon suffered a stroke and died on April 22, 1994 at the age of 81. Despite the controversial end to his Presidency, Former Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and the current President (at the time) Bill Clinton attended his funeral.





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Following the pardon, the media turned on Ford and stayed on the attack for the rest of his time in office. Along with shows like *Saturday Night Live*, they went after Ford's clumsiness, mocking the time he fell down skiing or when his knee gave out and he tumbled down the stairs of the Presidential airplane *Air Force One*. Media scorn aside, Ford set out to "right the ship" and lead the country.

1. Midterm Elections

The 1974 Congressional Midterm Elections took place in the wake of the Watergate scandal and less than 3 months after Ford took office. The Democratic Party turned voter dissatisfaction into large gains in the House of Representatives, taking 49 seats from Republicans to increase their majority to 291 of the 435 seats. This was 1 more than the number needed (290) for a two-thirds majority... the number necessary to override Presidential vetoes or to propose Constitutional Amendments. As a result, Congress overrode the highest percentage of vetoes since President Andrew Johnson (1965-1869). In the Senate, the Democratic majority increased by 3 more seats to 61 of the 100 members. Ford would be on his own.

2. Economy

Ford inherited the weakest economy since the Great Depression. In October 1974, in response to rising inflation, Ford addressed the public and asked them to "Whip Inflation Now" (WIN). At the time, inflation was believed to be the primary threat to the economy, more so than growing unemployment (which stood at 9% and was the highest since the Depression). Inflation had grown from 4.7% in 1969 to 12.3% by 1974, meaning the purchasing power of money decreased by 12.3%. To rein in inflation, it was necessary to control the public's spending. Ford favored voluntary actions by citizens instead of price restrictions imposed by the Federal Government. "WIN" encouraged personal savings and disciplined spending habits. People who supported the measures were asked to wear "WIN" buttons to encourage others to do the same. The buttons became objects of ridicule. Skeptics wore them upside down saying that "NIM" stood for "No Immediate Miracles" or "Need Immediate Money". The campaign remains one of the biggest Federal public relations blunders ever.





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3. Women's Rights

First written in 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment (or "ERA") was a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution designed to guarantee equal rights for all American citizens regardless of gender. It sought to end the legal distinctions between men and women in matters of divorce, property, and employment. More than 4 decades later, and with the rise of the Women's Rights Movement, the ERA was reintroduced and approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on October 12, 1971 and by the U.S. Senate on March 22, 1972. The ERA was then submitted to the states for ratification. Congress set a 7-year ratification deadline of March 22, 1979 for the states.

To be ratified at the state level, the ERA would have to be approved by both the state House and state Senate and then be signed by the state Governor. If 38 states ratified the ERA, it would become a valid amendment. Hawaii was the first state to ratify it, doing so on the same day it was approved by Congress! During 1972, a total of 22 states ratified the ERA, and 8 more joined in 1973.

Ford was an outspoken supporter of the ERA and issued Proclamation 4883 in 1975 making August 26th "Women's Equality Day". He said, "In this Land of the Free, it is right, and by nature it ought to be, that all men and women are equal before the law." Despite his efforts, only 5 more states approved it from 1974-1977, giving the ERA 35 of the necessary 38 state ratifications. However, an author and anti-feminist named Phyllis Schlafly mobilized conservative women in opposition. They argued the ERA would disadvantage housewives, cause women to be drafted, and eliminate the tendency for mothers to obtain child custody in divorce cases. Many labor feminists also opposed the ERA on the basis that it would eliminate protections for women in labor law. In 1979, 5 states (Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee, and South Dakota) voted to revoke their ERA ratifications. In 1978, Congress and President Carter extended the ratification deadline to June 30, 1982, but no additional states approved the ERA during this time. In 2017 and 2018, Nevada and Illinois ratified it to become states #37 and #38. On January 15, 2020, Virginia became the 38th. However, legal uncertainty remains due to the expired deadline and the 5 states' revocations.





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3. Women's Rights (continued...)

Ford opposed the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade*. This ruling granted women access to abortions legally by saying the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment provides a "right to privacy" and protects a pregnant woman's right to choose. He believed a Constitutional Amendment was needed to override the decision and let each state decide whether abortion should be legal. Later in his life, Ford had a change of heart and identified as "pro-choice".

4. Vietnam

The final phases of the Vietnam War fell into Ford's lap. Even though all U.S. forces were already out of Vietnam, conservatives urged Ford to continue to give military aid to South Vietnam to help them against the final North Vietnamese attack. Ford agreed, but the Democratic-controlled Congress rejected such bills. Ford then ordered all Americans to evacuate Saigon (the capitol of South Vietnam). On April 30, 1975, over 7,000 people were extracted by helicopter and the U.S. Embassy was abandoned. That same day, South Vietnam fell.

Previously, on September 16, 1974, Ford, a World War II veteran, issued a conditional amnesty (an official pardon/forgiveness) to U.S. soldiers who deserted during the Vietnam War and for the American civilians who dodged the draft. (Failing to register or dodging the draft is a criminal offense that can result in the loss of student aid, a government job, U.S. citizenship, up to 5 years in jail, and a \$250,000 fine.) The conditions of amnesty required that these individuals reaffirm their allegiance to the U.S. and serve 2 years working in a public service job. Ford said, "Desertion in time of war is a major, serious offense. Draft evasion is also a serious offense. Yet, reconciliation calls for an act of mercy to bind the nation's wounds and to heal the scars of divisiveness." Draft dodgers, however, who had fled the country were deemed ineligible by Ford. On January 21, 1977, President Carter granted a full-pardon to all dodgers without the need for public service. In all, 100,000 Americans went abroad to avoid being drafted. Only 20,000 ever returned home. While people today view amnesty as the right move, 50% of the public disapproved at the time.





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5. Assassination Attempts

Ford was the target of 2 assassination attempts during his Presidency, both in September 1975, both in California, and both by women.

On September 5, 1975, 26-year-old Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, a follower of cult leader Charles Manson, wanted to make a statement to people who refused to halt environmental pollution by killing Ford. Ford had just finished a speech that morning and was shaking hands with people in a park around the State Capitol Building in Sacramento. Fromme, wearing all red ("for the animals"), walked right up to the President, pointed a handgun at him and pulled the trigger at point-blank range. The gun did not fire, and she was tackled to the ground by a Secret Service Agent. Fromme was sentenced to life in prison. She escaped in 1987 but was found 2 days later. Despite this, she was released on August 14, 2009 at age 60. Fromme currently lives in New York.

Ford returned to California 17 days later, this time traveling to San Francisco to speak at the World Affairs Councils of America. Following his speech on September 22nd, Ford exited the St. Francis Hotel to walk to his limousine. Before getting in, he stopped and waved to the crowd that had gathered across the street. Sara Jane Moore, who was in the crowd, fired 2 shots aimed at Ford with a revolver from a distance of 40 feet. The first shot missed Ford's head by 5 inches. Upon hearing the gunfire, a bystander grabbed Moore's shooting arm. This directed her second shot away from Ford, hitting a nearby taxi driver (who survived). Moore was an estranged civil rights activist looking to "reconnect" with her high powered friends. She was 45, had married and divorced 5 times and had 4 children. She believed that America needed a change and that this could only be done through a violent revolution. Shooting Ford, she reasoned, would provide the spark. Moore was sentenced to life imprisonment but released on December 31, 2007 at age 77. She currently lives in West Virginia.

In response to these two attempts, Ford began wearing a bulletproof trench coat in public beginning in October 1975.





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Ford, who reluctantly agreed to run for office in 1976, limped into the election with few true successes in office. His decision to pardon Nixon still didn't sit well with voters. Ford's biggest accomplishment was signing the Helsinki Accords in August 1975 to revive the spirit of détente between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Ford still had to win the Republican Party's nomination. The former Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, challenged Ford in a very contentious primary election. Primaries are used to narrow down the field of candidates, but neither Ford (1,121) nor Reagan (1,078) had won enough delegates (1,130 were needed) to become the nominee. At the start of the Republican National Convention in August 1976, the race was still undecided. This resulted in both having to convince delegates to switch to their side during the convention. Ford defeated Reagan by just 117 delegates. Ford chose Republican Senator Bob Dole from Kansas as his running mate in place of incumbent Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, who had announced the previous year that he was not interested in running.

Democratic nominee and former Governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter campaigned as an outsider and reformer, gaining support from voters dismayed by the Watergate scandal and the Nixon pardon. After the Democratic National Convention, Carter held a massive 33 point lead over Ford. However, as the campaign continued, the race tightened, and by Election Day, polls showed the race was too close to call. Record low voter turnout made the Election of 1976 the closest in decades. This was ironic since the nation was celebrating its Bicentennial (America's 200th Birthday). Only 53.6% of registered voters showed up (the lowest since the Election of 1932), but it was enough to give Carter the victory over Ford.

** 1976 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (53.6% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Carter: 40,831,881 (50.1%)	Carter: 297 (55.20%)
Ford: 39,148,634 (48.0%)	Ford: 240 (44.61%)
	Reagan: 001 (00.19%)**

** A "Faithless Elector" from Washington cast his Electoral Vote for Reagan instead of Ford.





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The Carter Years

James Earl Carter, Jr. served as the 39th President from 1977-1981.

Before becoming President, "Jimmy" Carter, a Democrat, was as a Georgia State Senator (1963-1967) and the Governor of Georgia (1971-1975). A former peanut farmer with a Georgia accent, his ease in front of TV cameras and his promise "not to lie to the American people" was comforting and resonated with a lot of voters.

But his campaign promises soon fell apart. Carter promised to reform the tax system... but didn't. He promised to reduce the number of Federal agencies... but instead increased them. He promised to manage the economy different than his Republican predecessors... but instead managed it exactly like Republicans. Polls showed that the public liked Carter as a *person* but lacked faith in his *leadership*. This was reflected in his steadily eroding approval ratings that peaked in March 1977 at 74% and sank to 28% by June 1979.

Carter did try to act peacefully with foreign affairs. For example, after anti-American riots in the Panama "Canal Zone", Carter negotiated to turn over the Panama Canal (built by the U.S. from 1903-1914) to Panama in 2000. Still, 5 major key foreign events/issues soon came to dominate the Carter Administration. These were:

1. Camp David Accords

Carter proved to be a great negotiator. In 1978, he brokered a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt at Camp David, the retreat/vacation site for U.S. Presidents located in Maryland. For 12 days, Carter negotiated with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. This led to the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty that has lasted since the treaty went into effect. Egypt has become an important strategic partner of Israel. As part of the agreement, the U.S. began sending economic and military aid to Egypt. From 1978-2000, the U.S. sent over \$3.8 billion worth of aid. The peace is often described as a "cold treaty" with many in Egypt skeptical about its effectiveness. The signing of the Camp David Accords, however, led to Sadat's assassination in 1981 by an Egyptian Islamic terrorist group. In Israel, there is still support of the Accords, and 85% of Israelis continue to view it favorably.





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2. China

President Ford visited the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1975 and reaffirmed American interest in normalizing relations with Beijing. Shortly after taking office, President Carter did as Ford and said the U.S. would continue Nixon's *détente* ("relaxation") policy. On December 15, 1978, the U.S. and the PRC announced they would establish diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979. On that date, the U.S. officially changed its diplomatic recognition of China from Taipei (the capital of Taiwan) to Beijing. Such a move resulted in many agreements, especially in the fields of scientific, technological, and cultural interchanges, as well as trade relations. On March 1st, the two countries established embassies in each other's capitals, and Vice President Walter Mondale visited China in August. Chinese demands for advanced technology and weaponry from the U.S. were not always met, in large part due to opposition from Congressmen who either distrusted giving technology to a communist country (on principle) or because there were concerns that this technology might end up in the hands of "unfriendly" third parties. As it turns out, such skepticism was not entirely unmerited. During the 1980s, China continued to sell weapons to Iran and other countries that were openly hostile to the U.S.

3. SALT II

Carter also continued Nixon's nuclear treaties with the Soviets. The first round of the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT I) let both the U.S. and the Soviet Union keep what nuclear weapons they had but outlawed the building or buying of new weapons.

SALT II was a series of talks between the U.S. and the Soviet Union from 1972-1979. By 1979, both the U.S. and Soviet Union were eager to get an agreement together. For the U.S., fear that the Soviets were leaping ahead in the arms race was a motivating factor. For the Soviets, the increasingly close relationships between the U.S. and China was a cause for growing concern. During a summit meeting in Vienna, Austria, Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev signed SALT II on June 18, 1979. SALT II instead set precise limits on the number and the type of nukes each nation could maintain.





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3. SALT II (continued...)

Carter had gone into negotiations wanting to ban nuclear weapons entirely, but he came out of it with a treaty that did little in the way of stopping the arms race. The treaty was met with unrelenting criticism in the U.S. and denounced as a "sellout" to the Soviets, one that would leave America defenseless against a whole range of new weapons not mentioned in the agreement. Debate over SALT II in Congress continued for months. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, it effectively killed the chance of SALT II being passed. SALT II remained signed but unratified.

4. Iran Hostage Crisis

In November 1977, Carter pledged that his Administration would continue positive relations between the U.S. and Iran. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, however, created the first major foreign crisis for Carter. Iran's Monarch (called "Shah") was Mohammad Pahlavi. He had been a U.S. ally since World War II even though his rule was very autocratic (meaning he had absolute power).

When an anti-Shah revolution began in January 1979, Carter chose for the U.S. to not intervene. The Shah was overthrown in favor of Ruhollah Khomeini, who established the Islamic Republic of Iran and made himself the nation's Supreme Leader (which he held until his death in 1989). Known as the "Ayatollah Khomeini" in the West, the Ayatollah urged his people to demonstrate against the U.S. and Israel. He denounced the U.S. as the "Great Satan" and the "Enemy of Islam".

On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students who supported the Ayatollah and opposed Western influences stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehrān (the capital) and took 66 Americans hostage. Carter responded by freezing \$8 billion in Iranian assets held by U.S. banks and imposing an embargo against Iran. Oil imports from Iran were ended 8 days later. The U.S. public was outraged by Iran's actions and wanted to see the hostages brought home. It created a surge of patriotism (and anti-Iranian sentiment) and left the American people more united than they had been on any issue in 2 decades.





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4. Iran Hostage Crisis (continued...)

The hostage-takers, declaring their solidarity with other "oppressed minorities" and "the special place of women in Islam", released 13 female and black hostages. One more hostage, a white man, was released in July 1980 after he became seriously ill. The remaining 52 hostages were kept captive and paraded around blindfolded on TV. When Khomeini endorsed the students' actions, the "Iran Hostage Crisis" ensued that lasted until January 20, 1981. Iran demanded that the U.S. apologize for acts committed in support of the Shah and help bring the Shah back to Iran (he fled to U.S.) to face trial and execution. Iran also demanded the return of billions of dollars that the Shah hid abroad.

Rejecting Iranian demands, Carter approved an ill-fated secret rescue mission called "Operation Eagle Claw". On the night of April 24, 1980, transport airplanes met up with helicopters. As they began, 2 helicopters broke down in a sandstorm. The mission was aborted, but as aircraft took off again, a helicopter clipped a plane and crashed, killing 8 and wounding 4. Its failure, and the humiliating public debacle that ensued, damaged the U.S. image worldwide. In Iran, Khomeini's prestige skyrocketed as he said divine intervention caused the failure. A second attempt, called "Operation Credible Sport", hoped cargo planes could land in a soccer stadium by the U.S. Embassy in Tehrān and airlift the hostages out. During a practice run on October 29, 1980, the aircraft sustained a heavy landing which tore off a wing and set it on fire. (Luckily, the crew survived.) Carter was viewed as very weak and incompetent. In fact, the Hostage Crisis was a major reason behind Carter losing his re-election bid to Ronald Reagan the following month.

Still, negotiations pressed on, resulting in the Algiers Accords that were signed on January 19, 1981. In exchange for the release of the hostages, the U.S. had to unfreeze Iranian assets and pledge to not intervene "directly or indirectly, politically or militarily" in Iran's internal affairs. On January 20, 1981, *minutes* after Reagan was sworn in as the new President, the 52 hostages were released after having spent 444 days in captivity. The hostage-takers delayed the release to punish Carter for his support of the Shah.





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5. Afghanistan

Mohammed Daoud Khan served as the Prime Minister of Afghanistan from 1953-1963. In 1973, with the aid of the Soviet Union, he overthrew the monarchy and declared himself as the first President of Afghanistan. He held this position until 1978 when he was assassinated during the Saur Revolution led by the communist-driven People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) after he fell out of favor with the Soviet Union. Nur Muhammad Taraki became the new President. This 1978 coup and assassination plunged Afghanistan into a civil war.

The new communist government of Afghanistan quickly initiated a series of socialist and land reforms, many of which were extremely unpopular among the rural population. However, Soviet Afghanistan suppressed opposition by executing thousands.

By April 1979, 25 of Afghanistan's 28 provinces (which are like states) were in open rebellion. In September, President Taraki was murdered by his second-in-command Hafizullah Amin, who declared himself the new leader of Afghanistan.

On December 24, 1979, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev sent in troops to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. These troops staged a coup, killed President Amin, and installed a new communist government under Soviet loyalist Babrak Karmal.

The U.S. viewed the Soviet response in Afghanistan as an "invasion". The Soviets called it an "intervention", justified by the Brezhnev Doctrine (which stated that any threat to communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe was a threat to communism itself and required immediate intervention by the Soviet Union).

The U.S. also worried the Soviets would seize Middle Eastern oil. Carter had to show he could be tough. He said that this was "the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War". The new Carter Doctrine, announced during his State of the Union Address in January 1980, said the U.S. would not allow any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region.





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6. Afghanistan (continued...)

Carter ended the Russian Wheat Deal, which actually hurt U.S. farmers more than Russia. He then boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics that were to be held in Moscow. This enraged the Soviets, who later led a "revenge boycott" of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Still, none of these responses caused the Soviets to remove their troops. The Soviets used their superior air power to devastate the anti-communist rebels and Afghan civilians, leveling entire villages. They soon installed millions of land mines to combat the guerilla warfare they faced in the countryside. In response to reports that the Soviets were committing mass genocide of Afghan civilians, the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution protesting the Soviet intervention. Soon the Afghan rebels began to receive massive amounts of support through monetary and military aid. They received training in neighboring Pakistan from the U.S. and Britain.

The Soviets had planned to secure towns and roads, stabilize the government under the new leader Karmal, and withdraw in 6 months or a year. However, the improved fighting strength of the guerillas turned this into a bloody 9-year-war instead. By the mid-1980s, the fighting increased, and the military and diplomatic cost of the war began taking its toll. In 1987, the Soviets, now under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, began withdrawing from Afghanistan. The final Soviet troops left on February 15, 1989.

Over 15,000 Soviet troops were killed and more than 53,000 wounded in Afghanistan. The Afghan rebels suffered over 90,000 casualties (including 57,000 deaths). The war saw 2 million Afghan civilians killed, 3 million wounded, and created 5 million refugees. Afghanistan has often been dubbed the "Soviet Vietnam". This failure was a contributing factor in the Soviet Union's collapse 2 years later.

Just like what happened to Ford when he lost media support, Carter soon suffered the same. Big issues seemed worse, small issues were blown out of proportion, and Carter was furthered harmed by oil, his brother... and a bunny.





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The 1979 Oil Crisis came in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. The new Iranian regime's oil exports were lower than before, which drove up prices. Long lines again appeared at U.S. gas stations as memories of the oil shortage in 1973 caused motorists to "panic buy". (It has been estimated that Americans wasted up to 6.3 million gallons of gas idling in line... to buy gas.) On July 15, 1979, Carter outlined his plans to reduce oil imports and improve energy efficiency in his "Crisis of Confidence" speech, sometimes known as the "Malaise (Discomfort) Speech" to reflect Carter's pessimistic view of the country's direction. He said, "All the legislation in the world can't fix what's wrong with America. In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does but by what one owns. But owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning." Carter encouraged Americans to do what they could to reduce their use of energy. Carter asked Americans to turn down their thermostats. Solar power panels were installed on the roof of the White House. Wood-burning stoves were even put in the White House living quarters. His speech argued that the oil crisis was the "moral equivalent of war". While many considered Carter's address the most theologically profound speech by a U.S. President since Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address in 1965, critics (then and now) argued that Carter's proposals actually made the situation worse.

Billy Carter, Jimmy's younger brother, was known for his outlandish behavior, such as urinating on an airport runway in full view of the press and visiting foreign dignitaries. After a failed attempt running for the Mayor of Plains, Georgia, he endorsed "Billy Beer" in 1977 because, as the beer's tagline said, he was "One of America's all-time great beer drinkers". On 3 occasions in late 1978 and early 1979, however, Billy traveled with a delegation from the state of Georgia to the country of Libya (in North Africa). Eventually, Billy registering as a foreign agent of the Libyan Government (after which Libya paid him \$2 million). This led to a Senate hearing on Billy's alleged influence on U.S.-Libyan relations (which the press called "Billygate"). As a result, Carter had to denounce his brother. (Billy died of pancreatic cancer in 1988.)





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And then came the bunny. On April 20, 1979, Carter was attacked by a "killer" rabbit on a fishing trip in Georgia. According to the Secret Service, the rabbit was "hissing menacingly, its teeth flashing and nostrils flared and making straight for the President". When the rabbit tried to enter the boat, Carter swung at it with an oar. Naturally, once the media caught wind of it, it was over for Carter. Newspaper headlines read: "President Attacked By Rabbit!" The Press even called the rabbit "Paws" (in reference to 1975's movie "Jaws"). Carter was additionally mocked by references to the killer rabbit scene in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975).

The book *The Other Side of the Story* (1986) recounted the infamous Carter/Killer Rabbit story:

"Upon closer inspection, the animal turned out to be a rabbit. Not one of your cutesy, Easter Bunny-type rabbits, but one of those big splay-footed things called swamp rabbits. The animal was clearly in distress, or perhaps berserk. The President confessed to having had limited experience with enraged rabbits. He was unable to reach a definite conclusion about its state of mind."

The bunny incident became synonymous with Carter: he was hapless and enfeebled. Carter's unpopularity and poor relations with Democratic leaders encouraged an intra-party challenge by Senator Ted Kennedy (JFK's younger brother). Carter eventually defeated Kennedy in the Democratic Primaries, but Kennedy remained in the race until Carter was officially nominated at the Democratic National Convention. Ronald Reagan defeated George H. W. Bush and John B. Anderson in the Republican Primaries. Reagan selected Bush as his running mate. Anderson entered the election as an Independent. In the Election of 1980, one that saw even lower voter turnout than in 1976, Reagan soundly defeated Carter.

** 1980 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (52.8% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Reagan: 43,903,230 (50.7%)	Reagan: 489 (90.89%)
Carter: 35,480,115 (41.0%)	Carter: 049 (09.11%)
Anderson: 05,719,850 (06.6%)	Anderson: 000 (00.00%)





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The Reagan Years

Ronald Wilson Reagan served as the 40th President from 1981-1989.

Born in Illinois, Reagan was a Hollywood actor for 25 years and starred in over 50 movies. He served as Governor of California from 1967-1974. He tried to run for President in 1968 (Nixon) and 1976 (Ford) but lost in the Republican primaries both times.

His crushing defeat of Carter signaled a huge change for the U.S. Reagan oversaw the most far-reaching changes in economic and social policy in 50 years. He eliminated many of the social programs of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) and Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969) and lifted restrictions on Big Business. Reagan saw his role as "The Great Communicator" and delegated much of day-to-day work to his staff. He defined his style as "to identify the problem, find the right individuals to do the job, and then let them go to it."

Reagan was liked by: businessmen opposed to government regulation, anti-communists who felt the U.S. should build up its military, conservative religious groups who were appalled by America's growing acceptance of sex and drugs, moderate middle-class and working-class Americans (many of whom used to support the Democratic Party), and people who thought the U.S. Government was too large.

Reagan appealed directly to the American people through the media of the day. His training as an actor gave him incredible abilities as a speaker that influenced public opinion greatly.

But not everyone liked Reagan. At 2:27pm on March 30, 1981, John Hinckley, Jr. fired 6 shots at Reagan as he left a hotel in D.C. after addressing an AFL-CIO conference. One bullet struck Reagan in the chest after ricocheting off the side of the Presidential limousine. The bullet just missing Reagan's heart, and the President was rushed into surgery. During the attack, a police officer, a Secret Service agent, and Press Secretary James Brady were injured. Brady was permanently disabled in the shooting and died as a result of his injuries 33 years later in 2014. Brady's death was subsequently ruled a homicide. Prior to his death, however, the Brady Bill was passed in 1993. It implemented the 5-day waiting period to buy guns.





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As it turns out, Hinckley tried to kill Reagan as a way to attract the “respect and love” of actress Jodie Foster. Hinckley’s idea came from the 1976 movie *Taxi Driver*. In that movie, a psychopath played by actor Robert De Niro stalks a candidate running for the Senate. Jodie Foster made her acting debut in *Taxi Driver* as a sexually trafficked 12-year-old child.

When Foster entered Yale University, Hinckley moved to Connecticut to stalk her, slipping poems and messages under her door and evening calling her several times. He once considered hijacking a plane or killing himself in front of her to get her attention. Eventually, he settled on killing any U.S. President, thinking that by achieving a place in history he would appeal to her as an equal.

Hinckley began following President Carter around the U.S. before being arrested in Tennessee on a firearms charge. He returned home and began collecting material on the assassination of JFK. With a plan in place, he turned his sites on the newly elected President, Ronald Reagan. Hinckley even wrote a love letter to Jodie Foster just before his attempt on Reagan.

At his trial in 1982, Hinckley was found “not guilty” by reasons of insanity (schizophrenia) and committed to St. Elizabeths, a psychiatric hospital in Washington, DC.

Soon after his trial, Hinckley wrote that the shooting was “*the greatest love offering in the history of the world*” and was disappointed that Foster did not reciprocate his love.

The verdict was met with public outrage and resulted in several states amending their laws governing the insanity defense and when it can be used in a criminal prosecution.

While at St. Elizabeths, hospital staff discovered photographs and letters in Hinckley’s room that showed a continued obsession with Foster. They even found evidence that Hinckley had exchanged letters with serial killer Ted Bundy and tried to get the address of incarcerated cult leader Charles Manson (whose follower Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme tried to kill President Ford in 1975).





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On September 10, 2016, Hinckley was released from St. Elizabeths after being deemed "no longer a threat to himself or others". The conditions of his release was that he have no contact with the Reagan family, the Brady family, Jodie Foster, or Foster's family or agent. He had to live with his 90-year-old mother and be restricted to a 50-mile zone around her home in Williamsburg, Virginia. He was prohibited from using alcohol and possessing any firearms, not allowed to speak to the press, had to work at least 3 days a week, have limited Internet access and use, submit his cell phone and license plate numbers to the Secret Service, and see a psychiatrist twice a month.

In 2018, Hinckley was permitted to move out of his mother's house. He currently lives in a modest home on a golf course in Williamsburg, runs a small antiques business, and posts and sells music on-line (anonymously).

Unlike with the 2 assassination attempts on Ford, public sympathy helped Reagan push his agenda through Congress. Reagan knew it was important to convey to the country that he was going to be OK. The very first thing he said to the First Lady Nancy Reagan when she arrived at the hospital was, "Honey, I forgot to duck," a reference to a one-liner used by boxer Jack Dempsey. In fact, Reagan even said to the surgeons as he entered the operating room, "Please tell me you're Republicans." After the surgery when he was surrounded by medical staff, he joked, "If I had this much attention in Hollywood, I'd have stayed there."

Later, when Reagan was giving a speech in West Berlin, a balloon in the crowd popped very loudly and sounded like a gun shot. Without missing a beat, and in mid-sentence, Reagan said, "Missed me" and continued.

In 1984, with his popularity rising and approval ratings trending back up, Reagan cruised to re-election over the Democratic candidate Walter Mondale in one of the biggest political drubbings in history. Mondale had served as Carter's Vice President and ran with Geraldine Ferraro as the first female Vice Presidential candidate of a *major* American political party.





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** 1984 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (53.3% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Reagan: 54,455,472 (58.8%)	Reagan: 525 (97.58%)
Mondale: 37,577,352 (40.6%)	Mondale: 013 (02.42%)

Reagan's Presidency was shaped by his economic plan at home and his anti-communist stance in foreign affairs.

1. Reaganomics

Reagan based his economic program on supply-side economics. Nicknamed "Reaganomics", it called for tax cuts and a reduction in governmental spending. This, in theory, would leave more money in the hands of the American people. The people then spend this extra money on goods or invest in businesses, which boosts the economy. This is often known as the "Trickle-Down Theory" because when you cut taxes on high incomes and businesses, it frees up money that "tickles down" to others. The criticism of such a theory states, "If you feed enough oats to the horse, some will pass through to feed the sparrows."

Supply-side economics is the opposite of Deficit Spending. With Deficit Spending (nicknamed "Pump-Priming"), the government borrows or prints more money to finance its spending. As the economy recovers, revenues increase, and the government has a surplus of money. The surplus is then used to pay back the money the government borrowed.

Still, "Reaganomics" produced economic growth and fueled a 5-year increase in the Stock Market. As a result, the 1980s were a prosperous time for many Americans, particularly those in the upper class who benefited the most from Reagan's tax cuts.

2. Anti-Communism

Reagan was determined to make the U.S. the world's #1 military again. Defense spending increased, jumping from \$134 billion in 1980 to \$290 billion in 1988. This drove the National Debt up from \$908 billion in 1980 to \$2.6 trillion in 1988.





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2. Anti-Communism (continued...)

Reagan changed the tone of the U.S. foreign policy. Détente, the peaceful policy of coexistence with the Soviet Union that had been stressed under Nixon, Ford, and Carter was de-emphasized under Reagan. In 1983, Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire" and talked about a "Second Cold War". The Reagan Doctrine, put forth in 1985, aggressively pledged U.S. aid to anti-communist guerillas and resistance movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The doctrine remained a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy until the end of the Cold War in 1991.

After the Nicaraguan Revolution deposed Nicaragua's dictator in 1979, the U.S. accused the new Sandinista Government of being allied with Cuba and the Soviet Union and for aiding communists in El Salvador and other Central American countries. Reagan suspended aid to Nicaragua, imposed an economic boycott, and began supplying money, weapons, and training for an opposition guerrilla force known as the "Contras" (short for the Spanish word for counterrevolutionaries). These Contra forces, based in neighboring countries, included former members of the previous dictator's family and other Nicaraguans dissatisfied with the new communist government. Nicaragua, facing Contra attacks, began receiving military aid from Cuba and the Soviet Union. The Contra War (1981-1990) ended when the communist government peacefully surrendered power in favor of a national election. When the National Opposition Union's pro-democratic candidate Violeta Barrios de Chamorro became the nation's President, the U.S. ended its embargo. The U.S. sent weapons and advisors to aid the government of El Salvador against communist guerillas. The Salvadoran Civil War (1979-1992) resulted in the communist guerillas being defeated. They dissolved but remain a political party in the country today.

In 1983, the U.S. and a coalition of 6 Caribbean countries invaded the island of Grenada ("Operation Urgent Fury") after communists overthrew the government there. The invasion resulted in 19 killed and 116 wounded for the U.S. but also the appointment of an interim government, followed by democratic elections in 1984. Grenada has remained a democratic nation since.





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2. Anti-Communism (continued...)

The U.S. continued to send military supplies to the Afghan guerrillas fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan. Such aid helped turn Afghanistan into the "Soviet Vietnam".

The U.S. also aided guerrillas fighting the communist government of Angola (on the west coast of Southern Africa). The Angolan Civil War (1975-2002) began after Angola gained its independence from Portugal in 1975. The war was a power struggle between 2 former anti-Portuguese guerilla movement: 1 was communist (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA) and the other was anti-communist (National Union for Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA). The war was used as a surrogate battleground for the Cold War by the Soviet Union, Cuba, South Africa, and the U.S. All foreign forces withdrew by 1989, which resulted in a communist MPLA victory in 1992 and the creation (then collapse) of the People's Republic of Angola. From then on there were fragile periods of peace, and by the time the MPLA achieved victory in 2002, 500,000 people had died and over 1 million had fled as refugees.

Under Reagan, U.S. direct relations with the Soviet Union (now under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev) tempered, partly because of the U.S. military buildup. Of particular importance was Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The SDI was a proposed missile defense system that would protect the U.S. from enemy nuclear missiles. Reagan was a strong critic of the idea of the Cold War "strategy" of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), a coin termed in 1962. MAD called for the full-scale use of nuclear weapons that would result in the complete annihilation of the attacker *and* the defender. Such a doctrine required that neither side construct shelters on a massive scale. In fact, if one side constructed such shelters, it would violate the MAD doctrine and destabilize the situation because that side would have less to fear from a second (or retaliatory) strike from whatever was left of the other side. Reagan described such an approach to nuclear war as a "suicide pact" and in 1983 called on American scientists and engineers to develop a system that would render nuclear weapons obsolete. In March 1983, Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative.





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2. Anti-Communism (continued...)

A wide array of advanced weaponry (like space-based missile systems and lasers that could detect and deflect any inbound nuclear weapons) were studied along with computer systems that would be needed to control a system consisting of hundreds of combat centers and satellites. In 1987, and after spending \$30 billion (\$70 billion in today's money) on SDI, the U.S. Department of Defense concluded that the technologies being considered were decades away from being ready to use... and at least another decade of research would be required to know whether such a system was even possible. Such developments were estimated to cost an additional \$400-800 billion (\$934 billion to \$1.87 trillion in today's money).

SDI was criticized for threatening to destabilize the MAD-approach and re-igniting an "arms race" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy referred to it as "misleading Red Scare tactics and a reckless 'Star Wars' scheme". The nickname of "Star Wars" stuck to Reagan's SDI program. SDI officially ended in 1993 when President Bill Clinton redirected efforts and funding toward other defensive projects. Whether the SDI technology could have ever been accomplished remains highly unlikely. Some historians say it was Reagan "bluffing" the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The very idea of the SDI program made the Soviet Union realize it could not sustain a technological arms race with the U.S., forcing Soviet leadership to eventually accept defeat.

3. Iran-Contra

The last 2 years of Reagan's Presidency were marred by scandals, the biggest of which was known as the "Iran-Contra Affair". It was a major political scandal that turned the public's attention to the effectiveness of Reagan's "hands-off" managerial style and damaged his reputation. While Reagan had won the Election of 1984, the Democrats had taken the majority of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Soon after, Democrats passed the Boland Amendment, which restricted the activities of the CIA and Department of Defense in foreign conflicts. This immediately put Congress at odds with the Reagan Doctrine.





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3. Iran-Contra (continued...)

The Boland Amendment was aimed at Nicaragua, where the anti-communist Contras were battling the communist Sandinista government. Reagan described the Contras as "the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers" even though much of their funding, to that point, had come via Nicaragua's cocaine trade (hence Congress' decision to pass the Boland Amendment). As a result, Reagan instructed his National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane to find a way to assist the Contras regardless of the cost (political or otherwise).

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, where U.S. relations had been strained for decades, Iraq and Iran were engaged in a bloody war. At the same time, Iranian-backed terrorists had taken 7 Americans hostage in Lebanon. Reagan delivered an ultimatum to his advisors: avoid what happened to Carter and find a way to bring the hostages home.

McFarlane told Reagan that Iran had approached the U.S. about purchasing weapons for its war against neighboring Iraq. (Keep in mind, however, that in 1984 Congress had designated Iran as a terrorist nation and banned any weapon sales and all U.S. assistance to Iran. In fact, a U.S. trade embargo had been in place since 1979 in response to the Iran Hostage Crisis during the Carter Administration.)

Even though Reagan's Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense opposed it, McFarlane argued that an arms deal with Iran would not only secure the release of the hostages but help the U.S. improve relations with Lebanon. This would also provide the U.S. with an ally in a region where it desperately needed one.

Additionally, the arms deal would secure funds that the CIA could secretly funnel to the Contras in Nicaragua.

In 1986, a Lebanese newspaper reported the arms deal between the U.S. and Iran. By that time, some 1,500 American missiles had been sold to Iran for \$30 million. Three of the 7 hostages in Lebanon were also released, although the Iran-backed terrorist group took 3 more Americans hostage.





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3. Iran-Contra (continued...)

An investigation into the \$30 million that Iran had paid for the weapons found \$18 million unaccounted for. At that time, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North of the National Security Council came forward to acknowledge that he had diverted the missing funds to the Contras, who then used the money to acquire weapons.

During the Congressional investigation in 1987, several people involved in the scandal, including Reagan, testified in hearings that were televised nationally. In a nationally televised address from the Oval Office in March 1987, Reagan took full responsibility, stating, "As angry as I may be about activities undertaken without my knowledge, I am still accountable for those activities."

In the end, 14 people, including North and McFarlane, were charged. McFarlane was sentenced to 2 years probation and \$20,000 in fines. North's conviction was later dismissed on a technicality. Reagan was never charged, but his lack of oversight and supervision enabled those working under him to divert the funds to the Contras. In 1992, President George H. W. Bush (Reagan's Vice President) pardoned Reagan's former Secretary of Defense (who had opposed the deal from the start).

Despite this, Reagan remains one of America's most beloved Presidents and is often ranked by historians in the "Top 10". He generally enjoyed approval ratings around 53%, peaked at 71% (January 1986), had a low of 35% (January 1983), and left office at 63%.

Five years after his second term, Reagan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. His son, Ron Reagan, stated that he saw signs of the disease while his father was in office, and later analysis detected variations in Reagan's vocabulary during his time in office which could point to signs of dementia.

While there is no conclusive evidence that he suffered while President, rumors of dementia dogged Reagan during his 1980 campaign. When Reagan was sworn in as President in 1981, he was the oldest President (age 69) until Donald Trump took office at 70 in 2017.





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Reagan's Vice President, George H. W. Bush, ran for President in 1988, promising voters: "Read my lips: No new taxes." Using Reagan's popularity, Bush easily defeated the Democratic candidate and former Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis.

** 1988 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (50.3% turnout)		<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)	
Bush:	48,886,597 (53.4%)	Bush:	426 (79.18%)
Dukakis:	41,809,074 (45.6%)	Dukakis:	111 (20.63%)
Bentsen:	N/A (00.0%)	Bentsen:	001 (00.19%)**

*** Lloyd Bentsen ran as the Vice Presidential candidate alongside Michael Dukakis. A "Faithless Elector" from West Virginia cast her Electoral Vote for Bentsen as President and Dukakis as Vice President instead of the other way around. She did this as a form of protest against the "winner-take-all" custom of the Electoral College.*

The H. W. Bush Years

George Herbert Walker Bush served as the 41st President from 1989-1993.

Bush, a Republican, had a long history of service to the country dating back to his time as a pilot during World War II. He served as a U.S. Representative from Texas (1967-1971), a U.S. Ambassador to the UN (1971-1973) under Nixon, Director of the CIA (1976-1977), and Vice President (1981-1989) under Reagan.

Despite winning the entire South, most of the West, and almost all of Midwest, the Election of 1988 left one obstacle for Bush: the Democrats kept majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Still, Bush toned down the imperial image that had surrounded the Reagan Administration by jogging every morning in D.C. First Lady Barbara Bush talked about her fake pearls and her inability to lose weight. The result was great popularity for a President that entered office with only a 51% approval rating. Subsequent polling put Bush at 60% before surging to 70% by June of his first year.





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The H. W. Bush Years

After Reagan's scandals, Bush spoke about the need for integrity in government. Bush's most dramatic departure from Reagan, however, was his belief that the Federal Government was not the enemy. To demonstrate this, he worked to increase Federal spending for education and child care. Bush battled Congress on the Crime Control Act of 1990 to help police bring criminals to justice. After 8 years of environmental disregard under Reagan, Bush moved to reauthorize the Clean Air Act, which established higher standards for air quality.

Still, Reagan's economic legacy was the biggest domestic challenge Bush faced. By 1990, the Federal Debt had increased to \$3.2 trillion. Bush believed that incomes and the standard of living would not increase if the economy was built on a foundation of debt. As such, Bush tried to persuade Congress to reduce the deficit but found it difficult to please Democrats and Republicans. Democrats believed increasing taxes on the wealthy was the solution, while Republicans felt major cuts in Federal domestic spending was the solution. Finding a compromise would have been difficult for any President, but for Bush, who never enjoyed the trust of his party's powerful conservative wing, it proved nearly impossible.

As a result, Bush's Democratic rivals in Congress consistently outmaneuvered him. Democrats forced Bush to agree to sign a statement calling for tax increases before they'd even negotiate the budget. Bush agreed (despite his campaign promise of "no new taxes"), and many Republicans felt betrayed. The Democrats and Bush agreed to a historic package of spending cuts and tax increases that reduced the deficit by \$500 billion over 5 years, but angry Republican conservatives defeated the budget bill in the House. Bush had to reassemble a bill that could win a majority, and to do so he had to accept almost all of the Democrats' demands (including higher taxes and more spending). In popularity polls, Bush's approval rating fell 20 points in one 6-week period in late 1990.

The budget mess coincided with a mild recession in late 1990 that lasted 8 months but seemingly lingered in the public's mind for 2 years. During the recession, Federal spending on welfare and other programs increased, wiping out the savings the budget deal had promised.





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The idea for a North American free trade zone began with Reagan, who announced the idea when he launched his campaign for President in 1979. In 1988, the U.S. and Canada signed a free trade agreement. This removed tariffs (taxes on imports) between the two. Soon afterward, the President of Mexico proposed a similar trade agreement with the U.S. In December 1992, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada was signed by Bush but still needed to be ratified by Congress. (This happened in November 1993 under his successor President Bill Clinton. The deal was replaced in 2020 under President Donald Trump.)

1. Panama

In December 1989, Bush sent U.S. troops into Panama, a country with which the U.S. has had a long-standing history.

The U.S. always wanted to build a canal through Panama as a way to reduce the travel time between the East and West Coasts. Without a canal, ships going from New York to California (or vice versa) had to travel down around the tip of South America, a trip that was 7,900 miles long. In 1903, the U.S., having failed to obtain from Colombia the right to build a canal across Panama (which was part of Colombia), sent warships to aid in Panama's fight for independence. Newly-freed Panama gave the U.S. the rights to build a canal, which the U.S. did from 1903-1914. It cost the U.S. \$375 million (roughly \$9.7 billion in today's money). An estimated 12,000 workers died during construction (most died from yellow fever and malaria). The existence of an American-controlled "Canal Zone" cut Panama in half geographically. Major anti-American riots occurred in 1958, 1959, and again in 1964, resulting in the U.S. easing its control of the region. After extensive negotiations during the Carter Administration, the "Canal Zone" ceased to exist in 1979 and guaranteed Panama would gain control of the Panama Canal in 2000.

The U.S. also had a relationship with Panama's General and Dictator Manuel Noriega. He served as a U.S. intelligence asset and paid informant of the CIA from 1967 until the mid-1980s. Noriega sided with the U.S. in Central America and helped sabotage the forces of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the FMLN group in El Salvador.





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The H. W. Bush Years

1. Panama (continued...)

Although Noriega worked with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to restrict illegal drug shipments, he was known to accept "financial support" from drug dealers and assisted with the laundering of drug money (which is an illegal process of concealing the origins of money obtained illegally by passing it through banking or commercial transactions). However, he received protection from DEA investigations due to his special relationship with the CIA.

In the mid-1980s, relations between Noriega and the U.S. began to fall apart. In 1986, President Reagan demanded that Noriega step down after Noriega was implicated in the Iran-Contra Scandal. Noriega was then indicted in the U.S. for drug trafficking in 1988. Knowing that Panama would never extradite him, Noriega ignored Reagan. Soon there was talk in the Reagan Administration about an invasion of Panama, but Reagan refused due to Bush's ties to Noriega through his previous positions in the CIA (where Bush was the Director from 1976-1977) and the Task Force on Drugs. Reagan worried this might have a negative impact on Bush's 1988 campaign.

In March 1988, Noriega's forces resisted an attempted coup against the government of Panama (of which he was the *de facto* leader). He then began to shift his Cold War allegiances to favor the Soviet Union, even receiving military aid from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya. In May 1989, during the Panamanian national elections, an alliance of political parties opposed to the Noriega dictatorship ran Guillermo Endara against Carlos Duque (a candidate of a pro-Noriega coalition). Endara was victorious but physically assaulted by Noriega supporters the next day in his motorcade.

Noriega declared the election "null" and maintained power by force, making him unpopular among Panamanians. Noriega's government insisted that it had won the election and that the U.S. had interfered. President Bush called on Noriega to honor the will of the Panamanian people. Instead, Noriega had Panama's General Assembly (their version of Congress) pass a resolution declaring that a state of war existed between Panama and the U.S. This put the lives of the 35,000 U.S. citizens living in Panama in jeopardy.





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1. Panama (continued...)

On December 16, 1989, 4 U.S. soldiers from the "Canal Zone" were on their way to dinner in Panama City (the capital of Panama) when they were stopped at a roadblock. The soldiers, who were unarmed and in a private vehicle, were soon surrounded by an angry crowd of civilians and members of the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF), the military of Panama. When the U.S. soldiers tried to flee, the PDF shot and killed 1 and wounded another. (The PDF claimed that the U.S. soldiers were armed and on a reconnaissance mission.)

The next day, President Bush ordered the execution of the Panama invasion plan. Bush said the U.S. needed to protect the American citizens living in Panama, defend democracy and human rights in Panama, combat drug trafficking (Panama had become a center for drug money laundering and a transit point for drug trafficking to the U.S. and Europe), and protecting the integrity of the treaty signed by President Carter that let the U.S. intervene militarily to protect the Panama Canal. His reasoning provided enough justification to establish bipartisan Congressional approval and support for the invasion. (The invasion also had 80% support from the U.S. public.)

On December 20, 1989, the U.S. launched "Operation Just Cause", sending 27,684 soldiers and 300 aircraft into Panama. The invasion, which involved the unprecedented use of 600 U.S. military women (in non-combat roles) lasted a little over a month and left 23 U.S. soldiers dead and 325 wounded. Over 200 PDF troops and 500 Panamanian civilians died.

"Operation Nifty Package" was a side-operation launched by Navy SEALs to prevent Noriega from escaping during the invasion. He was captured on January 3, 1990 and immediately flown to the U.S.

In 1992, Noriega was convicted of drug trafficking, racketeering, and money laundering and sentenced to 30 years. After 17 years, he was released in 2007... and then sentenced to 7 years in France for similar charges. In 2011, Noriega was returned to Panama to serve time for crimes committed during his rule. In January 2017, he was released and placed under house arrest. He died on May 29, 2017.





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1. Panama (continued...)

After the invasion, the PDF were dissolved and President-elect Guillermo Endara was sworn in as President of Panama, where he served until 1994. The U.S. paid Panama \$1 billion to repair the invasion's damage.

2. Cold War

During a speech in West Berlin on June 12, 1987, President Reagan called for the Soviet Union's leader Mikhail Gorbachev to open the Berlin Wall that had separated communist East Berlin from capitalist West Berlin since 1961. He said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" On November 9, 1989, the wall fell during Bush's Presidency. This led to the reunification of East and West Germany on October 3, 1990 as a democratic and unified Germany.

With communism failing around the globe, Bush wanted to forge a partnership with the Soviet Union. If the Soviets could become a U.S. ally, Bush could reduce the defense budget and save taxpayers *billions*. Bush invited Gorbachev to a 3-day summit on the Mediterranean island of Malta, where they discussed 21 proposals from military cuts to economic aid.

Gorba-who? Here's a quick history of Soviet leaders:

The Soviet Union, also known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (or U.S.S.R.) was founded by Vladimir Lenin (served: 1917-1922), who overthrew Czar Nicholas II (ruled: 1894-1917). After Lenin died, he was followed by:

Joseph Stalin (served: 1922-1953) - WWII and Korean War.

Nikita Khrushchev (served: 1953-1964) - Cuban Missile Crisis.

Leonid Brezhnev (served: 1964-1982) - invaded Afghanistan.

Yuri Andropov (served: 1982-1984) - challenged Reagan's UDI.

Konstantin Chernenko (served: 1984-1985) - boycotted '84 Olympics.

Mikhail Gorbachev (served: 1985-1991) - ended Cold War.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

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2. Cold War (continued...)

In the late 1980s, Gorbachev tried to change society with his policies of "glasnost" (Russian for "openness") in political and cultural affairs and "perestroika" (Russian for "restructuring") in economic affairs. Gorbachev's policies prepared the country for democratic reforms and helped ease tensions with the U.S.

Gorbachev and Bush worked together to help bring the Cold War to a smooth end. In fact, the Cold War ended like an old man easing into a bathtub, a far cry from the nuclear standoff that might have been expected only a few years earlier.

The end started when, from August 20-31, 1991, 8 of the republics that made up the Soviet Union (Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldavia, Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan) joined Lithuania and Georgia in declaring their independence. Other republics followed in September and October.

On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev announced his resignation as leader in a solemn TV address. The Soviet Parliament passed its final resolution, acknowledging the dissolution of the Soviet Union, on December 26th. On December 31st, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

After Gorbachev's abdication, Boris Yeltsin served as the 1st President of a non-communist Russia from 1991-1999.

3. Persian Gulf War

President Bush is best remembered for being in office during the Persian Gulf War (1991).

In August 1990, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein launched an attack on neighboring Kuwait, seizing control of the tiny country and 10% of the world's oil. Hussein then sent Iraqi forces to the border of Saudi Arabia, which controlled 25% of the world's oil.

With 10% of the world's oil in Iraq, this now put Saddam in striking distance of controlling almost half of the world's oil.





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3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

Throughout the Cold War, Iraq had been an ally of the Soviet Union, and there was always some friction between it and the U.S. The U.S. disliked Iraq's support for many Arab and Palestinian militant groups. This resulted to Iraq being designated a terrorist nation in December 1979. (Saddam Hussein had become the country's leader in July of the same year.)

In 1980, Iraq invaded Iran, beginning the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). The U.S. remained officially neutral but did provide some resources, political support, and "non-military" aircraft to Iraq. In 1982, Iraq was removed from the list of terrorist nations, and the U.S. sent several billion dollars worth of economic aid, military intelligence, and special operations training. The U.S. never sent any military arms to Iraq (although the U.S. was sending secret weapons to Iran during the "Iran-Contra Affair").

A ceasefire brokered by the United Nations (UN) ended the deadliest conventional war ever fought between regular armies of developing countries. Both sides claimed victory in the Iran-Iraq War that resulted in over 1 million casualties and left more than 100,000 civilians dead. Both sides used ballistic missiles, and Iraq used several chemical weapons against Iran, including the use of nerve gas that killed 20,000 Iranian soldiers on the spot. In total, Iraq caused over 100,000 casualties with its chemical warfare.

At the end of the conflict, Iraq was heavily in debt, with most of its debt owed to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Iraq pressured both countries to forgive the debts, but they refused.

Iraq then accused Kuwait of exceeding its OPEC quotas for oil production. In order for OPEC to maintain its desired price of \$18 a barrel (at the time), discipline was required of all nations in OPEC. If a country overproduced, the result would be too much supply (compared to demand), and a drop in the cost per barrel of oil.

In 1989, oil dropped to \$10 a barrel, which resulted in each OPEC nation losing \$7 billion. Iraq could ill-afford to lose money.





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3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

Iraq also historically viewed Kuwait as Iraqi territory, dating back to the days of the Ottoman Empire. In 1922, and after World War I (in which the Ottoman Empire was on the losing side), England drew a border between Iraq and Kuwait that made Iraq landlocked and with no access to the Persian Gulf. Iraq desperately wanted access.

Iraq had the world's fourth largest army with 1 million active soldiers and another 850,000 in reserve, 5,500 tanks, 3,000 artillery pieces, and 700 combat aircraft.

Meanwhile, Kuwait had an army of 16,000 soldiers and 40 aircraft.

Within 12 hours, Iraq had taken Kuwait City and forced the Royal Family to flee. In just 2 days, all of Kuwait was under Iraqi control. After the invasion, the Iraqi military took over \$1 billion from Kuwait's Central Bank.

Within hours of Saddam's attack, Bush began lining up European, Asian, and Middle Eastern allies, many of them suspicious of one another but nevertheless willing to work together to stop Saddam. Bush wanted to create a coalition against Iraq under the leadership of the UN, which had brought immediate economic sanctions against Iraq just 4 days after they attacked Kuwait.

On August 9, 1990, Bush began the organization of "Operation Desert Shield" in order to prepare U.S. troops to become part of the international coalition in a war against Iraq. This was done in accordance with the Carter Doctrine (which stated that the U.S. would use military force to defend its interest in the Persian Gulf) and out of fear that Iraq's next attack would be on Saudi Arabia.

With the permission of the Saudi Arabian monarch King Fahd, over 500,000 U.S. soldiers were sent to Saudi Arabia in the biggest deployment of soldiers since the Vietnam War.

Bush famously commented, "This will not stand. This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait."





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3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

On November 29, 1990, the UN's Security Council passed "Resolution 678", which gave Iraq until January 15, 1991 to withdraw from Kuwait and granted permission to Bush's coalition to use "all necessary means" to force Iraq out of Kuwait after the deadline.

Bush's coalition consisted of forces from 34 countries. As the clock for Iraq's withdrawal ticked down, stories detailing atrocities committed by Iraqi soldiers on the Kuwaiti people began to pour in. This prompted Bush to compare Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler.

In December, Iraq offered to end the conflict in exchange for part of Kuwait... but Bush wanted complete withdrawal.

On January 12, 1991, the Democratic-controlled Congress voted to authorize U.S. troops to attack Iraq. (The Senate adopted the resolution by a vote of 52-47; the House vote was 250-183.) The action was the most explicit authorization of war by Congress since the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution approved U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in 1964. Bush said, "Peace is everyone's goal. Peace is everyone's prayers. But it is for Iraq to decide."

General Norman Schwarzkopf was selected to lead coalition forces.

January 15th came... and went.

The Persian Gulf War (called "Operation Desert Storm") began with an extensive aerial bombing campaign. For 42 consecutive days and nights, hundreds of aircraft and bombers from different nations subjected Iraq to one of the most intensive air bombardments in military history. More than 4,000 bombing runs were flown in the first week, and the pace continued for another 4 weeks leading up to the ground invasion phase of the war.

In all, the coalition flew over 100,000 sorties (missions) and dropped 88,500 tons of bombs, successfully crippling Saddam's Air Force, its anti-aircraft facilities, its command and communication buildings, and military targets throughout Iraq and Kuwait.





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The H. W. Bush Years

3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

Iraq's air-defense system proved ineffective, and the coalition suffered only 75 aircraft losses (with just 44 due to Iraqi action) in the 100,000 sorties flown.

Of particular concern, however, was destroying Iraq's Scud missile launchers. (Scuds were tactical ballistic missiles developed by the Soviets who sold them during the Cold War to any country that wanted them.)

Five hours after the first attacks, Iraq's state radio broadcast, "The dawn of victory nears as this great showdown begins!" Iraq fired 8 Scud missiles into Israel the next day in an attempt to provoke a military response from them. Saddam hoped that Arab countries would withdraw from the coalition rather than fight alongside a common-enemy in Israel.

Following the attacks, Israeli Air Force jets were deployed to patrol the northern airspace with Iraq. Israel prepared to fight back, as its policy for the previous 40 years had always been retaliation. However, Bush pressured Israel's Prime Minister to withdraw his jets. The U.S. promised to deploy surface-to-air Patriot missiles to defend Israel. (By the end of the war, Iraq fired a total of 42 Scuds at Israel, killing 74 and wounding 230 Israelis.)

In addition to the attacks on Israel, 47 Scuds were fired into Saudi Arabia, killing 1 and injuring 78 Saudi civilians. In both Israel and Saudi Arabia, the governments issued their civilians gas masks in fear Iraq would be using missiles with chemical or biological warheads.

During the opening phase of the war (and then throughout the duration of the conflict), the U.S. used new weapons that had been developed during the Reagan-Bush military buildup of the 1980s. This included Tomahawk missiles (which are long-range and jet-powered missiles fired from submarines) and F-117 stealth bombers (aircraft with faceted-angle surfaces to make them hard to detect, or "invisible", on radar).





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3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

On February 24th, and after weeks of intensive bombing, U.S.-led coalition forces launched a ground invasion of Kuwait and Iraq. The ground campaign (called "Operation Desert Saber") would feature 3 of the largest tank battles in U.S. history. Iraq lost over 3,000 tanks and 2,000 other combat vehicles during these battles.

Iraq's outdated and poorly supplied soldiers were rapidly overwhelmed. By the end of the first day, the Iraqi Army had effectively folded and 10,000 of its troops were prisoners.

After less than 4 days, Kuwait was liberated, and a majority of Iraq's armed forces had either been destroyed, surrendered, or retreated. However, as Iraqi troops left Kuwait, they set 737 of Kuwait's oil wells on fire. The fires burned out of control for 10 months to the tune of 6 million barrels of oil lost each day. The last fire was extinguished in November 1991.

Soon, a long convoy of retreating Iraqi troops formed along the main Iraq-Kuwait highway. They were bombed so extensively by coalition air forces that it came to be known as the "Highway of Death". Thousands of Iraqi soldiers were killed. Specifically, U.S., British, and French forces continued to pursue the Iraqi troops over the border and back into Iraq, eventually moving to within 150 miles of Baghdād (the capital) before withdrawing back to Iraq's border with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

One hundred hours after the ground campaign began, on February 28th, Bush declared a cease-fire.

Critics called Bush's decision to halt the invasion after 100 hours "premature" since thousands of Saddam's best troops were allowed to escape. Bush was also condemned for not driving Iraqi forces all the way back to Baghdād and removing Saddam from power.

Bush defended his decision by restating that he had never made Saddam's removal the objective. He wanted to keep U.S. casualties low and return control of Kuwait to Kuwait. He had achieved both goals.





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3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

In 1992, Dick Cheney (the Secretary of Defense during the war) agreed with Bush, stating, "I would guess if we had gone in there, we would still have forces in Baghdād. We'd be running the county. How many additional American casualties is Saddam worth? And the answer is, not that damned many. We were not going to get bogged down in the problems of trying to take over and govern Iraq."

The removal of Saddam became the objective of the Second Persian Gulf War, a.k.a. the Iraq War (2003-2011). Bush's son, George W. Bush, was the President and his Vice President was... Dick Cheney.

By war's end, the U.S. had suffered 148 battle-related deaths (35 to friendly fire) with 1 pilot listed as MIA (his remains were found in August 2009). An additional 145 Americans died in non-combat accidents for a total of 293 total U.S. military deaths. There were 458 wounded. The Persian Gulf War had a 0.21% casualty rate (compared to 6.69% in World War II and 10.66% in Vietnam). However, almost 250,000 of these soldiers would later suffer from "Gulf War Syndrome", a multi-symptom illness, due to toxic exposures.

There were 190 coalition troops KIA and another 379 coalition deaths from friendly fire or accidents. The coalition suffered 776 WIA. Kuwait's armed forces suffered 4,200 KIA, 12,000 captured, and saw 1,000 of its civilians killed.

Estimates range concerning Iraq's casualty numbers. Approximately 50,000-100,000 Iraqi soldiers were KIA. Upwards of 75,000 were wounded and 80,000 captured. There were over 3,500 Iraqi civilian deaths. One Iraqi soldier, who had fought in the Iran-Iraq War, said that his brigade "had sustained more punishment from allied airpower in 30 minutes than in 8 years of fighting against Iran."

Iraq accepted the UN Security Council's terms to end the war. Saddam agreed to give up all Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), pay damages for its 7-month occupation of Kuwait, and submit to UN inspectors. U.S. and British aircraft would also patrol the skies and enforce a no-fly zone over Iraq.





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3. Persian Gulf War (continued...)

The U.S. spent \$61.1 billion on the Persian Gulf War (\$119 billion in today's money).

The war was heavily televised. For the first time, people all around the globe were able to watch live pictures of missiles hitting their targets and fighters departing from aircraft carriers. (This resulted in the war earning the nickname the "Video Game War".) The U.S. made it a point to demonstrate its weapons' accuracy, and the world marveled at this new technological war.

Newspapers and magazines from all over also covered the war in great detail. However, U.S. policy regarding media freedom was much more restrictive than it had been in the Vietnam War. Most of the press information came from briefings organized by the military. Only selected journalists were allowed to visit the front lines or conduct interviews with soldiers. Such visits were subject to approval by the military and censorship afterward. This policy was heavily influenced by the military's experience in Vietnam.

Bush enjoyed 89% approval ratings after the war (the highest of any President up to that date). Nearly 9 in 10 Americans approved of the President's overall job performance, including most Democrats. Naturally, his Administration believed this would allow him to coast into a second term. However, Bush never put the same energy into domestic affairs that he did in the war. This would cost him in the Election of 1992.

Democrats nominated Bill Clinton, the Governor of Arkansas. Clinton attacked Bush as a President who would do nothing to solve the problems of the average citizen. Texas billionaire Ross Perot complicated the political situation early in 1992 by launching a third-party bid for the Presidency. Running as an Independent, Perot argued that neither Republicans nor Democrats could be trusted to eliminate the deficit and make the U.S. Government more efficient. Many people agreed with Perot.





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Bush also wasn't helped by his bumbling Vice President Dan Quayle, who continually made embarrassing mistakes. Many supporters said Bush needed to drop Quayle from the ticket.

The U.S. also entered a recession in 1990, which lasted 8 months through March 1991. Bush's once high approval rating dropped below 50%. Although the recession was mild relative to other post-war recessions, unemployment continued to rise through June 1992, hitting 7.4%, its highest since 1983. By July, Bush's approval rating sank to 31%. By October, it hit 29%, the lowest of his Presidency.

Clinton jumped all over the slumping U.S. economy, pointing out that Bush was "out of touch" with Middle America and had lost focus on the economy. Bush's image soon shifted from "conquering hero" to a "politician befuddled by economic matters".

In fact, during the campaign, Clinton's strategist James "the Ragin' Cajun" Carville hung a sign outside the office to keep everybody focused on what mattered. It read: "It's the economy, stupid!"

Perot attacked Bush's proposal of NAFTA, which he claimed would lead to major job loss. National polling taken in mid-1992 actually showed Perot in the lead, but Clinton experienced a surge when he selected Al Gore, a popular and relatively young Senator, as his running mate.

On Election Day, Perot's impact was massive. Even though he didn't win any Electoral Votes, he pulled enough Popular Votes away from Bush in key states. Had Perot not entered, Bush would have won.

Together, Perot and Clinton managed to unseat a once popular war-time President.

** 1992 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (55.2% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Clinton: 44,909,889 (43.0%)	Clinton: 370 (68.77%)
Bush: 39,104,550 (37.4%)	Bush: 168 (31.23%)
Perot: 19,743,821 (18.9%)	Perot: 000 (00.00%)





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The Clinton Years

William Jefferson Clinton served as the 42nd President from 1993-2001.

Clinton, a Democrat, was born "William Jefferson Blythe III". He was named for his biological father who died in a car accident 3 months before Clinton was born. Clinton's mother later remarried, and he eventually took his stepfather's last name "Clinton".

From 1977-1979, "Bill" Clinton served as the Attorney General of Arkansas. He was the Governor of Arkansas twice, serving the first time (1979-1981) when he was just 32-years-old and again from 1983-1992, having been defeated between his first and second terms. (In 1986, Arkansas changed its gubernatorial term from 2 to 4 years.)

During most of his Presidency, Clinton maintained strong support from those who had elected him, principally African-Americans, women, and blue-collar workers. Such strong minority support resulted in him being informally called "America's first black President." Of all U.S. Presidents, Clinton was one of the most forceful champions of civil rights for minorities and equality for women. He appointed record numbers of minorities and women as Federal court judges, Cabinet members, and other political officials.

Clinton continued to focus on the economy, which had helped him defeat incumbent George H. W. Bush in the Election of 1992. Clinton believed that the key was reducing spending by the Federal Government in order to eliminate the huge deficits that occurred in the budget each year because the country spent more than it took in from taxes. In 1993, Clinton submitted a budget to Congress that reduced Federal spending and increased taxes. Even though every Republican voted against it, it still passed. Clinton's victory reversed the trend of rising deficits, and it stimulated the economy.

Clinton's major policy initiative of his first term (providing health care insurance for *all* Americans) collapsed after a bitter fight in 1994. This failure, along with low approval numbers (37%), tax increases, and budget battles with Republicans, hurt the Democrats in 1994's Midterm Elections. The Republicans won a majority in both the House and the Senate in the "Republican Revolution".





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In one of the biggest upheavals in Congressional history, Republicans achieved something they hadn't done since 1952. (Meanwhile... Republican George W. Bush's election as Governor of Texas laid the groundwork for his Presidential campaign in 2000.) Republicans were able to nationalize the election by campaigning on a "Contract with America", a legislative agenda that detailed the actions the Republicans promised to take if they won back Congress (including 8 reforms and 10 bills). Some of these included a balanced budget, tax cuts for small businesses, families, and seniors, term limits for legislators, social security reform, and welfare reform.

The new Republican makeup of Congress dramatically changed Clinton's strategy. Unable to push his own programs, he turned his attention to preventing the Republicans' agenda from becoming law by frequently vetoing their budgets and bills. In 1995, the Republican-controlled Congress shut down the Federal Government twice, once for 5 days and another for 21 days. Congress and Clinton didn't approve a budget because of conflicts over funding for education, the environment, and public health. The 2 sides reached a compromise on welfare reform, but this angered many in Clinton's party.

Many Federal Government agencies and programs rely on annual funding from Congress. Congress must pass (and the President must sign) budget legislation for the upcoming fiscal year (which, for the Federal Government, begins on October 1st). In a "shutdown", Federal agencies must discontinue all non-essential functions until new funding legislation is passed and signed into law. Essential services continue to function. Shutdowns cause the disruption of government services and programs, including the closure of national parks and institutions. A major loss of government revenue comes from lost labor from furloughed employees (those that are not called in to work because of the shutdown but who are still paid).

Polling generally showed that most Americans blamed Congressional Republicans for the 2 shutdowns, and Clinton's handling of them bolstered his successful re-election campaign. In 1996, Clinton ran for re-election against Republican Senator Bob Dole, the Majority Leader of the Senate, and Ross Perot, who ran as the candidate of the Reform Party.





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Voters were happy with the robust economy, and Clinton claimed credit for decreasing the number of people on welfare. He promised additional reforms if re-elected.

Dole, a World War II veteran, was seen as "out-of-touch" with current issues and lacked the energy of Clinton's campaign. Perot was not as effective as he had been in 1992, but he did keep Clinton from hitting 50% of the Popular Vote once again.

The Election of 1996, however, saw the lowest voter turnout in U.S. history. Only 49% of registered voters cast a ballot.

** 1996 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (49.0% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Clinton: 47,401,185 (49.2%)	Clinton: 379 (70.44%)
Dole: 39,197,469 (40.7%)	Dole: 159 (29.55%)
Perot: 08,085,294 (08.4%)	Perot: 000 (00.00%)

After Clinton's win, Congress was less confrontational. In 1997, Clinton and Congress worked out several compromises and other reforms aimed at producing a balanced budget. This was a remarkable achievement since the Constitution doesn't require Congress to pass a balanced budget, one in which the projected income to the U.S. Government through taxes, fees, fines, and other revenues equals or exceeds the amount proposed to be spent. This has led to Deficit Spending and the creation of a National Debt. Except for a short period during the Presidency of Andrew Jackson (1829-1837), the U.S. has always been in debt.

A Balanced Budget Amendment that would make it unconstitutional for the Federal Government to run annual budget deficits passed in the House of Representatives... but fell 1 vote short of passing in the Senate.

Because the Cold War ended during the George H. W. Bush Administration, Clinton didn't have to face a lurking communist Russia or anything that threatened national security like every President since Harry Truman (1945-1953) had to.





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Still, he had to make difficult decisions about whether to intervene in bloody conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and how to deal with the growth of international terrorism.

Clinton was the opposite of his predecessor: he outperformed domestically but was hit or miss internationally.

1. Somalia

In January 1991, the Somali President was overthrown by a coalition of opposing clans, starting the Somali Civil War. By September, severe fighting had broken out in Mogadishu (the capital) and spread throughout the country. Over 20,000 people were killed or injured before the end of the year. The war led to the destruction of Somalia's agriculture, which caused massive starvation. Many countries responded by sending food and supplies to Somalia, but 80% of it was hijacked and brought to local clan leaders, who then exchanged it with different countries for weapons. Further starvation resulted in the deaths of 300,000 Somalis. In July 1992, after a ceasefire between opposing clans, the UN sent military observers to watch the food's distribution. "Operation Provide Relief" began in August 1992 when President Bush announced the U.S. would assist the UN relief efforts. When this proved inadequate to stop the massive death and displacement of the Somali people (500,000 were now dead and over 1.5 million had become refugees), the U.S. launched "Operation Restore Hope". This sent troops into Mogadishu to secure the city, port, and airport. On October 3, 1993, 160 U.S. soldiers were sent to capture Mohamed Farrah Aidid, a Somali military and political leader who had driven out the President in 1991. The mission was to last no longer than 1 hour. Shortly after the assault began, Somali militia and armed civilians shot down 2 U.S. Black Hawk helicopters. The operation to recover the downed crews turned into an overnight standoff between 160 U.S. soldiers and 4,000 Somali militia. The Battle of Mogadishu resulted in 18 U.S. deaths, 73 wounded, and 1 captured. The Somali militia suffered 1,500-3,000 casualties. Some of the American bodies were dragged through the streets and broadcast on TV stations.

Clinton's response: All U.S. forces were withdrawn from Somalia.





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2. Rwanda

Rwanda is a country in Central and East Africa about the size of Massachusetts. Rwandans form three groups: Hutu, Tutsi, and the Twa. Scholars disagree on the origins of (and differences between) the 2 largest groups, the Hutu and Tutsi. Some believe they are derived from former social castes, while others view them as being races or tribes.

The Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884-1885 assigned the territory of Rwanda to Germany. Belgian forces took control of Rwanda and neighboring Burundi during World War I. Both the Germans and the Belgians considered the Hutu and Tutsi to be different races. They believed the Tutsi were more "white" than the Hutu and were, therefore, racially superior and better suited to carry out colonial administrative tasks. In 1935, Belgium introduced identity cards labeling people as either Tutsi (good), Hutu (bad), or Twa (so-so).

From 1959-1961, the Rwandan Revolution saw the Hutu began killing the Tutsi (20,000-100,000 were killed and 130,000 had to seek refuge elsewhere). In 1961, the now pro-Hutu government voted to abolish the Belgian monarchy. Rwanda was separated from Burundi and granted its freedom by Belgium in 1962. Cycles of violence followed, with exiled Tutsi attacking and the Hutu retaliating with large-scale slaughter and repression of the Tutsi. In 1973, Juvénal Habyarimana took power in Rwanda in a military coup. Pro-Hutu discrimination continued, but there was greater economic prosperity and a reduced amount of violence against the Tutsi. In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group composed mostly of Tutsi refugees, invaded Northern Rwanda, initiating the Rwandan Civil War (1990-1993). Neither side was able to gain a decisive advantage in the war, and a cease-fire was declared in 1993.

The cease-fire ended on April 6, 1994, however, when President Habyarimana's plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile. While it will probably never be known who fired the missile, most observers believe it was Hutu extremists who had been promoting ethnic cleansing over the radio airwaves. Habyarimana's death was the catalyst for the Rwandan Genocide, which began a few hours later.





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2. Rwanda (continued...)

Over the course of approximately 100 days, between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsi (or 70% of the entire Tutsi population) were killed in well-planned attacks on the orders of the interim Hutu government. Many Twa were also killed, despite not being directly targeted. The Tutsi RPF restarted their offensive and took control of the whole country by mid-July 1994. This sent 2 million Hutu fleeing to other countries in fear of reprisals. Within Rwanda, a period of reconciliation and justice began, but the scars of the genocide remain to this very day.

Intelligence reports indicate that Clinton was aware that a "final solution to eliminate all Tutsis" was underway.

Clinton's response: The U.S. will not intervene.

Years later, Clinton referred to his refusal to intervene in the genocide as one of his major foreign policy failings, saying, "I don't think we could have ended the violence, but I think we could have cut it down. And I regret it."

3. Bosnia

At the end of World War I in 1918, territory that had been a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was merged with the country of Serbia to form the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes". In 1929, its name was changed to Yugoslavia. In 1941, Yugoslavia was invaded and occupied by the Nazis. Following World War II, Yugoslavia became communist and renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

As communism began to collapse in Eastern Europe in the 1980s, 2 of its wealthier republics (Croatia and Slovenia) seceded. Nationalism and ethnic differences among the republics soon doomed the country. In 1992, Yugoslavia began to disintegrate and eventually dissolved into 5 new countries: Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Serbia & Montenegro. Each of these new nations had large Serbian minority populations whose goals were to secede and unite with all of the other Serbs.





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3. Bosnia (continued...)

The leader of Serbia & Montenegro, Slobodan Milošević, wanted this to happen in order to form a "Greater Serbia". Such aspirations of Serbian nationalism (which started World War I in 1914) led to civil war in Croatia and in Bosnia & Herzegovina. With support from Milošević, Serb forces seized large parts of both Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, expelling or killing most non-Serbs in those parts in what became known as "ethnic cleansing". Nicknamed the "Butcher of the Balkans", Milošević's ethnic cleansing resulted in the deaths of over 250,000 non-Serbs in the region.

Milošević was widely blamed for inciting and backing Serb forces and atrocities in Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations in 1992 did little to stop him. The war in Bosnia, and Milošević's role in that war, continued until 1995 when the Croatian army took back most of the Croatian territory that Serbs had controlled since 1991. A joint Croatian-Muslim offensive in Bosnia, combined with air strikes by members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), succeeded in bringing Milošević to the bargaining table. On November 1, 1995, Milošević represented the Bosnian Serbs in peace talks at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. On December 14th, he signed the Dayton Peace Accord in Paris (along with the leaders of Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina), bringing the highly-destructive Bosnia War (1992-1995) to an end.

Clinton's response: Deployed U.S. peacekeepers to Bosnia in late 1995 to uphold the Dayton Accords.

Milošević was indicted in May 1999 for "crimes against humanity" and "genocide" for his ethnic cleansings in the Bosnia War and in the Kosovo War (1998-1999). Clinton authorized the use of U.S. force in a NATO bombing campaign ("Operation Allied Force") against Serbia in 1999 for Milošević's actions in Kosovo where 90% of the country's Albanian population was expelled and over 8,600 were killed. His trial began at The Hague in the Netherlands in 2002, but he died of a heart attack in prison in 2006 before the trial ended. He became the first ever head of state to be tried for war crimes.





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4. Ireland

The Acts of Union in 1707 united the kingdoms of England (which included Wales) and Scotland to form the Kingdom of Great Britain. In 1801, another Act of Union united it with the Kingdom of Ireland, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. This existed until the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921), which was a guerilla war fought between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and British forces. This resulted in the partition of Ireland, which divided the island into Northern Ireland (which stayed with the United Kingdom) and the independent Republic of Ireland.

In the late 1960s, an armed conflict between Northern Ireland and Ireland (called "The Troubles") broke out. The key issue was the "status" of Northern Ireland. Unionists/loyalists (who were mostly Protestants) wanted Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom. Irish nationalists/republicans (who were mostly Catholics) wanted Northern Ireland to leave the United Kingdom and join a united Ireland.

Severe violence in August 1969 resulted in the deployment of British troops in what would become the British Army's longest ever operation. They built "peace walls", which were massive barriers in Northern Ireland to separate the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods. A majority of the walls were constructed in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland.

On January 30, 1972, in Derry, Northern Ireland, British soldiers shot unarmed civilians during a protest march, killing 14 and injuring 15. All of those shot were Catholic. Dubbed "Bloody Sunday", it fuelled Catholic and Irish nationalist hostility toward the British Army and further worsened the conflict. Support for and recruitment by the new Provisional IRA took off. In just 1972 alone, the Provisional IRA carried out 1,300 bombings and killed 100 British forces and wounded 500 others, the most notable being "Bloody Friday" on July 21, 1972 in Belfast when 22 car bombs were set off in an hour. This resulted in it being labeled a terrorist group by the United Kingdom. By the end of 1972, the deadliest year in the conflict, 500 people (half of them civilians) lost their lives.





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4. Ireland (continued...)

Of particular importance was Sinn Fein, an Irish republican political party that was active in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. It was founded in 1905 but split on a number of occasions throughout its history. The party took its current form (it's still around today) in 1970. It has been associated with the Provisional IRA and wants a unified Ireland. It was often said, "The IRA wages an armed campaign while Sinn Fein maintains the propaganda war and is the public and political voice of the movement."

In 1984, the IRA set off a 100-pound bomb in a hotel in Britain where prominent politicians were staying, including Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Although Thatcher narrowly escaped the blast, 5 were killed and 31 wounded. The IRA was boosted by large donations of weapons from Libya due to Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi's hatred of Thatcher. (In April 1986, Thatcher assisted the U.S. and President Reagan in launching air strikes against Libya in retaliation for Libya bombing a West German nightclub that killed 2 U.S. soldiers. During these attacks, one of Gaddafi's children was allegedly killed.)

In 1991, the IRA attempted to assassinate Britain's Prime Minister John Major and his war cabinet by launching a mortar at 10 Downing Street (their version of the White House).

Clinton's response: In January 1994, he granted a 2-day travel visa to Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, so Adams could visit the U.S. and discuss peace. Britain's Prime Minister John Major was furious, saying that the visit would give the IRA a high-profile platform to justify terrorism. While no peace came from the meeting at the time, Adams later stated that Clinton's decision to allow him to travel to the U.S. helped to pave the way for the IRA's truce 7 months later.

In November 1995, Clinton became the first U.S. President to visit Northern Ireland. During his trip he saw the divided communities of Belfast and shook hands with Adams. Clinton went on to play a role in the peace talks, which led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.





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4. Ireland (continued...)

On the question of whether Northern Ireland should remain in the UK or become part of a united Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement said there would be no change without the "consent of the majority". This meant that, in the future, staying or leaving could be tested by referendum, called a "border poll", conducted by voters in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

5. Osama bin Laden

Founded in 1988 by a Saudi Arabian citizen named Osama bin Laden during the Soviet-Afghan War, al-Qaeda is a network of Islamic extremists and jihadists. It was designated as a terrorist group by the UN, NATO, the European Union, the U.S., Russia, India, and a host of other countries worldwide.

On August 7, 1998, al-Qaeda used truck bombs to attack U.S. Embassies in East Africa, specifically targeting the ones in Kenya and Tanzania. The attacks killed 224 people (including 12 Americans) and injured over 4,000.

Clinton's response: He ordered "Operation Infinite Reach" 2 weeks later. These were a series of cruise missile strikes on targets in Sudan and Afghanistan. Clinton announced the planned strike in a prime time address on TV.

These preemptive strikes by the U.S. took out a factory in Sudan suspected of manufacturing a nerve gas for Osama bin Laden and destroyed some Afghan training camps in Afghanistan.

However, bin Laden was not present at either location.

"Operation Infinite Reach" was the largest U.S. action in response to a terrorist attack since the 1986 bombing of Libya. U.S. allies and most of the American public supported the strikes, but the targeted countries, Islamic militant groups, and other nations in the Middle East opposed them. The failure of the attacks to kill bin Laden only enhanced his image in the Muslim world.





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5. Osama bin Laden (continued...)

On October 12, 2000, the USS *Cole* was attacked while the battleship was being refueled in Yemen, a country at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. Seventeen U.S. sailors were killed and 39 wounded. Immediately after, al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the suicide attack. In Afghanistan, the bombing was a "great victory" for bin Laden. Al-Qaeda camps filled with new recruits.

Clinton's response: No military action was taken.

Al-Qaeda's role in the bombing was investigated and found to be "increasingly clear" by November 11th. By December 21st, the CIA made a preliminary judgment that al-Qaeda was involved. The outgoing Clinton Administration and incoming George W. Bush Administration have been criticized for failing to respond militarily.

The *9/11 Commission Report* cites one source who said in February 2001, "Osama bin Laden complained frequently that the U.S. had not yet attacked in response to the *Cole*. Bin Laden wanted the U.S. to attack, and if it didn't, he would launch something bigger."

Reports now show that on 4 separate occasions, Clinton knew of bin Laden's whereabouts. Clinton refused to act, however, because of the potential of killing innocent civilians in the process.

Clinton's reluctance came partially because in May 1999 (during the NATO strikes against Serbia), the U.S. accidentally sent missiles into the Chinese Embassy in Serbia's capital of Belgrade when it meant to hit a nearby Yugoslav supply building. Three were killed and 27 wounded, forcing Clinton to apologize to an outraged China.

Ironically, on September 10, 2001 - the day before the infamous 9/11 terrorist attacks - Clinton spoke at a business conference in Australia. He mentioned how he had nearly gotten bin Laden, stating, "I nearly got him. And I could have killed him, but I would have to destroy a little town called Kandahar in Afghanistan and kill 300 innocent women and children, and then I would have been no better than him."





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6. Iraq

In Clinton's 1998 State of the Union Address, he warned Congress that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was building an arsenal of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Seeking to weaken Saddam's grip on Iraq, Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 into law. This instituted a policy of "regime change" against Iraq and set aside funds for Iraqi opposition groups in the hopes of removing Saddam from power and replacing his regime with a democratic government. Despite all of this, the Iraq Liberation Act didn't authorize or provide for direct intervention on the part of the U.S. military.

In response to reports that Saddam wasn't cooperating with UN inspectors and wasn't complying with terms that ended the Persian Gulf War, Clinton launched a 4-day bombing campaign named "Operation Desert Fox" in December 1998. The targets included weapons research and development buildings, air defense systems, weapon and supply depots, and the barracks and command headquarters of Saddam's Republican Guard (the elite troops of the Iraqi Army that reported directly to him). One of Saddam's lavish palaces was also destroyed. U.S. and British aircraft in the Iraq no-fly zone attacked hostile Iraqi air defenses 166 times in 1999 and 78 times in 2000.

Clinton's real emphasis in foreign policy was on economic globalization. This means he believed that American security and prosperity depended on removing barriers to trade with other nations and by stabilizing countries with economic troubles. Despite opposition from his own party, Clinton pushed Bush's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) bill through Congress in 1993. NAFTA lowered tariffs on trade between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico and allowed them to compete against similar free-trade zones in Europe and Asia. Canada benefited the most, seeing 3.6% economic growth (compared to the 3.3% in the U.S. and 2.7% in Mexico). Nearly all trade unions in the U.S. opposed NAFTA, fearing that it would rob U.S. workers of jobs. In September 2018, the 3 reached an agreement to replace NAFTA with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). All 3 countries ratified it by March 2020.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Clinton Years

From his first months in office until his last day, Clinton's Presidency was plagued by charges of wrongdoing, most notably Whitewater, Monica Lewinsky, and his impeachment.

1. Whitewater

The longest-running issue was the Whitewater Controversy, a small real-estate project in Arkansas in which Clinton and his wife Hillary had invested during the late 1970s. Before Clinton was elected Governor of Arkansas, he and Hillary were looking for ways to boost their income. The Clintons were approached by James McDougal and his wife about investing in the Whitewater Development Corporation. The Clintons knew the McDougals from having previously invested in another deal with the couple.

The Clintons and McDougals purchased 230 acres of land to build and sell vacation homes in the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas. Several problems hindered their plan, notably the accessibility of the land and flooding. The real estate venture failed, costing the Clintons \$40,000 in losses. Everyone (but the Clintons) did time in jail. Many accused Bill of using his position as President to "make it go away" and hinder the investigation into the questionable land deal. Clinton was elected Governor of Arkansas a short time later in November 1978. James McDougal entered the banking industry and formed Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan.

In 1986, Federal regulators investigated another real estate investment backed by James McDougal. The investigation led to McDougal's resignation from Madison Guaranty and the eventual collapse of the bank. Its failure cost the U.S. Government between \$65-75 million.

Questions surrounding Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater deal grew during Clinton's first term as President, and an investigation into the legality of the Whitewater transaction was launched. Allegations surfaced during the investigation that Clinton pressured David Hale (former president of a small business investment firm) into making a \$300,000 loan for the Whitewater deal. Other allegations said debts incurred during Clinton's campaign for Governor were paid off by Madison... through McDougal.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Clinton Years

1. Whitewater (continued...)

President Clinton and Hillary were subpoenaed for documents, but the Clintons reported the documents missing. The documents were eventually found and cleared the Clintons of any wrongdoing. However, the investigation continued under Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr, who had served as President Bush's U.S. Solicitor General (the 4th highest ranking position in the Department of Justice). James McDougal was sentenced to 3.5 years in jail for fraud and his wife was given 2 years. James died of a heart attack while incarcerated in Texas. His death was a clear setback to Starr and his prosecutors and reduced the legal risks to the Clintons. In the end, and after 3 separate inquiries, insufficient evidence linked the Clintons with criminal conduct.

2. Monica Lewinsky

The real scandal dropped in 1998 concerning a sexual affair Clinton had with a 22-year-old White House intern named Monica Lewinsky.

This was not the first time that allegations of sexual misconduct had been leveled against Clinton. In 1998, and while Clinton was President, he settled a sexual harassment case out-of-court when he paid a woman name Paula Jones \$850,000 to drop her harassment case from 1991 (when Clinton was the Governor of Arkansas).

Kenneth Starr, who had been appointed to look into the Whitewater scandal, was the lead investigator again.

Monica Lewinsky grew up in Southern California and graduated from Lewis & Clark College in Oregon in 1995 with a degree in psychology. With the help of a family connection, she got an unpaid White House summer internship in the office of Leon Panetta (the White House Chief of Staff and closest advisor to the President). She moved to D.C. and took up the position in July 1995. In December 1995, she was promoted to a paid position in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs. In April 1996, Lewinsky's superiors relocated her job to the Pentagon (where she befriended Linda Tripp), because they felt she was spending "too much time around Clinton".





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Clinton Years

2. Monica Lewinsky (continued...)

While working in the Pentagon's public affairs office, Lewinsky confided in her new friend Linda Tripp (who was 24 years older than Lewinsky). Lewinsky said she had sexual encounters with Clinton on 9 occasions from November 1995 to March 1997. Lewinsky went on to tell Tripp that First Lady Hillary was at the White House while 7 of these "encounters" happened.

After Lewinsky revealed this to Tripp, Tripp (acting on the advice of Lucianne Goldberg, a literary agent/book dealer) began to secretly record her phone conversations with Lewinsky in September 1997. She also convinced Lewinsky to save the gifts Clinton had given her and to not dry clean a semen-stained blue GAP dress (from one of their "encounters") in order to keep it as an "insurance policy".

Tripp reported their conversations to Goldberg who now urged Tripp to take the tapes to Kenneth Starr and bring them to the people working on the Paula Jones harassment case (which hadn't been settled out-of-court yet). In the fall of 1997, Goldberg began speaking to reporters (including an investigative journalist named Michael Isikoff of the magazine *Newsweek*) about the tapes.

As the Paula Jones case continued to be investigated, Lewinsky was contacted and submitted an affidavit (a written sworn statement of fact) that denied any physical relationship with Clinton.

In January 1998, Lewinsky tried to persuade Tripp to commit perjury (lie under oath) in the Jones case. Instead, Tripp gave the tapes to Starr (who was still investigating the Whitewater scandal).

Starr was now armed with evidence of Lewinsky's admission of a physical relationship with Clinton, and he broadened the investigation to include Lewinsky and her possible perjury in the Jones case.

News of the scandal first broke on January 17, 1998 on the *Drudge Report*, a news website launched by Matt Drudge in 1995. The site consists mainly of links to news stories from other outlets about politics, entertainment, and current events.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Clinton Years

2. Monica Lewinsky (continued...)

The website reported that *Newsweek* editors were sitting on a story by Michael Isikoff exposing the affair. The story broke in the mainstream press on January 21st in *The Washington Post*. Despite swift denials from Clinton, the demand for answers from the White House grew more intense.

On January 26th, Clinton, standing with Hillary, spoke at a White House press conference and issued a denial in which he said, "I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time. These allegations are false."

The next day, Hillary said on NBC's *Today* morning show, "The great story here for anybody willing to find it and write about it and explain it is this vast right-wing conspiracy that has been conspiring against my husband since the day he announced [he was running] for President."

For the next several months, the media debated whether an affair had occurred and whether Clinton had lied or obstructed justice, but nothing could be established beyond the tape recordings because Lewinsky was unwilling to discuss the affair or testify about it.

On July 28, 1998, Lewinsky received total immunity (which would protect her from future prosecution) in exchange for grand jury testimony concerning her encounters with Clinton. She also turned over the blue dress to the Starr investigators, thereby providing DNA evidence that could prove the relationship despite Clinton's official denial.

On August 17, 1998, Clinton admitted in taped grand jury testimony that he had engaged in an "improper physical relationship" with Lewinsky.

That evening Clinton gave a nationally televised statement admitting that his relationship with Lewinsky was "not appropriate".





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Clinton Years

2. Monica Lewinsky (continued...)

Three days after he testified, "Operation Infinite Reach" launched missiles against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The media and some Republicans accused Clinton of ordering the attacks as a diversion.

The entire Clinton-Lewinsky fiasco was far from over.

In his deposition for the Paula Jones harassment lawsuit, Clinton denied having sexual relations with Lewinsky. Based on the evidence (like the blue dress), Starr concluded that the President's sworn testimony was false and he had committed perjury (lying under oath). As Starr pointed out, it's one thing to lie during a TV interview, but it's another to lie under oath.

3. Impeachment

Clinton's Democratic Party was still in the minority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. A few Democrats and most Republicans claimed that Clinton giving false testimony and influencing Lewinsky's testimony were crimes of obstruction of justice and perjury... and impeachable.

On December 12, 1998, and after a delay due to "Operation Desert Fox" (the bombing of Iraq), the Republican-controlled House of Representatives approved 2 of the 4 articles of impeachment sent to it by the House Judiciary Committee. Clinton would now face a trial in the Republican-controlled Senate for grand jury perjury and obstruction of justice. (Remember, the House impeaches and the Senate convicts.) The House failed to approve the other two impeachment articles (perjury in the Paula Jones case and abuse of power).

Polls showed that only 44% of the U.S. public approved the impeachment and removal of Clinton. In fact, heading into the impeachment trial, Clinton's job approval rating sat at a robust 62%.

On February 12, 1999, the Senate voted. Sixty-seven Senators (or two-thirds) would have to vote "guilty" in order to convict and remove Clinton. (His Vice President Al Gore would then become President.)





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Clinton Years

3. Impeachment (continued...)

For Article 1 (grand jury perjury), 45 Senators voted "guilty" while 55 voted "not guilty". Specifically, the 45 that voted "guilty" were all Republican. Of the 55 that voted "not guilty", 45 were Democrats and 10 were Republicans.

For Article 2 (obstruction of justice), 50 Senators voted "guilty" and 50 voted "not guilty". Specifically, the 50 that voted "guilty" were all Republican. Of the 50 that voted "not guilty", 45 were Democrats and 5 were Republicans.

Although the affair and impeachment sullied Clinton's Presidency, he was able to turn the investigation against the Republicans. Many voters thought the Republicans were being unfair and hypocritical in pressing for impeachment and removal. In fact, Clinton's approval rating climbed to 71% after his acquittal. In April 1999, about 2 months after the trial, Clinton was cited by Federal District Judge Susan Webber Wright for civil contempt of court (being disobedient) for his "willful failure" to obey her orders to testify truthfully in the Paula Jones case. For this, Clinton was fined \$90,000 and the matter was referred to the Arkansas Supreme Court. On the day before leaving office, Clinton agreed to a 5-year suspension of his Arkansas law license and to pay an additional \$25,000 fine. He was also disbarred from practicing law before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the end, Clinton's biggest achievement was eliminating the Federal Budget deficit. Clinton's final 4 budgets (1998-2001) were balanced budgets that had surpluses. When he left in January 2001, the country was running on a surplus instead of a deficit. Historians consider Clinton to be one of the most brilliant economic leaders.

Al Gore, Clinton's Vice President, ran for President in 2000. Gore distanced himself from Clinton and even asked him to not campaign on his behalf. Gore's Republican challenger was George Walker Bush, former Governor of Texas and son of former President George H. W. Bush. Bush won the Election of 2000 despite losing by 543,895 Popular Votes in one of the closest and craziest elections in history.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Electoral College

** 2000 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (50.3% turnout)		<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)	
Gore:	50,999,897 (48.4%)	Bush:	271 (50.37%)
Bush:	50,456,002 (47.9%)	Gore:	266 (49.44%)**

** A "Faithless Elector" from Washington, D.C. chose to not cast her Electoral Vote for Gore. She did this as a form of protest against D.C.'s lack of voting representation in Congress. She said her blank ballot was an act of civil disobedience.

How does the Electoral College Work?

As bizarre as that may seem, the election of George W. Bush (even though he lost by over half a million Popular Votes) is totally within the realm of possibility under the current electoral system in the U.S. In fact, this happened 5 times:

- 1824 (John Q. Adams)
- 1876 (Rutherford B. Hayes)
- 1888 (Benjamin Harrison)
- 2000 (George W. Bush)
- 2016 (Donald J. Trump)

To understand how this can happen, let's examine how Presidential Elections work in this country.

For starters, electing a President is indirect. This means your vote does NOT actually determine who wins the White House. Instead, when you vote, you're actually choosing people known as "Electors" in what is called the "Electoral College" for your state.

The Electoral College was created by the Founding Fathers because they simply didn't trust us. (Let's be honest. Our track record up to that point in time consisted mainly of heavy drinking and rioting, which didn't help our case). However, the Founding Fathers most certainly didn't want to have Congress pick the President.

Instead, their compromise was to create an Electoral College system that allowed voters to vote for Electors... who then cast their votes for the candidates.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Electoral College

How does the Electoral College Work? (continued...)

Sidenote... Why are elections held on a Tuesday in November? Americans first began the custom of weekday voting in 1845 when Congress passed a federal law making the Tuesday following the first Monday in November as "Election Day". Before then, states were allowed to hold elections any time they pleased within a 34-day period before the first Wednesday in December. This system had many flaws, namely knowing early voting results in other states affected turnout - why bother voting in your state if your candidate was losing heavily in other states? In the 1800s, most Americans worked as farmers and lived far from their polling place. Since people often traveled at least a day to vote, Congress needed to allow a 2-day window for Election Day. Weekends wouldn't work since most people spent Sundays in church, and Wednesday was market day for farmers. With this in mind, Tuesday was selected as the most convenient day of the week to hold elections. November was picked as the month because spring and early summer elections interfered with the planting season, and late summer and early fall elections overlapped with the harvest. November was after the harvest but before the arrival of harsh winter weather. (So now you know!)

There are 2 kinds of votes you'll hear mentioned on Election Day: Popular Votes and Electoral Votes.

A Popular Vote (PV) is the actual ballot that YOU cast when you get into your voting booth. PVs help determine which candidate wins a certain state.

An Electoral Vote (EV) is the vote that's cast by members of the Electors of the Electoral College. EVs help determine which candidate wins the overall election.

In order to become President, a candidate must win the majority (1 more than half) of the Electoral Votes. There are 538 Electoral Votes up for grabs on Election Night. This comes from adding together 100 Senators + 435 Representatives (a number that's been the same since 1913) + 3 more for Washington, D.C. (which is treated as a state in elections) = 538. The first candidate to 270... wins.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Electoral College

How does the Electoral College Work? (continued...)

The number of Electoral Votes given to each state is calculated by adding together a state's Senators (every state gets 2) and a state's Representatives (based on the state's population).

In the 2016 Election, Ohio was "worth" 18 EVs (2 Senators + 16 Representatives = 18 EVs). This was based on the 2010 Census.

Ohio had 21 EVs in the Election of 2000 (based on the 1990 Census). Ohio dropped to 20 EVs in the Election of 2004 (based on the 2000 Census).

California is worth the most (55). Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington D.C., and Wyoming are worth the least (3).

In 1961, the 23rd Amendment made D.C. worth the same number of EVs as the state with the least number of EVs. This means D.C. is worth at least 3 EVs. Should that move to 4, then D.C. also moves up to 4.

Back to Ohio...

Since 1944, the winner of Ohio has gone on to win the Presidency (except for 1960: Ohio went for Nixon but JFK won).

In the last Presidential Election in 2016, Both Republican and Democratic Parties had 18 Electors chosen for Ohio since it was worth 18 EVs (think of it as 18 "points").

Electors are chosen by their state's party committee. They are selected usually as a way to reward their loyalty and service to the party. Often these Electors are politically active or have personal or political ties to the candidate. While the U.S. Constitution makes no mention of qualifications that must be met to become an Electoral College Elector, it does determine that an Elector cannot be a member of Congress, a high-ranking U.S. official, or someone who has "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" against the U.S. (Yea, those "insurrections" of yours will get you every time).





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Electoral College

How does the Electoral College Work? (continued...)

If the Republican candidate wins Ohio because she received more Popular Votes than her opponent, she wins all of Ohio's 18 "points". It doesn't matter whether she wins Ohio by 1 vote or 200,000 Popular Votes. In fact, Ohio and 47 other states have this kind of "winner-take-all" system in place. (Only Maine and Nebraska award their Electoral Votes according to which candidate won which Congressional District in their state.) Since the Republican candidate won Ohio, the Republicans send their 18 Electors to cast their Electoral Votes while the Democrat's 18 stay home. (These Electors meet in the state capital to cast their Electoral Votes on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December.)

However, the 18 Republican Electors chosen for Ohio do NOT have to vote for the Republican candidate. In short, this is the "safety net" that the Founding Fathers included when they created the Electoral College system. This way, if the people of Ohio elected Candidate "A" to win the state, the 18 Electors could opt out of voting for "A" and pick Candidate "B" instead.

Very rarely do Electors vote for someone they're not pledged to, but, it has happened before. Let's say that even though 100% of Ohioans voted for the Republican candidate, 1 (or more) of the 18 Republican Electors could, in theory, cast their Electoral Vote for the Democratic candidate instead. This is called a "Faithless Elector". While most states don't punish Faithless Electors, 4 states provide a penalty of some sort for the "deviant" vote (like a \$1,000 fine), and 11 states cancel the vote and replace the Elector. There have been 165 Faithless Electors in U.S. Presidential Elections.

Repeated efforts to amend or replace the Electoral College have been around since the start. Some want it based only on Popular Votes. Some want the states to award Electoral Votes based upon the percentage of the Popular Vote the candidate received. In other words, if Candidate "A" won 65% of the Popular Vote in Ohio, she would get 65% of Ohio's Electoral Vote (or 11.7 Electoral Votes). Naturally, people have a tendency to either agree or disagree with how it works depending on whether their candidate benefited.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Electoral College

How does the Electoral College Work? (continued...)

Still, with the current Electoral College system, it is possible for a candidate to win the Presidency *without* winning the most Popular Votes. And it has happened 5 times, too!

Think of U.S. Presidential Elections like Major League Baseball's World Series. To win the World Series, a team must win 4 of the 7 games. To win the Presidential Election, a candidate must win 270 of the 538 EVs.

Consider the number of runs scored by a team as being like the number of PVs a candidate receives.

World Series Results

Game 1 - Tigers 3, Braves 2	...	<i>Tigers lead series 1-0</i> <i>Total offense: Tigers 3, Braves 2</i>
Game 2 - Tigers 5, Braves 0	...	<i>Tigers lead series 2-0</i> <i>Total offense: Tigers 8, Braves 2</i>
Game 3 - Braves 10, Tigers 2	...	<i>Tigers lead series 2-1</i> <i>Total offense: Braves 12, Tigers 10</i>
Game 4 - Braves 8, Tigers 4	...	<i>Series tied 2-2</i> <i>Total offense: Braves 20, Tigers 14</i>
Game 5 - Braves 22, Tigers 1	...	<i>Braves lead series 3-2</i> <i>Total offense: Braves 42, Tigers 15</i>
Game 6 - Tigers 4, Braves 3	...	<i>Series tied 3-3</i> <i>Total offense: Braves 45, Tigers 19</i>
Game 7 - Tigers 2, Braves 1	...	<i>Tigers win series 4-3</i> <i>Total offense: Braves 46, Tigers 21</i>

The Tigers win the World Series because they won more GAMES than the Braves (4-3). But... the Braves had a better offense and scored more RUNS than the Tigers (46-21). Still, the Tigers are Champs because the World Series is based on GAMES, not runs.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Electoral College

How does the Electoral College Work? (continued...)

With the World Series example in the back of your head, let's revisit the Election of 2000...

George W. Bush:

- Won 30 states (58.82%)
- Won 271 Electoral Votes (50.4%)
- Won 50,456,002 Popular Votes (47.9%)

Albert Gore, Jr.:

- Won 20 states + DC (41.18%)
- Won 266** Electoral Votes (49.4%)
- Won 50,999,897 Popular Votes (48.9%)

*** NOTE: Gore should have had 267 EVs, but a Democratic Elector from D.C. refused to cast her EV for Gore and left her ballot blank in protest of D.C.'s lack of voting representation in Congress.*

Bush wins because he won more EVs than Gore (271-266). But... Gore won 543,895 more PVs than Bush. Still, Bush wins because Presidential Elections are based on ELECTORAL Votes, NOT Popular Votes.

What happens if no candidate is able to hit 270 EVs? If nobody wins 270 EVs, the decision is thrown to House of Representatives (per the rules of the 12th Amendment). The top 3 candidates with the most EVs go before the House. The House then votes state-by-state to decide, with 1 vote allotted per state. A candidate needs 26 states to win. The vote is repeated over and over until someone gets 26 and wins. This has actually happened 2 times, in 1800 (Thomas Jefferson) and in 1824 (J.Q. Adams).

Oddly enough, this means someone could become President without winning the PV and the EV! In 1824, John Quincy Adams became the 6th President despite losing *both* the EV and the PV to Andrew Jackson. Because no one won the majority of EVs (131 back then), the Election went to the House, who picked from the top 3 EV-getting candidates (Adams, Jackson, and William Crawford). In the House (made up of only 24 states then), 13 states picked Adams, 7 picked Jackson, and 4 picked Crawford. This made Adams the new President.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

George Walker Bush, son of George H. W. Bush, served as the 43rd President from 2001-2009.

Bush, a Republican, had been the Governor of Texas from 1995-2000. Prior to his foray into politics, Bush worked in the oil industry and Major League Baseball. In 1989, the owner of the Texas Rangers sold the team to an investment group headed by Bush for \$89 million, although Bush's share in the team was small (\$500,000). Bush left his position with the Rangers when he was elected Governor.

The "W" Administration got off to an auspicious start thanks to the insanity surrounding his election. One word sums up why the Election of 2000 was controversial: Florida. In fact, the entire outcome of the election hinged on Florida's 25 Electoral Votes.

At 8pm on November 7th, all 5 major TV stations prematurely called Gore as the winner of Florida. However, by 10pm, as votes were tallied from the panhandle, all 5 stations retracted their call. As the night wore on, Florida became "too close to call". By 2:30am, with 85% of the vote counted, Bush now led Gore by more than 10,000 PVs. All 5 stations called Bush the winner of Florida and declared that he would be the next President. Gore even privately contacted Bush and congratulated him on winning the Presidency. But by 4:30am, with 100% of the votes counted, Bush led by only 1,784 PVs out of the more than 6 million PVs cast in Florida. This small margin was within the automatic recount rule.

As a result, the stations took back Bush's victory, Gore withdrew his concession, and Florida again became "too close to call". This became significant because in taking the 25 EVs off Bush's EV total, it now meant that Gore was winning, 267-246. However, Gore still didn't have the magic number of "270". Thus, the ENTIRE election now hinged on the recount. If Gore won Florida, he would become President. If Bush won Florida, he would become President.

A *machine* recount (which means all of the PVs are counted again) was conducted and took a week. After the recount, Bush's lead dropped to under 200 PVs. Gore requested a *hand* recount in 4 Democratic counties where 70,000 punch-card ballots had recorded a "no vote".





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

To the Gore campaign, these “no votes” for President raised a red flag. It seemed odd that 70,000 people would head to the polls and vote for school and fire levies... but skip voting for President.

A punch-card ballot requires voters to punch holes in cards next to the name of the candidate they want to vote for by using a supplied punching device. Punch-ballots are then fed into a tabulating machine in order to “count” the vote.

If a voter fails to punch hard enough and break the perforated hole, then when the punch-card ballot gets run through the tabulating machine, the vote won't count and will show up as a “no vote”.

On November 26th, and after a hand recount of the punch-card ballots, Bush was declared the winner by 537 PVs and was now President.

Except that he wasn't...

Gore contested these results to the Florida Supreme Court and demanded a second recount (a re-recount) of the 70,000 “no vote” punch-card ballots.

Gore's holdup was the “hanging chad”. A “chad” is the name of the perforated hole that gets punched out by a voter on a punch-card ballot.

Hand counting ballots with “hanging chads” became controversial for 2 reasons:

1. Voter's intent: If there was a “hanging chad” next to Gore's name, should that ballot count as an automatic vote for Gore? Some vote counters said “yes” while others said “no”.
2. Technicality: If the rules say “hanging chad” ballots are not to be counted, then why are they even being looked at in the first place? Rules are rules.

The American public was growing tired. Almost a month had passed since the election... and there was still NO winner.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

That's when the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in. On December 12th, it ruled twice in the case *Bush v. Gore*.

In a 7-2 vote, the Supreme Court ruled that because different vote counters interpreted the "hanging chads" differently, the Florida Supreme Court's approval of the re-count was unconstitutional.

In a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court ruled that there was also not enough time to conduct the hand recount before the U.S. Government's December 15th deadline for when the state's Electoral College members were supposed to meet to determine who gets Florida's 25 EVs.

As a result, Bush officially won Florida by 537 PVs. The 25 EVs he got for winning Florida pushed him past Gore (and 1 EV past the 270 threshold). Bush won 271-266 (not 267 because a "Faithless Elector" didn't vote for Gore) in the EV but lost by 543,895 in the PV.

On January 6, 2001, a joint session of Congress met to certify the EVs. Twenty members of the House filed objections to Florida's EVs. According to an 1877 law, any such objection had to be sponsored by both a Representative and a Senator. No Senator would co-sponsor these objections, deferring to the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings in *Bush v. Gore*. In a twist of irony, Gore, who was still the acting Vice President under Clinton (and the VP serves as the President of the Senate) had to rule the 20 objections "out of order".

Fourteen days later, on January 20th, Bush took the Oath of Office as the 43rd U.S. President.

The recount issue loomed over the country. Many cried foul because Bush's younger brother, Jeb, was Florida's Governor. As a result, several independent recounts were conducted by newspapers. Some found that had the recount continued, Gore would've won by 107 or 115 PVs. Others found Bush would've still won, but by only 110 PVs.

As a result, Bush faced a divided U.S. and took office with a 46% approval rating. However, a massive terrorist attack on September 11th would take the country's attention off the Election of 2000 and unify Americans in a way not seen since World War II.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

On the sunny Tuesday morning of September 11, 2001, 19 terrorists, working in teams of 4 or 5, hijacked 4 commercial jetliners and turned them toward targets chosen for destruction.

Two of the planes, Boeing 767s, loaded with fuel and passengers, were flown at speeds between 470-590mph into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. American Airlines Flight 11 hit the North Tower at 8:46am, just 17 minutes before United Airlines Flight 175 hit the South Tower at 9:03am. The buildings burst into flames and collapsed almost an hour later (the South Tower collapsed at 9:59 in just 10 seconds, and the North Tower collapsed at 10:28am). A total of 2,753 people (including 343 NYC firefighters and 71 law enforcement officials) died in New York.

At 9:37am, a third terrorist crew smashed their plane (American Airlines Flight 77) into the Pentagon, headquarters of the U.S. military in Arlington, Virginia, killing 184.

The hijackers of the fourth airliner (United Airlines Flight 93) intended to hit another target in the Washington, D.C. area (like the White House or the Capitol Building), but passengers on the plane fought back. This airplane crashed in a field near rural Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing 40.

The 9/11 attacks (which lasted 102 minutes from Flight 11 until the collapse of the North Tower) were the deadliest terrorist act in world history and constituted the first major foreign assault on the Continental U.S. since 1814 when the British invaded Washington, D.C. and burned the White House during the War of 1812.

In all, 2,977 victims were confirmed to have died and over 6,000 were wounded in the initial attacks. In 2007, the New York City medical examiner's office began to add people to the official death toll who died of illnesses caused by exposure to toxins at Ground Zero. As it stands today, 2,996 Americans perished on 9/11. Medical authorities concluded that 1,140 people who worked and lived in Lower Manhattan at the time have been diagnosed with cancer as a result of exposure. Sadly, over 1,400 rescue workers who responded to the scene in the days and months after the attacks have since died.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

The youngest victim was a 2.5-year-old child on Flight 175 while the oldest was an 82-year-old passenger on Flight 11.

The 9/11 death toll was the most to die on U.S. soil since the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War when 4,710 Americans died on September 17, 1862. The 9/11 death toll also eclipsed the 2,403 killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

While bad, the 9/11 death toll could have been much higher. Turnstile counts indicate there were 14,154 people in the Twin Towers at 8:45am on 9/11 (1 minute before Flight 11 hit the North Tower).

The men who carried out the hijackings came from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Arab states. The targets they chose symbolized U.S. financial, political, and military power. They worked for al-Qaeda, the radical Islamic group led by Osama bin Laden that had attacked 2 U.S. Embassies in Africa and the USS *Cole* in the late 1990s.

The hijackers selected transcontinental flights from the East Coast to the West Coast, which meant the aircraft would be carrying extra fuel and be able to cause more damage when they exploded. They chose flights on a midweek day that would be less likely to have a full load of passengers. This would reduce the chance of someone interfering with their plans. They also targeted airlines with the words "American" or "United" as symbolic gestures of defiance.

The FBI concluded that 19 men were involved, some as pilots and some as accomplices. Several had taken flight lessons in the U.S. They needed only basic training to accomplish their mission. Because they planned to hijack planes already in flight, they did not have to learn takeoff procedures, and since they intended to crash, they did not need to know how to land. Preparation was extensive.

FBI agents later concluded that the ringleader for the entire September 11th operation was an Egyptian named Mohamed Atta. He was at the controls of Flight 11 that hit the North Tower.

Since airline screening makes it hard to smuggle guns aboard, the terrorists used ceramic knives and box cutters as their weapons.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

U.S. citizens, feeling their country under attack, rallied behind their leaders in a display of national unity, patriotism, and much-needed generosity.

Instantly, the controversy concerning the Election of 2000 and "hanging chads" seemed ridiculous.

The country celebrated the values of courage and heroism exemplified by the New York firefighters and rescue workers who willingly rushed into the towers to save as many people as possible. Before long, it was clear that September 11th would alter the course of U.S. history. President Bush quickly announced that fighting terrorism and preventing future attacks would be his Administration's top priority.

Just as FDR's words following the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor would be the rallying cry in WWII, Bush's words helped unite the country in the new War on Terrorism. He said, "I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it. I will not yield, I will not rest, I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people."

Bush gave governments around the world an ultimatum with his Bush Doctrine. In short, he told other countries that they're either "with us" or "against us". Bush asserted that the responsibility of the U.S. is to protect itself by promoting democracy where the terrorists are located so as to undermine the basis for terrorist activities. Bush believed that hatred for the U.S. was not because of actions perpetrated by the U.S., but rather because the countries from which terrorists emerge are in social disarray and do not experience the freedom that is an intrinsic part of democracy. In short, if these countries become democracies then their terroristic behavior will stop.

Understandably, this did not sit well with many countries.

The Bush Doctrine eventually landed the U.S. in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. These wars, considered part of Bush's War on Terrorism, would vastly impact his approval rating as the years wore on.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

In the post 9/11-world, Americans had to get used to new security measures that complicated their travel, work, and recreation.

In the meantime, Bush created a new Cabinet position called the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Six weeks after 9/11, Congress passed the U.S.A. P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act, which was an acronym for: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act. (It is usually just written as the "Patriot Act".)

The Patriot Act authorized the jailing of those suspected of being terrorists. Concerns soon ranged from wiretapping to racial profiling to interrogation techniques. Elements of the Patriot Act continue to be debated, usually in court.

In 2002, Homeland Security introduced a color-coded "Advisory System" concerning the likelihood of a terrorist attack on any given day.

The system used colors ranging from green to red. Specifically, the scale went from green (Low Risk of Terrorist Attacks) to blue (Guarded/General Risk) to yellow (Elevated/Significant Risk) to orange (High Risk) to red (Severe Risk). The system was largely ignored and often mocked. As a result, it was scrapped in 2011.

Almost immediately (and to be expected), there were conspiracy theories about 9/11. Many theories came on the heels of the *9/11 Commission Report*, which was the U.S. Government's "official" version of the attacks.

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (better known as the 9/11 Commission) was established on November 27, 2002, some 442 days after the attacks. It's final report was not issued until July 22, 2004.

The 9/11 Commission interviewed over 1,200 people in 10 countries and reviewed over 2.5 million pages of documents, including classified national security documents. The Commission placed heavy blame on the FBI, CIA, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

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After releasing the report, the Commission's chair Thomas Kean declared that both Presidents Clinton and W. Bush were "not well served" by the FBI and CIA.

The report said that an attack by al-Qaeda was imminent but was roundly criticized for not giving the whole story behind the warnings the U.S. received prior, more specifically: who know what, when they knew it, and what they did with that information.

The biggest pundits of the Commission's report have been the 9/11 Truth Movement, who continue to advocate that "9/11 was an inside job" and that "Bush knew".

The most damning accusation is that Bush deliberately turned a blind eye to attack warnings because he wanted to go to war in the Middle East for oil.

"Truthers" cite evidence that an airliner did not hit the Pentagon and that the World Trade Center could not have been brought down by airliner impacts and burning aviation fuel alone. Many witnesses claim to have heard explosions below the aircraft impacts and before both the collapses and the attacks themselves.

The collapse of "7 World Trade Center" (7 WTC) is often times what conspiracy theorists point to when discussing unrelated explosions. The 47-story skyscraper was not hit by any planes during the attacks but still collapsed later the same day. "Truthers" claim that the internal fire damage of 7 WTC was not caused by the debris of the Twin Towers coming down but by explosives installed in the building in advance. This collapse was never investigated by the 9/11 Commission.

Controlled demolition theories, such as 7 WTC, make up a good chunk of 9/11 conspiracy theories.

Like with the JFK assassination and the moon landing, 9/11 conspiracies continue to take shape. Today, 49% of New Yorkers and 41% of Americans do not believe the "historical" version of how 9/11 unfolded.





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Nevertheless, in the aftermath of 9/11, Bush enjoyed a 92% approval rating. This remains the highest received by any U.S. President ever. Bush, however, would see his popularity drop due to post-9/11 U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

1. Afghanistan

Following the 9/11 attacks, Bush and the U.S. Government suspected Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda as the perpetrator of the attacks and demanded that the Taliban government hand him over.

The Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) had left Afghanistan in chaos. A civil war among 6 different rebel groups that had combated the Soviets soon erupted, heavily damaging Kabul (the capital) and killing 25,000 civilians. Soon other militia groups and warlords joined in, destroying the country's stability.

In 1994, a former guerilla from the Soviet-Afghan War named Mohammed Omar formed a group called the Taliban in Kandahar (a city in Southern Afghanistan). It grew in power, toppled Kabul in September 1996, and soon controlled 90% of the country. The Taliban proclaimed the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan", made Omar its "Emir" (king), moved the capital to Kandahar, and quickly set about enforcing their interpretation of Islamic Sharia Law (Arabic for "God's Divine Law"). This resulted in the brutal treatment of many Afghans, especially women. During their rule, the Taliban, who considered many of Afghanistan's other ethnic communities as "foreigners", committed massacres against civilians, denied UN food supplies to 160,000 starving civilians, committed "cultural genocide" by destroying monuments (some over 1,500 years old), and conducted a policy of scorched earth by burning once-fertile land and destroying tens of thousands of homes. In response, Afghanistan's former Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud, who had been a guerilla commander during the Soviet resistance, formed a group called the Afghan Northern Alliance to fight the Taliban. However, neighboring Pakistan began sending thousands of Pakistanis to help the Taliban defeat the Northern Alliance. The al-Qaeda terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden also aided the Taliban. Around 400,000 Afghans died from internal conflicts and civil wars between 1990-2001.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

1. Afghanistan (continued...)

On September 9, 2001, 2 al-Qaeda suicide attackers, posing as journalists, detonated a bomb hidden in a video camera while interviewing the Northern Alliance's leader Massoud. Aside from being targeted because he was fighting against the Taliban, al-Qaeda wanted Massoud dead because in April 2001 he warned of a massive terrorist attack on U.S. soil (the 9/11 attack) while speaking in Belgium before the European Union's Parliament. John P. O'Neill was a counter-terrorism expert and Assistant Director of the FBI. He retired from the FBI to become the Director of Security at the World Trade Center, taking the job 2 weeks before 9/11. On September 10th, O'Neill told his friends, "We're due. And we're due for something big. Some things have happened in Afghanistan [referring to the assassination of Massoud]. I don't like the way things are lining up in Afghanistan. I sense a shift, and I think things are going to happen soon." (O'Neill died on 9/11 when the South Tower collapsed.)

Two days after Massoud's murder, the 9/11 attacks were carried out. President Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden. The Taliban agreed to hand him over... but not directly to the U.S. The Taliban said they would extradite bin Laden to a third country for trial once the U.S. provided them clear evidence of his involvement in the attacks. Bush refused their offer and viewed it as a delaying tactic.

On October 7, 2001, the U.S. (led by General Tommy Franks) and the United Kingdom began "Operation Enduring Freedom" with the intention of dislodging the Taliban regime for sheltering Osama bin Laden and other members of al-Qaeda. The majority of Afghans supported the U.S. invasion of their country. To justify the war, Bush claimed the Taliban threatened not only the sovereignty (the ability to govern yourself) of the Afghan people but also the sovereignty of surrounding countries. The U.S. and U.K. collaborated with the Northern Alliance to combat the Taliban. For the first 12 days, a bombing campaign took out al-Qaeda training camps and targeted Taliban defenses. (Ironically, some of the bombing intel was given to the U.S. by Iran, who supported the Northern Alliance.)





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

1. Afghanistan (continued...)

The Taliban unraveled quickly following a massive defeat at the Battle of Mazar-i-Sharif on November 9th in which the U.S. suffered 0 casualties to the Taliban's 300 killed, 500 captured, and 1,000 defeated. Later that month, the Northern Alliance took back Kabul.

After tracking Osama bin Laden to a well-equipped Tora Bora cave complex southeast of Kabul, the U.S. and its allies engaged in a fierce 2-week battle with al-Qaeda from December 3-17, 2001. The U.S. again suffered no casualties while al-Qaeda loss 200 KIA and 60 captured. Unfortunately, bin Laden escaped on horseback into Pakistan the day before the battle ended. (Inevitably, he was tracked down to a compound north of Pakistan's capital of Islamabad and killed on May 2, 2011 by members of U.S. Navy SEAL Team Six.)

After the fall of Kabul, the United Nations invited major Afghan factions (including the Northern Alliance and a group led by Afghanistan's former pre-Taliban leader) to a conference in Bonn, Germany. On December 5th, the factions signed the Bonn Agreement that installed Hamid Karzai as the country's "interim" leader and created an international peacekeeping force to maintain security in Kabul.

On December 20th, the UN authorized the International Security Assistance Force (or ISAF). This NATO-led military mission would also be tasked with training the Afghan Armed Forces and helping Afghanistan rebuild key governmental buildings. Troop contributors included the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and other NATO members.

To help, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$38 billion in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan from 2001-2009.

Just 2 months after the war began, the Taliban had been driven from power. The end of the Taliban regime is usually dated December 9, 2001 when they surrendered Kandahar and their leader Mohammed Omar fled. While hundreds of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters and leaders had been killed or captured during the initial invasion, thousands still managed to slip off into the mountains of Afghanistan and surrounding countries.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

1. Afghanistan (continued...)

In March 2002, "Operation Anaconda", the first major ground assault and largest since the Battle of Tora Bora, was launched against 1,000 al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters hiding in the mountains. Even though they suffered 8 KIA and 82 WIA, the U.S. killed 800 (or 80%) of the enemy combatants.

By the summer of 2002, Al-Qaeda fighters established sanctuaries on the border with Pakistan where they launched cross-border raids. Guerilla units, numbered between 5-25 men, regularly went across the border to fire rockets at coalition bases, ambush U.S. convoys and patrols, and assault civilians. Taliban fighters remained in hiding in the rural regions of Afghanistan. The British Royal Marines, highly trained in mountain warfare, were deployed in numerous operations, including "Operation Jacana", "Operation Snipe", "Operation Condor", and "Operation Buzzard" over several weeks with varying results. Still, the Taliban alluded capture.

In January 2003, the U.S. led a 2-week "cave cleaning" operation ("Operation Mongoose") in Kandahar. Using Apache helicopters and F-16 fighter jets, over 75 caves were "cleaned".

On October 9, 2004, Afghanistan held its first nationwide democratic Presidential Election. Their elections are conducted using a two-round system. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the first round, a second (or "run-off") round is held featuring the top two candidates from the first round.

More than 12 million Afghans registered to vote (and 41% were women). On Election Day, 70% of registered voters cast their ballots among the 18 candidates (including a female candidate). To ensure that people only voted once, each voter's right index finger was stained with long-lasting purple ink.

Rebels loyal to the former Taliban government attempted to disrupt the election. Five members of the Afghan Armed Forces and 17 UN election workers overseeing the voting were killed and 46 injured in various attacks in and around the polling places.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

1. Afghanistan (continued...)

Hamid Karzi, who had served as the nation's interim leader, became the country's first President after receiving 55.4% of the votes (which eliminated the need for a second round of voting). Karzi served his first 5-year term before winning e-election in 2009. Ashraf Ghani won the 2014 Election (Karzi couldn't run again because of term limits), and for the first time in its history, power was democratically transferred. Ghani won re-election in 2019.

Still, and despite countless operations, pockets of al-Qaeda remained throughout Afghanistan, resulting in renewed and prolonged fighting. However, on October 26, 2014 (and after 13 years), the U.S. and the U.K. officially ended their combat operations in Afghanistan. On that day, the U.S. and Britain handed over their last bases to Afghan forces.

On December 28th, NATO ended combat operations and disbanded the ISAF in a ceremony held in Kabul. However, not all of the troops came home. Over 17,000 (including 13,000 U.S. forces) remained behind in advisory roles as part of the new NATO-led mission under the name "Operation Resolute Support" that began on January 1, 2015. (This is referred to as "Operation Freedom's Sentinel" in the U.S.)

"Operation Freedom's Sentinel" serves as a counter-terrorism mission against the remnants of al-Qaeda and provides support for the Afghan Armed Forces. Afghanistan has become America's longest war.

The U.S. has suffered over 2,400 KIA and 20,000 wounded. The U.S.-allied Afghan Armed Forces lost over 65,500 killed while the Northern Alliance saw 200 KIA. Taliban forces sustained between 60,000-72,000 killed while al-Qaeda lost 2,000 KIA. Additional terrorist organizations that have since entered the war have lost over 2,400 killed. Over 38,400 Afghan civilians have died during the conflict.

From 2001-2018, the U.S. spent \$75 billion on the Afghanistan War. The cost of deploying 1 U.S. soldier in Afghanistan was over \$1 million a year. In 2019, the U.S. Department of Defense requested \$46 billion to fund "Operation Freedom's Sentinel".





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

1. Afghanistan (continued...)

On February 29, 2020, the U.S. and the Taliban signed a conditional peace deal which requires that U.S. troops withdraw from Afghanistan within 14 months so long as the Taliban cooperates with the terms of the agreement. On March 10th, the UN unanimously backed the U.S.-Taliban peace deal.

The war in Afghanistan became part of a "Global War on Terrorism". Shortly after 9/11, the U.S. found al-Qaeda cells in over 50 countries. In keeping al-Qaeda on its heels, over 10 major terrorist attacks on the U.S. and Britain were thwarted from 2002-2006.

2. Iraq

Bush and his advisors were deeply concerned that terrorists might acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). These could be nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush warned that an "Axis of Evil" made up of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea posed a grave threat to world peace. Each of these countries had harbored terrorists in the past and were suspected of developing WMDs.

Of particular interest to Bush was Iraq. Bush's father, of course, had been in office in 1991 when the U.S. pummeled Iraq and drove them out of Kuwait. After the Gulf War, Iraq had to submit to UN inspections. From 1991-1998, Iraq appeared to be hiding WMDs from these UN inspectors.

Much of the case against Iraq was already in place, starting in 1998 when President Clinton warned Congress that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was building chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Clinton's Iraq Liberation Act advocated "regime change" and set aside funds for Iraqi opposition groups in the hopes of removing Saddam from power and implementing a democratic government.

However, the Iraq Liberation Act didn't authorize the use of the U.S. military to do fulfill the regime change.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

When Iraq didn't comply with the UN inspectors, Clinton launched "Operation Desert Fox", a 4-day bombing attack on Iraq to destroy its ability to make WMDs. U.S. and British aircraft in the Iraq no-fly zone attacked hostile Iraqi air defenses 166 times in 1999 and 78 times in 2000.

In 2002, intelligence agencies continued to believe Iraq was hiding WMDs. Bush asked the UN to pressure Saddam Hussein to give up all of Iraq's WMDs. Iraq admitted that it *did* have WMDs before the first Gulf War but that it no longer had any.

In October 2002, the Republican-controlled Congress passed the Iraq Resolution 296-133 in the House and 77-23 in the Senate. This authorized Bush to use "any means necessary" against Iraq, including the use of U.S. Armed Forces. Initially, Americans polled widely favored a diplomatic approach over an invasion.

The UN called for new inspections, and Saddam permitted inspectors to return in November 2002. In February 2003, these inspectors found "no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq". At the start of March, the UN inspectors said there was no evidence of WMDs in Iraq.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Government engaged in an elaborate domestic public relations campaign to market a potential second war with Iraq to the public. Americans overwhelmingly believed Saddam did have WMDs. In fact, 85% said he did even though the inspectors had concluded otherwise, and 64% of Americans (at that time) supported taking military action to remove Saddam from power.

On February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell lobbied the UN to permit an invasion, stating that Iraq was lying. He also presented evidence alleging that Iraq and Saddam had direct ties to al-Qaeda. As the U.S. and 40 other countries (including the U.K.) prepared for war with Iraq, the UN refused to authorize the use of force. France and Russia, members of the UN Security Council who have the power to veto any UN action, refused to back the U.S.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

Around the world, 3,000 anti-war demonstrations and 36 million protesters spoke out against the U.S. and Bush. Speaking at a conference in the U.K., former President Clinton said, "As a pre-emptive action today, however well-justified, may come back with unwelcome consequences in the future." Pope John Paul II, who met privately with Bush, publically condemned any sort of military intervention. Former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela voiced his opposition, stating, "All that Mr. Bush wants is Iraqi oil." Many saw the pending war as a violation of international law and accused the U.S. and the U.K. of acting like a "world vigilante". To many outsiders, it seemed that the U.S. would do anything to get its war with Iraq. Many said it was a "personal vendetta" by Bush to kill Saddam since his father stopped short of that in 1991.

Soon, countries that had helped the U.S. in Afghanistan refused to help in Iraq. These included Germany, France, and Canada. Saudi Arabia and Turkey refused to let the U.S. attack Iraq from their territories. Only Kuwait permitted the U.S. access.

In an address to the nation on March 17, 2003, Bush defended the impending invasion on grounds of pre-emptive self-defense, arguing that Iraq could arm terrorists with WMDs. He said, "The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours." Finally, Bush demanded that Saddam and his 2 sons Qusay (Saddam's heir apparent) and Uday surrender and leave Iraq. Bush gave them a 48-hour deadline, promising the Iraqi people, "The day of your liberation is near."

At 5:34am Baghdād Time on March 20th (or 9:34pm EST on March 19th in the U.S.), the surprise military invasion of Iraq began, without UN approval, as U.S. and British forces launched a powerful bombing display dubbed "Shock and Awe". Led by U.S. General Tommy Franks, 177,000 coalition forces (including 130,000 U.S. troops and 45,000 British troops) were supported by 70,000 Iraqi Kurdish militia troops. (Kurds are an ethnic group native to a mountainous region of Western Asia known as Kurdistan that spans areas across Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.)





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

Even though "Operation Iraqi Freedom" encountered major resistance initially (although not to the level that the U.S. expected), massive air strikes across the country threw the Iraqi Army into chaos and prevented an effective resistance. The objectives in this initial invasion were to end Saddam's regime, eliminate Iraq's WMDs, drive out terrorists, secure Iraq's oil fields, and help the Iraqi people transition to a new democratic government.

On April 9th, just 20 days after the invasion began, U.S. troops captured Baghdad, ending Saddam's 24-year rule, and liberating the Iraqi people. That same day, crowds tore down a huge iron statue of Saddam in the Firdos Square, a public open space in the center of the capital. Before the statue was toppled, one U.S. soldier climbed it and placed an American flag over the face. Other soldiers soon realized the PR disaster unfolding as the formerly cheering crowd became silent, so they grabbed an Iraqi flag and gave it to the crowd to put up instead of the American flag. The statue was then torn down. The event was widely publicized, but allegations that it had been staged in a manner similar to the Iwo Jima flag raising soon surfaced. The fall of Baghdad saw a widespread outpouring of gratitude toward the American "liberators" but also massive civil disorder. One civilian, a wrestler who famously took a sledgehammer to the statue of Saddam, commented, "After the invasion, things started to get worse every year. There was infighting, corruption, killing, and looting. Saddam has gone, but now in his place, we have 1,000 Saddams."

Additional operations targeted remaining pockets of the Iraqi Army, which was eventually overwhelmed and defeated. Saddam and other high-ranking leaders went into hiding as coalition forces completed the occupation of the county after 26 days.

On May 1, 2003, while aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* docked off the coast of San Diego and in front of a giant "Mission Accomplished" banner, Bush declared major combat operations in Iraq "over". The U.S. lost 139 (109 KIA) and 495 WIA. Between 11,000-15,000 Iraqi combatants were killed along with 3,750 civilians.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

Bush's speech (and banner) would come back to haunt him. Unlike in Afghanistan where the arrival of U.S. troops scattered al-Qaeda, the arrival of the U.S. in Iraq attracted al-Qaeda and other radical groups who saw this as a chance to build support in the Muslim world by organizing resistance to the U.S.

On July 22, 2003, Saddam's sons Uday (age 39) and Qusay (36) were surrounded in a home in the city of Mosul in Northern Iraq by 200 U.S. troops. They were both killed in the subsequent firefight. On December 13, 2003, Saddam was captured during a raid near his hometown of Tikrīt, a city along the Tigris River. He was found hiding in a spider hole (similar to a foxhole). He was turned over to the Iraqi people, who put him on trial and had him hanged 3 years later on December 30, 2006.

With the initial invasion over, the Occupation of Iraq (2003-2014) began. This would prove to be the most difficult (and the deadliest) phase of the conflict.

The Occupation of Iraq saw a massive increase in violence and political turmoil. In June 2004, the Iraqi Interim Government was established. It was to serve as a "care-taker" government until a new regular government in Iraq could be elected. Tens of thousands of private company personnel were employed in the protection of Iraq's infrastructure. Efforts in rebuilding Iraq following the damage after the invasion were slowed when the coalition and allied Iraqi forces fought a stronger-than-expected militant Iraqi insurgency, leading to difficult living conditions for the people of Iraq.

After decades of brutal oppression, 2 years of war, and for the first time in half a century, Iraq held free elections on January 30, 2005. The voting marked an important step in the transition of turning control of the country over from U.S. occupation forces to the Iraqis themselves. The election was seen by some as a victory for democracy in the Middle East. However, 15,000 U.S. soldiers were on patrol in Baghdād amid vows by al-Qaeda and other insurgency rebels to "wash the streets with voters' blood".





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

The objective with this election would be for the Iraqi people to elect a transitional 275-member Iraqi National Assembly that would function like a Parliament. This meant the National Assembly, once elected, would be responsible for drafting a new constitution. The National Assembly would also appoint the country's transitional President, its 2 transitional Vice Presidents, and its transitional Prime Minister. (Iraq is a parliamentary democracy.)

More than 100 armed attacks on the 30,000 polling places killed 35, including 20 in Baghdad. Despite this, of the 14.2 million Iraqis registered to vote, 58% cast ballots, successfully electing the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly.

One Iraqi voter, who had lost his leg in a car bomb blast the year before, expressed his excitement to vote: "I would have crawled here if I had to." He proudly waved his index finger to show the purple ink used at the polls to prevent double-voting.

On April 6, 2005, the Iraqi Transitional National Assembly appointed Jalal Talabani as President and Ibrahim al-Jaafari as Prime Minister. Moving forward, Iraq's legislature would always appoint the President. The President, in turn, would always select the Prime Minister. Two 4-year terms would be the max that both could serve.

Iraq's President functions as the "head of state". Its Prime Minister functions as the "head of government". The difference between "head of state" and "head of government" is that the "head of state" formally represents the people of a country. The "head of government" is the person that serves as the leader and is in charge of the system of creating and executing laws.

For example, in the U.K., Queen Elizabeth II serves as the "head of state" while Prime Minister Boris Johnson serves as the "head of government". In the U.S., many say that the President is the "head of government" when, in reality, the President is the only leader of the Executive Branch and does not legislate or create laws. This means, the President is the "head of state" in the U.S.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

The Iraqi Transitional National Assembly drafted a new constitution and took it to the Iraqi people in a national referendum on October 15, 2005. It was approved with 79.6% of the vote (with 69% voter turnout).

After this, on December 15th of the same year, a general election was held to elect a permanent 275-Iraqi Council of Representatives to replace the Transitional National Assembly and create Iraq's parliamentary unicameral legislature. (As of 2020, this Council of Representatives has 329 representatives.) Following this particular legislative election, in which 76.4% of registered voters participated, the new Iraqi Government was considered to be a "legitimate government" by the U.S., the UN, and countries around the world.

With the permanent Council of Representatives in place, they again selected Jalal Talabani in 2006 to serve as President. Nouri al-Maliki was then picked by Talabani to be the Prime Minister. (Both served in these roles until 2014.) In the elections that have followed every 4 years, Iraqi voters have successfully decided on the members of the Council of Representatives (who have then appointed the Iraqi President and Prime Minister). The peaceful democratic transfer of power between elections was also a first for Iraq.

Despite these electoral accomplishments, violence worsened in Iraq. As casualties mounted, the public in both the U.S. and Iraq began to turn more and more against the war. A troop "surge" in 2007 sent 20,000 more U.S. soldiers to Iraq and extended the enlistments of those already in the county. Bush argued that it was needed to restore order in Baghdād and across large portions of Iraq, which (despite massive political and public opposition) it managed to do. Nevertheless, U.S. military forces had reached an all-time high in Iraq with 107,3000 by November 2007.

On August 31, 2010, President Barack Obama declared, "The American combat mission in Iraq has ended. 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' is over, and the Iraqi people now have lead responsibility for the security of their country."





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

2. Iraq (continued...)

"Operation New Dawn" saw U.S. troop totals begin to drop. On December 15, 2011, an American military ceremony was held in Baghdad to put a formal end to the U.S. mission in Iraq. The last U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq 3 days later.

After 8 years and 8 months, the U.S. suffered 4,497 dead (3,836 KIA) and 32,252 wounded. Following the initial invasion (post-Saddam), over 26,500 insurgents and terrorists were killed. Over 113,000 Iraqi civilians died during this time. The U.S. spent over \$1.7 trillion on the Iraq War.

In 2014, and at the request of the Iraqi Government, Obama ordered 6,000 U.S. forces back into Iraq under "Operation Inherent Resolve" to combat a terrorist group known as ISIS that had moved into the country.

President Donald Trump continued the operation's fight against ISIS despite the Iraqi Government ordering U.S. soldiers out of its country in January 2020.

Five thousand U.S. soldiers still remain in Iraq.

In 2004, with 2 foreign wars underway (and the nation still recovering from 9/11), Bush faced re-election in November 2004. National security and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were hot-button issues.

Bush's challenger was John Kerry, a Democratic Senator from Massachusetts. Kerry's "flip-flopping" on key issues, coupled with weak foreign policy stances, didn't sit well with the country, especially with the nation at war.

As such, the Election of 2004 didn't come down to Florida. Unlike in 2000 when he lost by over half a million Popular Votes, Bush defeated Kerry by over 3 million PVs.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

** 2004 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (55.7% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Bush: 62,040,610 (50.7%)	Bush: 286 (53.16%)
Kerry: 59,028,444 (48.3%)	Kerry: 251 (46.65%)
	Edwards: 001 (00.19%)**

** A "Faithless Elector" from Minnesota who was pledged for Kerry and his Vice Presidential Candidate John Edwards cast his or her Presidential Vote for John Edwards (misspelling Edwards as "Edwards"). This was presumably done by accident. Because all of Minnesota's Electors cast secret ballots, the identity of the Faithless Elector is not known.

Despite having secured a second term as President, Bush's domestic agenda remained largely ignored during the seemingly expanding Global War on Terrorism.

Keeping captured terrorist suspects at the U.S. military base in Guantánamo Bay in Cuba soon came under fire when stories of abuse and torture leaked to the press. The U.S. Supreme Court repeatedly ruled against Bush and his belief that the prisoners were enemy combatants and not protected under U.S. court "rules". To skirt around this, Bush established special military courts, but these were also struck down.

As part of the Patriot Act, the National Security Agency (NSA) began wiretapping domestic phone calls made to overseas locations when they believed one party in the call was a member of al-Qaeda. Civil rights groups argued this violated the 4th Amendment.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina smashed into the Gulf Coast, devastating Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The storm killed 1,836 people and caused \$125 billion in damage.

The affected area was the size of England; 80% of the city of New Orleans flooded. The people of New Orleans took shelter in the Superdome (home of the NFL's Saints).

Waiting for days, the people had little food, clean water, or information from authorities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was inexcusably and embarrassingly slow to act.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

As was seen with Presidents Ford and Carter, Bush's eroding popularity fueled an angry press that teed off on his Administration's failure to help the people in New Orleans.

On September 2, 2005, rapper Kanye West effectively put the nail in the Bush coffin. During a live telecast of a concert to raise money for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, he deviated from the script and said, "George Bush doesn't care about black people." Bush later called the remark as "one of the most disgusting" moments in his Presidency.

Approval ratings for Bush and the Republican-controlled Congress continued to plummet. The 2006 Midterm Elections saw the Democrats take back control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate for the first time since 1994.

As Bush tried to run out the clock on his second term, the U.S. economy went into the Great Recession (2007-2009). The financial crisis (which eventually spread globally), started in the U.S. when the once booming housing market crashed (often referred to as the "housing bubble"). It began the most significant downturn since the Great Depression (1929-1942).

The Great Recession, however, was avoidable. The U.S. Government failed to regulate the financial industry and didn't curb "toxic", "high-risk", or "predatory" lending. Banks and private lenders took advantage of Americans' desire to live beyond their means by approving people for homes they couldn't afford. This "shadow banking system", which consists of lenders, brokers, and other credit companies who fall outside the realm of traditional banking, grew so big that it rivaled the depository banking system. However, these lenders and brokers were not under the same scrutiny or regulation by the U.S. Government.

Inevitably, excessive borrowing by consumers caused the shadow banking system to fail because these bad loans were given to people (some with low credit scores) who couldn't afford to pay them back. This collapse severely affected the flow of credit to consumers and businesses.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

The "housing bubble" (or real estate bubble), which saw a run-up in housing prices fueled by demand brought on by bad loans (and people living beyond their means), burst. This caused sharp drops in prices and people defaulting on their mortgage payments.

When Lehman Brothers, the country's fourth largest investment bank, filed for bankruptcy, the ripple effect was massive. The collapse soon hit economies around the world, most notably Europe. Across the U.S., companies started laying off workers. As a result of the Great Recession, the U.S. lost 8.7 million jobs, causing the unemployment rate to double to 11.5%. American households lost roughly \$19 trillion of net worth during this time.

The U.S. entered the Election of 2008 with the country embroiled in 2 foreign wars, dealing with a crippled economy and devastated housing market, and coping with rising anti-American sentiment around the globe. An unknown Illinois Senator named Barack Obama grabbed America's attention by campaigning with just one word: "Hope".

The Election of 2008 was poised to make history regardless of which candidate came out the winner. The Republican Party was represented by Arizona Senator and Vietnam Veteran John McCain (with Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin as his VP). The Democrats ran Illinois Senator Barack Obama (with Delaware Senator Joe Biden as his VP). If the McCain-Palin ticket won, the U.S. would have its first female Vice President. If the Obama-Biden ticket won, the U.S. would have its first black President.

Obama pulled off the biggest win by a Democrat since Lyndon B. Johnson decisively won the Election of 1964. The election also saw the largest voter turnout (58.2%) since 1968.

On Election Night, Obama said, "This is our moment... to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American Dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth - that out of many, we are one; that when we are met with those who tell us we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: 'Yes We Can!'"





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The W. Bush Years

** 2008 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (58.2% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Obama: 69,498,516 (52.9%)	Obama: 365 (67.84%)
McCain: 59,948,323 (45.7%)	McCain: 173 (32.16%)

As for Bush, Obama's inauguration as President couldn't come soon enough. From having had the highest approval rating of any President (when he hit 92% in the wake of 9/11), Bush's approval rating hit 19%, the lowest of any President ever. Bush's legacy remains uncertain. While creating 2 democracies in the Middle East was Herculean, the manner in which it came about severely damaged the American "brand" around the globe... and at home.

The Obama Years

Barack Hussein Obama II served as the 44th President from 2009-2017.

Obama, a Democrat, served as a member of the Illinois State Senate (1997-2004) and as a U.S. Senator from Illinois (2005-2008).

Expectations were high for Obama, especially because he represented so many things to so many people: hope, change, progress, youthfulness, and "progressive" thinking. Pundits, however, reminded the President that his job was more than giving great speeches. Soon, Obama found it difficult to fulfill many of his campaign promises. He was instantly greeted with 2 foreign wars and a shaky economy. Since the economy had been the most important issue in the election, Obama tackled it first. Before leaving office, Bush and Congress passed a \$700 billion bailout for the nation's banks. This didn't sit well with the public. Even though home buyers were part of the problem, people's inherent mistrust of banks drove their dissatisfaction. To try to jump start the economy, Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on February 17, 2009. The act provided tax cuts to working families and small businesses. In short, it was a bailout for the people... not the banks. It allocated Federal funds for growth and investment as well as for education, health, and other programs.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Obama Years

By June 2009, it appeared Obama's economic measures were working but at the expense of a rising Federal deficit. Some Americans were uncomfortable with the U.S. Government's growing role in the economy.

With several irons in the fire, Obama had to quickly shift gears and get to another campaign promise: Universal Health Care.

The cost of going to a doctor or to the hospital can be outrageously expensive. In fact, health care costs are the #1 cause of bankruptcy in the U.S. A visit to the emergency room can cost you anywhere from \$1,400-\$3,000. A hysterectomy for cancer treatment costs between \$15,000-\$38,000. One day in the hospital can cost between \$2,000-\$20,000. Additional illnesses and treatments can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. If you have health insurance, your insurance company helps pay for these costs. The insured pays a small fee per visit, called a copayment (or co-pay). Most people get health insurance as a benefit from their employer. The company pays part of the monthly cost, known as a premium.

Still, not everyone has a job or has a job that provides them with health insurance. If people are poor enough, they might qualify for Medicaid, which is insurance paid for by the state and the Federal Government. Those who are older than 65 receive Medicare. While they still pay premiums, the Federal Government aids them by paying for certain benefits (like prescription drugs).

However, people who make too much money to be eligible for Medicaid or who are too young for Medicare but don't get insurance from their jobs have to pay for private insurance. This is very expensive. Many simply just did without health care and took their chances. Some have chronic illnesses, called a "pre-existing condition", and insurance companies often don't offer them coverage.

In 2010, between 32-50 million Americans didn't have health insurance. If something happened and they had to go to the hospital, they often just didn't pay the bill. The hospital would then be forced to charge it to an emergency Medicaid plan... which raised the cost of health care for everyone. Medicare and Medicaid's cost became so big that it threatened to overtake the Federal Budget.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Obama Years

To combat growing prices, to lower the cost of health care, and to make sure all Americans were able to get some form of health insurance, Obama announced the biggest reform and expansion of the health care system since the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965. His hope of providing health insurance for everyone was very enticing, but it faced a huge funding issue. Essentially, how would the country pay for it?

Obama wanted to pay for his plan by raising taxes on the wealthy and by reducing wasteful spending. This touched off months of heated debates in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Even though no Republicans voted for it, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. "ACA" or "Obamacare") still passed through the Democratic-controlled Congress and was signed into law by Obama on March 23, 2010.

Obama had achieved something that President Clinton had tried to do in 1994 but failed.

Obamacare was so complicated, however, that it was phased in over 5 years. It required everyone who didn't already have health insurance to obtain a minimum amount of health care coverage and gave millions of uninsured people access to health insurance options that they didn't have in the past or could not previously afford. All health insurance plans offered under Obamacare provide the following 10 essential health benefits at no cost, with no co-pay, or with a low copayment.

1. Preventative and wellness visits.
2. Maternity and newborn care.
3. Mental health and behavioral treatment (drug abuse/addiction).
4. Services to help people with temporary injuries (broken leg), disabilities, or chronic conditions (like multiple sclerosis).
5. Lab tests.
6. Pediatric care (like dental and vision care).
7. Prescription drugs.
8. Outpatient care.
9. Emergency Room services.
10. Hospitalization.





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Still, many Americans didn't think the U.S. Government should have the right to force people to get health insurance. Obama fought back by claiming if everyone has insurance, then more people will go to the doctor when they are getting sick instead of waiting until their illness turns into an expensive emergency. This would lower health care costs for everyone.

Three years after it was approved, 54% of Americans opposed Obamacare. Between 3-5 million people lost their insurance plans when the company they worked for found it more cost-effective to pay the penalty for not providing health care than to continue to provide it. Increased coverage under Obamacare actually wound up raising overall health care costs. This happened because it was expensive to treat illnesses that had been ignored for decades by those without insurance who now had it and could seek treatment. Obamacare also raised the income tax rate for people making over \$200,000 a year.

Disapproval for Obamacare peaked in 2014 at 56% and today sits at 50%. Politically speaking, 84% of Democrats approve of it while 87% of Republicans disapprove. In the years since its passage, Obamacare has fended off numerous legal challenges and attempts to have it replaced. Before the end of 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case to determine whether Obamacare is unconstitutional, addressing the claims of the Texas Attorney General that the "Federal Government cannot order private citizens to purchase subpar insurance that they don't want."

By the Midterm Elections in November 2010, Obama's approval rating slumped to its lowest in office at that time, dropping from 76% to 44%. Many Americans felt his stimulus and Obamacare were too expensive and had not strengthened the economy enough.

A grassroots movement called the "Tea Party" sprang up to protest Obama. The movement took its name from a reference to the Boston Tea Party in 1773 that was done in protest to British taxation. The movement opposed "Big Government". As a result, Republicans wrested back control of the House of Representatives while Democrats kept the Senate. Obama would now have to deal with a split-Congress.





Unit #6: The U.S. of Awesome

The Obama Years

The Great Recession continued to take its toll on the country. The 2010 Census showed that the income of the middle class had fallen by 45%. When the middle class stops spending... recovery grinds to a halt.

The widening gap between income groups sparked a movement called "Occupy Wall Street" in September 2011. These protestors claimed that they represented "the 99 percent" of the population against the wealthiest 1 percent. (A person needed to earn \$506,000+ annually to be in the Top "1%" of the income distribution in the U.S.)

They began by gathering and camping out ("occupying") a park in NYC's financial district. Most protestors were young and politically categorized as "independent". Often there were clashes with local police who tried to disperse the crowds. The protests shifted dialogue from the Federal deficit to the economic problems that ordinary Americans faced. While the movement helped express popular anger, it suffered from a lack of leadership and petered out by February 2012. In its 5 months, the Occupy Movement spread to 951 cities across 82 countries. While Obama acknowledged that the movement expressed people's frustration with the financial crisis, his Administration soon returned to "business as usual" in D.C.

On the international front, Obama came to office determined to take a less "Yosemite Sam" approach to world affairs and tone down the Bush Doctrine that had alienated many countries.

While there was never an official Obama Doctrine, Obama's foreign policy emphasized negotiation and collaboration rather than confrontation and unilateralism. Obama said, "The U.S. will use military force when our core interests demand it but must mobilize partners to take collective action." Critics of his approach called it overly idealistic and naïve because it promoted the appeasement of America's enemies. Supporters praised it as a welcome change from the interventionist Bush Doctrine that landed the U.S. in the Global War on Terrorism and costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

That being said, Obama had to be very careful not to go the route of President Carter when it came to international crises.





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In August 2010, Obama began reducing U.S. troop totals in Iraq, leaving 50,000 to train their forces with the understanding that all U.S. soldiers would be off Iraqi soil by December 15, 2011.

At the same time, Obama expanded the American combat role in Afghanistan. Its mission was to fight remnants of al-Qaeda until Afghan Armed Forces could defend the country on their own. While this had been the goal since 2001, the war in Iraq detracted troops and attention from Afghanistan. In 2015, a new NATO-led mission called "Operation Freedom's Sentinel" was launched. U.S. troops remain in Afghanistan in what has become America's longest war.

On May 2, 2011, "Operation Neptune Spear" was carried out in Abbottabad, a city 75 miles north of Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. It's target: Osama bin Laden.

Efforts to locate bin Laden were exhaustive and lasted nearly 10 years. Bin Laden was found living in an upper-middle class "mansion" when his courier Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti (who mailed letters, video tapes, and other correspondence with al-Qaeda) was tracked to the building. Constructed from 2003-2005, the main building didn't stand out architecturally from other houses in the neighborhood. Its size and its perimeter of concrete walls topped with barbed wire and two security gates, however, did set it apart from its surroundings. Inside the compound was a well-kept garden and some livestock. Bin Laden moved into the place on January 6, 2006 and continued to evade capture by living in a section of the house without Internet or phone connection, and hiding away from the public, who were allegedly unaware of his presence.

On May 2nd, 24 members of U.S. Navy SEAL Team Six arrived in 2 stealth helicopters. Due to hotter than expected temperatures and the high compound walls that interfered with the rotor's functioning, one of the helicopters crashed just inside the compound's yard (but no one was injured). The SEALs advanced into the house, breaching walls and doors using explosives. On the way to bin Laden's expected location on the third floor, the SEALs shot and killed bin Laden's adult son Khalid, the courier Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti, al-Kuwaiti's brother Abrar, and Abrar's wife.





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Two differing accounts exist on bin Laden's final moments. The first states that the SEALs encountered an unarmed bin Laden in his bedroom standing behind one of his wives, using her as a shield. He was then shot twice in the forehead, then once more as he fell to the floor. The second account says bin Laden peered through his bedroom door at the SEALs advancing up the stairs, and the lead SEAL fired at him. Bin Laden was struck and staggered back into the room. The lead SEAL then pushed bin Laden's wives aside, attempting to shield the SEALs behind him in the event that either woman had an explosive device. Bin Laden lay wounded on the ground when he was shot multiple times and killed.

Regardless of how it happened, shortly after 1:00am Pakistan Standard Time (or 4:00pm EST on May 1st in the U.S.), bin Laden was dead. The SEAL team leader radioed, "For God and country - Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo" and then, "Geronimo EKIA (Enemy Killed-in-Action)". Watching the operation in the White House Situation Room, Obama simply said, "We got him." The raid took 38 minutes.

The SEALs took bin Laden's body and 10 computer hard drives, 100 thumb drives, a dozen cell phones, DVDs, and documents they discovered during the raid. The other 4 killed were left behind at the compound. (The compound was later demolished by the Pakistani Government in February 2012.) Measurement, facial recognition software, in-person identification from the women at the compound, and DNA testing positively identified the body as Osama bin Laden.

At 11:35pm on May 2nd, Obama addressed the nation. He said, "Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, and a terrorist who's responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children." He continued, "Yet his death does not mark the end of our effort. There's no doubt that al-Qaeda will continue to pursue attacks against us. We must, and we will, remain vigilant at home and abroad. We must also reaffirm that the United States is not, and never will be, at war with Islam. Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader; he was a mass murderer of Muslims. His demise should be welcomed by all who believe in peace and human dignity."





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Following Obama's address, major celebrations broke out across the U.S. as bin Laden's death gave the country a much-needed sense of closure.

Muslim religious rites were performed aboard the USS *Carl Vinson* in the North Arabian Sea within 24 hours of bin Laden's death (in accordance with Islamic tradition). The body was washed, wrapped in a white sheet, and placed in a black plastic bag loaded with 300 pounds of iron chains. An officer read prepared religious remarks which were translated into Arabic by a native speaker. Afterward, bin Laden's body was placed onto a flat board. The board was tilted upward on one side, and the body slid off into the sea. (The U.S. sought out, and received permission from, the Saudi Arabian Government to bury bin Laden at sea. (Bin Laden had been born in Saudi Arabia in 1957.) No country wanted his remains, and the U.S. wished to avoid creating a "destination" for future terrorists to visit.)

Keeping with a more cautious foreign policy, Obama began approving the use of pilotless drone aircraft to track and eliminate other leaders of al-Qaeda and as a way to avoid having to send in ground troops. Of course, the use of drones raised protests at home when errant attacks killed civilians near specific targets. Nevertheless, Obama's approach overseas won back some of the nation's alienated allies. However, the question remained whether or not Obama would be as assertive in countries where the U.S. did not already have troops.

The "Arab Spring" gave Obama his next chance to stand in the world's spotlight. This movement, which lasted from December 2010 until December 2012, was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across much of the Arab world. It began in response to oppressive regimes and a low standard of living, starting with protests in Tunisia, a county in North Africa. The protests then spread to Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Sustained street demonstrations took place in Morocco, Iraq, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan. In the end, 7 governments were overthrown (including those in Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen) and 4 civil wars broke out (in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen). Over 61,000 people died.





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Since U.S. troops were no longer in Iraq (but still entrenched in Afghanistan), Obama was reluctant to provide the rebels in these countries with military support. Instead, he defaulted to NATO to provide the air support in select countries, including Libya, where rebels removed and killed Muammar Gaddafi. (Gaddafi had seized control of Libya in 1969 and frequently funded international terrorism.)

While overthrowing dictators is often celebrated, doing such can actually further the instability of a region. After some governments fell during the Arab Spring, horrific civil wars resulted. Many of these conflicts continue to this day.

Having been elected in 2008 by promising "hope" and "change", Obama found his re-election jeopardized by the slow recovery of the economy. His main challenger was former Massachusetts Governor and business executive Mitt Romney.

Without a doubt, the economy loomed as the biggest issue in the Election of 2012. Romney's pledged to make further cuts in taxes contrasted Obama's plan that the wealthy should pay a larger share of the taxes. On October 29th, just one week before the election, Hurricane Sandy (originally a Category 3) began drifting back out into the Atlantic Ocean when it circled back and hit New Jersey and New York as a post-tropical cyclone. Its storm surge flooded the streets, tunnels, and subway lines in New York City. In total, 72 Americans died and \$65 billion was done in damage. Political strategists believe the storm actually helped Obama because it drew discussions away from the economy and gave Obama the chance to be the "Comforter-in-Chief". Despite exit polls suggesting a Romney victory, Obama won in a convincing fashion. In so doing, he became the first President to be re-elected despite the economy doing worse in his first 4 years.

** 2012 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (54.9% turnout)	
Obama:	65,915,795 (51.1%)
Romney:	60,933,504 (47.2%)

<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)	
Obama:	332 (61.71%)
Romney:	206 (38.29%)





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The Obama Years

After his victory was declared on Election Night, Obama addressed a divided nation: "I have always believed that hope is a stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting."

The Election of 2012 left the country at a crossroads. Issues of Obamacare, the Federal deficit, taxes, immigration, Same-Sex Marriage, the legalization of marijuana, the war in Afghanistan, and the environment were "on deck" for Obama in his second term.

1. Immigration

In June 2012, Obama used an Executive Order to pass DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). DACA allows for immigrants that illegally entered the U.S. as minors to receive a renewable 2-year "deferred action" from deportation and be eligible for work permits. There are currently 800,000 "Dreamers" (a nickname given to DACA immigrants) in the U.S. In 2017, DACA was rescinded by President Trump, but a legal injunction let the policy continue while the matter plays out in the courts.

Shortly after his inauguration in January 2013, Obama gave a speech in Las Vegas calling for comprehensive immigration reform, including a path to citizenship for the 11 million illegal/"undocumented" immigrants residing in U.S. In June, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 was passed 68-32 by the Democratic-controlled Senate but defeated in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. The bill would have created a 13-year path to citizenship for millions of "undocumented" immigrants as well as add security checks before green cards can be given and add 40,000 border-patrol agents. Today, 78% of Americans support a path to citizenship.

Despite these efforts, 3.2 million people were deported from the U.S. during Obama's Presidency. (By comparison, 800,000 have been deported under President Trump, 2 million were deported under President W. Bush, 1.87 million were deported under President Clinton... and 2.1 million were deported in the 105 years between 1892-1997.)





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2. Same-Sex Marriage

Massachusetts became the first state to approve same-sex marriages in 2003. In 2004, it was legal in 12 states. A decade later, same-sex marriage was legal in 38 states and D.C.

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in *Obergefell v. Hodges* to recognize the right to same-sex marriage nationwide, overturning a previous decision *Baker v. Nelson* (1971) that had denied it. In a speech in the White House Rose Garden, Obama said, "The ruling is a victory for gay and lesbian couples who have fought for so long for their basic civil rights. It's a victory for their children, whose families will now be recognized as equal to any other. It's a victory for the allies and friends and supporters who spent years, even decades, working and praying for change to come. And this ruling is a victory for America. This decision affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts: when all Americans are treated as equal, we are all more free." Today, 60% of Americans support same-sex marriage.

3. Marijuana

During the Obama Presidency, the U.S. Government eased enforcement of marijuana laws. Obama said the drug should be treated as a "public issue" similar to cigarettes and alcohol. He commented it was becoming harder for the Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to continue to enforce a "patchwork of laws, where something that's legal in one state could get you a 20-year prison sentence in another." On November 6, 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize the recreational use of marijuana when voters approved initiatives to amend their state constitutions. Each regulate marijuana like alcohol, allowing possession of up to 1 ounce for adults 21 and older while enforcing DUID (Driving Under the Influence of Drugs) laws. Both measures allow for commercial cultivation and sales (subject to state regulation and taxes). Today, recreational use is legal in D.C. and 9 more states (Alaska, California, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, and Vermont). Sixty-seven percent of Americans support legalizing marijuana for recreational use.





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4. Environment

Obama made protecting the environment and combating climate change one of the cornerstones of his Presidency. He said, "No challenge poses a greater threat to our children, our planet, and future generations than climate change. No other country on Earth is better equipped to lead the world towards a solution." Knowing that green initiatives are historically unlikely to win bipartisan support, Obama used his authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 on 23 occasions, more than any President since its passage. The law gives the President the authority to, by Presidential Proclamation, set aside certain valuable public natural areas as park and conservation land. These areas would be given the title of "National Monuments". This can be done much faster than going through Congress to create a National Park.

With these powers, Obama expanded W. Bush's Pacific marine reserve, rejected construction of the 1,179-mile oil pipeline that would've run from Canada to the coast of Texas, expanded the existing California coastline National Monument by over 1,500 acres, quadrupled the size of the earth's largest ocean sanctuary in Hawaii created by W. Bush, reached an agreement with 13 major automakers to increase fuel economy from 29.7 miles per gallon to 54.5 miles per gallon for cars and light-duty trucks by the year 2025, and helped push the Clean Power Plan (that will reduce carbon pollution) to be fully in place by 2030.

5. ISIS

ISIS (which stands for "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria") is a terrorist group that burst on the scene when they captured the city of Mosul in Northern Iraq in 2014. ISIS, however, had been around (to one degree or another) since the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003. After defeating Saddam Hussein (Iraq's fifth President from 1979-2003), the U.S. removed all members of Hussein's political party (the Ba'ath Party, in power since 1968) from civil and military services (a policy called De-Ba'athification). As a result, hundreds of thousands of Sunni Muslims formerly loyal to Saddam were without a job... zand mad.





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5. ISIS (continued...)

Al-Qaeda chose to capitalize on their anger by forming "al-Qaeda in Iraq" (or AQI) to wage an insurgency against U.S. occupation forces.

Time for a quick refresher on Sunni and Shiite Muslims...

Much like there are Protestants and Catholics within the same Christian faith, there is Sunni Islam (Sunnis) and Shia Islam (Shiites) within the same Muslim faith.

The Sunni-Shiite split, however, is very important to understand. The divide dates back to 632 AD when the Islamic Prophet Muhammad died. At that time, a debate soon emerged about who should be his successor. (Thus, the difference is political and NOT religious.) Shiites felt Muhammad's successor should be someone in his bloodline. Sunnis didn't think it had to be a blood relative - rather, a pious individual who would follow Muhammad's customs would work.

Both Sunnis and Shiites read the Islamic holy book *The Quran*, believe the Prophet Muhammad was the messenger of Allah (God), fast during the ninth month (called Ramadan) of the Islamic calendar, pledge to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, pray 5 times a day, and give charity to the poor. Prayer rituals differ only slightly - Shiites stand with their hands at their sides; Sunnis put their hands on their stomachs. Both believe in Islamic law but have different applications for it.

The great majority (85-90%) of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims are Sunnis (or 1.3-1.4 billion). Shiites make up 10-15% (or less than 200 million). Sunnis can be found all over world while Shiites are mostly in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen.

Back to "al-Qaeda in Iraq"...

While AQI fought U.S. troops in Iraq, they also waged war against Iran-back Shiites in Iraq and neighboring Jordan. Captured AQIs were put in "Camp Bucca" in Iraq, which allowed them to radicalize.





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5. ISIS (continued...)

In the wake of the U.S. troop "surge" in 2007, the U.S.-installed, Shiite government in Baghdād began reaching out to Sunni tribes and encouraging them to reject AQI. It worked, and AQI was practically defeated. There was hope that peace was on the horizon until the "Arab Spring" in 2011.

While dictators were overthrown in 7 different countries during the Arab Spring, things got incredibly messy in Syria with its dictator Bashar al-Assad.

Keep in mind that during the Iraq War, AQI went back and forth between Syria and Iraq to re-supply. When Assad began shooting and gassing his own people in 2011, the Arab Spring uprising in Syria went from peaceful to a full-blown civil war. AQI saw an opportunity to establish a presence in Syria, so it quickly moved in, re-named itself the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and merged with its Syrian counterpart.

This upset al-Qaeda headquarters since they were in the process of establishing a separate "al-Qaeda in Syria" (AQS). The two terrorist groups fought a mini-war among themselves before going their own ways.

As the Syrian Civil War continued, ISIS became the first rebel group to capture major cities in Syria (Raqqā and Deir ez-Zor). In the summer of 2014, it captured Mosul in Iraq and drove south to Baghdād's. Weeks later, it re-branded itself as the new Worldwide Caliphate (1-world government) and demanded all Muslims pledge allegiance. Groups in Nigeria, Egypt, and half a dozen other countries did so. Soon the black flag of ISIS was seen all over the news.

When ISIS captured the Iraqi town of Sinjar, it institutionalized the slavery and rape of the Yazidi minority. The Yazidi speak Kurdish and practice Yazidism (a blend of pre-Islamic and ancient Mesopotamian religions).

ISIS was now a threat more dangerous than pre-9/11 al-Qaeda.





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5. ISIS (continued...)

ISIS grew in notoriety thanks to an aggressive social media and viral video strategy that glorified violence and attracted new followers. ISIS often posted the videos of its beheadings on-line, including one of their gruesome execution of a U.S. journalist named James Foley. Foley had been working as a freelance war correspondent during the Syrian Civil War. He became the first American civilian killed by ISIS. When asked about what the U.S. should do, Obama joked, "The analogy we use around here sometimes, and I think is accurate, is if a JV team puts on Lakers uniforms that doesn't make them Kobe Bryant." Obama's reaction and lack of a response was met with widespread disgust. His approval rating quickly hit a new low (38%). Obama later clarified his statement and said the U.S. would stop ISIS, but left it at that. ISIS would continue to be a serious threat in the Middle East, and strategies to defeat the terrorist group were soon debated in the upcoming Presidential Election.

The Election of 2016 was a divisive, visceral, and downright nasty affair. A return of disillusionment not seen since the 1970s troubled a nation sickened by unfilled promises and clamoring for something "new", "different", and NOT "politics as usual". Democrats chose former First Lady Hillary Clinton to be their candidate, the first woman to be nominated by a major political party. Hillary had run for President in 2008 but had been defeated by Obama in the primaries. She also served as a U.S. Senator from New York from 2001-2009 and was Obama's Secretary of State from 2009-2013. A controversial primary against socialist candidate Bernie Sanders left Clinton exposed. Alleged media bias and questionable practices by the Democratic National Committee became a point of contention among many disenchanted Sanders supporters who later refused to vote for Clinton in the general election. Republicans, meanwhile, watched their primaries dominated by business mogul and realty TV star Donald J. Trump, who emerged as their nominee. Both candidates had under 50% approval ratings, so many people turned to third-party and write-in candidates. **(For more on Dr. Hartnell's 2016 Presidential campaign, please visit ElectTheBeard.com.)**





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Sticking points with Trump, whose campaign was initially seen as a ratings hoax, centered around his sexist behavior and insensitive/racist comments, coupled with his refusal to turn over his tax returns and his incessant use of Twitter. Clinton was seen as dishonest and fake. People questioned the funds raised by the Clinton Foundation and wanted to know what happened to 33,000 e-mails she "lost" from her time as Secretary of State (that contained incriminating evidence about a 2012 terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya).

Their debates were more of a circus act than a true political forum. Both Trump and Clinton turned to petty attacks, which further entrenched their supporters and frustrated the general public. Still, most polls and every major network/media outlet predicted a landslide Clinton victory, with some models showing her beating Trump by 126 Electoral Votes. In the end, despite losing by 2,868,686 Popular Votes, Trump won the Electoral College in one of the biggest political upsets in history.

** 2016 ELECTION RESULTS **

<u>Popular Vote</u> (55.7% turnout)	<u>Electoral Vote</u> (270 needed)
Clinton: 65,853,514 (48.2%)	Trump: 304 (56.51%)
Trump: 62,984,828 (46.1%)	Clinton: 227 (42.19%)
Powell: N/A (00.0%)	Powell: 003 (00.56%)
Kasich: N/A (00.0%)	Kasich: 001 (00.19%)
Sanders: N/A (00.0%)	Sanders: 001 (00.19%)
Paul: N/A (00.0%)	Paul: 001 (00.19%)
Eagle: N/A (00.0%)	Eagle: 001 (00.19%)
Johnson: 4,489,221 (3.28%)	Johnson: 000 (00.00%)
Stein: 1,457,216 (1.07%)	Stein: 000 (00.00%)
Hartnell: 721 (<.01%)	Hartnell: 000 (00.00%)**

** Four "Faithless Electors" pledged to Clinton from Washington cast 3 of their EVs for former Secretary of State Colin Powell and 1 EV for Faith Spotted Eagle (a Native American activist), making her the first Native American to receive an EV. A "Faithless Elector" pledged to Clinton from Hawaii cast the EV for Bernie Sanders. Two "Faithless Electors" from Texas pledged to Trump gave 1 EV to Ohio Governor John Kasich and 1 EV to former Texas Representative Ron Paul. In addition, 3 other "Faithless Electors" had their votes invalidated. In Colorado, Kasich received 1 EV, which was invalidated and recast for Clinton. Two additional "Faithless Electors", 1 in Maine and 1 in Minnesota, cast their EVs for Sanders but had their votes invalidated. The "Faithless Elector" in Maine was forced to recast the vote for Clinton. The Elector in Minnesota was replaced by a new Elector who voted for Clinton.





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Donald John Trump is currently the 45th U.S. President, having taken office in 2017.

He became the oldest first-term President (age 70) and the first without any previous military or government service.

Trump's victory was immediately greeted with mass protest by Democrats who took to the streets to voice their disdain for the President-Elect. On January 21, 2017 (the day after Trump's inauguration) the "Women's March" protest was held. It drew 200,000 demonstrators in D.C., 3-5 million across the U.S., and 5 million worldwide. Outside of the "March for Life" protest (held in January annually since 1974), it was the largest protest since the anti-Vietnam War Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. A range of speakers and performers cutting across generational lines rallied near the Capitol Building before marchers made their way to the White House. The event, while successful in raising concerns with the incoming Administration, was marred by a few off-color speeches, including when the singer Madonna said, "Yes, I'm outraged. Yes, I have thought an awful lot about blowing up the White House."

Entering office with approval ratings hovering slightly above 40%, Trump was slated to be a very polarizing Chief Executive. His political positions have been described as populist (which emphasizes "the people" against "the elite"), protectionist (that protects the interests of Americans), and nationalist (which promotes patriotism and puts the U.S. first in all decisions). Not helping Trump's approval ratings are comments and actions that sometimes end up being racially-charged, racist, sexist, or offensive.

While all politicians have been known to make false or misleading statements, Trump constantly found himself being "fact-checked" by the media. This set up for a showdown between Trump and the mainstream press that was unlike anything the country had ever seen before. Trump turned to Twitter to get his message out and to communicate with his supporters, often circumventing traditional press conferences. His use of the expression "fake news" undercut the media at every turn. Trump and the media soon found themselves in an unusual symbiotic love-hate relationship.





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His campaign motto of "Make America Great Again" (abbreviated on social media as "MAGA"), which could be seen on red baseball hats worn by his supporters, soon drew the ire of the anti-Trump crowd. In some cases, people wearing these hats were physically or verbally attacked. Media outlets began comparing Trump's hats to the Nazi swastika because of the "triggering" effect they had on people who dislike the President. In response, the term "Trump Derangement Syndrome (TDS)" began being used by Trump supporters to describe people whose hatred of Trump was so intense that it impaired their judgment. (The origin of the term can actually be traced to the late political columnist and psychiatrist Charles Krauthammer who coined the phrase "Bush Derangement Syndrome (BDS)" in 2003 during the Presidency of George W. Bush. The "syndrome" was defined by Krauthammer as "the acute onset of paranoia in otherwise normal people in reaction to the policies, the Presidency, and the very existence of George W. Bush".) Trump and many in his Administration began using the term in interviews and on social media to attack negative press coverage.

Like Obama, however, Trump charged right into trying to fulfill campaign promises. Some he found easier to check off than others.

1. Climate

Trump rejects the idea of climate change and made budget cuts to programs that research renewable energy. Trump also rolled back Obama-era policies directed at curbing climate change and pursued policies aimed to boost the production and export of coal, oil, and natural gas. In February 2018, the U.S. surpassed Saudi Arabia as the top oil-producing country in the world (and now accounts for 18% of world production). Much of the increased production came from the controversial use of fracking in Texas and North Dakota. (Fracking injects water at high pressure into subterranean rocks in order to force open existing cracks and extract oil or gas.) Severing a dependency on Middle Eastern oil was seen as a way to alter an American foreign policy driven by oil access in the Middle East since the 1970s. In June 2017, Trump announced the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation, stating that it would undermine the growing U.S. economy.





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2. Economy

The economic expansion that began under Obama continued under Trump. In December 2017, Trump signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which cut taxes for individuals and businesses. In December 2019, unemployment hit 3.5%, the lowest since 1969. A pandemic in 2020, however, brought the economy to a halt. [See Page #139 for more details.]

3. Health Care

During his campaign, Trump attacked Obamacare. On his first day in office, Trump signed Executive Order 13765 to give more flexibility to states and small businesses concerning mandated coverage under Obamacare. It was seen as the first steps to rejecting the law, and Trump urged the Republican-controlled Congress to take action. In May 2017, the House voted 217-213 to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Democrats, who all voted against the bill, vowed to make Republicans pay a political price. As Republicans reached the threshold for passage, Democrats sang, "Na na na na, na na na na, hey hey hey, goodbye!" In July, the Senate failed to pass the Obamacare repeal plan by a vote of 49 "for" and 51 "against", a contested vote that saw 3 Republicans break rank and vote against the measure. Before the end of 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case to determine whether Obamacare is unconstitutional.

4. Social Issues

Trump modified the 2016 Republican platform opposing all abortions to allow for exceptions in cases of rape, incest, and circumstances endangering the health of the mother. He remains committed to appointing "pro-life" Supreme Court Justices (and has appointed 2 since taking office: Neil Gorsuch in 2017 and Brett Kavanaugh in 2018). He supports "traditional marriage" but considers the nationwide legality of same-sex marriage a "settled" issue. However, in March 2017, the Trump Administration rolled back some workplace protections for LGBTQ+ people, namely by revoking an Obama-era stipulation that companies seeking contracts with the U.S. Government had to prove they've complied with Federal laws banning discrimination based on sexual identity or orientation.





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4. Social Issues (continued...)

Trump supports a broad interpretation of the 2nd Amendment and is against gun control in general, although his views have shifted over time. He opposes legalizing recreational marijuana but supports the legalization of medical marijuana.

5. Immigration

Trump's proposed immigration policies were a topic of bitter and contentious debate during the 2016 campaign. He kicked off his campaign with harsh words for Mexico, saying, "They are not our friend, believe me. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

To that end, he promised to build a more substantial wall along the U.S./Mexican 1,954-mile border to keep out illegal immigrants and vowed Mexico would pay for it. In January 2017, Trump signed Executive Order 13767 calling for the U.S. Government to begin attempting wall construction along the border by using existing Federal funding. The order did not estimate a cost, although a report by the Department of Homeland Security estimated that such a wall would take 3.5 years to build and cost \$21.6 billion.

On December 22, 2018, the U.S. Government went into a shutdown due to Trump's demand for \$5.6 billion in Federal funds to begin work on the wall. After 35 days (the longest budget shutdown in U.S. history), it ended on January 25, 2019 when Trump agreed to endorse a stopgap bill to reopen the government for 3 weeks until February 15th to allow for negotiations to take place. When the House of Representatives (which had been taken back by the Democrats in the 2018 Midterm Election) refused to budge, and rather than face another shutdown, he signed a declaration of National Emergency. By saying that the situation at the border was a crisis, Trump would be able redirect \$8 billion in previously-agreed finances to be used instead to build the wall (like \$3.6 billion assigned to other military construction projects and \$2.5 billion meant for the Department of Defense to combat drug trafficking). Congress passed a resolution to overturn the emergency order, but Trump vetoed it.





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5. Immigration (continued...)

In July 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court approved the reallocation of \$2.5 billion in Department of Defense anti-drug funding to construct the wall. In September they diverted an additional \$3.6 billion from military projects (including overseas schools for children of American soldiers). That same month, Trump said he planned to build 450-500 miles of new wall by the end of 2020. On February 13, 2020, the Pentagon diverted \$3.8 billion from its budget for the War on Terrorism to constructing the wall. However, while 76 miles of existing wall has been replaced or reinforced during Trump's Presidency, only 93 miles of new wall have been built. Just 37% of Americans favor building a wall.

In addition to wanting to build the wall, he pledged to massively deport illegal immigrants residing in the U.S. and criticized birth-right citizenship for creating "anchor babies". He said deportation would focus on criminals, visa overstays, and security threats. In 2017, he issued Executive Order 13769 that lowered the number of refugees admitted into the U.S. and imposed a travel ban that prohibited issuing visas to citizens of 7 predominantly Muslim countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen). More than 700 travelers were detailed, and 60,000 visas were revoked.

Trump attempted to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, but a legal injunction has allowed the policy to continue while the matter is the subject of a legal challenge.

He continued a "zero tolerance" policy begun in 2005 by George W. Bush and continued under Obama that required the arrest of anyone caught illegally crossing the border and which separates children from their families. The adults were prosecuted and held in Federal jails, while the children were placed under the supervision of the U.S. Health Department in poor facilities. When it emerged that the policy did not include measures to reunite the 2,300 children separated, and following heavy criticism, Trump signed an Executive Order to end such practices. Facing economic pressure from Trump, Mexico and other Latin American countries strengthened their efforts to stop illegal immigration from their countries.





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6. Syria

Trump has been described as a “non-interventionist”. He supports an “American First” foreign policy that emphasizes American nationalism, protectionism, and isolationism. While he supports increasing U.S. military defense spending, he favors decreasing what the country spends on NATO, the UN, and in 2017 withdrew the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade negotiations because it would wind up being too expensive for the U.S. Trump defended such actions saying, “The U.S. should look inward, stop ‘nation building’ (a reference to what happened in Afghanistan and Iraq), and re-orient its resources toward domestic needs.”

The Syrian Civil War would be Trump’s first international test. Since the war began in 2011 during the “Arab Spring”, more than 465,000 Syrians have been killed, over 1 million injured, and over 12 million (or half of the country’s pre-war population) have been displaced from their homes. Four million Syrian refugees have since left their country. Lack of freedoms and economic woes drove resentment of the Syrian Government (led by President Bashar al-Assad), and Assad’s harsh crackdown on protesters inflamed public anger. When uprisings toppled governments in Tunisia and Egypt, it gave hope to Syrian pro-democracy activists. In March 2011, peaceful protests took place in Syria after 15 boys were detained and tortured for writing graffiti in support of the “Arab Spring”. One boy (age 13) died while being brutally tortured. Assad responded by killing hundreds of demonstrators and imprisoning many more.

In July 2011, defectors from the Syrian military announced the formation of the Free Syrian Army, a rebel group aiming to overthrow Assad. Syria began to slide into civil war. Sixty-five percent of Syrians are Sunni Muslims. (Remember, this is the largest of the 2 groups and historically didn’t think Muhammad’s successor had to be within his bloodline.) Sunni Muslims, Christians, and Alawite each make up 10%. Syria’s security establishment, however, has long been dominated by members of the Alawite sect. Little is known of the Alawite faith, even among the Alawites themselves. It bears little resemblance to other forms of Islam (but can be traced back to a cousin of Muhammad).





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6. Syria (continued...)

A common theme among Alawites, however, is a fear of Sunni Muslims, who had once persecuted Alwaites. Assad is a member of the Alwaite faith. Assad's father, Hafez al-Assad (Syria's President from 1971-2000), ordered a military crackdown on Sunni Muslims in 1982, killing tens of thousands of people and flattening much of the city of Hama in Western Syria.

Severe drought plagued Syrian from 2007-2010, causing 1.5 million people to move from the countryside into the cities, which only created more poverty and social unrest. Foreign backing and open intervention played a large role in the Syrian Civil War. Russia entered the conflict in 2015 and has been the Syrian Government's main ally since. In the region, the governments of countries with Shiite (Shia) Muslim majorities (Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon-based Hezbollah) have supported Assad's Government. (Hezbollah is a Shia Muslim political party and militant/terrorist group based out of - and in control of - Lebanon since 1985.) Sunni-majority countries (Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia) have supported the anti-Assad rebels.

ISIS saw potential in the chaos of Syria, so it sent fighters into the civil war to take territory from whichever group stood in its way (be it Assad's Government or the anti-Assad rebels).

By 2012, Assad's forces retreated to their strongholds in Damascus (the capital) and other major cities and areas along the Mediterranean coast and Lebanese border. The rest fell under control of rebel groups, criminal gangs, and ISIS. At its peak, ISIS controlled half of the territory of Syria. Israel carried out air raids inside Syria, targeting Hezbollah (who hates them) and targeting Assad's Government.

In August 2012, Obama warned that the use of chemical weapons in Syria was a "red line" that would prompt military intervention. Sarin nerve gas attacks in the suburbs of Aleppo in March 2013 and Damascus in August 2013. Four other cities saw similar attacks in the same year. Over 1,000 civilians perished. The UN concluded the attacks were conducted by the pro-Assad Syrian Army.





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6. Syria (continued...)

In April 2014 and March 2015, the Syrian Army dropped chlorine bombs on two towns. ISIS used sulfur mustard gas on a town in August 2015. Hundreds of civilians died. In September 2013, a bill was filed in Congress to authorize the use of military force against the Syrian military. Obama's Secretary of State John Kerry stated that air strikes could be avoided if Syria turned over "every single bit" of its chemical weapons stockpiles. Hours after Kerry said this, the Russian Foreign Minister announced that Russia had suggested to Syria that it relinquish its chemical weapons. The Syrian foreign minister welcomed the proposal.

Later that month, Assad's Government entered into several international agreements for the destruction of its chemical weapons. Syria would have to give up all weapons by June 30, 2014. Syria never did, and, in some cases, falsified reports that it had. Russia often corroborated these reports. The UN and U.S. never confirmed that any chemical weapons had been turned over. In 2013, the CIA began a covert program to arm, fund, and train rebel groups to fight Assad. The program was later shut down after it was revealed the CIA spent \$500 million... but only trained 60 fighters. Beginning in 2014, the U.S. led an international coalition bombing of ISIS targets (while maintaining its opposition to Assad). In other words, the U.S. doesn't like Assad... but it really doesn't want ISIS to take control of Syria.

In September 2015, Russia launched its own bombing campaign against ISIS and all anti-Assad rebel groups. Additionally, Russia deployed military advisors to shore up Assad's defenses. In December 2016, 53 civilians were killed in a nerve gas attack in ISIS-controlled territory. The Syrian Army also retook city of Aleppo. On April 4, 2017, a major chemical attack (including sarin nerve gas) took place in the town of Khan Shaykhun. Over 100 were killed and 600 injured. On April 7, 2017, Trump ordered 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from the Mediterranean Sea at the air base responsible for the gas attack. (It was later reported that Trump had also ordered his Defense Secretary James Mattis to have Assad assassinated, but Mattis refused to do so.)





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6. Syria (continued...)

However, the Syrian Air Force launched air strikes against the anti-Assad rebels from that exact air base only hours after the U.S. attack. The ability to continue to use the base for these attacks was later attributed to the advanced warning the U.S. gave to Syria's ally, Russia, prior to the U.S. strike.

At the UN Security Council, Russia and China continued to veto Western-backed resolutions in Syria. On April 7, 2018, a chemical weapon attack was carried out by the Syrian Army on a rebel town called Douma (near Damascus). Over 500 people (mostly women and children) were exposed to a chemical agent; 42 died. The region had been attacked by the Syrian Army in February 2018 in which 1,700 civilians died. The Russian foreign minister said the reports were "bogus", and Assad claimed the rebels intentionally gassed themselves since his forces were on the verge of taking the city. Trump declared that swift military action could be expected as a result.

In April, U.S., British, and French forces struck Syria with 105 missiles from aircraft and ships in the first coordinated Western strikes against the pro-Assad Government. Three targets were hit (1 on the outskirts of Damascus and 2 just west of the city of Homs). All 3 were related to Syria's chemical weapons program: a research center, a storage facility, and an equipment factory/command post. Syrian State TV reported that 3 civilians were injured in the Homs attack. Assad and Russia's leader Vladimir Putin denounced the attacks, with Putin going so far as to say that continued Western attacks in Syria would result in "global chaos". In the wake of the attacks, the activity of Russian internet trolls increased 2,000% (according to the Pentagon).

The Trump Administration indicated its intention to maintain an open-ended military presence in Syria to oust Assad with 2,000 soldiers spread out across the county. In September, the U.S. began to implement a new strategy to push American objectives in Syria. However, because he is against "nation building", in December 2018, Trump ordered the withdrawal of all U.S. ground troops out of Syria over the course of 90 days.





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6. Syria (continued...)

Trump's Defense Secretary Mattis resigned over disagreements with this plan. After taking heat from many D.C. insiders (including the military industrial complex) and to avoid creating a power vacuum, Trump announced in February 2019 that instead of total withdrawal, a contingency force of 400 U.S. troops would remain in Syria to help train 5,000 Kurdish and Arab opposition soldiers known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The U.S. soon saw decisive results in its intervention against ISIS, with the terror organization losing all physical Syrian territory by March 2019. During a high-stakes U.S. special operations raid in Syria, the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was cornered by an American military canine and detonated a suicide vest, killing himself and 2 of his children (and injuring the dog).

On November 23, 2019, the head of the U.S. Central Command stated there was no "end date" on the U.S. intervention in Syria.

7. Afghanistan

As part of "Operation Freedom's Sentinel" that began in 2015, U.S. troop totals increased from 8,500 to 14,000 during Trump's first month in office, reversing his pre-election position critical of further involvement in Afghanistan. However, unlike his predecessors, Trump delegated decision making authority to the commanders and said that discussions concerning withdrawal would be based on conditions on the ground rather than arbitrary timelines. On April 13, 2017, the U.S. dropped the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB), commonly know as the "Mother of All Bombs" on an ISIS target in Afghanistan. It was the first use of the most powerful non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal (that weighs 21,600 lbs.) in combat. The strike killed 4 ISIS commanders and 90 ISIS fighters and leveled the tunnel complex. On February 29, 2020, the U.S. and the Taliban signed a conditional peace deal which requires that U.S. troops withdraw from Afghanistan within 14 months so long as the Taliban cooperates with the terms of the agreement. On March 10th, the UN unanimously backed the U.S.-Taliban peace deal. Fourteen thousand U.S. soldiers remain in Afghanistan.





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8. Iraq

Meanwhile, in Iraq, Trump continued "Operation Inherent Resolve" (launched in 2014) to fight ISIS, despite the Iraqi Government ordering U.S. soldiers out of its country in January 2020. Five thousand U.S. soldiers remain in Iraq.

9. Iran

In 2002, and based upon testimony from Iranian exiles, Iran was suspected of having nuclear facilities. Following inspections and additional discoveries, Iran continued to proceed with nuclear development despite international opposition. In 2006, the UN imposed sanctions on Iran, which were followed by similar actions from the U.S. and the European Union. Bitter confrontations then broke out between Iran and the world powers. These sanctions (which were on Iran's oil business, weapons sales, and financial transactions) severely hurt Iran's economy. This, of course, sent gas prices up and down during a volatile period.

In 2009, President Obama outlined his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, and the centerpiece of this agenda was to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state. Obama set out to negotiate a deal that would, supposedly, roll back the nuclear program and set up a way to verify that the regime would comply in exchange for loosening some of the sanctions.

Under the "Iran Nuclear Deal", Iran would reduce the number of centrifuges it was operating from 19,000 to 6,000. (Centrifuges are needed to create enriched uranium for nuclear reactors.) The enrichment levels of uranium or plutonium would be brought down to 3.7% (much lower than the 90% needed to make a bomb). These measures would restrict Iran's capability to make nuclear weapons and would ensure nuclear power usage would be limited to civilian use only. Iran would also need to allow for monitoring of these facilities.

In return, the oil embargo that prevented the import of oil from Iran was removed. Trade was again permitted with Iran.





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9. Iran (continued...)

One way that economic sanctions are often accomplished is by making it illegal for U.S. citizens or businesses to conduct certain financial transactions with a specific country. The money of the country being punished that is in the banks of the country leveling the sanctions is "frozen", which means it can't be accessed, used, or withdrawn. When sanctions on Iran's banking were dropped, it enabled the immediate release of \$100 billion that had been frozen in Iranian bank accounts around the world (including access to \$56 billion in the U.S.).

Immediately after the deal was reached, governmental officials from major European countries began visits to Iran to explore business opportunities. As such, Iran's economic challenges drastically improved after the agreement.

The deal, although welcomed by a larger group of nations across the globe, also had opposition. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the deal "paves Iran's path to the bomb". His strong disdain for the deal came on the basis of Iran's history of being a nuclear-capable challenge for the Middle East. He warned that a strengthened Iran would hinder peace and security in the region.

Nine days after Trump took office, Iran conducted ballistic missile tests in an obvious challenge to the new Commander-in-Chief. Trump responded by imposing sanctions on Iran and lobbied dozens of European officials against doing business with Iran. This was in violation of the deal, which said the U.S. was not permitted to pursue any policy that might adversely affect trade and economic relations with Iran. In August, Trump signed into law an act that placed sanctions collectively on Iran, Russia, and North Korea.

In May 2018, Trump announced that the U.S. would pull out of the deal and enact fresh sanctions on Iran. Many European countries (including Germany, France, and the U.K.) disagreed with Trump. As a result, Iran's economy struggled, leading to protests in the streets. Iran responded by saying it would no longer comply with the nuclear deal.





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9. Iran (continued...)

On January 3, 2020, the U.S. assassinated the Iranian General Qasem Soleimani with a drone strike in Iraq. Soleimani was head of the Iranian Quds Force (their version of the CIA but also a designated terrorist organization). He was considered the second most important person in Iran (behind Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei). The killing promptly escalated the decades-old tension between the 2 countries.

Khamenei vowed "severe revenge" against the U.S. In the aftermath of Soleimani's killing, the U.S. moved 3,000 additional troops to the Middle East as a precautionary measure amid rising threats from Iran. On January 7th, Iran's Parliament unanimously passed a bill naming all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and employees of the Pentagon as "terrorists". That evening, Iran launched 17 ballistic missiles to strike multiple U.S. targets located throughout Iran and Iraq, including the Al Asad Airbase in Iraq (where 1,500 U.S. soldiers are housed). While no casualties were initially reported, 110 soldiers were later diagnosed and treated for "traumatic brain injuries" from the attack. Iran had informed Iraq before the attack, and the information was passed along to the U.S. military. Some analysts suggested the strike was deliberately designed to avoid causing any fatalities to avoid an American response. At the urging of both Democrats and Republicans, Trump reduced tensions by downplaying the attacks, commenting that Iran appeared to be "standing down". Trump affirmed, however, that Iran would never be able to possess nuclear weapons while he was in office. Three days later, the U.S. imposed new economic sanctions on Iran.

10. China

The U.S. and China are the world's 2 largest economies. China is the world's largest exporter... while the U.S. is the world's largest importer. The 2 have been important pillars for the global economy. By 2017, however, the U.S. had a \$336 billion trade deficit with China (meaning the U.S. imported more from China than China imported from the U.S.). In fact, the deficit with China made up 60% of the total U.S. trade deficit of \$566 billion.





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10. China (continued...)

Since the 1980s, when Trump was a businessman, he strongly advocated tariffs as a way to reduce the U.S. trade deficit and promote more manufacturing in the U.S. (Tariffs are a tax or duty paid on particular products being imported into a country. Tariffs can be tricky because they often result in counter-tariffs and can lead to a trade war.) In short, Trump said the country was being “ripped off” by its trading partners.

In 2018, a trade war broke out between the U.S. and China after Trump began setting tariffs and other trade barriers on China with the goal of forcing it to make changes to what the U.S. felt was “unfair trade practices”. After imposing tariffs, he denied entering into a trade war, claiming the trade war “was lost many years ago by the foolish, or incompetent, people who represented the U.S.” Trump blamed Clinton, W. Bush, and Obama for “naively looking the other way while China cheated its way to an unfair advantage.”

Among the unfair trade practices asserted by the Trump Administration was the stealing of U.S. intellectual property (like copyrights, patents, trademarks, and trade secrets). Researchers found that this intellectual property (IP) has been taken through espionage and theft. The estimated cost to the U.S. from IP theft is between \$225-\$600 billion annually as technology is considered the most important part of the U.S. economy. As a result, Trump took steps to prevent Chinese state-controlled companies from buying American technology companies and tried to stop American companies from handing over their key technologies to China in bad trade deals.

The first shots were fired on January 22, 2018 when Trump announced tariffs on solar panels and washing machines (since 8% of American solar panel imports came from China and imports of residential washing machines from China totaled about \$1.1 billion). On March 1st, Trump initiated steel and aluminum tariffs on imports from all countries (3% of U.S. steel comes from China). He followed this up by applying tariffs on \$50-\$60 billion worth of Chinese goods (which targeted 1,300 categories of Chinese imports, including aircraft parts, batteries, TVs, medical devices, and satellites).





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10. China (continued...)

In a rare example of bipartisan support, Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer praised Trump's tariffs, saying, "Democrats, Republicans, Americans of every political ideology, every region in the country should support these actions."

On April 2nd, China fired back by imposing tariffs on 128 products it imports from the U.S., including airplanes, cars, pork, soybeans, fruit, nuts, and steel. Three days later, Trump responded by saying he was considering another round of tariffs on an additional \$100 billion of Chinese imports. China complained to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is an intergovernmental organization concerned with the regulation of international trade, prompting a visit by China's top economic advisor to the U.S. on May 15th. The talks concluded with China agreeing to help reduce America's trade deficit with China by purchasing more American goods. Despite these initial breakthroughs between the 2 countries, the trade war continued with both sides engaging in tit-for-tat tariff exchanges.

In the U.S., however, the trade war brought both positive and negative results in the economy. Many industries showed employment growth while others were planning layoffs. American farmers were particularly hard-hit by China's retaliatory trade actions. Agricultural exports from the U.S. to China fell from \$24 billion a year to \$9.1 billion. Farm bankruptcies increased, and the agricultural equipment manufacturer John Deere lost millions. To alleviate the difficulties faced by farmers, the Trump Administration allocated \$28 billion in relief, mostly in direct payments. Farmers continued to support Trump, and 78% of them said they believe the trade war will ultimately benefit U.S. agriculture.

Analysis found that American tariffs on Chinese goods increased from 3.1% in 2017 to 24.3% in 2019. Despite this, China's annual trade surplus actually grew to an all-time high while the U.S. trade deficit reached \$621 billion, the highest it had been since 2008. In November 2019, the UN reported that "the U.S. tariffs on China are economically hurting both countries." Many political observers have warned against a "New Cold War" between the U.S. and China.





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11. North Korea

Korea remained divided following the Korean War (1950-1953), a conflict that killed 4 million Koreans, 2 million Chinese, over 54,000 Americans, and more than 3,000 UN soldiers.

Economic and social damage to the peninsula was incalculable, especially in the North, where three years of bombing left hardly a modern building standing. Following his ill-fated attempt to reunite the peninsula by invading the South in 1950, North Korean dictator Kim Il-Sung began a process of political consolidation and brutal repression. He executed his foreign minister and those he believed to be a threat to him in order to take control of the Korean Workers' Party. It was during the late 1980s, as communism started failing throughout Eastern Europe, that North Korea's development began to differ strongly from that of other socialist nations. Its greatest sponsor, the Soviet Union, fell in 1991, leaving North Korea at a loss for the subsidies it (ironically) needed to maintain the facade of self-sufficiency. North Korea, having always played the Chinese and the Soviets off against one another, turned to China. In 1994, however, North Korea negotiated an agreement with the Clinton Administration in which it agreed to cancel its controversial nuclear program in return for U.S. energy supplies in the short term. Midway through negotiations, Kim Il-Sung suffered a massive heart attack and died. The reaction to Kim Il-Sung's death inside North Korea was nothing short of mass hysteria. The entire country came out en masse to mourn their dead leader (the only leader they had ever had since the country's formation in 1948), with crowds frequently being driven into frenzied wailing and screaming by the state television channel.

Kim Il-Sung's death rendered the North weaker and even less predictable than before. His son Kim Jong-Il assumed the mantle of power. In 1995, terrible floods led to disaster. Breaking with a strict tradition of self-reliance (despite secret aid from communist allies), North Korea appealed to the UN for food. In order to get this aid, they had to allow UN access to the whole country. Aid workers were horrified by what they saw - malnutrition and starvation was underway, which led to the deaths of 3.5 million people.





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11. North Korea (continued...)

Kim Jong-Il's pragmatism and relative openness to change became apparent in the years following the devastation of the famine, and a series of initiatives to promote reconciliation with both the South and the U.S. were implemented. In June 2000, North-South relations peaked with a swiftly convened summit in North Korea's capital of P'yŏngyang between the leaders of both countries. It was the first-ever meeting on such a level between North and South Korea. The summit paved the way for U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to P'yŏngyang later the same year. Kim Jong-Il's aim was to have North Korea legitimized through a visit from President Clinton himself. However, as Clinton's second term ended and George W. Bush assumed office in 2001, the international climate swiftly changed, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In his 2002 State of the Union address, W. Bush labeled the North (along with Iran and Iraq) part of an "Axis of Evil", a phrase that came to haunt Kim Jong-Il. The following year, North Korea resumed its nuclear program.

Frustrated at being ignored by the U.S. throughout the Bush Presidency, North Korea test-launched several missiles in July 2006, followed by the detonation of a nuclear device on its own soil. Kim Jong-Il suffered a serious stroke in 2008. Shortly after, he began promoting his son Kim Jong-un to whom great feats were accorded and who was soon accompanying Kim Jong-Il on public appearances. Kim Jong-Il died from a heart attack on his private train in 2011. The announcement of his passing caused similarly dramatic scenes of public hysteria when Kim Il Sung had died in 1994.

Kim Jong-un quickly dispatched anyone who threatened his position with swift brutality. From 2013-2017, he resumed the testing of his nuclear arsenal, launching dozens of missiles. Such behavior was increasingly seen as a serious threat to the U.S. In August 2017, Trump dramatically escalated his rhetoric against North Korea, warning that further provocations against the U.S. would be met with "fire and fury like the world has never seen". Trump continued calling Kim's bluff by referring to him as "Rocket Man" and shifting American military attention to North Korea's doorstep.





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11. North Korea (continued...)

With the world holding its collective breath, it seemed as though Kim Jong-un had “met his match”. Eventually, he agreed to meet Trump at a summit to discuss denuclearization. On June 12, 2018, Kim Jong-un and Trump met in Singapore, the first time a leader of North Korea and an American President had ever met. Kim Jong-un agreed to cease missile testing in exchange for Trump not attacking North Korea. The two met again from February 27-28, 2019 in Vietnam, although Trump walked away from the negotiating table rather than “take a bad deal”. The U.S. and North Korea remained cordial until April 17, 2019 when Kim Jong-un test-fired a new tactical guided weapon as a warning to Trump that unless the once-promising negotiations resumed, the 2 countries could again be on a collision course. A week later, Kim Jong-un met with Russian leader Vladimir Putin on Russky Island in Vladivostok in the Sea of Japan. Little came from this summit, although Putin appeared less than interested in helping mediate problems between P’yŏngyang and D.C.

On June 30th, Trump met for a third time with Kim Jong-un. South Korea’s President Moon Jae-in also attended the 1-day summit at the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Established in 1953, the DMZ is 160 miles long and 2.5 miles wide and serves as a buffer between North and South Korea. Trump even crossed the border line into the North Korean side of the DMZ, making him the first active U.S. President to enter North Korea. (Former Presidents Carter and Clinton had previously visited North Korea after they left office.) Trump and Kim Jong-un shook hands before crossing back into South Korea for their meeting. Trump invited Kim Jong-un to the White House. In September, Trump fired his National Security Advisor John Bolton after he strongly disagreed with Bolton’s suggestion about applying a more aggressive approach to disarming North Korea. Talks between American and North Korean negotiating teams continue to this day. While a vast majority (70%) of Americans think North Korea poses a serious threat to the U.S., 57% trust Trump to act responsibly in handling the situation. Only 23% would support the use of military force to disarm them. In April 2020, Kim Jong-un suffered serious health setbacks following a cardiovascular surgery. The U.S. continues to discuss contingency plans with North Korea.





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12. NAFTA

The idea for a North American free trade zone began with Reagan, who announced the idea in 1979. In 1988, the U.S. and Canada signed a free trade agreement. Soon afterward, the President of Mexico proposed a similar trade agreement with the U.S. In December 1992, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada was signed by H. W. Bush but still needed to be ratified by Congress. This happened in November 1993 under Clinton.

Canada benefited the most from NAFTA. It saw 3.6% economic growth compared to the 3.3% in the U.S. and 2.7% in Mexico. Nearly all U.S. trade unions opposed NAFTA, fearful that it would cost America too many jobs.

During his campaign, Trump promised to renegotiate NAFTA, which he called "the worst trade deal ever made". In September 2018, the 3 countries reached an agreement to replace NAFTA with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), or "NAFTA 2.0". Provisions of the agreement cover a wide range of issues, including agricultural produce, homelessness, manufactured products, labor conditions, hourly wages, and digital trade. Some of the more prominent aspects included giving U.S. dairy farmers greater access to the Canadian market and guidelines to have more automobiles manufactured among the 3 nations rather than imported from elsewhere.

Mexico ratified the deal in June 2019, the U.S. did so in January 2020, and Canada approved it in March 2020.

13. Russia Investigation

Since Trump took office in 2017, he has been the subject of Justice Department and Congressional scrutiny, with investigations covering his campaign, his post-election transition and inauguration, actions taken during his Presidency, private business dealings, personal taxes, and charitable foundations. At one point in May 2019, Trump had 29 open investigations, including 10 Federal criminal investigations, 8 state and local investigations, and 11 Congressional investigations.





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13. Russia Investigation (continued...)

"Crossfire Hurricane", the codename for the FBI investigation into possible links between Russia and Trump, was launched in mid-2016 during the campaign season. By January 2017, American intelligence agencies (the CIA, FBI, and the NSA) jointly stated with "high confidence" that the Russian Government interfered in the Election of 2016 to favor Trump. On May 9, 2017, Trump fired James Comey, the Director of the FBI, causing massive speculation. Comey then asked a friend to "leak" excerpts from a memo he had written during a private conversation with Trump in February 2017. Following Comey's dismissal, the FBI's work was taken over in May 2017 by the Special Counsel investigation under prosecutor Robert Mueller. Mueller had been the Director of the FBI (2001-2013) before Comey. The investigation concluded on March 22, 2019 with the 448-page Mueller Report, which was submitted to U.S. Attorney General William Barr. The Department of Justice released a redacted version of the report to the public on April 18th. It was divided into 2 volumes.

Volume 1 stated that Russian interference occurred "in sweeping and systematic fashion" and had been welcomed by the Trump campaign as it expected to benefit from such efforts. However, it concluded that the investigation did not find sufficient evidence that the Trump campaign "coordinated or conspired" with the Russian Government in such activities. Investigators had an incomplete picture of what happened due to communications that were encrypted or deleted, as well as testimony that was false, incomplete, or declined.

Volume 2 addressed obstruction of justice. The investigation intentionally took the approach that it could not pass judgment on whether Trump committed a crime, abiding by the opinion that a sitting President is immune from criminal prosecution. The investigation felt it would be unfair to accuse Trump of a crime without charges or a trial. The report stated that the investigation "does not conclude that the President committed a crime" but "it also does not exonerate him". The report described 10 instances where Trump could have obstructed justice and further stated that only Congress can decide whether Trump obstructed justice and take action accordingly (a reference to impeachment).





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14. Impeachment

During much of Trump's Presidency, Democrats were divided on the question of impeachment. Fewer than 20 Democrats in the House of Representatives supported impeachment in January 2019. After the Mueller Report was released in April and Special Counsel Robert Mueller testified in July, this number ballooned to 140.

In August 2019, a whistleblower (a person who exposes any kind of information or activity that is deemed illegal) filed a complaint with the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community (ICIG). The ICIG conducts independent and objective audits, investigations, inspections, and reviews to assist the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The complaint was about a phone call on July 25, 2019 between Trump and the newly-elected President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky. During the call, Trump pressured Zelensky to investigate CrowdStrike and Democratic Presidential candidate (and Obama's Vice President) Joe Biden and his son Hunter. Trump also asked Zelensky to look into a theory that Ukraine, not Russia, was behind interference in the 2016 Election. The whistleblower added that the White House attempted to cover-up the call records and that the call was part of wider pressure by the Trump Administration to withhold military aid from Ukraine unless they complied.

CrowdStrike is a cybersecurity company in California that investigated the 2016 Democratic National Committee (DNC) email leak in which alleged Russian hackers stole 19,252 emails and 8,034 attachments. These emails were published by WikiLeaks, an international organization that publishes news leaks and classified media provided by anonymous sources. The leaks showed bias against Hillary Clinton's Presidential Primary opponent Bernie Sanders and other DNC-Clinton agreements regarding financial arrangements and control over policy and hiring decisions within the DNC. The CIA concluded that Russia conducted operations during the Election of 2016 to prevent Hillary from winning. WikiLeaks did not reveal its source, and its founder Julian Assange said the source of the emails was not Russia. The Mueller Report, however, later indicted 12 Russian military intelligence agents from a group known as "Fancy Bear" alleged to be responsible for the attack.





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14. Impeachment (continued...)

From 2014-2019, Hunter Biden served on the board of Burisma Holdings, a major Ukrainian natural gas producer, where he made \$50,000 a month despite having no qualifications or previous experience. This was around the same time as his father, the Vice President, was spearheading Obama's efforts to force the Ukraine Government to root out internal corruption. A year after leaving the White House, Joe Biden was sitting on stage at the Council on Foreign Relations in D.C. to present an article called "How to Stand Up to the Kremlin". He had been answering questions for an hour when the moderator turned to a war in the Ukraine and the prospects of peace. Among the things standing in the way, Biden said, was growing corruption. He then told a story recounting a trip to Ukraine's capital Kyiv in 2015. He described telling the Ukrainian President at the time Petro Poroshenko that he had to fire the Prosecutor General (who oversees investigations in Ukraine) or the U.S. would not release \$1 billion in loan guarantees. Biden said, "I looked at them and said, 'I'm leaving in 6 hours. If the Prosecutor is not fired, you're not getting the money.' Well, son of a bitch. He got fired." Video of the statement ricocheted around Ukraine and Russia as evidence of U.S. meddling in Ukraine's internal affairs. Soon it morphed into a conspiracy pushed by Trump that Biden ordered the Prosecutor's firing because his son, Hunter, was on the board of the company (Burisma Holdings) the Prosecutor was investigating.

After the whistleblower complaint became known in September 2019, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, initiated a formal impeachment inquiry. Trump then released a memorandum of the phone call, confirming that after Ukraine's President Zelensky mentioned purchasing American anti-tank missiles, Trump asked him to investigate and to discuss these matters with Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani (who had been the Mayor of New York City from 1994-2001) and Attorney General William Barr. William B. Taylor, Jr., the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, testified that Trump was looking for an advantage in the Election of 2020. When Taylor arrived in Ukraine, he said he found Zelensky being pressured by Giuliani to comply or the scheduled military aid would be withheld. However, Zelensky denied that he felt pressured by Giuliani or Trump.





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14. Impeachment (continued...)

On December 18, 2019, the Democratic-controlled House approved the 2 articles of impeachment sent to it by the House Judiciary Committee. Trump would now face a trial in the Republican-controlled Senate for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. (Remember, the House impeaches and the Senate convicts.)

Polls showed that only 45% of the U.S. public approved the impeachment and removal of Trump. In fact, polls released on the day of Trump's impeachment found that his approval rating increased by 6 points. By the end of the impeachment process, Trump's approval hit 49%, the highest of his Presidency to date.

On February 5, 2020, the Senate voted. Sixty-seven Senators (or two-thirds) would have to vote "guilty" in order to convict and remove Trump. (His Vice President Mike Pence would then become President.)

For Article 1 (abuse of power), 48 Senators voted "guilty" while 52 voted "not guilty". Specifically, 45 Democrats (all of them), 1 Republican (Mitt Romney), and 2 independents (Angus King and Bernie Sanders) voted "guilty". All of the 52 that voted "not guilty" were Republicans.

For Article 2 (obstruction of Congress), 47 Senators voted "guilty" and 53 voted "not guilty". Specifically, 45 Democrats (all of them) and 2 independents (Angus King and Bernie Sanders) voted "guilty". All of the 53 that voted "not guilty" were Republicans.

Following acquittal, Trump removed several appointees and officials that he deemed "insufficiently" loyal. Meanwhile, the tone of the global reaction to his impeachment was notable in the fact that there wasn't any. World leaders stayed out of it. In fact, there was no mention of it in North Korea or China, where state media often looks for opportunities to bash U.S. leaders. Britain, France, and the European Union all were silent. Most world newspapers simply ran straightforward news stories on the vote. In Russia, even Vladimir Putin said very little, commenting that the impeachment was "just the continuation of American domestic political strife".





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15. Coronavirus

In December 2019, an outbreak of Coronavirus (or COVID-19) was first identified in Wuhan, China. The highly infectious respiratory disease soon spread worldwide within weeks. The first confirmed case in the U.S. was reported on January 20, 2020, just 4 days after Trump's impeachment trial began in the Senate. The case was a 35-year-old who had returned from Wuhan 5 days earlier. On January 31st, Trump announced a partial ban on travel to the U.S. from China. After he referred to the Coronavirus as the "Chinese virus" in a tweet, he was quickly denounced as xenophobic by his rivals.

The early U.S. response to the pandemic was slow, especially in regards to testing. A manufacturing defect rendered CDC-developed test kits unusable, and regulatory rules prevented commercial laboratories from using their own tests. Initially, Trump was optimistic, dismissing the threat and claiming the outbreak was under control. Throughout January and February, he continued to claim that a vaccine was only months away despite officials repeatedly telling him it would take 12-18 months to develop one.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the leading national public health institute in the U.S., soon warned that widespread disease transmission might force large numbers of people to seek health care. This would overload hospitals and lead to otherwise preventable deaths.

On March 6th, Trump signed the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act into law, providing \$8.3 billion in emergency funding. (In the end, over \$2 trillion was passed in additional relief bills.) This included \$1,200 stimulus checks to millions of eligible U.S. residents. On March 13th, Trump declared a National Emergency, freeing up additional Federal resources. During another press conference, he admitted that the pandemic was not under control and warned that a recession might occur. He advised against any gatherings of more than 10 people. In mid-March, the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) requested that new medical facilities be constructed and to convert leased buildings for use as makeshift hospitals and intensive care units.





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15. Coronavirus (continued...)

State and local responses to the outbreak included mandatory quarantines and lockdown measures to limit where people could travel, work, and shop. This resulted in the closing of schools, retail stores, hotels, workplaces, houses of worship, gyms, bars, movie theaters, and restaurants (although some were allowed to stay open for carryout and "contactless" delivery). Gas stations, pharmacies, grocery stores, and banks remained open, although hours were reduced and people were instructed to remain 6-feet apart at all times. By April 2nd, about 297 million Americans (or about 90% of the population) was under some form of lockdown. Several states even set up police checkpoints at their borders.

Concerts, sporting events, and large-scale gatherings were canceled. These cancelations even included the Men's and Women's NCAA "March Madness" basketball tournaments, the suspension of the NBA, WNBA, MLB, MLS, and NHL professional sports seasons.

"Non-essential" businesses were shut down. People everywhere were ordered to stay at home except to get food, obtain health care, or go to an "essential" job (medical, fire, and police). "Social distancing", wearing masks in public, and not shaking hands became the norm as people adapted to a very different way of life.

The pandemic prompted calls from voting rights groups and Democratic Party leaders to expand mail-in voting so citizens don't have to decide between exercising the right to vote versus the risk of being exposed to the Coronavirus. While the pandemic interrupted the Democratic Primaries, Joe Biden still picked up the nomination.

While people of all ages were impacted by the Coronavirus, older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease) were hardest hit. By the end of April 2020, more than 3.2 million cases of Coronavirus were reported across the globe, resulting in over 227,000 deaths. The U.S. had over 1.1 million confirmed cases and 61,000 deaths, the most of any country. The state of New York was the hardest hit, with over 300,000 cases and 18,000 deaths.





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15. Coronavirus (continued...)

As the Coronavirus continued to spread, and as public health measures were put into place around the planet, the once growing U.S. economy (that had seen unemployment rates as low as 3.5% in December 2019) stalled. On February 20th, dubbed "Black Monday", the Stock Market crashed. Soon, a global recession on par with the one from 2007-2009 began. In just the first 5 weeks of the outbreak, 26 million Americans filed for unemployment, skyrocketing the unemployment rate to 18%, the highest since it hit 19% in 1938 during the Great Depression. By the end of 2020, economists are hopeful that the U.S. will begin to rebound. However, even in a best-case scenario, most forecasters say unemployment is likely to remain elevated for the next few years.

16. Election of 2020

Trump will run for re-election in November 2020. His Democratic challenger will be Joe Biden. Biden served as a Senator from Delaware from 1973-2009 and as Obama's Vice President from 2009-2017. Biden is 77 years old, and, if elected, will be 78 when inaugurated, making him the oldest serving President. There were 29 major candidates who launched campaigns for the Democratic nomination, making it the largest field of candidates for any political party. Biden, whose campaign was considered "DOA" after the first few primary contests, made a remarkable comeback on "Super Tuesday", a day when the largest number of states hold primary elections with approximately one-third of all delegates up for grabs. (Like with the Electoral College, each state is worth varying numbers of delegates. To become the nominee for a political party, you have to win a majority of the delegates.) With numerous challengers dropping out of the race and throwing their support behind Biden, it became a showdown between him and the Socialist Bernie Sanders. Because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Biden/Sanders debate on March 15th did not have a live audience and the candidates stood 6-feet apart. In early April, Sanders suspended his campaign and endorsed Biden on April 13th in a live-streamed discussion from his home. Obama endorsed Biden the next day. Early polling for the 2020 Election on November 3rd shows Biden leading Trump by 7 points, 49% to 42%.



