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US History: Period 4

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Presidential Response Notes

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

1. Why did you choose this President to research?

Lately, I've been watching a lot of videos about Barack Obama--to offset the typically negative news coverage of our current commander-in-chief--so this was a natural choice. From my perspective, he was an amazing president and somebody to aspire to be like.

2. What do you know about this President?

I know that he did not come from a wealthy background. I know that he taught Constitutional Law at a college in Washington, DC for some time before he ran for the presidency. I know that he has two daughters and eats dinner with them every weeknight at 6pm (this is just a random anecdote that I recall from one of those videos I watched about him; something that affirms his character and priorities in life). He was first elected in 2008 and won the presidency for a second time in 2012 (against Mitt Romney).

3. What is the reason for the speech?

This speech is a tribute to a defining civil rights movement and the events that occurred on this bridge in Selma. President Obama emphasizes how segregation affected everyone and describes the significance of "the death of four little girls [and] the dream of a baptist preacher" in the fight to determine the "true meaning of America."

4. What are the president's main points?

President Obama depicts how "we" drive our nation forward and how "we" the people are at the foundation of the US government. He describes the hopeful spirit of America and how Americans take destiny into their own hands. He emphasizes how, despite seemingly insurmountable hardships and discriminations, we are America and we all share in the nation's hopeful spirit.

5. How can the President that wins 2020 use these ideas in their own policy?

Vice President Joe Biden has already been using similar messaging in his own speeches as he campaigns for the presidency. For example, in his closing statement in this last debate, he emphasizes how he would be a president for all the people, regardless of whether they voted for him or not. He does not see blue states and red states but rather will be a representative for all America.

6. What is the president's leadership style?

While I believe that President Obama employed many different styles of leadership throughout his time in office, this specific speech primarily focused on transformational leadership style. Throughout his address, President Obama repeatedly used imagery to inspire the American people to unite and work together towards a brighter future.

PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH

1. Why did you choose this President to research?

President George W. Bush is one of the only--along with President Obama--people listed in this slideshow that is still alive. I wanted to be able to learn more about him and his background so as to be informed about why he takes certain stances in the future.

2. What do you know about this President?

He is a Republican and was in office before President Barack Obama. His father, George H. W. Bush, was the 41st president of the US. Before his time in office, he was a pilot in the National Guard, graduated from Harvard University, worked in the oil industry, and was the governor of Texas.

3. What is the reason for the speech?

This speech was responding to the terrorist attacks on 9/11 and describes the 1000s of lives that were ended by "despicable acts of terror." President George W. Bush emphasizes how, even though terrorist attacks can damage buildings, they cannot damage our nation's resolve.

4. What are the president's main points?

President George W. Bush describes how the US "responded with the best of America" and how he acted quickly with "implementing . . . emergency response plans." He emphasizes how the US continued without interruption and how the nation's economy was not damaged by these attacks. He then goes on to describe the current work of the military and intelligence agencies in bringing these terrorists, and those who harbor

them, to justice. Finally, he thanks Congress and allied nations for their help in the war against terrorism. He ends his speech asking the nation to pray for those who were damaged by the attacks and even goes as far as to quote Psalms!

5. How can the President that wins 2020 use these ideas in their own policy?

From my admittedly provincial perspective, I believe that the President who wins this 2020 election cycle should apply the same principles of unity and urgency that President George W. Bush emphasizes in the fight against global warming and other life-threatening crises.

6. What is the president's leadership style?

This speech was quite similar to President Barack Obama's speech (in its use of transformational leadership) as it calls the people to action and clearly depicts Americans as a single people with a single goal: to win the war against terrorism.