

Chapter 25 – That Seventies Decade – 1970 to 1979

Review:

The decade of the 1960s was one of the most turbulent in American history. The decade that followed would be a little more restrained but on the whole the period of change that began in the sixties would continue through the 1970s. The War in Vietnam would finally come to a conclusion and the Civil Rights movement would expand in an effort to improve conditions for women and other minorities. America would celebrate its bicentennial during this decade. The role of the United States in the Middle East would also become very important.

Lesson 1 – Changes

Main Idea: *The early 1970s led to some big changes – voting age, expanding the war in Vietnam & relations with China – just to name a few.*

Vietnam: Conflict and Protest Continue

President Nixon had made a commitment to end the conflict in Vietnam by shifting the responsibility for the majority of the fighting onto the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). However, that did not mean an immediate pull out of American forces. In 1970, Nixon actually expanded the war by launching an attack into South Vietnam's neighboring country of Cambodia. The goal was to knock out bases that the Viet Cong was operating out of across the border from South Vietnam. Ultimately, this helped destabilize the situation in Cambodia, which was also fighting a radical group of communist rebels called the Khmer Rouge.



A student at Kent State University expresses shock and anger at over the body of one of her fellow students gunned down by National Guard troops on May 4, 1970.

The invasion into Cambodia caused more protests back home against the war. The most notorious incident took place at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. In early May, a group of protestors had firebombed the Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) building on campus. Ohio Governor James Rhodes called up the National Guard to put an end to the protests. On May 4, a group of protesting students was ordered to disperse. When they refused to do so, the National Guard troops fired tear gas. The students responded with rocks and cement. After believing they heard a shot, the troops opened fire on the students, killing four of them. Those killed were not even involved in the protest. This tragedy sparked even more protest around the nation.

A presidential commission created after this stated that “students who bomb and burn are criminals.” It also recommended that the president work on solving this political crisis. By the end of

1970, Nixon called upon the “Silent Majority”¹ of Americans for support against the lawless anti-war protesters who were aiding the enemy by humiliating our nation. Nixon would grow increasingly irritated with Vietnam protestors and anyone who did not back his policy when it came to the war. An example of this was the arrest of over 7,000 protestors in Washington, D.C. in 1971.

In addition to this, the Nixon administration attempted to halt the publication of a *New York Times* series called the *Pentagon Papers*. This was information collected by the Defense Department and leaked to the *Times* by analyst **Daniel Ellsberg**. Attorney General John Mitchell argued in front of the Supreme Court that publication of this information would hurt national defense. The Court did not agree and the *Times* was able to print the rest of the series. The information revealed that the U.S. government had deliberately expanded the war when it had told the people that it was not going to do that. This damaged the credibility of the federal government and served as ammunition for the anti-war movement.

26th Amendment

On July 25, 1971, the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution went into effect. This amendment sets the minimum voting age at 18 years. When Congress tried to pass a law putting this into effect, the Supreme Court ruled that it did not have the authority to set such measure for the states and that the only way to do this was to pass an amendment. There was much pressure for passage due to the war in Vietnam. It was unfair that the government could draft young men into the military under the age of 21, yet

it wasn't until those young men turned 21 that they had the right to vote and change the government. (Twenty-one was the voting age in most states). The 26th Amendment changed that.



People's Republic of China's leader Mao Zedong shakes hands with President Nixon during his visit to China in 1972.

Nixon Visits China

One of the focal points of Richard Nixon's presidency was foreign policy. This was an area that seemed to hold his strongest interests. The Vietnam War was an unfortunate distraction for Nixon. He entered office in 1969 with the goal of improving relations with the Soviet Union and China. In the bigger picture, these relationships affected other events all over the world. After all, the Soviet Union was the only country that possessed the nuclear technology to destroy the United States and China was (and still is) the largest nation on the planet with a population of over a billion.

In February 1972, Nixon became the first president to visit China. This was a first step for the United States regarding the communist People's Republic of China. Ever since the fall of the Nationalist government in 1949, and its eventual move to the island of Taiwan, the U.S. refused to

¹ "**Silent Majority**" is a term used by the U.S. President Richard Nixon in a 1969 speech. It refers to a hypothetical large number of people in a country or group who do not express their opinions publicly. (*Wikipedia*)

recognize the communist government in Beijing (PRC's capital). With this move, Nixon was starting the U.S. on a path that would normalize relations with China.

This action would have two major effects. First, it would lead to a restoration of diplomatic relations with the Chinese. Doing so would be a boon² to American businesses, because the opportunity to sell products to over a billion people could lead to billions of dollars in profits. The only problem that would remain would be that China's communist government is, well, communist and they tend to take a low view of capitalists profiting off of their population. But economically, restoring ties to the U.S. would help China as well, because the U.S. represented a market for their goods. These goods could be made cheaply thanks to the low cost of Chinese labor. So essentially, the Chinese economy would be moving more toward capitalism and away from communism.

The second effect that improving relations with the Chinese had would be on the American relationship with the Soviet Union. Although both countries were communist, relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China had soured dramatically. The ideal of international communism bringing the workers of the world together just didn't work out. The Soviets were distrustful of the Chinese and the Chinese didn't like to be told what to do by the Soviets. In fact, that ship had sailed within the first 10 years after Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China. So Nixon's act was a way of showing the Soviets that the United States had some things in common with China, namely a potential friend when it came to curbing any possible Soviet expansionism.

1972 Olympic Games

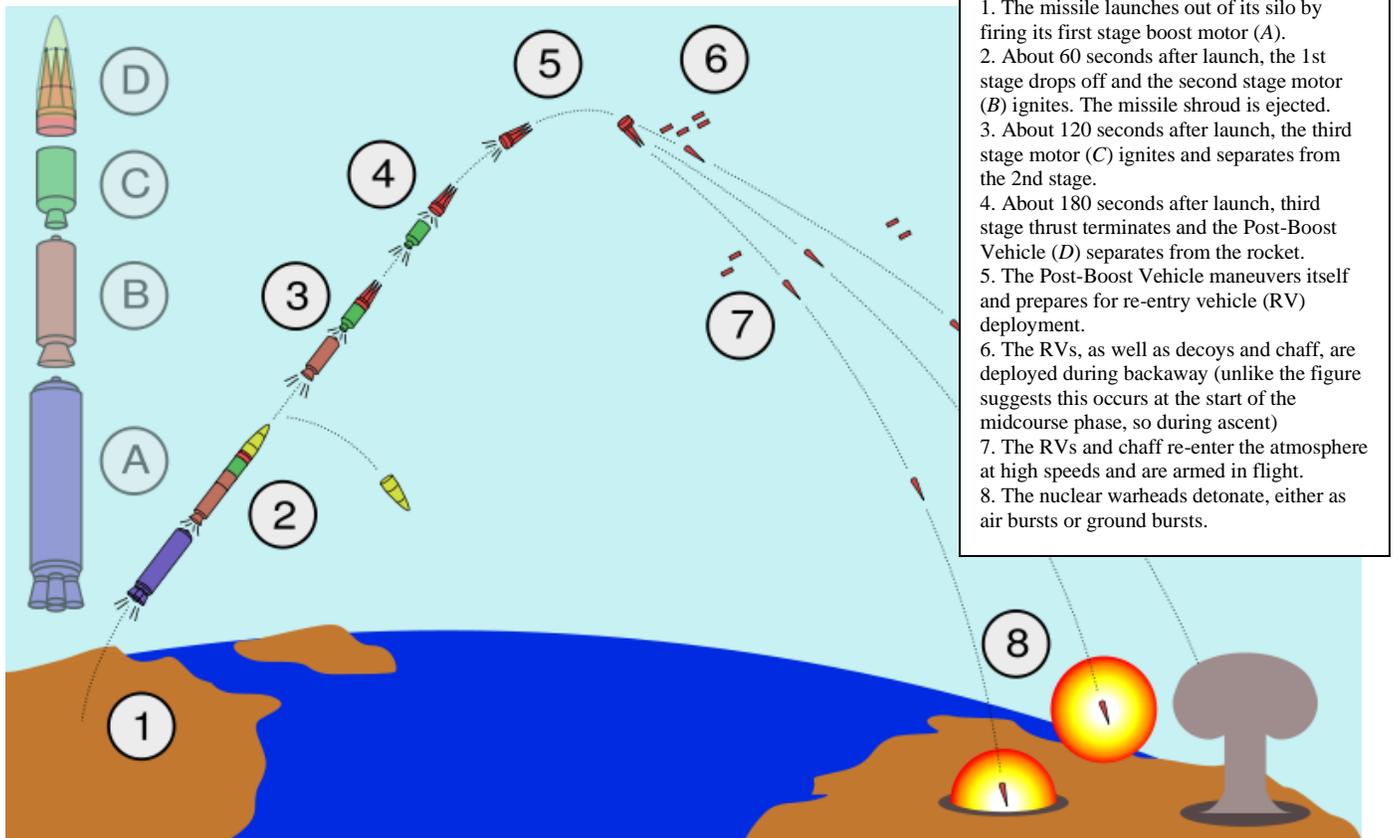
Normally, we haven't covered Olympic events in this class. There is a reason, however, why we're going to learn about the 1972 Summer Olympic Games held in Munich, Germany. Something happened there that had an impact on the world today. A **terrorist** group killed 11 athletes at the Olympic Village. It was a terrible event, not unlike some of the terrorist activities that have been part of the headlines in recent years.

The terrorist group was called Black September and was made up of Palestinians. If you don't know who Palestinians are, I'll tell you. The country of Israel was created in 1948 as a homeland for the world's Jewish population. The territory from which Israel was created was called Palestine. The Arab people living there called themselves Palestinians and some of the more radical among them were not happy about giving up their ancestral homeland to another group of people. (This is still a problem today). Black September was one of a number of terrorist groups that



A masked terrorist from Black September is photographed on the balcony of the apartment where Israeli athletes were murdered.

² **boon**: A timely blessing or benefit.



MIRV launch sequence:

1. The missile launches out of its silo by firing its first stage boost motor (A).
2. About 60 seconds after launch, the 1st stage drops off and the second stage motor (B) ignites. The missile shroud is ejected.
3. About 120 seconds after launch, the third stage motor (C) ignites and separates from the 2nd stage.
4. About 180 seconds after launch, third stage thrust terminates and the Post-Boost Vehicle (D) separates from the rocket.
5. The Post-Boost Vehicle maneuvers itself and prepares for re-entry vehicle (RV) deployment.
6. The RVs, as well as decoys and chaff, are deployed during backaway (unlike the figure suggests this occurs at the start of the midcourse phase, so during ascent)
7. The RVs and chaff re-enter the atmosphere at high speeds and are armed in flight.
8. The nuclear warheads detonate, either as air bursts or ground bursts.

had been formed in opposition to the country of Israel. Terrorism is the use of violence and threats to intimidate a group for political purposes.

A group of terrorists took eleven Israeli athletes hostage on September 5, 1972 in their apartment in the Olympic Village in Munich. They killed two of them quickly and were involved in a stand-off with the German military. They took the remaining hostages to an airport for a flight to a still unknown Arab country when the Germans attempted a rescue. It went badly and the remaining hostages were killed. The terrorists were killed except for three, two of whom are believed to have been later killed by the Israeli Mossad (Israel's version of the CIA). The Olympic Games were cancelled for a day but then continued the next day.

Perhaps the best thing that came out of the Olympics from an American point-of-view was that Mark Spitz, an American swimmer, set a world record by winning 7 gold medals. (Michael Phelps broke this

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record with 8 medals in 2008). In basketball, the U.S. team which had dominated since 1936, lost to the Soviet Union in a controversial game. It was this defeat that led eventually to the creation of a U.S. basketball team made up of professionals from the NBA in later Olympics.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM)

We last visited the subject of nuclear weapons back in the section on the 1950s. By the 1970s weapon technology had greatly advanced. In the late 1950s ballistic missiles were developed that could deliver a nuclear bomb thousands of miles in a matter of minutes. Both the United States and the Soviet Union had perfected this technology over the years. Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) could be launched from missile silos located on land while submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) were fired from atomic-powered submarines that could be located anywhere around the world. To make matters even more potentially horrifying, these missiles

contained multiple re-entry vehicle (MIRV) **warheads**. What this means is that each ICBM or SLBM had multiple warheads. One missile could target a number of different locations. As this technology became available, both sides continued to build these missiles. The possibility of a nuclear holocaust grew with every technological advancement.



It became obvious that both sides needed to come up with a solution to counter this missile build up. A large amount of money was devoted to developing the ability to shoot down any incoming nuclear missiles. These were called anti-ballistic missiles. There was only one problem. It was a whole lot easier to make missiles that blew things up than develop missiles to shoot down other missiles. Both sides rushed to come up with a solution that would give them a strategic advantage. In the mean time, the only thing that really prevented a nuclear war was the theory of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD).

MAD is a really crazy theory but it was one that actually worked. The concept is based on the idea that if one side started a nuclear war, it would be impossible to win it. The reason for this is that both sides had the ability to detect incoming ballistic missiles. Within minutes of launching a first strike, the enemy would launch a counter strike. As the missiles flew past each other in outer space, the minutes would count down to total destruction for both sides - thus the term Mutual Assured Destruction. This turned out to be the best deterrent to starting a war. MAD guaranteed that any major conflict between the two superpowers (U.S. & U.S.S.R) would result in a loss for all.

In November 1969, the Soviet Union and United States began what became known as the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty) negotiations. The goal was to come up with a treaty that would at the very least freeze the production of nuclear weapons by both the Americans and Soviets. The first part of SALT I was the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972. The treaty allowed both sides to have just 2 ABM systems – one to protect the capital and another to protect its ICBM silos. This was later reduced to

just one in 1974. The ABM treaty showed that the superpowers were committed to maintain the balance of power and rely on MAD to prevent World War III.

Lesson 1 Review Questions – (write answers in complete sentences on a piece of loose-leaf paper).

1. What is so ironic and sad about those students who were killed at Kent State in 1970?
2. What is the connection between the 26th amendment and the Vietnam War?
3. Explain at least one effect of President Nixon's move toward restoring relations with China.
4. How did the theory of Mutual Assured Destruction prevent the outbreak of nuclear war?

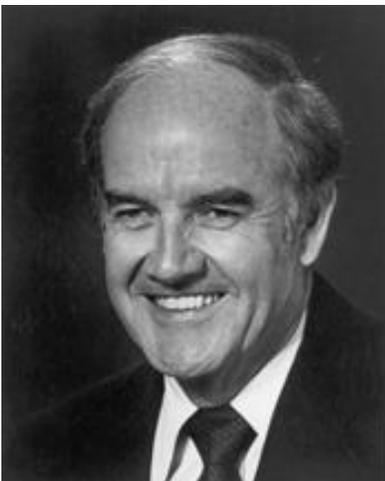
Lesson 2 – Elections, Court Decisions & Minorities

Main Idea: *Despite Nixon's re-election campaign, even more changes were on the way.*



The Election of 1972

This election would not be as turbulent as the presidential election of 1968. President Nixon easily won the Republican nomination for a second term. The Democrats had difficulty choosing a candidate and once they did, they had even more difficulty keeping their focus on defeating President Nixon. The Vietnam War was a central issue but some of the actions of the Democrats turned out to be key issues as well.



George McGovern

There were three strong candidates for the Democratic nomination. U.S. Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine was considered a likely candidate until the press reported that he was near tears when he delivered a speech defending his wife. Governor George Wallace of Alabama (and American Independent candidate for president in 1968) was considered an outsider with a chance at the nomination until he was shot in an assassination attempt during the campaign and left paralyzed. The nomination ultimately went to U.S. Senator

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George McGovern of South Dakota who promised an end to American involvement in the Vietnam War. President Nixon, however, campaigned that peace was close in Vietnam.

The biggest problem for the McGovern campaign was his choice for vice president. He selected Thomas Eagleton, the U.S. Senator from Missouri. A story broke just a few weeks after the Democratic convention revealing that Senator Eagleton had once undergone psychiatric electro-shock therapy for depression. He had failed to inform McGovern of this before he was chosen as the Democratic running-mate. Initially McGovern supported Eagleton, but then three days later asked him to drop out. The decision made McGovern look indecisive. It also didn't help that a news story quoted an anonymous Democratic senator who said that, "The people don't know McGovern is for amnesty, abortion and legalization of pot." The Republicans picked up on this and labeled him the candidate for "amnesty, abortion and acid."

The election results were disastrous for McGovern. Nixon won in a landslide. The 23% difference in popular votes is the third largest margin of victory in U.S. history. The one good thing that the Democrats could take out of the election was that they still maintained a majority in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Also, this was the first time that 18 year olds could vote, thanks to the 26th amendment. Nixon's victory would come at a price, for the nation would learn that his methods for getting re-elected would involve criminal activity.

Roe v. Wade

One of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions in our nation's history took place in January 1973. The case dealt with the topic of ***abortion***. In the last section we learned that Senator McGovern was labeled as a candidate who

avored abortion. The word is an extremely intense one. The subject is hotly debated to this day. That's because the subject of abortion draws on emotion – sometimes fueled by religious policy. Regardless of what your own opinion is on this issue, the Court's decision continues to have influence over politics today.

Before the Court ruled in this case, the issue of terminating a pregnancy was one decided by individual state laws. In *Roe v. Wade*, Norma McCorvey (“Jane Roe” – claimed her pregnancy was the result of rape) argued that a Texas law that made abortion illegal was unconstitutional. Henry Wade was the Dallas County District Attorney who represented the State of Texas in court. The case eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court on appeal. The Supreme Court ruled that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is part of a woman's right to privacy and thereby ruled that the Texas abortion law was unconstitutional.

This 7-2 court decision touched off a firestorm of controversy that remains to this day in the United States. The woman at the center of the case, Norma McCorvey has since become an advocate³ for making abortion illegal. A number of states have enacted legislation putting restrictions on abortion and pro-choice⁴ advocates have challenged many of them in court. This issue will continue to be controversial and will undoubtedly continue to play a role,

especially in presidential politics for years to come.



³ **advocate:** a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person, cause, etc.

⁴ **pro-choice:** supporting or advocating legalized abortion

Other Minorities Struggle for Rights

We have covered some of the extreme problems in the Civil Rights movement, especially in the 1960s. Most of that has dealt with the problems for African Americans. But there are other minority groups whose issues came to the forefront in the 1970s.

We'll start with the American Indian Movement (AIM). You really haven't heard much discussed when it has come to Native Americans since we learned about the Indian Wars of the late 19th Century. AIM was founded in 1968 but became well known in the United States in 1972 and 1973. In 1972 AIM leaders along with a Canadian Indian group began what they called “The Trail of Broken Treaties”. It was a cross-country protest that began on the West Coast and concluded in Washington, D.C. Its purpose was to bring attention to Native American issues. When the trip ended in Washington, AIM members seized control of the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs building. They left after a week but caused \$700,000 in damages.



An even bigger event was the Wounded Knee Incident in 1973. You may remember the name “Wounded Knee” because that is where one of the last battles of the Indian Wars took place. In reality it wasn't a battle when a group of Sioux were gunned down by the U.S. Army in 1890. Anyway, back to 1973. AIM leaders and members of the Oglala Sioux seized the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota in opposition to the reservation government there that AIM officials claimed had been abusive toward Sioux people living on the reservation. In February, the U.S. Justice Department sent marshals to surround the town. A stand-off remained for 71 days

during which two AIM occupiers were killed and a U.S. Marshal was shot and paralyzed.

These events along with others brought attention to the serious needs of the Native American population. Education, housing, employment, and alcoholism were all areas where Indians were among the worst-off among U.S. minorities. Although their methods appeared controversial to many Americans, AIM was successful in bringing these issues to the forefront of America.



César Chávez

Another minority group we've not really addressed much would be Hispanic⁵ Americans. Today, Hispanics represent the largest minority group in the United States (14% in 2005) but that percentage was much lower in the 1970s (4.7% in 1970). As is the case today, immigration was a very important issue back then but so too were some of the same concerns that other minority groups had especially concerning civil rights for Hispanics.

A great civil rights leader emerged at the time. His name was **César Chávez**. He was the co-founder of the National Farm Workers Association (which later became the United Farm Workers). This was a union made up predominantly of migrant farm workers (many of whom were immigrants from Mexico) that worked for better wages and working conditions for its members. Chávez and his union used non-violent protest to call attention to their situation. Often times they were met with hostility and violence.

⁵ **Hispanic:** related to a Spanish-speaking people or culture

Chávez was a staunch supporter of stopping illegal immigration because that damaged his group's ability to bring about real change. Because of his efforts, the civil rights picture for Hispanics began to improve. César Chávez became the voice of the Hispanic civil rights movement and the results are very apparent in areas where migrant farmers were common. Chávez passed away in 1993 and there are a number of places, buildings, schools, parks, etc. named after him throughout the United States.

Lesson 2 Review Questions – (write answers in complete sentences on a piece of loose-leaf paper).

1. What happened during the 1972 presidential campaign that made George McGovern look indecisive?
2. What methods did César Chávez use to gain civil rights for Hispanics?

Lesson 3 – Conflict & Scandals

Main Idea: *Some major events would forever change life in the United States during the 1970s. Conflict in the Middle East would lead to a rise in gas prices while here at home people lost faith in their government.*

Oil Crisis

The United States has been dependent on oil to run our industry and transportation systems for a number of years. In fact, we are so dependent on oil that we have to import oil from other countries. In 2006 the United States was the third-largest producer of oil in the world but we were also the number-one importer of oil in the world. In 1973 the United States came face-to-face with the fact that other oil-

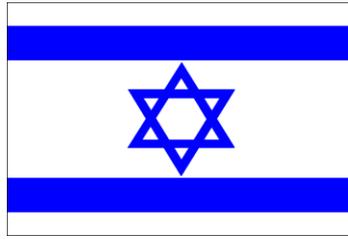
producing countries could have a huge impact on our economy.

To understand all of this you need to have a better understanding about the part of the world that produces the greatest amount of oil – the Middle East. There's much more to this, but I'll give you a short explanation of the situation. In 1948 the United Nations created the country of Israel out of the former British colony of Palestine. Israel was set up as a Jewish homeland – a restoration of the ancient kingdom of Israel that had been destroyed thousands of years ago. A Zionist⁶ movement for a new Jewish state had originated at the beginning of the 20th Century. After the world discovered the atrocities of the Holocaust, the idea of creating a new state of Israel became a reality.

This did not sit well with the Palestinians who had lived in the region for thousands of years. They had lived under foreign rule (Ottoman Turks & the British to name a few) for too long. These people were naturally upset that land they had long considered theirs was going to be given to people from other parts of the world. The UN had created a Palestinian homeland in



An Israeli tank during the Yom Kippur War.



Modern flag of Israel

1948 when they created Israel, but the Arab nations (Palestinians are Arabs) surrounding the area decided to go to war against Israel as soon as it was founded. The United States supported Israel and had provided the new country with weapons. Israel quickly defeated their Arab neighbors.

What does all of this have to do with oil? Wait – you'll see! Anyway, there were two more major wars between Israel and its Arab neighbors – in 1956 and 1967. Both times, the Israelis won and came away with land that from their victories. Then in 1973 the Arab nations launched a surprise attack on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. After the Israelis were able to turn the tide of the fighting in their favor, there was concern that the Soviet Union might get involved. They had supported the Arab nations with weapons to offset the American interests in helping Israel. With the possibility of a nuclear war resulting from the Middle East crisis, the U.S. and Soviet Union helped to negotiate a cease-fire between Israel and her enemies.

So ... what does this have to do with oil for crying out loud? Ok, I'll tell you. Some of those Arab countries, namely Saudi Arabia were part of an organization called OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting



Signs like this were common at gas stations during the 1973 OPEC oil embargo.

⁶ **Zionist:** a worldwide Jewish movement that resulted in the establishment and development of the state of Israel

Countries). To strike back at the United States for helping Israel, OPEC decided to cut production on oil, especially to the United States. The effect here in the United States was immediate. Long lines could be seen at gas stations and prices began going up. Increasing gas prices caused inflation throughout the American economy, (Sound familiar?)

President Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, put together a plan to make the United States energy independent by 1980. Obviously that didn't work. But the writing was on the wall for American industry. The big U.S. automakers began looking at ways to build smaller, more gas-efficient vehicles. Japanese automakers had the advantage here and Japanese imports rose steadily. Eventually in March 1974 OPEC lifted the embargo and things settled down a bit. Sadly, because oil imports returned to their pre-embargo levels, planning for an energy-independent America was put on hold. Today in the 21st Century we're paying the price for that kind of thinking.

Vice President Agnew Resigns

When Richard Nixon became president in 1969, **Spiro Agnew**, the former governor of Maryland, became his vice president. Agnew was the first Greek-American and Marylander to rise to the office of vice president. When Nixon won re-election in 1972, Agnew continued on as



Spiro Agnew

vice president. It appeared that he would soon be the front-runner for the Republican nomination to the presidency in 1976.

That all changed on October 10, 1973. Agnew became

the second vice president in the history of the United States to resign. Why did he resign? He was being charged with the crime of taking bribes while governor of Maryland. He pleaded "no contest" to the charge, paid a fine and was given three years probation. His political career was ruined and he never help public office again.

Perhaps the biggest reason for learning about this incident has to do with the 25th amendment to the Constitution. The amendment was added in 1967 (you read about it in your last reading) and provided a process for filling the office of vice president in the case of death or resignation. With Agnew's resignation came the first opportunity to put this part of the amendment into action. Under this, the president needed to nominate a new vice president. The House and Senate would then confirm the nominee with a majority vote.

The first person ever to assume the office of vice president this way was **Gerald Ford** of Michigan. Ford had served in the U.S. House of



Gerald Ford

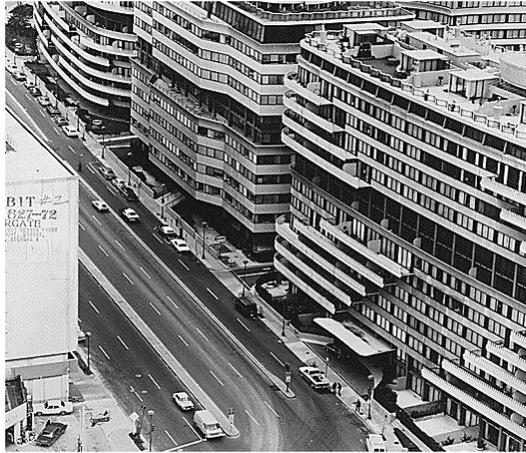
Representatives since 1949 and was the Minority

Leader⁷ in the House when President Nixon asked him to serve as vice president. Ford becoming vice president might not seem like such a big deal but it would turn out to be a very big deal in less than a year.

⁷ **Minority Leader:** the party member who directs the activities of the minority party on the floor of a legislative body, as of the U.S. Congress.

Watergate

The biggest political scandal of the 20th Century and perhaps in United States history is called the Watergate Scandal. It resulted in bringing down the President of the United States. And it all could have been avoided with some common sense.



The Watergate Complex in Washington, D.C.

The scandal dates back to President Nixon's re-election campaign in 1972. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) had their Washington, D.C. office located in the Watergate complex. The Watergate is a massive group of buildings that includes a hotel, apartments, offices and a shopping mall. Five men broke into the DNC headquarters but were caught and arrested on June 17, 1972. What started out looking like a simple burglary, turned into a huge scandal.

The problem was that the men who did the break in were connected to the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEP). There was no evidence to directly connect President Nixon to the break-in, but just six days after the arrests, Nixon and his White House staff plotted to cover up the connection to CREEP. Investigations into the connection between the White House and the Watergate break-in by the media, especially *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, showed a huge **conspiracy** to cover things up.

In 1973 a Senate committee began investigating the connection. In April 1973,

Nixon asked for the resignations of two of his closest advisors, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman. He also fired White House Counsel⁸ John Dean who went on to be a witness against Nixon. Haldeman and Ehrlichman would later be convicted and sent to prison for their role in the cover-up. The biggest problem for President Nixon, however, turned out to be the revelation

that he had recording devices tape all discussion in the Oval Office as well as in other parts of the White House. The Senate as well as the special prosecutor⁹ selected by the president issued a **subpoena** for copies of the tapes.

Nixon's response was to fire the special prosecutor. When his Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General refused to do it, Nixon fired them. It was becoming clear to the public that President Nixon had done something wrong when it came to the Watergate break-in. Eventually Nixon was forced to give up the tapes but one included a section of 18 ½ minutes that were erased. The White House said a secretary accidentally erased it but later evidence proved that was not the case.

It was the beginning of the end. The House of



August 9, 1974 – Richard Nixon waves goodbye as he boards a Marine helicopter after resigning as president.

⁸**Counsel:** a legal adviser or lawyer.

⁹**special prosecutor:** an independent counsel whose job is to determine facts in a case without having any political prejudice.

Representatives was preparing articles of impeachment. Nixon decided to resign from office on August 9, 1974. Gerald Ford became the 38th President of the United States. Imagine how different Nixon would appear to us now if he had just decided not to attempt a cover-up.

President Ford

One of the first things Gerald Ford had to do was nominate a new vice president. On August 20, he nominated former Republican governor from New York, **Nelson Rockefeller**. If you're wondering ... yes, he was the grandson of John D. Rockefeller, the head of Standard Oil. The unique thing about Ford and Rockefeller was that neither one of them had been elected to the executive branch.

The next thing for President Ford was to put the Watergate scandal behind us as a nation. To do this, Ford decided on September 8, 1974 to grant Richard Nixon a presidential pardon.



Nelson Rockefeller

What this means is that former President Nixon would not be tried in court for any crimes against the United States. Ford believed that the country needed to move ahead. Any trial that involved a possible prison sentence for the former president would likely be lengthy and become a media circus. That would prove an embarrassing distraction and Ford wanted to move on.

Ford's decision to pardon Nixon was highly controversial. There were many

Americans who felt that it was unfair for Nixon to go unpunished while people under him went to jail. Some people accused Ford of agreeing to pardon Nixon in return for Nixon's resigning and making him president. Regardless, Ford's pardoning of Nixon was proof enough for many Americans that they could not trust Washington politicians. It would prove to be a big issue in the upcoming presidential election.

Fall of Saigon – End of the Vietnam War

The last time we mentioned Vietnam, we were talking about the election of 1972 and the differences between McGovern and Nixon. Even during the election, the Paris Peace Accords were ongoing in an event to negotiate an end to the fighting in Vietnam. For President Nixon, the Vietnam conflict was something he wanted to end so that he could improve relations with the Soviet Union. He called this his *détente* policy. Nixon's trip to China in 1972 as well as the SALT negotiations and the ABM treaty were all part of détente. The Chinese and Soviets were on the side of the North Vietnamese so the war was a distraction to Nixon's overall foreign policy goals.

By December 1972 the United States began Operation Linebacker – the heavy bombing of North Vietnam with the intention of keeping them at the negotiating table. By January 1973 the president announced that the U.S. was halting offensive military operations against the North Vietnamese. This, combined with Nixon's Vietnamization policy, signaled that the U.S. was withdrawing from Vietnam. Even though both sides violated the Paris Peace Accords, Nixon continued to focus more of his détente policy than on Vietnam. After the Watergate scandal broke, Nixon was even less concerned with the situation there.

When President Ford took over in 1974, the Congressional elections that year brought more Democrats to the House and Senate. The Congress began reducing the amount of money that was being spent in Vietnam. By 1975 the North Vietnamese had launched a full scale invasion of the South. On April 30, 1975 the United States abandoned its embassy in the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon. That same morning communist troops captured the presidential palace and the war was over. In the past 10 years of fighting over 1.5 million Vietnamese had died and 3 million had been wounded. But now Vietnam would be one country – a communist country. Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City after the North Vietnamese communist leader.

The fall of Saigon signaled further changes in Southeast Asia. Earlier in April the Khmer Rouge, a fanatic communist movement in Cambodia (Vietnam's next door neighbor – see page 1) took control. Their rule resulted in a holocaust in Cambodia that killed more than 3 million people. Victims included anyone connected to the former government, intellectuals, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, homosexuals and people who lived in major cities. There is a whole lot more to this sad chapter in human history. It should be noted that the Khmer Rouge benefitted greatly from the U.S. invasion into Cambodia in 1970 (see page 1).

The fall of Saigon also led to a massive wave of immigration to the United States from people fleeing Southeast Asia. The time period from the end of the fighting in Vietnam to the end of the 20th Century saw hundreds of thousands of people from Southeast Asia come to the United States and Canada. Many of these people came by whatever means possible. Vietnamese "boat people" came in rickety boats not designed for ocean travel and many people died just making the attempt. Today, especially in the western part of the United



People fleeing the communist invasion of South Vietnam attempt to board a helicopter on top of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in April 1975.

States, Southeast Asia immigrants have made quite an influence. These people, like many immigrants, have worked hard to enjoy the fruits of life in America after experiencing horror and death in their homelands.

Lesson 3 Review Questions – (write answers in complete sentences on a piece of loose-leaf paper).

1. Why did OPEC place an embargo on oil exports to the United States?
2. Why did Vice President Spiro Agnew resign?
3. If President Nixon did not originally know who was behind the Watergate break-in, why was the House of Representatives considering impeachment?
4. What is unique about Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller?
5. When it came to the Vietnam situation, what foreign policy was President Nixon more concerned with?

Lesson 4 – Birthdays & Elections

Main Idea: *By 1976 Americans were trying to put the Vietnam War and Watergate behind us. We celebrated our 200th year and chose a new President.*

Happy Birthday America – the Bicentennial

Let's turn our attention to something a little more uplifting. The year 1976 was an important one in the United States. There was a big presidential election coming up in November and in July our country was turning the big 200. It was the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the nation planned on a big celebration.

A Bicentennial emblem was created and appeared on all sorts of things throughout the year. Everything from airplanes to fire hydrants was painted red, white and blue. The U.S. Mint even commemorated the event with a special flip side to the quarter, half-dollar and dollar coins. Because quarters are used far more than the \$0.50 or \$1.00 coin, you've probably still seen many of these in circulation today.



The Bicentennial celebration brought back a feeling of national pride to a nation that had just gone through some very tough times. The end of the Vietnam War and Watergate along with the oil crisis gave new hope to Americans who were reaching back to the Revolutionary War times in an effort to connect with things that make Americans proud.



Chapter 25 – That Seventies Decade

The Election of 1976

This was going to be an exciting election year for sure. Going into the race, no one was sure who the major party candidates were going to be. You might be tempted to think that President Ford would have the inside track for the Republican nomination since he was the **incumbent** candidate. But let's not forget that Ford had never been elected as either vice president or president. There were many in the Republican Party who thought he would not make the best candidate.

One of the top Republicans thought to have a good shot at the nomination was Ronald Reagan, a former movie actor and former governor of California. In a head-to-head race for the Republican nomination, President Ford jumped out to an early delegate lead by winning primary elections in New Hampshire, Florida and Illinois. Just when it looked like Reagan would have to drop out, he won some big primaries in North Carolina and Texas. Going into the convention it was too close to call. After some political wrangling, Ford narrowly won the Republican nomination. Unfortunately for Ford, the Republican Party did not seem to be as unified as he hoped they would be.

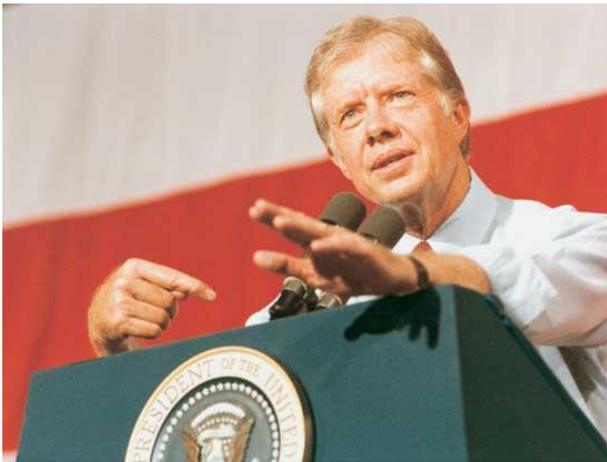


Ronald Reagan

The Democratic nomination was even more up for grabs. There were a number of Democrats running but the guy who came out with wins in the early primaries was former governor of Georgia, and peanut farmer, **Jimmy Carter**. These early wins gave Carter the momentum he needed to sew up the nomination before the Democratic convention. One of the things about Carter that appealed to many Americans was that he was a relative political unknown. Tired of the years of the Vietnam War and Watergate, Carter was a

fresh face who didn't have any connections to the current problems in Washington.

After the Democratic convention, Carter held a huge lead in the polls over Ford. Over the course of the campaign leading up to the November election, Ford narrowed that gap but not by enough. Carter won 50.1% of the popular vote along with 297 electoral votes to Ford's 240. On January 20, 1977 a new president would be sworn into office.



President Jimmy Carter

President Carter

There were a number of things that Jimmy Carter set out to achieve as President of the United States. When it came to his foreign policy objectives, President Carter was concerned with the issue of human rights. He made the 1975 Helsinki Accords the centerpiece of all U.S. foreign relations. The Helsinki Accords were signed in (can you guess?) ...Helsinki, Finland by the United States, Soviet Union and 35 other countries. The agreement focused on respecting human rights and self-determination of people around the world.

President Carter also continued new arms limitation talks with the Soviets at the SALT II Treaty that was signed in June 1979. He played a key role as peace-maker when it came to the Arab-Israeli conflict (as

we'll learn about in on page 15). One of his most controversial foreign policy decisions was the treaty that gave the rights to the Panama Canal to the country of Panama in 1999.

Carter also focused on creating a new energy policy that would make the country less dependent on foreign oil. In that respect, he played a key role in the creation of a new cabinet position – the Department of Energy. President Carter also helped to add another cabinet position with the creation of the Department of Education.

One of the biggest problems that President Carter faced during his administration was the weakening U.S. economy. Inflation reached double-digit highs – meaning above 10%. Prices skyrocketed thanks in large part to the energy crisis. Interest rates were incredibly high as well. By the end of his term in December 1980, the **prime rate** was 21.5% - the highest it has ever been. The government encouraged people to conserve energy. A national law was passed lowering the speed limit on highways to 55 miles per hour. Still, the economy continued to struggle.

Lesson 4 Review Questions – (write answers in complete sentences on a piece of loose-leaf paper).

1. Why do you think it was so important to Americans to celebrate the Bicentennial?
2. Why did Jimmy Carter appeal to so many Americans in 1976?
3. What were some of the major problems confronting President Carter as he came into office?

Lesson 5 – Middle East Problems & Nuclear Energy Issues

Main Idea: *The Middle East became a bigger concern for American foreign policy – oil & war had led to problems here at home. Could Nuclear Energy solve some of those problems?*

Working for Peace in the Middle East

As we learned back on pages 8 & 9, the situation in the Middle East was not a good one. Ever since the creation of the nation of Israel there had been a number of wars between Israel and her neighbors. Fortunately for Israel, the country won all of those wars and gained significant territory from her enemies. However, that did not mean that Israel was guaranteed to remain safe. There still was the problem of the Palestinians who demanded a homeland. Also a problem was the fact that none of Israel's Arab neighbors had ever recognized its right to exist. So achieving any kind of real peace was not anything that looked very good.

Things began to change in the mid



*Egyptian President
Anwar Sadat*

1970s. One of the most important things was the willingness of Egyptian President **Anwar Sadat** to meet with Israel to discuss peace. In November 1977 Sadat became the first Arab leader to visit Israel. In doing so, he was essentially recognizing

Israel's right to exist. Sadat was breaking with his Arab allies but he felt that doing this he could help end the violence that had gripped the region. This opened the door to negotiations that he also hoped would end the Palestinian problem. For this to work, however, Israel needed to be receptive to the Egyptian leader.



*Israeli Prime Minister
Menachem Begin*

Sadat's counterpart on the Israeli side was Prime Minister **Menachem Begin**. The Israeli Prime Minister extended an invitation to Sadat to visit Israel's Knesset (Israel's law-making body). Begin believed that entering into a peace dialog¹⁰ with the Egyptians would be a lot easier than negotiating with all of the Arab nations. A peace agreement with Egypt would make peace agreements with other Arab countries a possibility.

The third party in this whole thing was the United States and President Carter. Sensing that a break through in the peace process was possible, President Carter invited President Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Begin of Israel to Camp David, Maryland to discuss peace terms. Camp David has been a presidential retreat (sort of a vacation spot) since the time of President Franklin Roosevelt – but it got its name when President Eisenhower named the place after his grandson. Anyway, Carter, Sadat and Begin all met there in September 1978.

¹⁰ **dialog:** an exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue, esp. a political or religious issue, with a view to reaching an amicable agreement or settlement.

In March 1979 the **Camp David Accords** were signed by Egypt and Israel. The peace agreement included the Israelis returning the Sinai Peninsula to the Egyptians, an area that Israel had won in the 1973 War. In addition, an area where the Palestinians could have their own country was

established in what is known as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (See map below). This process has proved to be the most difficult in recent years. What is most important here is that the Camp David Accords were the first steps in the path to peace in the Middle East. Both Sadat and Begin received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978 for their efforts to get the whole process off the ground. Sadly, Anwar Sadat

was assassinated in 1981 by people in his country who felt he had betrayed them. Regardless, the efforts of Sadat and Begin were necessary in making a horrible situation a little better.



(left to right) President Sadat, President Carter and Prime Minister Begin shake hands after the signing of the Camp David Accords in March 1979.

Three Mile Island

Energy became a big issue in the 1970s with the OPEC Oil Embargo and the resulting difficulties that cause in the United States. Oil, it turns out, was not the only form of energy that would prove to be problematic for the U.S.

Nuclear energy – a form of energy that does not depend on foreign imports, became a huge concern in 1979. Let's go over the basics of how nuclear power works. It's all about creating a controlled nuclear reaction – which involves the splitting apart of atoms (fission). This is done with uranium, which is a mineral found in the ground and in abundance in the United States. When atoms are split it creates heat. In nuclear power plants the heat is used to heat water, creating steam and thus energy.

There are a few drawbacks. The splitting of atoms creates radioactivity which can be deadly to humans exposed to high doses. The uranium, which is in the form of fuel rods, will remain radioactive for tens of thousands of years. Essentially the process can be used to create energy or destructive force in the form of nuclear bombs (which we've discussed previously). When it works correctly, nuclear power is one of the most effective means of energy production. The main issue is storing spent fuel rods and keeping away from accidents. You can learn more about the whole process in science.



THE WASHINGTON POST



Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania still provides energy today.

So back to 1979... a Pennsylvania nuclear power plant called Three Mile Island had a pretty significant accident. On March 28, 1979 the plant experienced what is known as a partial core meltdown. This means that the process described above becomes overheated causing the material to melt and making it difficult to contain the radioactivity. What happened at Three Mile Island was that some of the radioactivity was released into the atmosphere.

Nobody died or was hurt but the possibility of this becoming worse was enough to stop the building of future nuclear power plants in the United States. Nuclear power continues to be a reliable energy force in the U.S. – generating about 20% of the nation's energy. The potential for disaster remains. In 1986 in Chernobyl, Ukraine (then part of the Soviet Union), a nuclear reactor blew up. A huge radioactive cloud floated over a number of European nations. Thirty-one people died within three months. The entire population of the area had to be moved. There are no complete records of how many people were exposed that resulted in health problems like cancer. The power plant and the area surrounding it are completely cut off. The material at the plant is buried under tons of concrete. The area will be unlivable for tens of thousands of years.

Chapter 25 – That Seventies Decade

Three Mile Island wasn't anywhere near as bad as Chernobyl but it caused Americans to be concerned about the safety of these plants. Safety has to be a primary concern if nuclear power is to remain a big part of the energy picture. Debate over nuclear power continues to this day. Learning more about this form of energy should be a priority for all Americans, especially as the question of alternative energy sources continues to be a major issue.

Iran Hostage Crisis

Ok – this is another situation that requires some background information. We're talking about Iran, a country that used to be called Persia. You can go back thousands of years and learn about how powerful the Persian Empire was and how they were constantly at war with Ancient Greece. We won't go back quite that far. Let's just go back to the 1950s. It was then that the U.S. helped set up the **Shah of Iran**. He was the king of Iran. The Shah of Iran kept his country allied with the United States. This was important for the U.S. because the Soviet Union borders Iran and because Iran has lots of oil! The problem, however, was that the Shah's government wasn't too nice to its own people. It was hardly a democracy with people who opposed the Shah being arrested and killed. As long as Iran remained friendly with the U.S. (and anti-communist), America was willing to overlook the Shah's wrongdoings.

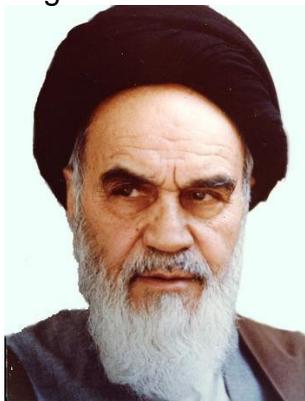


Mohammad Reza Pahlavi – Shah of Iran

The Iranian people decided they could no longer put up with the Shah. In

1978 the Iranian Revolution began. A religious movement took over that set up an Islamic Republic under the rule of fundamentalist¹¹ Islamic rulers. The top cleric¹² was the **Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**. When this new government took over in 1979, the Shah fled the country. He traveled from country to country but he had a form of cancer called non-Hodgkins lymphoma. In order for him to live he needed advanced medical help. He wanted to come to the United States for treatment in October 1979. Reluctantly, President Carter allowed him to come to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for treatment. That's when things spun completely out of control for the U.S.

Although President Carter was trying to establish better relations with the new Iranian government, they viewed Carter's admitting of the Shah as a sign that the U.S. intended for him to return to Iran to rule. In November 1979, Iranian students seized the U.S. embassy in the capital of Tehran and held 52 American diplomats hostage. They demanded that the U.S. return the Shah to Iran where he would be put on trial. The new Iranian government did nothing to stop the situation. President Carter refused to negotiate with what he termed to be



Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

terrorists. This was a violation of an age old tradition of respecting the diplomatic rights of nations.

The crisis was on the news every day. With the 1980 presidential election around the corner, President Carter knew that he needed to do something to



The wreckage of an American helicopter that crashed on a failed mission to rescue hostages in Tehran.

handle the crisis. He was appearing weak, not only to Iran, but more importantly to American voters. In April 1980, President Carter gave the go-ahead to a rescue mission that was to use military helicopters to sweep in and rescue the hostages. Unfortunately the mission failed when some of the helicopters and a rescue plane crashed in the Iranian desert. The mission failure seemed to underscore the inability of the Carter administration to handle the problem. As a result, President Carter's popularity plunged and he would inevitably lose his re-election bid in November 1980. The 52 American hostages were eventually released on Carter's last day in office on January 20, 1981 after 444 days in captivity.

Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Much of what is going on today in the Middle East and Central Asia is a direct result of what was going on back in the 1970s. In order to understand things, you really need to take a look at a map. Many of these places have been in the news recently. Knowing where these places are will not only help you to understand what we are studying, but also what's going on today. You should refer to the map on the bottom of the page to get a good idea of what we're learning about here.

¹¹ **fundamentalist:** a strict adherence to any set of basic ideas or principles.

¹² **Cleric:** a clergyman or other person in religious orders.



You've already learned about the Arab-Israeli conflict. You've already learned about the Iranian Islamic Revolution and the American hostage crisis that resulted. Right next door to Iran is the nation of Afghanistan. There is a long history of conflict in this region of the world involving the native people who live there and foreigners. To be honest, it's really difficult to understand and you don't really need to get into all that here. What you need to know is that in December 1979 the Soviet Union launched a full out invasion of the country to prop up a communist government there. You can read into this other reasons for the Soviets taking this action. Instability in the region plus the importance of the region in terms of oil probably plays a role. The impact of the Soviet invasion would turn out to be huge.



A Soviet MI-24 Hind Helicopter Gunship – this was used by the Soviets in their Afghanistan invasion.

Let's start with the impact on the Soviet Union. It might be easy to assume that the Soviets would have a huge advantage over the Afghans. They Soviets had modern technology and a wealth of modern day weapons. People thought the same thing about the United States in Vietnam and we know how that turned out. Afghanistan became for the Soviets, what Vietnam was for the Americans. They found themselves bogged down in a war that was hugely unpopular at home that resulted in the deaths of thousands of Soviets. And like Vietnam, the Soviets were forced to give up and go home. As you'll learn in your next reading, this helped bring about an end to the Soviet Union.

So what does any of this have to do with American history? Clearly, the Soviets getting themselves into a Vietnam-like situation could only

help the United States. The U.S. funded the Afghan rebels and got them weapons to fight the Soviets (just like the Soviets gave help to the Vietnamese). Unfortunately it turns out that some of those people the U.S. supported, would be major players in the Taliban government that was set up after the Soviets left (in the early 1990s). If you don't know what that means, just keep paying attention. The Taliban was the group that helped sponsor Osama Bin Laden, mastermind of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Currently, the U.S. finds itself in a similar role to that of the Soviets in the 1980s – trying to fight a guerrilla war against Islamic extremists dedicated to kicking out an invading power.

Lesson 5 Review Questions – (write answers in complete sentences on a piece of loose-leaf paper).

1. Why was Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977 such an important step in bringing peace to the region?
2. How does the Three Mile Island accident in 1977 compare to the Chernobyl disaster in 1986?
3. What action by the United States prompted Iranian students to take Americans hostage?
4. How was Afghanistan for the Soviets similar to Vietnam for the Americans?

Extra Credit Question (worth 20 points – answer in complete sentences on a piece of loose-leaf paper)

- How much of the oil refined in the United States comes from other countries? Cite your source.
- The Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia had a devastating effect on the people of that country. Get parental permission and watch the movie *The Killing Fields*. Do a movie review but make sure to explain how Cambodian people suffered. *(be warned that this is a disturbing movie)

Timeline of Events

1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. invasion of Cambodia • National Guard troops open fire on Kent State protestors • ABC & NFL introduce Monday Night Football • Apollo 13 mission to the moon nearly ends in disaster
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pentagon Papers released by the <i>New York Times</i> • 26th Amendment ratified allowing 18-year-olds to vote • China joins the United Nations – US normalizes relations with China • Disney World opens in Florida
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Nixon visits China • 11 Olympic athletes killed by terrorists at the Munich games • U.S. & U.S.S.R. sign ABM treaty – part of SALT treaty • Nixon wins landslide election defeating Democrat George McGovern
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Roe v. Wade</i> – U.S. Supreme Court legalizes abortion rights • AIM occupies Wounded Knee, SD. bringing attention to Native American issues • Vice President Spiro Agnew resigns – Nixon appoints & Congress approves Gerald Ford as VP • Watergate scandal breaks • Yom Kippur war begins with Arab attack on Israel • OPEC oil embargo begins • Sears Tower in Chicago is completed – tallest building in the world • U.S. pulls last troops out of Vietnam
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Nixon resigns due to Watergate – Gerald Ford becomes the 38th President of the United States • Ford pardons Nixon • Atlanta Brave Hank Aaron hits his 715th home run – passing Babe Ruth for most home runs in Major League Baseball
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Vietnamese capital Saigon falls to communists – Vietnam War is over • 2 assassination attempts are made on President Ford • NBC's Saturday Night Live debuts • Microsoft is founded by Bill Gates
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Bicentennial • Jimmy Carter defeats Gerald Ford to become the 39th President of the United States • Apple Computer is launched
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visits Israel • Panama Canal treaty signed – giving the canal to Panama in 1999 • "Son of Sam" killer in New York City arrested
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp David Accords signed between Egypt & Israel • Pope Paul VI dies – Pope John Paul I takes over for 33 days then dies – Pope John Paul II takes over • Suicide and murder of 900 people along with their religious leader Jim Jones in Guyana (South America)
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Mile Island nuclear accident • Iranian Revolution – students take over U.S. embassy in Tehran – hold 52 Americans hostage – Iranian hostage rescue fails • Soviet Union invades Afghanistan • Margaret Thatcher becomes first woman Prime Minister of England • ESPN – first all sports cable TV channel