**Guided Notes Compilation: Semester 2**

**The Roaring Twenties:**

**After the War: America’s economy was struggling to change from a wartime economy to a peace time economy.** Many Americans found themselves out of work. They blamed Woodrow Wilson, they blamed Europe, and they blamed everything associated with the War. America needed a change, so they elected **Warren G. Harding** as their next president. He promised a return to **normalcy**. He promoted a **tariff** on imported goods that allowed American companies to prosper**. Income tax rates** also dropped sharply from wartime rates, so Americans were able to keep more of their money.

**Prosperity:** In urban areas**, electric power** was spreading, along with modern conveniences. Competition between Ford and GM, as well as the development of the **assembly line**, made cars more attractive and accessible to the American people. Productivity of goods increased markedly. The 1920’s also marked the birth of the commercial airline industry. The post office used airmail, farmers used crop dusters, and old war pilots became flight instructors. People wanted more goods and started buying them on **credit** through monthly **installments.**  Labor saving appliances like the vacuum also increased efficiency, so people increasingly spent their time engaging in **leisure time activities,** such as going to the movies, sporting events, or simply listening to the radio.

**Problems:** Harding’s industries protected by tariffs **regained monopoly control** in their industry. Prices in these industries rose sharply. On the flipside, more food was produced than was needed, so the **surplus** caused food prices to go down. Perhaps the most concerning, **government policies favored corporate interest over social progress.** The **income gap** between the rich and the bulk of society reached its widest point to date. Almost half of Americans lived in **poverty**. Furthermore, Harding hired **unqualified** people to help him. The **Teapot Dome Scandal** surrounded his Secretary of the Interior: Albert Fall. Oil execs convinced him to grant them access to government land, which was not legal. Fall was the first cabinet member to serve prison time for a crime committed in office. It is widely believed that scandals like this took their toll on Harding, who died suddenly in August of 1923. Vice President Calvin Coolidge took over, and moved quickly to clean up the mess. Coolidge, like Harding, was pro-business. He agreed with the theory of **laissez-faire economics**, meaning that market needed to be left to its own devices, and would self correct for the best outcome for all. Furthermore, Coolidge did not believe that it was the **government’s job to address social and economic problems.** When bills to of that nature came to his desk, he **vetoed** them.

**Culture of the 1920’s:** Whether it was known as the **Roaring Twenties** or the **Jazz Age,** the 1920’s were a time to celebrate the new and the modern. **Jazz music** was highly popular, and captured the carefree spirit of the time. Although women were limited in some career choices, they still had more freedom than ever before. They drove cars, played sports, and went to college. Increased freedom led to changed views on marriage, voting in elections, and even two women governors. **Mass media,** communications capable of reaching several people at once, gained great importance in the 1920’s. **Movies** captivated the masses with the glamour of Hollywood, and also promoted popular culture. Radios became common in homes and **listening to the radio** became a national past time. The Controversy over religion and science in schools began in the 1920’s. Religious **fundamentalists,** who believe every word of the bible to be true, **objected to schools teaching evolution.** Through legal channels, they actually succeeded in making it illegal to teach evolution in three states. **John Scopes** broke this rule in Tennessee and taught evolution. His trial was big news. He was found guilty, but the State Supreme Court overturned his verdict. This controversy still continues to this day. **Prohibition** is also in full swing at this time. While it was intended to improve the moral fortitude of the nation, it actually had the opposite effect. Bootleggers ran unchecked, organized crime took over major cities, and the government was unable to manage the underground movement. Prohibition was considered a failure, and repealed in 1933. The **Great Migration** saw thousands of African Americans moving north in the years before and during WWI. Better jobs and lifestyle were attractive to them. However, with the war over, there was still **discrimination in securing housing and jobs**. Raising tension between white folks and black folks led to several **race riots** in 1919. There was also a resurgence of the KKK, and race relations took a step backward. To push back against racism, M**arcus Garvey** founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association, or **UNIA**. His goal was to not only spread black pride, but to have several African Americans **unite and establish their own nation in Africa,** and live successfully in the country of their forefathers. While few actually migrated, it brought several African Americans together for a cause. The **NAACP** was also active in helping African Americans fight against discrimination. They worked tirelessly to end segregation; however, their efforts were not matched by Congress. New York City became the unofficial capital of Black America. **Harlem**, a neighborhood on New York’s west side, housed the world’s largest black urban community. By the 1920’s, it became a center for African American culture. Harlem was home to writers, musicians, singers, painters, sculptors, and scholars. Among Harlem’s residents were poets like **Langston Hughes** and **Zora Neal Hurston.**  Jazz made its way to the nightclubs of Harlem. Musicians like **Duke Ellington** and L**ouis Armstrong** were favorites, along with singer **Bessie Smith.** The burst of culture that came forth from African Americans in the 1920’s and 30’s is known as the **Harlem Renaissance.** Many, however, were disenchanted with the direction in which society was heading. The Progressive Era reforms were thwarted by the war, leaving many to question America’s values. Those filled with resentment and little hope were known as the **lost generation**. Books such as Ernest Hemingway’s *“A farewell to Arms*” and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s ***“The Great Gatsby”*** highlight the despair of the lost generation.

**A Myth of Prosperity:** While the 1920’s was associated with prosperity, there were underlying problems that many failed to recognize. Many basic industries such as the **railroads, textile mills, and mining** were in serious trouble. While they had **improved efficiency** and were producing more goods, middle class incomes had not risen, so **no one could afford to purchase these goods**. Many items went unsold and piled up in warehouses. This becomes a problem because if businesses can’t sell their products, then they can’t buy materials and equipment, nor can they pay their employees’ salaries.

Farmers also suffered because of greater efficiency. Advances in machinery and irrigation methods led to them producing more crops than they could sell. The **increased supply caused lower food prices** and high levels of debt for farmers. Ultimately, the wealth associated with the 1920’s was largely **a myth**. While the wealthiest of people could afford the latest fads such as fancy cars and modern appliances, many people were barely getting by, had no savings, and were buying goods on credit. African Americans especially were having a hard time finding work. The stock market further masked the true financial crisis, and **investors often made risky deals** in hope of making fast money. This process is known as **speculation**. However, if the deals didn’t pan out, investors would not be able to pay for the stocks they bought. This made the risk of bankruptcy very high.

**The Great Depression:**

**Stock Market Crash:** In October of 1929, the illusion of wealth came to an end. On October 23, stock prices fell sharply, after a period of decline. On October 24, several **people panic**, and **start selling their stocks** to avoid going bankrupt. They also **make a run on banks**, taking out any and all savings. On **October 29, the stock market crashed** entirely, with prices plummeting by more than **75%**. Many investors saw their fortunes dwindle down to nothing in less than a week, and ordinary citizens lost their life savings in a matter of hours. October 29 came to be known in history as “**black Tuesday**.” The crash was only the beginning of the economic depression. Within the next five months, **several banks had to close** because they had literally run out of money.

Since **people had no money, they couldn’t afford to buy goods and services**. Many businesses laid off workers, so unemployment skyrocketed. While Americans had experienced depressions before, the **Great Depression was the worst economic crisis** in the nation’s history. Since many **European nations borrowed money** from America after WWI, when the American economy collapsed, theirs did as well. The **duration** of the depression was also intense. The economy struggled **from 1929 until America entered WWII in 1941**. Millions of people were homeless, starving, and out of work. Many Americans looked to President **Herbert Hoover** for help. However, Hoover didn’t want to increase the government’s role in the in the economy. **He didn’t believe that the government should bail out the nation or help the needy**. While he encouraged **charitable giving** from churches, and persuaded business owners to **voluntarily not lower their wages**, his lack of definitive action caused many people to blame him for the depression. By 1932, with no change in the economy, Hoover decided that the government may need to become involved. He supported the creation of the **Reconstruction Finance Corporation**, which would give loans to banks and railroads. He also supported **public works projects,** which are government funded construction projects that create jobs and address community needs. Hoover was highly involved in the building of the **Hoover Dam**, but his efforts could not shake his reputation as a “**do-nothing**” president.

**The New Deal:** In 1932, American’s elected **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** as President. FDR created a comprehensive program to combat the depression known as **the New Deal**. The New Deal focused on **reform, relief, and recovery** in America. First, Roosevelt declares a bank holiday, or a **temporary shutdown of all banks**. Only those in good financial shape would be allowed to reopen. Secondly, Roosevelt communicated directly with the public through **fireside chats**: a series of **radio** **talks where he explained his policy** in a casual manner. His new deal also created organizations like the **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA,)** which built **hydroelectric dams** in poor areas of the nation, providing them with **cheap electricity**. To further ensure confidence, he also created the **FDIC, which protected money of depositors in insured banks**. Roosevelt was not without his critics, but for the most part, Americans were supportive of his policies.

Encouraged by their support, Roosevelt created the **Second New Deal**, this time focusing on **social reform.** One of the most important pieces of legislation to come from this is the **Social Security Act,** which addresses the issues of **unemployment and retirement**. A working person would pay a small portion of their earnings to the treasury, an employer would match that contribution, and when that worker reached retirement age, they would get a monthly payment from the treasury. Social Security also helped the **disabled, low income families, and temporarily helped unemployed people while they were looking for work**. While the general public overwhelmingly voted to re-elect FDR in 1936, businesses and critics felt that the government was **gaining too much power** at their expense. The **Supreme Court** agreed, and using the power of **Judicial Review**, started striking down laws that they felt gave the government too much power. This threatened to destroy the new deal. Roosevelt asked Congress to write and pass a bill allowing him to **add six justices to the Supreme Court**. He would then appoint justices who were friendly to his policies. Congress said that his court packing bill interfered with checks and balances and voted against the bill. Due to death and retirements, Roosevelt did get to appoint Supreme Court Justices, but his attempt to stack the deck was a black mark on his reputation. In 1937, Roosevelt had further troubles when he made a grave miscalculation. FDR had doubts about **deficit spending,** which is using borrowed money to fund government programs. So, **he cut back** on the New Deal Programs in order to reduce the deficit, thinking **the nation sufficiently recovered**. **He was horribly wrong.** The economy once again hit a **downward spiral.**

**Effects of the Great Depression: Farmers** were particularly hard hit, not only because of dropping crop prices, but because of **extensive drought and damaged soil** from over-farming. Winds picked up the loose dry soil, creating massive **dust storms**. These dust storms killed livestock and damaged several farms within a 150,000 mile region known as the **Dust Bowl.** Many whose farms were ruined, packed their belongings and headed west, looking for work. Farmers weren’t the only ones suffering. **Unemployment was near 25%,** and without a job several people turned to **bread lines** for food. New York’s bread lines served approximately **85,000** meals a day. Not only was it hard to pay for food, shelter was hard to come by**. Many people lost their homes**, and sought shelter under bridges and overpasses. Some made shacks of orange crates. **Women** had a hard time working during the depression. They were often **under pressure to give up their jobs to jobless men**. **Men were struggling** with a loss of status, and the realization that they are **no longer adequate providers** for their family**. Kids had to grow up quickly**. Many boys dropped out of school to try and work to help out the family. Girls would help out at home, especially if Mom was able to find work somewhere. Teens who couldn’t find jobs often ran away so that they wouldn’t be a burden on their families. They lived in shanty towns along the railroads, and did what they could to survive.

Culturally, there was an emphasis on creation. The **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** helped give jobs to struggling **writers**, so many great works of literature were created. This was also the golden age of Hollywood, and many classic **movies and musicals** were made. If people could spare the change to go to a movie, they would definitely do so. **Radios** were also quite popular. News, Fireside Chats, and Comedy shows all came from one source of entertainment. Still others turned to **marathon dancing** for entertainment. **Eleanor Roosevelt** played a strong role as a first lady. She often traveled for her husband to see how well the New Deal programs were working, and would report back to him upon her return. She also **encouraged the involvement of women** in the administration and in her press conferences. The president supported her efforts, and also made his own to try and involve minorities, even having an **African-American set of advisors known as his black cabinet**.Finally, there was a growth in unions. The **American Federation of Labor (AFL),** joined forces with the **Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)** and labor laws allowed for greater negotiating power for unions. To improve working conditions, union members would often hold **sit-down strikes.** Instead of walking off the jobsite so the company could hire new workers, they would sit in place, non-functional.

**The Legacy of the New Deal:** Ultimately, there was a paradigm shift in our nation. In the past, we looked to local and state government for help. **Now we looked to the federal government to aid in social reform**. Roosevelt expanded his role as president, **often proposing laws for congress to consider**, rather than waiting for them to act. His programs expanded the bureaucratic role of the government. A few of FDR’s programs are still working pieces of our government today. **Social Security** still provides retirement services, and helps the disabled and temporarily unemployed. **The FDIC** continues to insure bank deposits, and the **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** monitors the stock market to ensure fair trading.

**World War II:**

**What led America to WWII:** The **treaties** that ended WWI did not resolve all of the issues that started the war in the first place. **Japan and Italy** were both a part of the Allies during WWI, and they helped win the war, but they were particularly unhappy with the treaties. Of the **Central Powers**, the losing nations, **Germany** was treated most severely, ordered to take **full blame** for the war and **pay $33 billion** in reparations. Economically, most countries in Europe lay in ruins and they came out of the war heavily in debt. While there were some gains made in the 1920’s, the Great Depression in America and Europe caused massive unemployment and unrest. People in Italy, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union turned to new leaders to solve their problems. The men they turned to would become absolute **dictators.** **Italy**’s dictator was name **Benito Mussolini**. He arrived on the political scene in 1922, and started a political movement known as **fascism**. Fascists believed in an **extreme** form of patriotism and nationalism that was often .linked to racism. In 1925, he became dictator and took the title *Il Duce*, meaning the leader. In **Germany**, **Adolf Hitler** led the Fascist National Sociality German Worker’s Party, more commonly known as the **Nazi Party**. The Nazis recruited members by preaching that Germany was racially superior. In 1932, Hitler was named chancellor of Germany, and he overthrew the constitution, taking complete control of the government. He called himself *der Fuhrer,* again meaning the leader. In the **Soviet Union**, the communist party had a tight rule**. Joseph Stalin** took power in 1924 after the death of Vladimir Lenin. Under Stalin, the government tried to control every aspect of life in the nation, crushing any hint of opposition. **Japan** also grew in its military strength during the 1930’s. In 1941, former army officer **Hideki Tojo** became Prime Minister of Japan, and assumed dictatorial powers as the war progressed.

As these dictators grew in power within their own nations, they decided they wanted to **expand their territory**. In 1936, Hitler and Mussolini formed an alliance called the Rome-Berlin Axis. Japan joined in 1940 and they simply became known as the **Axis Powers**. The Axis were developing **policies of aggression** to invade other territories. In n1938, Hitler invaded **Austria**. Since many Austrian citizens there spoke German, they welcomed the unification. After taking over Austria, Hitler moved onto **Sudetenland**, a German speaking portion of Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia didn’t want to cede control of its territory, and both France and the Soviet Union vowed to back them up should Germany invade. Trying to avoid another war, British Prime Minister **Neville chamberlain** met with Hitler in Munich. They decided that Germany would gain control of Sudetenland and Hitler promised to stop seeking more territory. The **Munich agreement** was part of the British and French policy of **appeasement:** meeting the demands of a hostile power to avoid war. While Chamberlain thought he had allowed for world peace, many disagreed with appeasement policies, and saw that Hitler would not stop his aggressive strategy to take over other nations.

In 1939, German troops conquered the remaining portion of Czechoslovakia, then set out to invade **Poland**. Britain and France warned Hitler that invading Poland would be an act of war. In August of 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union agreed not to attack each other. With that agreement made, on **September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland**. Britain and France declared War and WWII had begun. German forces used an effective tactic called **blitzkrieg** or “lightning war.” Blitzkrieg stressed **speed and surprise** in the use of tanks, troops, and planes. **Poland fell to Germany** in less than a month. In 1940, Hitler also conquered **Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands**. In June of 1940, **Germany invaded France**. In less than two weeks, France surrendered. Hitler expected the British to seek a peace agreement after France fell, but the **British had no intentions of quitting.** Hitler planned to invade Britain, but in order to be successful, he had to destroy the British Air Force. In the summer and fall of 1940, the highly destructive **Battle of Britain** was fought. Britain’s Royal Air Force clashed with Germany, and Germans purposely **bombed several civilian targets** around London. The Battle of Britain lasted nearly **three months.** Despite being bombed constantly, the British people did not surrender.Even though Hitler made a previous agreement with Stalin, he feared Stalin’s intentions for territorial growth. He also wanted Soviet wheat and oil to help sustain his military. So in June of 1941, he **invaded the Soviet Union**. The Soviets suffered heavy casualties, but a harsh winter stopped the Nazi advance.

Up until this point, America was not officially involved in the war, although this time, we did less to remain neutral. In 1941, Congress approved the **Lend-Lease Act**, which allowed the U.S. to lend or lease resources and equipment to allied powers. Through this act, we sent about $50 billion of goods to various allied powers. As **Japan joined the Axis** and developed a war mentality, Prime Minister Tojo decided he wanted to conquer the **Dutch East Indies** (modern day Indonesia) and other Asian territories. In the eyes of Japan, the U.S. Navy was the only force that stood in the way of them conquering the oil-rich Dutch East Indies. **On December 7, 1941, Japanese warplanes bombed the naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.** The attack came as a complete surprise, and killed about 2,400 Americans. The U.S. naval fleet was also devastated by this attack. FDR asked Congress for a declaration of war on Japan. He called December 7, 1941, “**a date that will live in** **infamy**,” Once we declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy quickly declared war on us.

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| **Allied Forces** | **Axis Powers** |
| **Britain** | **Germany** |
| **France** | **Italy** |
| **United States *after 1941*** | **Japan** |
| **Soviet Union a*fter 1941*** | **Soviet Union *until 1941*** |
| **China** |  |

**The War Effort:**

To defeat the Axis Powers, America would need more than just soldiers. They needed planes, tanks, weapons, parachutes, food, and other supplies. **As in WWI, the whole country got involved with the War Effort**. The **War Production Board** was set up to coordinate the production of military equipment and supplies. The WPB added second and third shifts to factories, and increased production schedules to a record pace. America ended up producing more than **300,000** planes, and **75,000** ships. For the first time in a long time, **jobs were easy to find**. Many of these factories needed extra help, and struggling families were happy to find the work. It was the war effort that officially **ended the Great Depression**. Minorities also were finding work, and migrating from the south to the north and west. Unfortunately, the influx of minorities caused **racial tensions**, and **riots** broke out. In 1943, a race riot in Detroit killed 34 people before order was restored. A positive step for minority workers came when Roosevelt issued **Executive Order 8802**, outlawing discrimination in defense industries working for the Federal Government. While many African Americans and Native Americans worked in the war industries, many **Mexican Americans** worked as **farm hands** to help produce more food.

In addition to helping with the war effort at home, many minorities joined the armed forces. More than a million African Americans and more than 300,000 Mexican Americans served during WWII. Unfortunately, due to prejudice, they served in segregated units. One unit was the **Tuskegee Airmen**, a group of African American pilots who served in Europe and North Africa. With so many men fighting overseas, opportunities for women expanded broadly. Traditionally told to stay at home and attend household duties, women were now joining the work force. The image of **Rosie the Riveter**, a strong woman hard at work in an arms factory was a **propaganda** symbol used to support this new group of wage earners. Women also served in the armed forces for the **Women’s Army Corps** (WAC). In addition to serving as nurses, they also served as mechanics, drivers, and clerks.

While jobs were easy to find, some items were in short supply. Auto makers didn’t produce any **cars** from 1942-1945, instead devoting their energies to making jeeps, tanks, and airplanes for the war. **Tires, shoes, meat, and sugar** were also in short supply. So much so that the government instituted a system of **rationing** to divide up these commodities among citizens. To help pay for the cost of the war, the United States sold **War Bonds**, much like they did during WWI. War Bonds were a loan to the government that would be paid back with interest. This tactic raised billions of dollars for the war.

**Japanese Internment:** Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, **anti-Japanese sentiment** grew in America. Many thought Japanese Americans were **a security threat**, and in 1942, President Roosevelt issued **Executive Order 9066**, allowing for the **removal of Japanese-Americans** on the west coast. **More than 110,000 people were rounded up, forced to sell their homes and possessions, and move to prison-like internment camps**. Fred Korematsu was charged and convicted for defying the executive order. He took his case to the Supreme Court, saying **the law** **was unconstitutional as it was based on race.** The court said that the law was a military **necessity** and was therefore constitutional. The fear of Japanese Americans was **unfounded**. Many in internment camps raised American flags every morning. Many volunteered to serve in the military. Japanese Internment is a prime example of the hatred that occurs when blame for a singular incident is placed on an entire race or religious group.

**Allied Advances**: While most of the war was fought in Europe, Britain had been fighting the Germans for control of North Africa… specifically Egypt. The **Suez Canal** was the main route to Asian and Middle Eastern Oil fields, and Britain wanted to maintain control of the canal. **German commander Erwin Rommel** gave Allied troops a run for their money. Finally it was **general Dwight D. Eisenhower** who stopped the German advance in Tunisia.After **North Africa** was cleared of Germans, Allied powers moved into **Sicily,** an island off the coast of Italy. There was bitter fighting in Sicily, but ultimately the Germans were driven out. Next the Allies invaded **Italy**. By 1943, when this invasion took place, many **Italian citizens had turned on Mussolini**, and officials imprisoned him. While he did escape, he never returned to power. The new Italian government surrendered to the Allies in September 1943. While the first few years of the war saw Germany winning victory after victory, the **tide of the war was turning**. The cold winter in the **Soviet Union** caused the Nazi defeat in **Stalingrad.** Thousands of Nazi soldiers froze and starved during the harsh conditions. After this loss, the Soviet troops began pushing the Germans back out of their nation. Fighting the war on two fronts spread Hitler’s forces too thin.

On **June 6, 1944,** more than 150,000 troops crossed the English Channel into **Normandy.** The plan, called **Operation Overlord,** was commanded by **General Eisenhower**. First, paratroopers landed in the cover of night behind German troops. Then at daylight was the invasion from the sea. They were trying to take back France. This invasion became known as **D-Day.** It was the **largest seaborne invasion in history**. By August, the Allies had taken back the French capital. Throughout the rest of the fall, the Allied troops, under General **Omar Bradley** and General **George S. Patton**, pushed the Germans out of France. In December, Hitler launched his final assault, the **Battle of the Bulge.** There were severe human causalities, but the Allies prevailed.

**The End of the Nazis:** By early 1945, the Germans were retreating everywhere. The **Yalta Conference** was held where the big three… **Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin** discussed plans to end the war and the future of Europe. They wanted to establish an international peace keeping organization to sustain peace long term. Roosevelt wouldn’t be able to see much of the peace he fought so hard for. In April 1945, months after being sworn in for a **fourth term**, Roosevelt died. Vice President **Harry S. Truman** took over the war effort. At the end of April, 1945, Soviet troops reached Berlin. **Adolf Hitler** went into hiding in a bunker. Sensing the end was near, he committed suicide by taking a cyanide pill and shooting himself in the head. Many now question whether this was the true end of Hitler, but evidence brought forth has not yet been conclusive enough to change the history books. A few days after Hitler’s death, the **Soviet army captured Berlin**. On May 7, 1945, Germany signed an **unconditional surrender**. As the Allies fought towards Berlin, they made the shocking discovery of the **concentration camps** of the **Holocaust**. No one truly knew until then the extent of German atrocities toward Jewish people. More than **6 million** Jewish people were **needlessly killed**. Hitler also targeted gypsies (Roma), Russians, Poles, disabled people, and the mentally insane in his attempt to create an **Aryan race**. Allied forces were sickened by the heartless devastation of Hitler’s **final solution.**

**The War in the Pacific:** While the War was over with Germany, **Japan** had not surrendered. Japan threatened America possessions in the Pacific Ocean. The U.S., upon entering the war, was fighting both in Europe and in the Pacific. The Japanese advances included them taking control over **Hong Kong, Thailand, and Guam**. They also pushed into **Malaya, Burma, and the Philippines**. By 1942, the Allies began to gain strength against the Japanese. A series of battles successfully blocked the Japanese push for **Australia** and thwarted their overall advances. After the Battle of Midway, Americans tried to **liberate** the Japanese lands that had been conquered. Often they decided to invade islands not heavily guarded by the Japanese and use them as strategic jumping grounds to recapture more taken territory. This strategy is known as **island hopping**. Another strategic measure used by the United States was **code talkers.** In order to keep Japanese intelligence from breaking American codes, we began using the **Navajo** language to transmit important messages. The group of Native American translators that helped American soldiers was crucial to their success in the pacific. In October of 1944, the Allies invaded the **Philippines**, which had been overrun by the Japanese. The naval battle of Leyte left Japan’s fleet so badly damaged that they were no longer a threat. Back in 1942, **General MacArthur** vowed that he would return to the Philippines and defeat the Japanese. By March of 1945, he kept his promise. Allied troops reached Manila and liberated the Philippines once again. Despite their defeat, the Japanese began use of a military technique: the **kamikaze**. A kamikaze pilot filled their airplanes with explosives and crashed them directly into Allied warships. Several Japanese pilots volunteered for these **suicide missions** as a last ditch effort to stop Allied advances. heir efforts did not detour the Allies. By the end of 1944, they were bombing Japan directly. Allies sought to create military bases on Japanese islands of **Iwo Jima** and **Okinawa** in order to attack the mainland. Fighting to capture these small islands is brutal, but after several months we succeeded. Despite being surrounded, Japan continued to fight. There was a plan to invade Japan directly, but there was also a fear that such an invasion would **cost up to 1 million American lives**.

The solution that American officials employed was the **atomic bomb**. The **Manhattan Project,** the secret project to build such a bomb, had been underway since America entered the war. Led by scientist **Robert J. Oppenheimer,** the building of the atomic bomb took three years. This bomb was so powerful, that many scientists who witnessed the **test explosion** were **temporarily blinded** from watching the blast. Once all testing was complete, President **Harry Truman** told Japan that they needed to **surrender or face imminent destruction**. The Japanese refused. On August 6, 1945, a B-29 bomber called the Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb on the industrial city of **Hiroshima**. The explosion decimated everything **within one square mile** of ground zero. 70.000 were killed instantly, and hundreds of thousands more died from radiation poisoning within the next few years. Despite these immense casualties, the Japanese still refused to surrender, so on August 9, **we dropped a second atomic** **bomb** on the city of **Nagasaki**. On August 14, Japan agreed to surrender. On **September 2, 1945**, they signed an official document of surrender aboard an American warship, **officially ending WWII**.

**The Costs and Legacy of the War: No war in history was as deadly as WWII**. Millions were dead and cities all over the world lay in **ruins**. While soldiers were thrilled to be returning home, many had no idea of the emotional toll the fighting would take on them as they tried to put it all behind them and return to their normal lives. It is estimated that over **20,000,000 soldiers** lost their lives in battle. The heaviest losses were sustained by the Soviet Union. Americans lost 400,000 men, and 600,000 more were wounded. While the death toll of soldiers is staggering, **millions of civilians also died**. **WWII was a war without boundaries**. Cities and towns were bombed without regard for civilian life. Previously, the goal would be to bomb military targets and rid the enemy of soldiers and military supplies. Bombing civilians was a whole new level of destruction. WWII also created a massive population of **refugees.** These were prisoners of war, people who escaped from concentration camps, and people who fled invading armies. Now that the war was over, this group of 21 million people had to figure out how to rebuild their lives. Economically, only the **United States** came out of the war stronger than they were before. With the exception of **Pearl Harbor**, **no major battles** were fought on U.S. soil, and the extensive production of war supplies brought America out of the Great Depression. Trying to help Europe, we approved the **Marshall Plan**, which would grant loans to European nations to help them get back on their feet. We ended up giving out more than **$13 billion**. U.S. forces also occupied Japan for many years after the war, and created programs to help their economies recover. In November of 1945, several top Nazi officials were put on trial for **crimes** **against Humanity**. These were known as the **Nuremburg Trials**. Several top officials were convicted and sentenced to death, proving that even in a time of war, people are held responsible for their actions.

Many world leaders wanted to create an international peace keeping body, to prevent a war like this from ever happening again. Although Woodrow Wilson came up with the idea of the **League of Nations**, and it was created, Congress refused to join the league. Since not everyone was on board with the League of Nations, it failed to function as a true international peace keeping authority. Before he died, **Roosevelt** told Americans not to turn their back on the international community again. This time we took the lead and held a conference of delegates from 50 countries in **San Francisco** to charter the **United Nations**.

As a result of the **Holocaust,** the **United Nations** created the nation of **Israel in 1948** as a homeland for Jewish people living in Palestine. Since **Muslim, Jewish, and Christian** faiths can all trace their roots back to this area, it is considered sacred ground to the faithful. Arabic people living in Palestine were furious about this homeland created for Jewish people, and began attacking the new country. The **Arab-Israeli** **conflict** is still heated to this day and is one of the main obstacles to peace in the Middle East.

Returning soldiers encountered a different America. **Population** had shifted to cities for wartime production. When soldiers returned, cities faced **overcrowding** and racial tensions. There was also a housing shortage. To help soldiers, the government passed the **G.I. Bill of Rights**, paying for soldiers to go to school and granting them a housing allowance. Several million veterans received their education under the G.I. Bill.

**Guided Notes: The Cold War Era**

**Returning Home:** After World War II, returning soldiers began to build their lives again. The job and housing markets were flooded with people ready to work and eager to put down roots. The government helped returning soldiers by passing the **G.I. Bill of Rights**. This **paid for the education of returning soldiers**, and gave them some money for a living allowance. More than 8 million veterans went to college under the G.I. Bill. Finding a place to live was a bit tougher. Due to **urbanization**, cities were heavily **overcrowded**. Interracial tensions were high, as people fought over who was deserving of precious available space. Businessman **William Levitt** met the increasing demand for housing by creating suburban neighborhoods. Levitt used **assembly-line style to mass produce houses**. He first created Levittown in New York; then he branched out, creating more than 17,000 homes.

**Post War Economy:** As defense industries began changing over to peacetime production, they reduced their workforce. Factories closed, and **thousands of workers, most women, were laid off**. With 10 million veterans flooding the workforce, they were often chosen over women for available jobs. Many women returned to jobs in more **traditional roles**, such as nursing, teaching, or office work. Despite the slim down of defense industries, **the overall economy did not slow down**, as many had expected. Many people had put off major purchases, cut out certain foods, and avoided asking for pay-raises in support of the war effort. Now it was time to indulge. People bought cars, homes, and every luxury they could afford.

Since many unions promised not to negotiate for pay raises during the war, they were now expecting that workers be fairly compensated to keep pace with rising prices. There were **several strikes**, adding up to over 4 million workers stating their case that their pay should be improved. African Americans were still experiencing high levels of **discrimination.** While Truman moved to **desegregate the military in 1948**, civilian life lacked equality, especially in the south. Truman also created the **Civil Rights Commission**. Although there is a very long way to go, Truman’s actions show the federal government was slowly starting to deal with racial problems in society.

In 1948, many didn’t believe Truman would be re-elected. However, he ran a campaign blasting the “do nothing” Congress for blocking his proposals. His smear campaign worked and he was elected for a second term. Back in office, he proposed the **Fair Deal**, which was an extension of FDR’s New Deal. It called for **new housing and employment projects** and an **end to racial discrimination in hiring**. Congress fought against Truman every step of the way, resulting in few measures getting passed.

**The Cold War:** Even though the United States were Allied with the Soviet Union during the latter part of WWII, **distrust** between the two nations began to grow. At the center of the distrust was how **Eastern Europe was to be governed** **after WWII**. It was initially agreed upon that Joseph Stalin would **allow free elections** in Eastern European states freed from Nazi rule. However, Stalin decided that he was going to **install pro-Soviet governments** in set countries. Distrust was further fueled by fear. The United States and the Soviet Union each suspected the other of trying to **dominate world affairs**. Winston Churchill, Britain’s prime minister, said that there was an “**iron curtain**” dividing Europe. This proverbial curtain had those in the sphere of the communist Soviets on one side, and non-communist nations on the other.

After WWII, **Germany was temporarily divided into four parts**, each one controlled by one of the primary allies: Great Britain, France, the U.S., and the Soviet Union. **The U.S., Great Britain, and France decided to unite their respective zones,** creating West Germany. **Stalin feared this move** and decided to take action. Berlin**, the German capital, was within his sphere. It had been divided in half,** creating East Berlin and West Berlin. In 1948, **Stalin blocked ground access to Berlin**. Truman responded by approving a **huge airlift of food, fuel, and equipment into the city**. Known as the **Berlin Airlift**, For nearly a year, more than 270,000 flights carried supplies to Berlin. In 1949, Stalin stopped the blockade. However, Germany was still divided into two parts: **the democratic West and communist East**.

Truman’s main strategy of fighting the Cold War was through the policy of **containment:** using military and non-military strategy to stop the spread of communism. The **Truman Doctrine** promised aid **to any nation fighting to maintain democracy**. **The Marshall Plan**, instituted after WWII, aimed at preventing the spread of communism by **rebuilding the war-torn economies** in Europe. The $13 billion in aid was distributed to non-communist nations. Alarm over the spread of communism in Eastern Europe led to the formation of the North **Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO** in 1949. NATO consisted of the U.S., Canada, and 10 Western European Nations. Eastern Europeans countered and united by forming the **Warsaw Pact** in 1955.

**Homegrown Fear:** With communism spreading overseas, many Americans were concerned that communism would come to America. Many Americans were accused of sending military secrets to soviets. There were convictions, and executions. In 1947, Truman ordered 4 million government workers to undergo **loyalty checks**. Loyalty boards actually forced several thousand government workers to resign. The **House Un American Committee (HUAC)** began targeting the movie industry. Many actors and directors were black-listed, and their careers were ruined. **Joseph McCarthy** increased widespread fear by accusing thousands of people of having communist ties. He claimed to have a list of 205 State Department officials who belonged to the Communist Party. This led to a **manhunt and several thousand false accusations** of communism. In 1954, the Senate held a nationally televised hearing where McCarthy claimed the military was coddling communists. Joseph Welch, the lawyer for the army, stood up to him. McCarthy was quickly shamed for his reckless conduct and eventually faded from public view.

After Eisenhower replaced Truman as president, he had to decide how he would formulate his Cold war Policy. Unlike his predecessor, he favored a more aggressive stance against communism. He openly stated that the United States would go to the brink of war to combat communism, a policy known as **brinkmanship**. It is noteworthy that during the Cold War, many people were convinced that a third world war could happen at any time. As such, the building of **bomb shelters** became quite popular. Many stored supplies and prepared bunkers for long term living in the event of an attack. In fact, there is still a functioning and fully stocked bunker that can hold Congress in the event of a nuclear war.

**Arms Race:** With the consistent threat of war looming overhead, both the United States and the Soviet Union beefed up their arsenal of weapons. The goal was of course quantity, but also quality: to develop a weapon with the most destructive power. In 1949, The Soviet Union developed the **atomic bomb.** In 1952, the United States developed the **hydrogen bomb**, or h-bomb. The atomic bomb causes energy through fission, or the splitting of atoms. The h-bomb gets its explosive power from nuclear fusion. It is **500X more powerful** than the atomic bomb. Many modern bombs are made with **enriched uranium**. This has the potential to create an even more powerful and damaging blast. Consequently, the fall out of such a weapon would be extensive and long lasting. Feeding the arms race fury, the United States spent **$5.5 trillion** on nuclear weapons from 1940-1996.

In addition to the arms race, the superpowers began a **space race**. The Soviet Union stunned the world by launching **Sputnik**, the world’s first space satellite. American scientists scrambled to catch up. Congress responded to Soviet success by setting aside billions of dollars for space research. Were it not for the Soviet satellite, we many have not landed on the moon in 1969.

**U2 Incident**: Eisenhower was hoping to alleviate cold war tensions by a series of face-to-face talks with the Soviets. A few weeks prior to the first meeting, an **American U-2 spy plane was shot down**. Eisenhower denied that the aircraft was spying until he learned that the pilot had been captured alive. Khrushchev, the Russian premier, demanded an apology. When Eisenhower refused, the talks collapsed.

**Responding to Communist Threats**: In 1961, President John F. Kennedy organized the invasion of Cuba, hoping to topple Fidel Castro, since he was considered a communist threat. An army of Cuban exiles, trained by the United States in South America, invaded Cuba. Cuban troops easily defeated the invasion, which humiliated the United States. **The Bay of Pigs Invasion**, as it came to be known, was one of the biggest failures of the Kennedy administration. The **Cuban Missile Crisis** was arguably one of Kennedy’s most serious confrontations with the Soviet Union. In October 1962, both Cuban leader Fidel Castro, and new Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev believed the U.S. planned another attack on Cuba. Soon, the U.S. learned that the Soviets had put **several nuclear missiles in Cuba** that were capable of reaching multiple targets throughout the country. Kennedy and his committee of advisors struggled with how they should handle this. At first, many thought a military solution was the most viable. However, it was decided that we should enforce a **naval blockade of Cuba.** This asserted our force, but allowed for a solution without violence. The Soviets and Cubans were able to work out an agreement with the United States, and **a treaty was signed against the use of nuclear weapons**.

Kennedy also had to contend with Soviet tensions in Germany. Many in East Germany were fleeing to West Berlin to escape Communism. The Soviet’s wanted to block western access to Berlin, but Kennedy insisted that West Berlin retain their independence. In August of 1961, the Soviet Union and East Germany built the **Berlin Wall**, a heavily guarded barrier dividing free West Berlin from Communist East Berlin and East Germany. This further became a symbol to highlight the division between communism and democracy.

 **Korean War:** After WWII. Korea was divided at the 38th parallel. Aided by the **Soviet Union**, a **Communist government** came to power in North Korea, led by **Kim Il Sung**. The **United States** helped set up a **non-communist government in South Korea**. In June of 1950, **North Korea invaded the South**. President Truman saw this as a **threat to his containment policy**, and immediately **asked the UN to stop the advance**. Being that Stalin pulled Soviet advisors out of the UN, he had little say in how the rest of the world handled his aggressive behavior. The UN supplied soldiers from 16 nations, led by the United States. This conflict became known as the **Korean War**. Not long after the war began, **China became involved**. Recently, the Civil War in China ended, and the communist party, led by Mao Zedong, defeated the nationalists led by Chain Kai-shek. Many Americans were shocked at the fall of the Nationalists, and this added to their fear of the spread of communism. Initially, North Korean troops back South Koreans into a small corner of the South Korean peninsula near the city of Pusan. General Douglas MacArthur led UN troops and had them set up behind North Korean lines, causing them to be surrounded. North Korea retreated across the 38th parallel, and the UN pushed them deep into their own territory, almost to the Chinese border. **China saw the UN forces as a threat**, and warned that any further UN advance would prompt them to get involved. MacArthur ignored that warning. On November 21, 1950, hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops flooded North Korea. By early 1951, there was once again a deadlock around the 38th parallel. MacArthur wanted permission to put a naval blockade around China, and then begin bombing them. President Truman refused, fearing that this conflict could easily lead to a much larger war. General MacArthur disagreed and publicly blasted the president for his decision. Since the president is also the commander in chief, or his boss, **MacArthur was fired**, and ordered to return to the United States. Truman began peace talks in 1951, and they continued through 1952, and the election of a new president: Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower, a highly successful WWII general, promised a swift end to the conflict. While **Eisenhower publicly compromised** with North Korean and Chinese leaders, he made sure to inform them privately that **he had no qualms about using nuclear weapons** should a peace agreement be violated**. The two Koreas still remain split at the 38th parallel**, with the **Demilitarized Zone (DMZ**) separating the two nations. Many Americans were upset that the results of the war were indecisive.

**Economic Prosperity in the 1950’s:** During the Eisenhower administration, **Social Security** was expanded, and the **Department of Health, Education, and Welfare** was created. Eisenhower also **increased the minimum wage** for workers, and spearheaded the building of **the Interstate Highway system**. The Highway Act spent **$32 billion to build more than 46,000 miles of highway**. The ease of transport fueled the expansion of the suburbs. Families left crowded apartments for larger, single family homes. Shopping centers, movie theaters, and restaurants sprouted up throughout the suburbs, and car sales increased greatly. During the 1950’s, the U.S. population grew by almost 30 million people. This was largely because of the **baby boom:** a sharp increase in the birth rate after WWII. During the late 1940’s there were 330 babies born every hour… one every 10 seconds. The increase in population further fueled the growth of suburban culture. This led to the rise of **consumerism**. Many came to believe that the American **dream was the ability to buy new products to increase the comfort of living**. Television and magazine ads featured new appliances and modern conveniences such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, televisions, and record players. An interesting trend in living patterns also developed during the 1950’s. While the exodus from cities to suburbs took place all over the country, many also moved to the south and to the west, or the **sunbelt.** This was spawned by the popularization of **air conditioning** in homes and businesses. In 1970, California surpasses New York as the most populous state.

Another trend that happened with the move to the suburbs is **urban decay**. As many Americans headed for the suburbs, shops and businesses moved with them. Fewer people remained in the city to pay taxes for services such as garbage collection, firefighting, and road repair. Without proper maintenance, cities soon became a shell of their former glory. **Unfortunately those most often affected by urban decay were African Americans and Latinos**.

**Cultural Trends:** One of the biggest trends during the 1950’s is the advent of **Rock’N’Roll. Elvis Presley** had teenagers going wild for his edgy music and style of dancing. Other popular musicians include Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats, Domino, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, and Chuck Berry. While Hollywood produced many movies and musicals, the popularization of the television caused movie ticket sales to plummet. **In 1950, 10% of families owned a TV. By 1960, 90% of families owned a TV**. Children enjoyed shows such as Lassie, the Lone Ranger, the Howdy Doody Show, and the Mickey Mouse Club. At this time we also see the advent of the **sitcom**. I Love Lucy and Leave it to Beaver were increasingly popular. Both did have stereotypes of women consistently wearing dresses and maintaining a spotless home, as this was part of the ideal American family at the time.

The 1950’s is not without **counterculture.** Many feared that there was an overwhelming push to **conform** to a specific beliefs and ideals of the majority. Roles for women and African Americans were particularly called into question. Those who felt that most of society was shallow and conforming to the norm were known as “**beatniks**.” They filled coffee shops and shared their negative opinions about the “square” society they live in.

**The Civil Rights Movement:**

After the Civil War, formerly enslaved African Americans had their civil rights established by three amendments to the constitution. The **thirteenth amendment** officially ended slavery, the **fourteenth amendment** granted equal protection under the law, and the **fifteenth amendment** granted African Americans the right to vote. Unfortunately, however, the process of reconstruction created intense political conflict. **Southern states resisted civil rights laws** set forth by congress by enacting the **black codes**, which were laws that tried to limit the freedom of slaves. Although Congress set forth several laws to advance the civil rights of African Americans, the **Supreme Court made many rulings that negated legal gains made during reconstruction.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of the Case:**  | **What the verdict stated:** |
| 1873: **Slaughterhouse Cases** | Most civil rights are ruled to be under state, rather than federal jurisdiction. This weakens the 14th amendment.  |
| 1876: **U.S. vs. Cruikshank** | State governments, not the federal government, were responsible for punishing violators of civil rights (such as members of the KKK) |
| 1876**: U.S. vs. Reese** | State can’t deny the right to vote based on race, but they can deny the right to vote based on failed literacy tests or poll taxes.  |
| 1883: **Civil Rights Cases**  | While states can’t deny the equal protection of citizens, hotels, restaurants, and other business owners are free to discriminate.  |
| 1896**: Plessy vs. Ferguson** | “**Separate but equal**” facilities were made legal. This officially legalized segregation.  |

After these Supreme Court rulings, **Jim Crow Laws** spread throughout the south. The first goal of Jim Crow laws was to **increase segregation**. This was most prevalent in the school system. **African American children could not go to the same schools as white children**. Unfortunately, the quality of education that African American children received was inferior to that of white children. Segregation also became prominent in restaurants and on buses. Jim Crow Laws also **sought to intimidate** African Americans. In the south, many were **lynched and murdered for trying to vote**. In the Midwest, there were several race riots. Unfortunately, **because of the U.S. vs. Cruikshank** decision, many **people who were guilty** of violating the civil rights of African Americans went **unpunished**. In 1909, African Americans in the north united and formed the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).** The NAACP tried to bring attention to the discrimination faced by African Americans. They hoped to gain full **political rights, better job opportunities, and an end to segregation**. Several historical events helped spread the need for racial equality. African Americans soldiers who served during WWI and WWII fought alongside white soldiers to keep America safe and free, and they were no longer willing to accept segregation at home. In fact, in 1948, three years after WWII ended, **the army was legally desegregated.**

Early in the 1950’s, African Americans officially sued to **integrate,** or officially end segregation. White controlled school boards awarded new books, new buildings, and the best resources to white schools. Black children had fewer resources and were not receiving a “separate but equal” education. **Thurgood Marshall**, a lawyer for the NAACP and future Supreme Court Judge, challenged the legality and constitutionality of segregation laws. He was fighting for **Linda Brown**, an African American student who was told she could not attend her neighborhood school because it was for white students only. She was sent to a school farther away for African American children. Her father sued the board of education in hopes of allowing his daughter to attend her neighborhood school. If we recall, the fourteenth amendment establishes equal protection under the law. **The Supreme Court held that separate but equal had no place in public education**. **Plessy vs. Ferguson was therefore overturned** and the schools were directed to integrate. Many adjusted quickly. However those whose attitudes matched the old way of thinking were bitter, and did everything they could to avoid desegregation.

One counteractive tactic was to create **White Citizens Councils** to prevent desegregation. The opposition of whites to desegregation became known as **massive resistance**. Set massive resistance threatened the desegregation process in Little Rock, Arkansas. Following the Brown decision, Little Rock made plans to integrate by calling for nine African American students to enroll at Central High school. Segregationists wanted to stop this, and had Arkansas governor Orval Faubus on their side. Faubus ordered **National Guard troops** to prevent the **little rock nine** from entering their new school. For three weeks, Faubus had the National Guard outside, preventing these students from going to school. President Eisenhower had a meeting with Faubus to encourage him to follow the law, but when it was clear he wouldn’t respond to words, **Eisenhower called in the 101st Airborne Division**. Students were escorted to school by jeeps with machine guns. Paratroopers lined the streets.

**Rosa Parks** furthered the civilian cause for equal rights when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus. Her peaceful resistance and arrest sparked a movement to end segregation. In 1955, the NAACP and several church leaders organized the **Montgomery Bus Boycott**. For **thirteen months,** African Americans refused to ride the bus, knowing that the lack of their patronage would cause business for the bus system to suffer. Many faced death threats for standing up for their beliefs. Facing this problem from an activist and a legal standpoint, the segregation law was challenged in court. In November of **1956, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was unconstitutional**. This was a huge victory for civil rights that yielded several important results. First, it ended segregation on Montgomery buses. Second, it led to the founding of the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).** The SCLC began coordinating non-violent civil rights protests throughout the south. Finally, the boycott is where Dr. Martin Luther King found his voice.

Taking their cue from the Montgomery Bus Boycott**, Freedom Rides** were developed in the early 1960’s. They were protesting treatment of blacks on **interstate bus rides**. On Freedom Rides, whites sat in the back, and blacks sat up front. At stops, blacks would try and use the “white’s only” bathroom. Many people were severely beaten for this display, but they also opened the doors to change in government and society. The **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE**) often planned freedom rides. In 1961, President Kennedy had to send federal Marshalls to protect freedom riders. A few months later, the federal government issued an order to **desegregate all interstate bus facilities**.

Another energizing factor in the civil rights movement was the **sit-in**. A sit-in is where people protest and **refuse to move until demands are met**. Although sit-ins were not violent**, they solicited a violent response** from segregationists. Segregationists threw **ammonia, itching powder, and acid** onto protestors. They **yelled at them, beat them, and burned them with cigarettes**. Despite the abuse, sit-in protesters were persistent and it became an effective tactic. Many stores or restaurants that had refused to serve African Americans **eventually changed their ways**. The sit-ins also led to the formation of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC),** which harnessed the energy and ideas that the younger generation could contribute to the civil rights movement.

By the Early 1960’s, the grassroots civil rights movement was gaining strength. Political leaders were hesitant to get involved, but the increasing number of protests made civil rights something they could no longer ignore. In **Birmingham Alabama**, Dr. King and the SCLC organized several non-violent protests and marches. They knew in advance that the authorities in Birmingham would respond with violence, but they also knew that seeing that violence throughout the country in **newspapers and television** reports would help bring about change. As demonstrators marched, police unleashed **attack dogs and fire hoses** on them, even on small children protesting with their parents. **The general public was horrified**. Eventually Birmingham leaders agreed to desegregate lunch counters, remove segregation signs, and employ more African Americans.

The Birmingham protests caused many Americans to support the passage of new laws to protect the civil rights of ALL American citizens. On August 28, 1963, approximately **250,000 people joined Dr. Martin Luther King Junior in the March on Washington**. When all were gathered that day, Dr. King made his famous **“I have a dream speech.”** The march on Washington united many people behind the cause of civil rights, and President Kennedy promised his support.

Unfortunately, **Kennedy was assassinated** as his motorcade traveled through Dallas on **November 22, 1963**. Vice President **Lyndon Baines Johnson**, knows as LBJ, was inaugurated almost immediately. He felt there would be no greater tribute to the fallen president than to honor his wishes with the passage of a civil rights bill. **The Civil Rights Act of 1964** was signed in July, **banning segregation in public places**, such as restaurants, hotels, and theaters. It also created the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to prevent job discrimination. Segregation **was officially illegal** in the United States.

Next, efforts were turned to voting. Civil rights leaders wanted to be rid of the poll taxes and literacy tests that prevented several African Americans from voting. States ratified the **twenty fourth amendment, outlawing poll taxes**. Next, the SNCC organized a **voter registration drive** for southern blacks. It was called **Freedom Summer**. When drives were organized in Montgomery, Alabama, state troopers attacked them, and the whole incident was broadcast to the nation. President Johnson told Governor Wallace that he would no longer put up with any violence. Troops were sent to protect the SNCC so they could finish their voter registration drive. Johnson also signed the **Voting Rights Act** into law in August of 1965. It banned literacy tests and other Jim Crow based laws that kept people from voting. Johnson also sent federal officials to register African American voters.

President Johnson also tried to implement his **Great Society** program on a national level. He wanted to help the poor, women, the elderly, and minorities. He wanted to promote education, end discrimination, and protect the environment. He created **Medicare and Medicaid**, which still help the elderly and the poor to this day. He also provided federal funds for public education with the **Primary and Secondary Schools Act**, and strengthened the **Clean Water and Clean Air Acts**.

By the late 1960’s, civil rights leaders began to **disagree** about which direction to take the movement. Some wanted to continue with **nonviolent protests**, while others sought to become **more aggressive**. Those who believed in aggressive behavior sought “**black power**.” The nation of Islam, a branch of Islam founded in the United States, urged African Americans to separate and form their own group. While **Malcolm X** was not the leader of the nation of Islam, he was their most prominent figure. Malcolm X, however, began to leave the groups separatist ideals behind. On a trip to **Mecca**, he saw Muslims treating each other as equals. **He envisioned a world where all races could live together in peace.** Unfortunately, his message of peace didn’t spread far, as **he was assassinated by members of the Nation of Islam in 1965**.

**While several laws were passed that made segregation illegal, attitudes had not changed throughout the country**. Many people still openly discriminated against African Americans. In certain areas, white people could not and would **not sell property** to black people. In other areas, African Americans were **denied job opportunities** based on race. Growing frustrated with their lack of political power**, riots** broke out in several cities across the country. There were 164 riots in several cities**. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated**, which caused widespread furor and several more riots.

The American civil rights movement sent shock waves through American society. **Many people reconsidered their views on equality and discrimination**, and many became politically astute and involved in their communities. Many other groups also took their cue from African Americans when hoping to expand their own civil rights. The **women’s movement** intensified in the 1960’s. Women sought expanded job opportunities, the ability to gain credit, own property and sign contracts, and to not be discriminated against if married or pregnant. The **National Organization for Women** was formed, with the goal of getting women good jobs with equal pay**. Native Americans and Latinos** also organized to spread awareness and support for their civil rights.

**Vietnam and Modern America**

**Vietnamese History - How the United States became involved:**

Throughout the twentieth century, the **fear of communism** heavily impacted foreign policy decisions. With the civil rights movement dominating domestic policy, anti-communist actions dominated foreign policy. Beginning in 1954, the U. S. began helping non-communist government of **South Vietnam** in their fight to resist being taken over by communist North Vietnam. North Vietnam had spent many decades fighting foreign rule. From the late 1800’s until WWII, **Vietnam**, along with **Laos and Cambodia**, were ruled by **France**. The three nations used to be part of a colony called **French Indochina**. The French became quite wealthy exporting rice and rubber from Vietnam, but the Vietnamese people remained exceedingly poor. The Vietnamese spent many years trying to break free of French rule. In 1930, **Ho chi Minh** formed the **Indochinese Communist Party**. They organized protests the French government. The French responded by arresting suspected communists and executing ICP party leaders. In 1940, during WWII, the Japanese took over Indochina. Ho Chi Minh returned to Vietnam. ICP leaders and other communist groups joined together to form the **Viet Minh. Their goal was to rid Vietnam of foreign rule.** Since Japan was an enemy of the United States **during WWII, we helped the Viet Minh** fight the Japanese. Once Japan surrendered to the Allies in 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam’s independence. France tried to re-establish control of Vietnam. By 1946, with no peaceful solution found, The Viet Minh and the French go to war.

With WWII settled, the United States shifted focus towards the Soviets, and the impending Cold War. President **Truman** followed the policy of **containment:** working to prevent the spread of communism in Western Europe. In late **1949, China fell to communism**. This caused the United States to expand their containment policy to include Asia. We joined forces with the French. They would need our assistance in stopping the communist Viet Minh. (Remember, just a few years back, we were supporting the Viet Minh in their quest to break free from Japanese rule) In addition, we would need their support in standing up to the communist Soviet Union.

In 1950, we entered the conflict when President Truman offered **$15 million in military aid** to the French. Eisenhower continued this aid when he was elected. When explaining the expenditure to the American people, **Eisenhower used the domino theory**. This theory holds that if one country falls to communism, that those surrounding set country would also fall, like a set of dominos. Our efforts were to ensure that not only Vietnam, but all of Southeast Asia remained free of communist rule.

Despite $3 Billion in aid from the U.S., the French were unable to defeat the Viet Minh. In **May of 1954**, peace talks took place in Geneva, Switzerland. The agreement reached was called the **Geneva Accords**. It divided Vietnam into **North and South p**ortions along the **17th parallel**, with a DMZ (demilitarized zone) surrounding the dividing line. (Much like North and South Korea.) The truce was temporary. In 1956, **elections** were supposed to determine Vietnam’s **system of governance**. In the mean time, both the North and South developed their own systems of government. **Ho chi Minh** led the **communist North**. **Ngo Dinh Diem** became the leader of the **south.** Since Ngo Dinh Diem **was an unpopular leader**, he **refused to allow elections** in 1956. The United States backed this decision to ensure that communism didn’t spread to the whole of Vietnam. Despite increasing aid to South Vietnam, **Diem was unable to establish a democratic government.** As **his corrupt officials attempted to cling to power**, the dissatisfied **South Vietnamese communists and non-communists** joined together and **formed the Viet Cong**. Their goal was to overthrow the Diem government and **reunite Vietnam under communist rule**. **North Vietnam** supported the **Viet Cong** and sent them **military supplies** along a network of paths called the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**, which traversed not only Vietnam, but Laos and Cambodia.

By 1963, the United States had lost faith in Diem. They had increased aid and even sent 16,000 troops. American **officials told Diem to make political, social, economic, and military reforms** to his government, but **he continually refused**. Eventually U.S. officials shifted their support to towards **a military coup, which overthrew Diem on November 1, 1963**. Against U.S. wishes, the **coup leaders killed Diem**.

**Fear of Communism Shapes Foreign Policy:**

Vietnam wasn’t the only hot spot where we were concerned about the spread of red. **Cuba** was also a communist country, and being only **90 miles from the U.S.** their proximity made their political choices all the more concerning. Hoping to take out Cuba’s communist leader **Fidel Castro**, **Kennedy ordered the Bay of Pigs Invasion**. In order to execute this mission, we took **Cuban exiles** to South America, provided them with **military training** and direction, and then had them invade Cuba in April 1961. **Exiles were quickly captured** by the Cuban government and it was an embarrassment for the United States.

There were also tensions in **Germany.** Many in communist East Berlin were fleeing in favor of non-communist West Berlin. This upset the Soviet Union, and they threatened to close western access to Berlin. Kennedy insisted on West Berlin’s independence. In **August of 1961, The Soviet Union and East Germany built the Berlin Wall, a heavily guarded barrier dividing East and West Berlin**. Since the wall made it harder for those fleeing communism to escape, it quickly **became a symbol of communist oppression**.

In 1962, there was another incident in Cuba. **Fidel Castro** and Soviet leader **Nikita Khrushchev** believe the United States was planning another attack similar to the Bay of Pigs Invasion. In preparation for this supposed attack, the **Soviets placed missiles on Cuba** that were well **within reach of causing destruction to U.S. Cities**. Through tense negotiations, the missiles were removed, we promised to not invade Cuba, and there were no shots fired. This was by far the most serious conflict Kennedy faced with the Soviets.

**Vietnam War Expands:**

The assassination of President Diem brought chaos to **South Vietnam. Several ineffective, corrupt** **leaders** tried to head the government. By 1964, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) controlled much of South Vietnam. Since the South was clearly unable to avoid a communist takeover on their own, **Lyndon Johnson** wanted to begin **bombing North Vietnam,** hoping to discourage Ho Chi Minh from supporting the Viet Cong. After the destroyer U.S.S. Maddox was fired on off the coast of North Vietnam, Congress passed the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**. This **allowed President Johnson to use military force in Vietnam**. In March 1965, Johnson began sustained bombing of North Vietnam. He also sent the first combat troops. The policy of escalation continued as general **William Westmoreland**, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, continually asked for **more boots on the ground**. By the end of 1968, there were more than **536,000** troops in Vietnam.

Many Americans thought that with their **superior weaponry**, they would defeat the Viet Cong very quickly. The Viet Cong could not match American firepower, so it resorted to **guerilla warfare, or surprise attacks by small bands of fighters**. Viet Cong would often emerge suddenly from **underground tunnels** to fight, then retreat back as quick as they came. They would set **booby traps throughout the jungle**, and **hide land mines** and grenades. When the United States first started sending ground troops, **we attempted to use traditional methods of fighting**. Guerilla tactics made the Viet Cong an elusive enemy. In addition**, we could only wage a limited war**, as the United States want to prevent **China** from becoming involved in the conflict.

In reality, the **United States had several disadvantages** in this conflict. Most soldiers were **young and inexperienced**. The average soldier was 19, and **tours of duty were only a year**. By the time they developed enough experience to be successful; it was time for them to leave. Another challenge for Americans was that the **Viet Cong mixed in with the general population and operated everywhere.** It was very hard to determine who was an enemy and who was a friend. Even the climate posed a challenge to American soldiers. **Triple digit temperatures and rain** were the norm. After wading through rice paddies, soldiers often had to pick leeches off of their legs and feet.

One of the strengths of the **Viet Cong** was their **knowledge of the land**, and therefore their ability to hide out. As previously stated, they relied on a network of **underground tunnels and bases hidden by foliage**. In addition, the VC were highly dedicated. They continually replenished troops and were willing to die for their cause. They saw the **Americans as invaders**, and set their sights on winning this **war of attrition.**

**American Strategies for Fighting in Vietnam:**

**To reveal and destroy Viet Cong hideouts American troops used chemicals that destroyed the landscape**. Over wide areas, U. S. Planes dropped bombs of **Napalm, jellied gasoline** that burns violently. Planes also sprayed **Agent Orange**, a chemical that kills plants, over the jungles. While these chemicals successfully **destroyed VC hideouts** and food supplies, **it also harmed the Vietnamese villagers**. In addition, many American soldiers who were exposed to agent orange later suffered from skin diseases and cancers.

In addition, Americans often used search and destroy missions as a means of seeking out Viet Cong. **They would bomb villages** that were thought to be **sheltering Viet Cong soldiers**. This tactic caused more harm than good. **Bombing villages doesn’t win the hearts and minds of the people,** and even if the VC were in the village that was destroyed, the fix was only temporary and they returned later.

**Tet Offensive:**

**Tet celebrates the Vietnamese lunar New Year.** In 1968, during the Tet holiday, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army launched a **surprise attack** on American forces. This **highly coordinated** attack encompassed more than **100 cities** in South Vietnam. They were able to sneak in by dressing in civilian clothing and **smuggling weapons in supply trucks that were bringing flowers and floats for the Tet Holiday parades.** During the attack, the communist forces **killed soldiers, government leaders, schoolteachers, and priests** in an attempt to take over South Vietnamese cities. This was a large **defeat** for the communist forces, as they **lost 45,000 men, and took over no cities**. The Tet Offensive caused a great deal of **doubt among Americans**. General Westmoreland had just indicated that **victory was in sight**, and such an attack clearly disproves that statement. A **credibility gap** developed between what military and political leaders were saying about Vietnam, and what was actually happening. Many Americans also began to **question our motives** for fighting in Vietnam.

**The Antiwar Movement:**

Opposition to the war came about for several reasons. Many felt we should not be involved in **another country’s civil war**. Still others felt the methods we were using to fight were **immoral**. Some felt that the **cost to society was too great**, and were upset that **funding was being shifted from social programs to the war effort**. Protests were staged across the country. One example of a protest gone wrong was the **Kent State Riot**. College students protesting were fired upon by officers**. Four were killed** and eight were injured in a matter of seconds.

Another issue that was often protested was **the draft,** which required young men to sign up for military service**. Initially, enrolling in college granted men a pass on the draft,** so many middle and upper class men enrolled in school to avoid military service. **Certain medical conditions and religious affiliations could also exempt you from the draft**, so many who could afford draft counselors to seek out such exemptions would do so. Upset by the **unfair system that favored the wealthy,** many **burned their draft cards** as a form of protest. Many were also dismayed by the **disproportionate number of African Americans called into service**. Indeed, even **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke about the unfair nature of the draft**. Starting in 1969, **draft lotteries** were implemented to help ensure fairness. The first lottery involved placing all **366 possible birthdays** (including February 29) into a bin and drawing one at a time. Everyone with the first birthday called would be drafted first, and so on. The second lottery was to settle disputes within set birthdays. Letters were drawn to determine the order of the draft based on initials.

One major facet of the antiwar movement was the **counterculture**. Also known as **hippies**, members of the counterculture, rejected **the middle-class lifestyle of consumerism and corporate influence** in favor of creating a **society governed by peace and love**. Many hippies joined **communes**, which are places where multiple families live together and share everything.

Clearly, the war was splitting the nation. Those who supported the war were called **hawks.** They had their own demonstrations, often stating that **antiwar protestors were unpatriotic.** Those who were against the war were called **doves.** **Families were often divided** between supporting and opposing the Vietnam war.

**Vietnam in American Politics:**

Although Westmoreland stated that victory was at hand, television news reporter **Walter Cronkite** went to Vietnam and reported that we were in a deadlock. Lyndon Johnson realized that he had lost popular support for the war, and did not grant General Westmoreland’s request for more troops following the Tet Offensive. Instead, he said that he would seek a **peaceable solution**. In the same speech, he shocked Americans by announcing that he **would not be seeking a second term** as president. While many of Lyndon Johnson’s **domestic policies were successful**, his shortcomings and **failures regarding Vietnam overshadowed his presidency.** He lost the support of many of his major political allies, civil rights leaders, and intellectuals over his role in Vietnam.

Richard Nixon, our new president, was determined to have a different political fate than his predecessor. **He made promises** to restore order, find an honorable end to the war, and to do so quickly. Unfortunately, **he did not follow through**, and the war dragged on. Morale of American troops really suffered during this time. At this point in the war, we had already **lost 35,000 men**, and many were losing faith that America could win the war. In addition, the **South Vietnamese were often deserting their battle stations**. American soldiers questioned why they were fighting a war that the **Vietnamese didn’t want to fight themselves**. Another blow to morale was the **Mai Lai massacre**, in which rogue American soldiers killed 500 unarmed civilians, mostly women, children, and old men. Mai Lai came to represent the **breakdown of morality and discipline** within the armed forces.

Hoping to recover, in 1969, Nixon announces his strategy of **Vietnamization, or a gradual drawdown of troops with an eventual transfer of power to the South Vietnamese**. While Nixon began bringing troops home in 1969, he did not retreat. He was still hoping to force the North Vietnamese to negotiate a peace agreement. **Detracting temporarily from his policy, Nixon authorized bombings in neighboring Cambodia** along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This was **meant to destroy supply lines** to the North Vietnamese. Since this constituted a widening of the war, not a drawdown, it was **initially done in secret**. Many Americans were infuriated when they found out. This **fueled public distrust of the government**. In 1971, Daniel Ellsberg put salt in an open wound by **releasing the Pentagon Papers**. They showed that the previous four presidential administrations **had not been honest with the public** about the U.S. involvement and goals in Vietnam.

**The War Finally Ends:**

In 1972, Nixon **won re-election** in a landslide. Again he promised an end in Vietnam. On January 27, 1973, the **Paris Peace Accords** were signed. This agreement stipulated a **cease fire** between North Vietnam, the Viet Cong, and South Vietnam. In exchange, the United States would remove all of its troops. By the end of March, the last of the combat troops left Vietnam. The ceasefire, unfortunately, was only temporary. **In 1975, North Vietnam launched a massive attack on the South.** Without the money and manpower from the United States, the south was no match for the north. On April 30, 1975, **communists captured Saigon**, the capital of South Vietnam. They re-named it Ho Chi Minh City. After the fall of Saigon, the war finally ended. Many South Vietnamese who were not communists fled the region and successful re-settled in America.

**Impacts of the War:**

The Vietnam War left lasting scars around the world. Between the north and south, more than **1.5 million people were killed**. American bombing and chemical spraying caused **lasting damage to farmland** **and forests**. In addition, the war left Asia highly politically unstable, which led to more bloody conflict in the region.

American were also heavily impacted by this war. Indeed, **58,000 American lives were lost, and more than 300,000 were injured.** Returning **veterans faced a public that did not support the war**. Consequently, they were not given the hero’s welcome they deserved. Since Vietnam, the **United States has been more reluctant to get involved in wars overseas**. The **War Powers Act of 1973 limited the President’s powers to commit the U.S. to a war.** If he does send troops, he must inform Congress within 48 hours. In addition, unless there is a declaration of war made by Congress within 90 days, troops must be pulled.

Vietnam also heavily impacted American politics. During the war, the **Twenty-Sixth Amendment** was passed, lowering the voting age from 21-18. Many believed if an individual was old enough to be drafted, they were old enough to vote in elections. Speaking of the draft, it was suspended in 1973. Finally, the events that took place in Vietnam and the way the government handled it made many U.S. citizens distrust their government. This trust has never been fully re-gained.

**Domestic Turmoil in the 1970’s:**

When he was elected, Nixon promised to restore order. His grand plan was to crack down on protests and crime. He also appointed highly conservative justices to the Supreme Court, thinking their policies would bring an end to social unrest. He even **directed the CIA and the FBI to investigate some of his political enemies**. When the legality of this was questioned, Nixon claimed all investigations were done under the pretense of **national security**.

America’s economy was struggling in the 1970’s as well. **Lyndon Johnson spent large amounts of money on the Vietnam War and on social programs, but he didn’t raise taxes to replace that revenue**. What resulted is high levels of **deficit spending**. Deficit spending put a great deal of money into circulation in the 1960’s, but the economy slowed by 1970. When the economy slows, fewer goods are produced. The combination of the increased money supply and decreased production led to **inflation.** When Nixon took office**, both inflation and unemployment had doubled in the last decade**. (Inflation went from 2.5% to 5%, and unemployment went from 3% to 6%.) In 1973, the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries** (OPEC), decided to **increase oil prices** and reduce the number of shipments made to the United States. With our heavy dependence on oil, **gas prices quickly quadrupled**. This only added to the inflation and unemployment numbers.

**Nixon’s Foreign Policy:**

In addition to negotiating the Paris Peace Accords with Vietnam, **Nixon improved relations with China** and the Soviet Union. While Nixon did not support the communist government of China, he believed that **a nation with 1 billion people could not be ignored**. He asked his national security advisor, **Henry Kissinger**, to arrange a meeting with the Chinese. This **opened up diplomatic and trading ties** between the two nations. The Soviets didn’t get along with China, and definitely didn’t like us having a better relationship with them. Consequently, Nixon was invited to Moscow. This led to the signing of the **Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty** (SALT) in 1972. This treaty placed **limits on the numbers of nuclear weapons** each country was able to have, which ultimately eased Cold War tensions.

**Watergate:**

While Nixon did help usher an end to the Vietnam war, he **did little to improve the public’s trust in their government.** Not long after being re-elected, reporters for the Washington Post uncovered evidence that many of **Nixon’s campaign workers had engaged in illegal activities.** Five men were caught **breaking into the Democratic Party headquarters** in the Watergate Office-Apartment Complex. They had cameras and bugs for the phones. **Within a week, Nixon ordered a cover-up** of any connection the White House may have had to the break-in. Nixon himself lied, his aides lied, people were paid to lie, and the **CIA was used to halt the FBI investigation into Watergate**. Once the Senate began investigating, the Watergate Scandal broke open. Under oath, **John Dean**, one of Nixon’s attorney’s, testified that the president had been involved in the cover-up. It was his word against Nixon’s until a White House aide revealed that **Nixon recorded phone conversations that took place in his office.** A battle then ensued over the transcripts of the tapes. In the spring of 1974, the Senate Judiciary Committee began an **impeachment inquiry**. Nixon released **edited transcripts** of his tapes, but would not release the tapes themselves. On August 5, 1974, a **federal judge ordered** the president to release full transcripts of the tapes. By this time, there was a bipartisan agreement on three articles of impeachment. The taped proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that **Nixon himself had abused his presidential power to stop the FBI investigation into Watergate**. On August 9, 1974, Richard Nixon became the first president to **resign his office**. Eventually, **40** members of Nixon’s administration were indicted or served prison terms for crimes connected to Watergate.

**Ford and Carter:**

In the wake of the Watergate Scandal, **Gerald Ford** and **Jimmy Carter** were left with the difficult job of restoring the public’s faith in the presidency. Ford blew his chance not long after he inherited the presidency by **pardoning Nixon of any crimes he committed in office**. While his intentions were to spare the country an impeachment trial, many felt Nixon should face justice for what he had done. Carter defeated Ford in the 1976 election, campaigning as a Washington outsider. While many hoped that would bring fresh ideas to D.C., **being an outsider made political life difficult for Carter**. He struggled with **domestic energy policy.** In 1977, **oil and natural gas shortages forced many schools and businesses to close**. Carter proposed an energy program to cut America’s dependence on oil, but American’s weren’t willing to make the sacrifice. OPEC’s continued price increases led to **inflation and unemployment** increases, making Carter increasingly unpopular. Carter did find success in his foreign policy initiatives. He worked to end a long-standing conflict with Panama over the **Panama Canal**. Under treaties signed in 1977, the **U.S. agreed to transfer control of the canal to Panama on December 31, 1999**. Carter also attempted to reduce tensions in the Middle East by brokering the **Camp David Accords**. These agreements include a **peace treaty signed by Israel and Egypt**, which not only ended 30 years of fighting, but became the first **treaty signed between an Arab and Israeli nation**.

One dark mark for Carter in the foreign policy arena, is the **Iran Hostage Crisis.** The **U.S. backed Shah of Iran was overthrown** in 1979. The revolution, led by anti-American Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini, involved the **seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, taking 66 Americans captive**. While some were quickly released, **53 were held captive for over a year**, including ambassador Bruce Laingen. **The Algiers Accords**, a deal brokered by the Algerians between the Americans and Iranians, officially ended the crisis in January of 1981. The conditions of the accords stipulated that the United States not interfere politically or militarily with Iran’s internal affairs, U.S. sanctions on Iran would be lifted, Iranian debt to the U.S. would be paid, and litigation regarding this incident on both sides would be suspended.

**Reagan:**

**Believing that Carter was a largely ineffective** president, the American people threw their support behind Ronald Reagan. He had a five point plan to solve the nation’s ills.

1. **Lower Taxes:** Reagan was a strong proponent of supply side economics. This theory holds that if taxes are lower, people save more money, banks could loan that money to businesses, which would then invest in ways to improve productivity. The supply of goods produced would increase, therefore driving down prices. Reagan’s belief in supply side economics led to the income tax rate being lowered by 25% in three years.
2. **De-regulation**: Reagan wanted to **ease restrictions** placed on many **business industries**. He thought businesses would grow more rapidly if the government stayed out of their affairs. This includes affirmative action and environmental protections.
3. **Smaller Government:** Reagan wanted to significantly **reduce the size of government bureaucracy**. He believed they were both **ineffective and inefficient**. He tried to shrink the government by utilizing private contractors to perform government business.
4. **A Conservative Supreme Court:** **Appointing justices to the supreme court whose belief systems match your own helps ensure the continuation of your agenda’s initiatives**. Reagan was no exception. He appointed three conservative justices to the Supreme Court, including Sandra Day O’Conner, the first female supreme court justice.
5. **Cutting Entitlements:** Reagan and other conservatives believe in cutting entitlements, or **programs that guarantee benefits to recipients**. Reagan believed these programs **promoted dependence on the government and a culture of people who are unwilling to help themselves**. By his standard, cutting welfare was not only practical, it was a moral obligation.

Reagan’s program had mixed results. At first, unemployment and inflation remained high, but they both dropped significantly by 1983. However, the **decrease in tax revenue led to high levels of deficit spending.** The **national debt doubled** from 1981 to 1986.

Although Reagan believed in a small government, this did not apply to the military. Indeed, Reagan believed that military force was an essential protection against communists taking over the world. Indeed, he devoted **$2 trillion in military spending** to complete with the Soviet Union’s military buildup. When Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, Reagan met with him several times hoping to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. The **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Treaty** (INF), signed in 1987, resulted from these meetings. Under this agreement, both countries would destroy all of their medium range missiles.

However, taking an anti-communist stand created some problems for Reagan. The Reagan administration decided to support the anti-communist side in several conflicts, including two civil wars in Central America. A scandal emerged surrounding the **aid secretly provided to an anti-communist group known as the Contras in Nicaragua**. Known as the **Iran-Contra Affair**, in 1986 Americans learned that the **U.S. government had sold weapons to Iran in exchange for help freeing American hostages** in the Middle East. The money from these sales went to the Contras. This **violated a law that barred the U.S. government from funding the rebels**. While Reagan claimed he never knew about the deal, many concluded that he should have kept better track of the deals made by his administration.

Despite the Iran-Contra Scandal and increasing national debt, Reagan remained **quite popular**. He was known as the “great communicator,” and even as the “Teflon president,” since scandals seem to slide right off of him.

**George H.W. Bush:**

After serving two terms, Reagan’s Vice President, George H.W. Bush, ran for president and won. His presidency was marked by many foreign policy events:

**The End of the Cold War:** **In 1989, several Eastern European nations stopped having a communist government**. As communism fell, so did a structure that came to symbolize the oppression of communism: **the Berlin Wall.** This cleanse from communism angered those who strongly believed in the communist system of government. In 1991, they tried to arrange a coup of the Soviet Union. **Boris Yeltsin** was successfully able to thwart the attempt. **Unlike Gorbachev, who wanted to reform communism, Yeltsin wanted to get rid of it.** One by one, the **republics that made up the Soviet Union declared their independence**. In December 1991, Yeltsin and the newly independent republics joined a loose alliance called the **Commonwealth of Independent States** (CIS). **The breakup of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War**.

**The Persian Gulf War:** In August of 1990**, Iraq invaded Kuwait**. The United States and the United Nations lead a force composed of **39 different nations** to free Kuwait. In 1991, this coalition force began bombing Iraq, then troops were sent in to push the Iraqi’s out of Kuwait.

Bush’s success in stopping Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf war made him extremely popular, but then **the economy stalled**. With unemployment reaching nearly **7%**, many Americans started to believe that **Bush was good at foreign policy, but ineffective at home**. He lost to Bill Clinton in the 1992 election.

**Clinton:**

When he first arrived in office, his **goal was to tackle universal health care**. His legislation was criticized by republicans for being too costly and going too far, and by democrats for not going far enough. **After an extensive battle with Congress, no health care plan was passed**, but there was a law passed that allows workers to keep their insurance when they change jobs.

In 1993, the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** passed. NAFTA lifted tariffs between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to allow for increased trade. While it won wide support from both sides of the isle, critics feared America would lose jobs to Mexico, where wages were lower and there were fewer safety regulations**. Newt Gingrich’s** outspoken opposition to the bill helped him to rise among his conservative colleagues, who made him speaker of the House after the 1994 mid-term elections. Since republicans won control of both houses of Congress in the 1994 elections, Clinton’s political arguments with them intensified. In 1995, **when Clinton and Congress couldn’t agree on a budget, the government was forced to shut down… twice.** Eventually they were able to compromise with the pressure to act mounting from the American people. They were also able to compromise on a Welfare Reform Bill, which was huge on the conservative agenda. Under the welfare reform bill, there was no longer a guarantee of service for needy families, and there was a time **limit to the length of time people could receive service.**

**Impeachment:**

Clinton was re-elected in 1996, but a scandal marred most of his second term. Information emerged that Clinton **had an affair with a White House intern, and lied about it under oath.** When the charges became public, he denied the affair with Monica Lewinski. Later, he admitted to the affair, but said that he didn’t lie under oath. In December 1998, the House of Representatives **impeached** president Clinton. He went through a trial, and was acquitted.

After his trial, Clinton worked to make gains in both foreign and domestic policy. Abroad, he led a group of nations dealing with the **independence of Kosovo from Serbia**. NATO forces began bombing Serbia in 1999, and three months later, the Serbians withdrew. Back at home, Clinton finished his second term with **three consecutive years of budget surpluses**, but partisan divisions continued to hold up needed legislation.

**2000 Election**:

The 2000 election was quite controversial. While **Al Gore** won the popular vote, **George W. Bush** won the electoral vote. The point of contention was the state of **Florida**. Many in that state said confusing ballots caused them to vote for the wrong person. In addition, many more said that they were turned away at their polling location: that they were not on the list of registered voters. The controversy led to a request for a hand re-count, a lawsuit, a countersuit, and finally a decision by the Supreme Court that the original vote count stands, and therefore Bush was the new president. Adding depth to the controversy, **George Bush’s brother, Jeb, was the governor of Florida at the time** of the election.

**9/11:**

On the Morning of September 11, 2001**, terrorists hijacked multiple planes** departing from the East Coast and heading for California. The hijackers crashed two of the jets into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. A third plane plowed into the Pentagon. A fourth jet crashed in an empty field after passengers courageously fought the hijackers. Everyone on all four planes died, in addition to several others. **More than 3,000 people lost their lives on 9/11**.

**Fighting Terrorism:**

This fateful day was a wake-up call to the American people. No longer could we pretend that terrorism was something that was only faced in other countries. With Congressional approval, Bush set out to fight terrorism**. A month after 9/11 the U.S. led forces on an attack in Afghanistan**. It was **believed that Afghanistan was harboring Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda**, the terrorist group believed responsible for 9/11. By 2002, the U.S. led coalition forces broke up the Al Qaeda strong hold in Afghanistan, but their leader Osama bin Laden was still at large.

At home, Bush signed into law a bill allowing our **government to detain suspected terrorists for up to seven days without charging them with a crime**. He also created the **Department of Homeland Security**, a government agency whose sole purpose is to coordinate anti-terrorism efforts. In addition, the federal government became more involved in aviation security.

In 2003, the U.S. expands the war on terror to Iraq. **Bush claimed that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was supporting Al Qaeda** with chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, also known as **weapons of mass destruction**. The UN conducted weapons inspections in Iraq, but Hussein did not fully cooperate. Britain and the U.S. broke off diplomatic ties with Iraq and ordered Saddam to leave the country. They began **air strikes** on the Iraqi military. Coalition forces soon had boots on the ground and within a matter of months, the Iraqi army was defeated. The Iraqi people were **happy to be rid of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorial rule.** By 2006, Iraq had a new republican constitution and new government. Hussein was convicted of the murder of 148 of his own people, and sentenced to death. The U**.S. continued to occupy the country to help with nation building**, and training of police and military troops. The challenge came from daily attacks from insurgents, or rebels. Although we achieved our objective of getting Saddam out of Iraq, there were several costs involved in this endeavor. By the end of 2006, more than **2,900 US soldiers** had been killed, and more than **50,000 Iraqis.** It's interesting to note that **no weapons of mass destruction were ever recovered in Iraq.** This has caused some to question the motives behind the Iraqi invasion.

**Facing New Challenges:**

As we move forward into the 21st century, there are many challenges we will face as a nation. First, the composition of our population is changing. The **baby boomers,** those born after WWII, are now starting to retire. With the increased percentage of the population reaching retirement age, and the increased life expectancy due to modern medicine, has **strong implications for social security and health care policy**.

In addition to our aging population, the **immigrants** coming to our country are now from **Asia and Latin America, not from Europe as in the past**. One of our domestic policy issues is how to fairly handle those who come into our country illegally. Immigration will likely be a hot topic well into the future.

Another challenge that many joyfully face is implementing ever changing technologies that come our way every day. The **popularization of the internet in 1993** led to huge advances in information technology. Computer usage exploded in businesses, at home, and in schools. Now, many use smart phones or tablets for their internet needs.

With the advent of technology, we have become more interconnected. We live in a world where companies are linked through business. The unfortunate part of globalization is that **many businesses have outsourced unskilled labor jobs to places where the cost of labor is much lower. This puts a strain for American workers to find employment.**

**Obama:**

In 2008, we broke a large barrier as a nation, electing **Barack Obama**, as our nation’s first African American president. President Obama**, unlike president Reagan, favors demand side economics.** Demand side economics is a theory that advocates **use of government spending and growth in the money supply to stimulate the demand for goods and services and therefore expand economic activity.** As such he produced a significant stimulus package in an attempt to counteract the great recession that arrived in 2008. While unemployment has declined and the deficit has shrunk under his watch, it remains to be seen how Obama will be rated on his handling of the economy.

Another of his big ticket items was an overhaul of healthcare. In March, 2010, Obama signed the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** into Law. This is also known as **Obamacare.** In addition, The Obama administration also **captured the elusive leader of al-Qaeda. Osama Bin Laden was discovered and killed in Pakistan by U.S. special forces** on May 1, 2011. For many who lost friends in family on 9/11, this served as a moment of justice.

While there are some successes, no presidency is perfect. Much like president **Clinton**, Obama has had a difficult **time passing necessary laws** because **partisan bickering** between himself and Congress remains unresolved. It remains to be seen if and how Washington regains the trust of the American people, and build their efficiency by working together.