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APUSH

Period 4

04/26/2021

CH 31 FQs Domestic & Foreign Policy of Ford, Carter, Reagan

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1. Ford Domestic Policy Developments

After the chaotic end of the Nixon Presidency and general distrust of the government at a high, Ford’s goal for the country was to continue with Nixon’s policies to save the economy. In a failed attempt to ease the country after the chaos of Nixon’s impeachment and in order to move past it, Ford pardoned Nixon for all crimes (Proclamation 4311—Granting Pardon to Richard Nixon , pg 1). However, Nixon was clearly guilty to much of the public, and pardoning him decimated Ford’s approval rating. OPEC had been harassing the United States with inflated oil prices since the Arab oil embargo in 1973, and the oil crisis was one of the main reasons behind inflation at the time. On top of this, the United States was hit with a recession in 1975, the first since the Second World War. Ford combated this with Tax Reductions, giving many Americans more disposable income to reboot the economy (State of the Union Address, pg 3). Ford ultimately continued the policies of Nixon, but his popularity was not comparable due to his pardon.

1. Ford Foreign Policy Developments

Similar to his domestic policy, Ford’s Foreign Policy was extremely similar to Nixon’s. He continued with the Nixon Doctrine, aided by Henry Kissinger. Fold was able to ease tensions in the Middle East with a new accord settling the 6-Day War and the OPEC crisis continued. The OPEC Cartel continued to raise the price of oil after the Arab oil embargo in 1793, leading to inflation reaching 11 percent three years late. Ford didn’t continue with Nixon’s price and wage freezes and instead left efforts to stop inflation in voluntary efforts. Ford was also able to even build upon Nixon’s SALT Treaty with the Soviet Union with the SALT 2 Treaty, a nuclear arms control bill that cooled the Cold War even more (Ford Foreign Policy Speech, pg 10). Ford also dealt with the aftermath of the Vietnam War, bringing the soldiers back home and dealing with draft dodgers. Ford dealt with the draft dodgers by giving less harsh sentences than required and did not send many to jail (Ford Draft Evaders Deserters Speech, pg 1).

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1. Carter Domestic Policy Developments

Carter was elected as a decent man to bring morality to the Presidency after the corruption of the Nixon and Ford Administrations. However, as he entered the Presidency, his lack of policy to solve the many problems facing America was clear. Both Nixon and Ford were largely unable to stop the rampant inflation overtaking America, and Carter did not do much. He increased spending, but this didn’t stop interest rates from reaching 20%, an all time high. When another fuel shortage occurred in 1979, Carter seemed to blame the American people due to a “crisis of confidence” in his Malaise Speech (The Malaise Speech, pg 3). Carter’s inability to deal with the economic crisis at hand lost him the support of many Americans. As the next election approached, Carter was dealing with the Iran Hostage Crisis, which lost him the support of even more Americans at home with ineffective petitioning to Iran to release the hostages (Hostage Letter, pg 1).

1. Carter Foreign Policy Developments

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Carter was unable to do much to stop domestic troubles and was just slightly better at tackling foreign problems. As he entered office, he pledged to support “human rights” over selfish interests in American foreign policy and acted as such. He showed his commitment by returning the Panama Canal to Panama. Carter was even able to create a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in the Camp David Accords (Carter Camp David Accords Draft Edits, pg 1). He also improved relations with China and the Soviet Union to continue talks about new arms agreements and to further peace. His worst moment began at the Iranian Revolution was a rebellion to the US supported monarchy in Iran with an Islamic Revolution. The new leader Ayatollah Khomeini was on his deathbed in New York City when 53 Americans were taken hostage from the American embassy in Iran (Carter Iron Hostage State Dept Summary Page 1, pg 1). Chaos in the Middle East ensued after the Russian Invasion of Afghanistan. Carter was unable to get Iran to release the hostages, and Reagan was able to get them back.

1. Reagan Domestic Policy Developments

Reagan was elected in a wave of the new rising right-wing movement across America. His first priority was to implement “Reaganomics”, which consisted of deregulation, reducing federal spending, and greatly reducing taxes. He believed that getting government out of the way would help the economic crisis (Economy New Beginning Speech Excerpt, pg 1). However, Reagan’s policies greatly increased the National Debt due to budget deficits. In order to minimize this, welfare was cut once again. A recession hit America in 1982 and raised unemployment to its highest level since the Great Depression, but America recovered quickly, with inflation decreasing for the first time in a decade. Another part of Reagan’s economic system was to greatly increase the military spending, with a program called the SDI, commonly known as “Star Wars”, to maintain the peace through strength. ( President Reagan's SDI Speech, pg1) Throughout all this, Reagan was immensely popular across America, through his masterful use of mass media and charming, rugged, personality. His jokes and quips gathered the support of Americans just as much as his economic recovery.

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1. Reagan Foreign Policy Developments

Reagan came into office with a gunslinging attitude to restore American pride in the world. With his SDI, the Cold War was being escalated. The Reagan Doctrine was one that reflected Reagan’s proud and rugged personality: it was to use American resources to interfere all places in the 3rd World where Communism was festering. Americans interfered in Grenada, Nicaragua and Lebanon just in Reagan’s first term. However, an unexpected side effect of this was a worldwide rise in Terrorism. This standing up to communism was unnecessary, as the Fall of the Soviet Union was in action. The Berlin Wall fell to American demands soon after Reagan demanded for East Germany’s freedom (Berlin Wall Brandenburg Gate Draft 1987, pg 15). However, Reagan suffered some losses with the Iran Contra Scandal, where Reagan sold arms to Iran, then funneled the money to aid contras in Nicaragua, and had his people lie to Congress about it (Iran Contra Scandal Issues, pg 1). At the end of Reagans term, America was at a much better place internationally.