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SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- 1 WHY DIDN'T AMERICA WIN ITS WAR IN VIETNAM?
- 2 SHOULD WE TRUST OUR NATION'S LEADERS?
- 3 IS IT BAD FOR AMERICA THAT SO FEW OF THE THINGS WE BUY ARE MADE HERE?

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Q U E S T I O N E I G H T E E N



American history is usually told as a series of triumphs – slavery was destroyed, the pioneers conquered the untamed West, Neil Armstrong set foot on the Moon – and rarely do we tell stories of failure. Although business ventures have failed, expeditions have come up empty-handed, and heroes have struck out, Americans have enjoyed a great deal of success in our short history.

The 1970s were different. In that decade, our nation suffered through a series of grand failures. We lost our war in Vietnam to an ill-equipped communist insurgency. A president resigned in disgrace. A nuclear power plant melted down. Foreign companies sold better, cheaper products and put American manufacturing workers out of their jobs. The great industrial heartland that had fueled the Arsenal of Democracy began to crumble. The vibrant energy and optimism that characterized the 1960s got a reality check.

Of course, the United States survived as a nation. Perhaps failing taught us lessons that have made us better. Perhaps though, these failures left lasting scars that have weakened us. What do you think? Can failure make us a better country?

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F I R S T Q U E S T I O N WHY DIDN'T AMERICA WIN ITS WAR IN VIETNAM?



INTRODUCTION

Before the war in Afghanistan, the Vietnam War was the longest in American history. The concerns of the Cold War led American leaders into the conflict in Vietnam, but over time, the war became less and less about stopping the spread of communism. By the time the last Americans were evacuated from Saigon, few people believed losing Vietnam would significantly impact the balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Compared to the United States, Vietnam is a tiny nation in every respect – territory, economic output, natural resources, population, and technology – and yet the United States lost. Despite dropping more bombs in Vietnam than in all of the World War II, the nation that had defeated Hitler could not suppress Ho Chi Minh.

How was this possible? Why didn't we win our war in Vietnam?

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WHY VIETNAM?


America's foray into Vietnam began early in the Cold War, and was motivated by Cold War priorities. Unlike Korea, however, Vietnam proved to be more complicated. Korea had no colonial master waiting to come back at the end of the Second World War, but Vietnam had been part of the French colony of Indochina, and the French wanted to reestablish control over their colony. The United States was placed in the uneasy position of supporting a colonial empire in an age of decolonization or supporting the Vietnamese independence movement under the leadership of **Ho Chi Minh** and his **Viet Minh** army. President Harry S. Truman had no love for France's colonial regime in Southeast Asia but did not want to risk the loyalty of its Western European ally against the Soviet Union.


In 1950, the Truman administration sent a small group of military advisors to Vietnam and provided financial aid to help France fight the Viet Minh. Despite America's help, however, Vietnamese forces defeated the French in 1954, and the country was temporarily divided at the 17th Parallel. Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh controlled the North. In the South, the last Vietnamese emperor and ally to France, Bao Dai, named the French-educated, anti-communist **Ngo Dinh Diem** as his prime minister. The **Geneva Accords** ending the conflict called for countrywide national elections in 1956, with the victor to rule a reunified nation, but Diem knew he would lose an election and refused to abide by the treaty.


After a fraudulent election in the South in 1955, Diem ousted Bao Dai and proclaimed himself president of the Republic of Vietnam. He cancelled the 1956 elections in the South and began to round up communists and supporters of Ho Chi Minh. Realizing that Diem would never agree to the reunification of the country under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, the North Vietnamese began efforts to overthrow the government of the South by encouraging insurgents called **Viet Cong** to attack South Vietnamese officials.


The United States, fearing the spread of communism under Ho Chi Minh, supported Diem, assuming he would create a democratic, pro-Western government in South Vietnam. However, Diem's oppressive and corrupt regime openly promoted the nation's small Catholic minority and elevated Diem's family members to power. He was an unpopular ruler, particularly with farmers, students, and Buddhists, and many in the South actively assisted the Viet Cong in trying to overthrow his government.


The world became frighteningly aware of the conflict between Diem and his people when **Thich Quang Duc**, a Buddhist monk burned himself to death at a busy Saigon intersection on June 11, 1963. Fellow monks had notified the press that something important was going to happen and photographs of his self-immolation were circulated widely across the globe. President Kennedy said of Malcolm Browne's Pulitzer Prize winning photograph of the monk's


 **Ho Chi Minh:** Communist leader of North Vietnam who fought the French, Japanese and then Americans in an effort to realize independence for Vietnam.

 **Viet Minh:** The North Vietnamese army.

 **Ngo Dinh Diem:** Dictator of South Vietnam. He was widely hated due to his corrupt government, policies that favored the Catholic minority and was eventually killed in a coup that was tacitly supported by the US.

 **Geneva Accords:** International agreement after World War II to unify Vietnam and hold nation-wide elections. Diem in the South ignored the accords knowing he would lose an election.

 **Viet Cong:** Guerilla fighters in South Vietnam who supported the North.

 **Thich Quang Duc:** Buddhist monk who self-immolated on a street corner in Saigon to protest Diem's government. A photograph of the event captured the world's attention.

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death, "No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one."



Primary Source: Photograph

The death of Thich Quang Duc. This photograph by Malcolm Browne won the Pulitzer Prize and brought international attention to Vietnam.

Quang Duc's act of protest increased international pressure on Diem and led him to announce reforms with the intention of mollifying the Buddhists. However, the promised reforms were not implemented, leading to a deterioration of affairs. With protests continuing, the special forces loyal to Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, launched nationwide raids on Buddhist pagodas, resulting in bloodshed and widespread damage. Several Buddhist monks followed Quang Duc's example, and self-immolated.

When Kennedy took office as president in 1961, he chose to continue the policies of the Eisenhower administration by supplied Diem with money and military advisors and by November 1963, there were 16,000 American troops in Vietnam. But American leaders were growing impatient with Diem and after the CIA indicated their support for a new regime, South Vietnamese military officers **assassinated Diem** and his brother Nhu. For good or bad, no one emerged as a clear, decisive, strong and effective leader for the South.

Kennedy's own death a few weeks before the overthrow of Diem meant that President Lyndon B. Johnson would be responsible for guiding America's involvement in Vietnam. Johnson was effective at building legislative majorities in a style that ranged from diplomacy to quid pro quo deals to bullying. In the summer of 1964, he deployed these political skills to secure congressional approval for a new strategy in Vietnam with fateful consequences.



Assassination of Diem: South Vietnamese army officers arranged the assassinate Diem and his brother and take over the government. The plot was carried out in November 1963. The CIA knew about the plot and did nothing to stop it.

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THE AMERICAN WAR

President Johnson had never been the cold warrior Kennedy was, but he believed that the credibility of the nation and his office depended on maintaining a foreign policy of containment. When, on August 2, 1964, the destroyer USS Maddox conducted an arguably provocative intelligence-gathering mission in the Gulf of Tonkin on the coast of Vietnam, it reported an attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. Two days later, the Maddox was supposedly struck again, and a second ship, the USS Turner Joy, reported that it also had been fired upon. The North Vietnamese denied the second attack, and Johnson himself doubted the reliability of the crews' report. The National Security Agency has since revealed that the August 4 attacks did not occur. Relying on information available at the time, however, Secretary of Defense **Robert McNamara** reported to Congress that American ships had been fired upon in international waters while conducting routine operations. On August 7, with only two dissenting votes, Congress passed the **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**, and on August 10, the president signed the resolution into law.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution gave President Johnson the authority to use military force in Vietnam without asking Congress for a declaration of war. It dramatically increased the power of the president and transformed the American role in Vietnam from supporter to combatant. Although he was not the first president to send Americans to Vietnam, and did not oversee the entire conflict, Americans would remember the Vietnam War as Johnson's war because of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

In 1965, large-scale bombing of North Vietnam began. The intent of the campaign, which lasted three years, was to force the North to end its support for the Viet Cong insurgency in the South. More than 200,000 American military personnel were sent to South Vietnam. At first, most of the American public supported the president's actions. Support began to ebb, however, as more troops were deployed. Frustrated by losses suffered by the South's Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), General **William Westmoreland** called for the United States to take more responsibility for leading the war. By April 1966, more Americans were being killed in battle than ARVN troops. Johnson, however, maintained that the war could be won if the United States stayed the course, and in November 1967, Westmoreland proclaimed that the end was in sight.

In reality, the end was nowhere near. Victory was elusive for a variety of reasons. The Viet Cong rarely faced off on the battlefield in the traditional way Americans had been accustomed to from World War II and Korea. The enemy was hard to identify. The Viet Cong blended in with the native population and struck by ambush, often at night. In an effort to separate the enemy from the civilians, the government of South Vietnam established **free-fire zones**. All civilians were forced to leave these areas and anyone left behind was considered an enemy combatant. Cases of indiscriminate



Robert McNamara: Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam War. He is often blamed for the failure.



Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: Resolution passed by Congress in 1964 that granted President Johnson wide authority to use armed force in Vietnam. It was used by presidents Johnson and Nixon to go to war without an actual declaration of war.



Watch Johnson's address regarding the Gulf of Tonkin



William Westmoreland: American commander in Vietnam.



Free-Fire Zones: Areas of the Vietnamese countryside. All civilians in these areas were supposed to move to camps and anyone left in the zones was considered an enemy. In reality, many civilians refused to leave and were killed. The policy made the government of South Vietnam and the Americans unpopular with the civilian population.

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attacks on civilians within free-fire zones were frequent. According to political scientist R.J. Rummel, American troops murdered about 6,000 Vietnamese civilians during the war. Nick Turse, in his 2013 book, "Kill Anything that Moves," argues that the widespread use of free-fire zones, rules of engagement where civilians who ran from soldiers or helicopters could be viewed as Viet Cong, and a widespread disdain for Vietnamese civilians led to massive civilian casualties and war crimes inflicted by American troops. It seems obvious now, but the establishment of free-fire zones, camps for the civilians who were forced to leave their homes, and the attitudes of American troops toward civilians turned many South Vietnamese into supporters of the Viet Cong.

Without a clear enemy, it became harder and harder for American commanders to demonstrate that they were winning. Instead of pointing to territory won, or battle victories, they began to measure success by the body count of the enemy. Being rewarded, promoted, and given medals for killing large number of enemy soldiers undoubtedly led American forces to target civilians.

More than any other reason, however, the Americans ultimately lost the war because the Vietnamese were fighting for freedom and were willing to suffer enormous casualties to win. Vietnam was their homeland and they were not going anywhere. The Americans, on the other hand, might leave. The Vietnamese had suffered through the French colonial era, the Japanese occupation, and would suffer through the American war as well. For the Vietnamese, it was only a matter of time.



Primary Source: Photograph

Navy A-6A Intruders dropping bombs in 1968 as part of Operation Rolling Thunder.

This did not mean, however, that the Americans didn't unleash the full onslaught of their armed forces. In February 1965, the air force began a long program of sustained bombing of North Vietnamese targets known as

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Operation Rolling Thunder. At first only military targets were hit, but as months turned into years, civilian targets were pummeled as well.

The United States also bombed the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**, a supply line used by the North Vietnamese to aid the Viet Cong. The trail meandered through the neighboring countries of Laos and Cambodia, so the bombing was kept secret from Congress and the American people. More bombs rained down on Vietnam than the Allies had used during the whole of World War II.

Additional sorties delivered defoliating chemicals such as **Agent Orange** and napalm to remove the jungle cover utilized by the Viet Cong. The intense bombardment did little to deter the enemy and they continued to use the Ho Chi Minh trail despite the grave risk. They also burrowed underground, building 30,000 miles of tunnel networks to keep supply lines open.



Operation Rolling Thunder: Major bombing campaign initiated in 1965 in an effort to force the North Vietnamese to surrender. It inflicted heavy damage but failed in its primary objective.



Ho Chi Minh Trail: Route taken by North Vietnamese to supply the Viet Cong in the South. The route went through Laos and Cambodia.



Agent Orange: Chemical sprayed from aircraft that caused the leaves to fall off of trees, thus making it easier to find enemy fighters. It is widely believed to have caused serious health problems for the soldiers who were exposed.

Primary Source: Photograph

An American helicopter sprays the defoliant Agent Orange.

AMERICANS TURN AGAINST THE WAR

Westmoreland's predictions of eminent victory were called into question at home in January 1968 during the Vietnamese new year, called Tet, when the North Vietnamese launched their most aggressive formal assault on the South, deploying close to 85,000 troops. During the **Tet Offensive**, as these attacks were known, nearly one hundred cities in the South were attacked, including the capital of Saigon. The Americans and South Vietnamese Army were able to retake all the areas captured by the North during the offensive, but at an enormous cost in lives. Even the iconic and respected CBS newscaster **Walter Cronkite**, who visited Saigon during the Tet Offensive, questioned to possibility of success, stating that he believed it was clear the war would in stalemate.



Tet Offensive: Major operation undertaken by the North Vietnamese to attack cities in the South during the new year's celebration (Tet) of 1968. It ultimately failed but did demonstrate that the North was not about to surrender.



Walter Cronkite: Respected television news anchor who went to Vietnam during the Tet Offensive and reported that he believed that war would end in a stalemate. Is opinion influenced many Americans.

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And it wasn't only Cronkite. Although North Vietnamese forces suffered far more casualties than the roughly 4,100 Americans killed, public opinion in the United States, began to turn against the war. The conflict in Vietnam was the first war Americans watched on television, and they were troubled by what they saw. Disastrous surprise attacks like the Tet Offensive persuaded many that the war would not be over soon and raised doubts about whether or not Johnson's administration was telling the truth about the real state of affairs. A dangerous credibility gap began to develop. People in American simply stopped believing what their president was telling them about the progress of the war.



Primary Source: Photograph

Walter Cronkite reporting from Vietnam during the Tet Offensive.

When Operation Rolling Thunder began in 1965, only 15% of the American public opposed the war effort in Vietnam. As late as January 1968, only a few weeks before the Tet Offensive, only 28% of the American public labeled themselves anti-war. However, by April 1968, six weeks later, the tables had turned and more Americans opposed the war than supported it.

Declining public support brought declining troop morale. Many soldiers questioned the wisdom of American involvement. Soldiers who had signed up believing they were going to be engaging in a great moral crusade against communism found themselves burning down villages. Some turned to alcohol, marijuana, and even heroin to escape the stress and horror of the war. To make matters worse, President Johnson had asked for the Selective Service Administration to triple the number of young men drafted in 1965. Many of the new soldiers who found themselves in Vietnam did not want to be there at all. For them, the most important objective of the war was surviving and making it home. Incidents of fragging, the murder of officers by their own troops who did not want to go into combat, increased in the



Baby Killer: Derogatory name that anti-war protesters called returning soldiers. It referred to the killing of civilians.

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years that followed the Tet Offensive. Soldiers who completed their yearlong tour of duty were welcomed home with chants of “**baby killer**,” instead of the parades that had greeted their fathers after World War II.



Primary Source: Photograph

Anti-war protesters used flowers as a symbol of peace. This photograph of a protester putting flowers in the barrels of military police rifles came to symbolize the conflict between the anti-war movement and the pro-war government.

In May 1968, with over 400,000 American troops in Vietnam, Johnson began peace talks with the North. It was too late to save Johnson’s presidency, however. Many of the most outspoken critics of the war were Democratic politicians whose opposition began to erode unity within the party. Minnesota senator Eugene McCarthy, who had called for an end to the war, surprised the nation when he received nearly as many votes in the New Hampshire presidential primary as Johnson. McCarthy’s success in New Hampshire encouraged Robert Kennedy to announce his candidacy as an anti-war candidate as well. Johnson, suffering health problems and realizing his actions in Vietnam had hurt his public standing, announced that he would not seek reelection and withdrew from the **1968 presidential race**. With his remaining time in office, he dedicated himself to finding a peaceful end to America’s involvement in Vietnam. Taking his place on the campaign trail as a supporter of the war, Vice President Hubert Humphry would go on to win the party’s nomination.

A peace deal was not to be. The North Vietnamese sensed crumbling American resolve. They knew that the longer the war raged, the more anti-war sentiment in America would grow. For the next five years, they pretended to negotiate with the United States, making proposals they knew would be rejected, and with each passing day, support for continuing the war in America decreased.



1968 Democratic Primary: In 1968 senator Eugene McCarthy challenged sitting president Lyndon Johnson. McCarthy ran as an anti-war candidate. When McCarthy did surprisingly well in the first primary election Johnson withdrew from the race. Robert Kennedy joined as another anti-war candidate and vice president Hubert Humphry joined as a pro-war candidate. Humphry eventually won the nomination but lost the general election to Richard Nixon.

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MY LAI: THE END OF MORAL AUTHORITY

In the 1940s and 1950s the United States had stood up to Stalin and Khrushchev in Berlin and Korea. But the moral authority the United States had as the defenders of freedom in the face of communism was lost in Vietnam. The killing of civilians horrified the Vietnamese people, Americans and the world. In Vietnam, a dangerous blend of power, racism, and frustration undermined the ethics of the young men who had been sent on a crusade that was failing.

On March 16, 1968, men from the army's Twenty-Third Infantry Division committed one of the most notorious atrocities of the war. About one hundred soldiers commanded by Captain Ernest Medina were sent to destroy the village of **My Lai**, which was suspected of hiding Viet Cong fighters. Although there was later disagreement regarding the captain's exact words, the platoon leaders believed the order to destroy the enemy included killing women and children. Having suffered twenty-eight casualties in the past three months, the men of Charlie Company were under severe stress and extremely apprehensive as they approached the village. Two platoons entered it, shooting randomly. A group of seventy to eighty unarmed people, including children and infants, were forced into an irrigation ditch by members of the First Platoon under the command of Lt. William L. Calley, Jr. Despite their proclamations of innocence, the villagers were shot. Houses were set on fire, and as the inhabitants tried to flee, they were killed with rifles, machine guns, and grenades. The Americans were never fired upon, and one soldier later testified that he did not see any man who looked like a Viet Cong fighter.

The precise number of civilians killed at My Lai is unclear. The numbers range from 347 to 504. None were armed. Although not all the soldiers in My Lai took part in the killings, no one attempted to stop the massacre until Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson arrived in his helicopter. Along with his crew, Thompson attempted to evacuate women and children. Upon returning to base, Thompson immediately reported the events taking place at My Lai.

Although Thompson's crew members confirmed his account, none of the men from Charlie Company gave a report, and a cover-up began almost immediately. The army first claimed that 150 Viet Cong had been killed during a firefight with Charlie Company. Hearing details from friends in Charlie Company, a helicopter gunner named Ron Ridenhour began to conduct his own investigation and in April 1969, wrote to thirty members of Congress, demanding an investigation. By September 1969, the army charged Lt. Calley with premeditated murder. Many Americans were horrified at the graphic images of the massacre. The incident confirmed their belief that the war was unjust and not being fought on behalf of the Vietnamese people.



My Lai Massacre: Attack by American troops on the village of My Lai in 1968. The American commander ordered his soldiers to kill everyone in the village, including women and children. The massacre caused many in the around the world to doubt the good intentions of the United States.

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Primary Source: Photograph

Villagers from My Lai massacred by American troops in 1968. Images of the slaughter turned many people in the United States and around the world against the war.

Aghast that their boys could ever commit such an atrocity, nearly half of all Americans surveyed after the incident believe that it had not actually happened. They wanted to believe that American goals in Vietnam were honorable and speculated that the anti-war movement had concocted the story to generate sympathy for the enemy.

But it was not made up. Americans had murdered hundreds of innocent women and children, and not just at My Lai.

Calley was found guilty in March 1971, and sentenced to life in prison. Nationwide, hundreds of thousands of Americans joined a "Free Calley" campaign. Two days later, President Nixon released him from custody and placed him under house arrest at Fort Benning, Georgia. In August of that same year, Calley's sentence was reduced to twenty years, and in September 1974, he was paroled. The only soldier convicted in the massacre, he spent a total of three-and-a-half years under house arrest for his crimes.

The massacre and the investigations that followed had a profound effect on Americans and the world. Never again would the United States be able to claim the moral high ground in its fight against the evils of the world. America is not to be believed, the world learned. Her motives are not always pure. No matter how justifiable the cause, America will always be tainted by the blood of the innocents of My Lai.

THE WAR COMES HOME

As the conflict wore on and reports of brutalities increased, the anti-war movement grew in strength. To take the political pressure off himself and his administration, and find a way to exit Vietnam "with honor," Nixon began

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a process he called **Vietnamization**, turning more responsibility for the war over to South Vietnamese forces by training them and providing American weaponry, while withdrawing American troops from the field. At the same time, however, Nixon authorized the bombing of neighboring Cambodia, in an effort to destroy North Vietnamese and Viet Cong bases and cut off supply routes between North and South Vietnam. The bombing was kept secret from both Congress and the American public since Cambodia had declared its neutrality. In April 1970, Nixon decided to follow up the bombings with an **invasion of Cambodia**.



Vietnamization: Nixon's policy of withdrawing American troops and turning responsibility for fighting over to the South Vietnamese Army. It was a way of ending the war without surrendering.



Invasion of Cambodia: In 1970 President Nixon decided to send American ground forces into Cambodia to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail. His move intensified the anti-war movement.

Primary Source: Photograph

Student protesters march through a campus during the Vietnam War.



The invasion could not be kept secret, and when Nixon announced it on television on April 30, 1970, protests sprang up across the country. In fact, opposition to the war had been brewing for years, most noticeably among students. Because college students could apply for a deferment from being drafted while they completed school, colleges were filled with well-educated, highly-motivated young men who knew that as graduation approached, so did the likelihood of being conscripted into the army. These students, both men and women formed a powerful and vocal element of the anti-war movement. In 1965, professors organized a teach-in at the University of Michigan attended by 2,500 faculty and students. Focused on the war, the meetings were replicated in at other campuses. That same year, the **Students for a Democratic Society** and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the civil rights activist group, organized the



Students for a Democratic Society: Group of college students who organized protests, most notably large rallies in Washington, DC.

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first of several marches in Washington, DC with some 25,000 protesters in attendance. Burnings of draft cards in public began in earnest in 1965 and President Johnson was burned in effigy at the University of California, Berkeley.

Musicians such as Joan Baez, John Lenin, Pete Seeger, Barry McGuire, Jimi Hendrix and the groups Country Joe and the Fish, and Peter, Paul and Mary recorded anti-war songs and performed at protests rallies. In 1967, heavyweight boxing champion **Muhammad Ali** declared himself a conscientious objector and refused to go to war. He was convicted of draft evasion and sentenced to five years in jail. His conviction was overturned on appeal, but he lost his title and was banned from boxing for three years.

By 1967, the anti-war movement was fully intertwined with the other social movements of the time. The counterculture of the hippies overlapped with the anti-war movement as hippies professed free love and turned out at rallies. Activists within the African-American civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were strongly anti-war. Since college students could obtain a deferment, wealthier white teenagers who could afford a college tuition were able to legally avoid the draft, while poorer African Americans who did not have the money for college, could not. On the battlefield, African Americans made up a disproportionately high number of the soldiers and the casualties. For many of America's poor, white and black, Vietnam felt like a **rich man's war and a poor man's fight**.

In June of 1967, President Johnson travelled to Los Angeles for a Democratic fundraiser. He met a massive anti-war protest outside his hotel. When the Los Angeles police tried to break up the crowd, violence ensued and Johnson refused to give public speeches from that point onward.

In 1968, students at **Columbia University** in the heart of New York City took over the campus, occupied the offices and classrooms and shut down the school, demanding that the university end research it was conducting to help the government's war effort. After seven days, the New York police were called in to forcibly remove the students. Some 700 were arrested and 12 police officers were injured.

The most tragic and politically damaging protest occurred on May 1, 1970, at Kent State University in Ohio. Violence erupted in the town of Kent after an initial student demonstration on campus, and the next day, the mayor asked Ohio's governor to send in the National Guard. Troops arrived at the university's campus, where students had set fire to the ROTC building and were fighting off firemen and policemen trying to extinguish it. The National Guard used tear gas to break up the demonstration, and several students were arrested.

Tensions came to a head on May 4. Although campus officials had called off a planned demonstration, some 1,500 to 2,000 students assembled, and threw rocks at a security officer who ordered them to leave. 77 members of



Muhammad Ali: Heavyweight boxing champion who went to jail instead of going to Vietnam when he was drafted. He lost his title but served as an example for other draft dodgers.



Rich man's war and a poor man's fight: Phrase that exemplified the idea that wealthy politicians were making choices about the conduct of the war but that poor Americans, especially African Americans, had to do the fighting.



Columbia University Protest: Protest in which students occupied the campus of Columbia University in 1968. They were violently ousted by the NYC police.

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the National Guard, with bayonets attached to their rifles, approached the students. After forcing most of them to retreat, the troops seemed to depart. Then, for reasons that are still unknown, they halted, turned, and began firing at the students. **Nine students were wounded and four were killed.** Two of the dead had simply been crossing campus on their way to class. Peace was finally restored when a faculty member pleaded with the remaining students to leave. Ironically, most of the national guardsmen were the same age as the students and just as conflicted about the war as the protesters.



Kent State Shooting: Clash between students and the Ohio National Guard at Kent State University in 1970. The guardsmen opened fire on unarmed students resulting in nine deaths. The massacre shocked the nation as it seemed the war was coming home.

Primary Source: Photograph

John Filo, a student and part-time news photographer, distilled the feelings many Americans had about Vietnam into a single image when he captured Mary Ann Vecchio kneeling over a fatally wounded Jeffrey Miller at Kent State. Filo's photograph was printed on the front page of the New York Times. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize and has since become the visual symbol of a hopeful nation's lost youth.



Watch a television report of participants sharing their memories of the Kent State Massacre

News of the Kent State shootings shocked students around the country. Millions refused to attend class, as strikes were held at hundreds of colleges and high schools across the United States. On May 9, 100,000 protesters turned out in Washington, DC.

Only a few weeks later on May 15, **a similar tragedy took place at Jackson State College**, an African American university in Jackson, Mississippi. Once again, students gathered on campus to protest the invasion of Cambodia, setting fires and throwing rocks. The police arrived to disperse the protesters who had gathered outside a women's dormitory. Shortly after midnight, the police opened fire with shotguns. The dormitory windows shattered, showering people with broken glass. Twelve people were wounded, and two young men, one a student at the college and the other a local high school student, were killed.

Not everyone sympathized with the slain students, however. Nixon had referred to student demonstrators as "bums," and construction workers



Jackson State Shooting: A less publicized shooting similar to the Kent State Massacre that occurred a few weeks later at the predominantly African American Jackson State College. Twelve students were wounded and two were killed by police.

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attacked the New York City protestors. A Gallup poll revealed that most Americans blamed the students for the tragic events at Kent State and in Jackson. While the students, African Americans, and hippies certainly had supporters, and by the early 1970s the majority of Americans opposed the war, their actions did not have the support of most of the country. Many, most notably their parents and grandparents felt that the students represented the worst of America. They were spoiled. They complained. They disrespected authority. They smoked and abused drugs. They were throwing away time-honored social traditions. And perhaps worst of all, they refused to support America's fighting men and women.

PULLING OUT OF THE QUAGMIRE

Ongoing protests, campus violence, and the expansion of the war into Cambodia deeply disillusioned Americans about their role in Vietnam. Understanding the nation's mood, Nixon dropped his opposition to a repeal of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. In January 1971, he signed Congress's revocation of the notorious blanket military authorization. Gallup polls taken in May of that year revealed that only 28% of Americans supported the war. By then, many felt that the war had been a mistake.

Realizing that he must end the war but reluctant to make it look as though the United States was admitting its failure to subdue a small Asian nation, Nixon began maneuvering to secure favorable peace terms from the North Vietnamese. His diplomatic efforts in China and the Soviet Union, also helped. Combined with the intensive bombing of Hanoi and the mining of crucial North Vietnamese harbors, the loss of support from their benefactors made the North Vietnamese more willing to negotiate.

Nixon's actions also won him popular support at home. By the 1972 election, voters favored his policy of Vietnamization by a ratio of two to one. On January 27, 1973, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger signed an accord with Le Duc Tho, the chief negotiator for the North Vietnamese, ending American participation in the war. The United States was given sixty days to withdraw its troops, and North Vietnam was allowed to keep its forces in places it currently occupied. This meant that over 100,000 northern soldiers would remain in the South where they were ideally situated to continue the war with South Vietnam. The United States left behind a small number of military advisors as well as equipment, and Congress continued to approve funds to support South Vietnam, but considerably less than in earlier years. After American troops withdrew the war continued, but it was clear the South could not hope to defeat the North.

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On the morning of April 29, 1975, as North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces moved through the outskirts of Saigon, orders were given to evacuate Americans and South Vietnamese who had supported the United States. Unable to use the airport, **helicopters ferried Americans and Vietnamese refugees from the American embassy** to ships off the coast. North Vietnamese forces entered Saigon the next day, and **the South surrendered**.



Operation Frequent Wind: A military airlift to transport escaping American and Vietnamese supporters out of Saigon as the North Vietnamese closed in in 1975.



Surrender of South Vietnam: April 30, 1975. North Vietnamese troops entered Saigon and the South Vietnamese government fell. Vietnam was united under communist leadership.

Primary Source: Photograph

Hubert van Es's iconic photograph of refugees boarding a UH-1 on a rooftop of one of the American embassy's building during Operation Frequent Wind. This photograph is emblematic of the final failure of America's long efforts in Vietnam.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR

The war had both immediate and long-term effects. With the exit of the Americans from Southeast Asia, neighboring Cambodia and Laos also fell to communist regimes. Domino Theory proved to be true in Southeast Asia. Supporters of the South Vietnamese government, and those afraid of what the new communist governments might do tried to escape. Over 3 million refugees left Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Most Asian countries were unwilling to accept these refugees, many of whom fled on whatever small fishing vessels they could find and were known as **boat people**. Between 1975 and 1998, an estimated 1.2 million refugees from Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries resettled in the United States. Hundreds of thousands more found refuge in Canada, Australia, France and China. Of all the countries of Indochina, Laos experienced the largest refugee flight in proportional terms, as 10% of its total population crossed the border into Thailand.



Vietnamese Boat People: South Vietnamese refugees who escaped the advancing North Vietnamese Army by boarding small boats and travelling to neighboring countries. They were one part of a larger refugee crisis that followed the fall of South Vietnam.

1 WHY DIDN'T AMERICA WIN ITS WAR IN VIETNAM?



Primary Source: Photograph

One example of the Vietnamese boat people – refugees escaping the advancing North Vietnamese Army.

In the longer term, the war left a scar on a generation of Americans. The Baby Boomers, whose parents had fought and won World War II, were left wondering what they had done wrong. Their friends had gone to die in a distant land, but had not come home victorious. What had all the bloodshed and heartache been for? And so it was that the generation that helped bring about an end of Jim Crow and had done so much good for social justice in America, collectively decided to try to forget the war. For decades, the veterans and protestors alike never mentioned their experiences. When Saigon fell in 1975, Kissinger said that “what we need for this country... is to heal the wounds and put Vietnam behind us...” But despite their efforts to

1 WHY DIDN'T AMERICA WIN ITS WAR IN VIETNAM?



forget, the wounds of Vietnam never healed. Even today, the generation of Americans who suffered through the war, both in Vietnam and in the streets and campuses back home, struggle to make sense of the catastrophe that shaped their young lives.

The war led to constitutional change. Up until the war, the Constitution granted voting rights to citizens age 21 and older. Many Americans felt that if 18-year-olds were old enough to be drafted and die for their country, they ought to be able to vote as well. On July 1, 1971, the **26th Amendment** was ratified by the requisite two-thirds of the states, just three months and eight days after it was proposed in Congress. It was the fastest any amendment was ever ratified.

The loss in Vietnam left its mark on the armed forces. Having failed to achieve the mission the military is designed to do – win on the battlefield – Americans were hesitant to send troops back into combat. This was **Vietnam Syndrome**, and it lasted into the 1980s, when President Reagan finally committed the military into action again, albeit in much smaller operations. When President George H. W. Bush decided to send the military into Iraq as part of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, much of the criticism came from those who feared “another Vietnam.” Now, most of the generals who had been young soldiers in Vietnam are retiring and a new generation of commanders, who never experienced that defeat, are leading. Of course, America’s recent, long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have brought back painful memories of the quagmire of Vietnam for the generation who lived through it.



26th Amendment: Constitutional amendment ratified in 1971 granting the right to vote to anyone age 18 and older. Previously citizens had to be 21 to vote.



Vietnam Syndrome: A fear on the part of American leaders to send the military into action due to the loss in Vietnam.



Primary Source: Photograph

The Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC. Popularly known as the Vietnam Wall, the memorial bears the names of all Americans killed in the war.

In all, America’s war in Vietnam cost the lives of more than 1.5 million Vietnamese combatants and civilians, and over 58,000 American troops.

1 WHY DIDN'T AMERICA WIN ITS WAR IN VIETNAM?



Those soldiers are honored in a poignant memorial in the nation's capital. The **Vietnam Wall** cuts a long V through the earth near the Lincoln Memorial. Along its face are carved the names of all those who were lost. Visitors, many of them family and friends of the fallen, come to find their love ones' names and to leave mementos. A young architect, **Maya Lin**, the daughter of Chinese immigrants, won a competition to design the memorial and the black granite of her vision reflects back the faces of those who visit. It is perhaps the most fitting memorial possible – the emotions of the living who struggle with the pain of the past are bound together with the names of the people they loved and lost in a war that America still has not come to fully understand.

CONCLUSION

Since the Second World War, the United States had been the most economically vibrant, militarily powerful nation on Earth. Why is it then, that the American military could not subdue the insurgency of a relatively tiny Third World nation? Vietnam was no proxy war. American troops were fully committed, leading the fight on the ground and they were not fighting the Soviets or the Chinese Red Army. The enemy was often disorganized and poorly equipped. Americans controlled the sea and the air almost without opposition.

Could it have been a lack of knowledge of the fighting spirit of the Vietnamese people, or a passion for communist ideology that was fiercer than America's commitment to freedom and democracy?

Was it a problem of two wars? Maybe America's loss was because the Vietnamese were fighting a struggle for independence while Americans believed they were facing down communists in a battle of the Cold War and the two goals simply never could have ended in an American victory.

Maybe it was a matter of leadership. Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon failed to understand the true nature of the conflict. General Westmoreland tried to fight a new foe using old tactics. The United States supported the wrong man in Diem. On the other side, Ho Chi Minh was beloved and the North Vietnamese commanders wisely used their limited resources to inflict the greatest harm at the lowest cost.

Or maybe Americans failed because they simply gave up. If the Baby Boomer Generation had not been so spoiled or afraid of sacrifice, could they have prevailed the way their parents had?

What do you think? Why did America lose its war in Vietnam?



Vietnam War Memorial: Also known as the Vietnam Wall, the memorial in Washington, DC bears the names of all Americans who died in the war. It takes the shape of a long granite V sunken into the earth. Visitors see themselves reflected in the polished stone.



Maya Lin: Young Chinese-American architect who won a competition to design the Vietnam War Memorial.

1 WHY DIDN'T AMERICA WIN ITS WAR IN VIETNAM?



SUMMARY

The United States initially became involved in Vietnam because of Cold War fears about the spread of communism. Most American leaders saw Vietnam as another Korea. That is, the United States would have to fight to prevent Vietnam from falling to communists or else neighboring countries such as Cambodia, Laos, or even the Philippines might fall to communists as well. This was the Domino Theory.

Although American advisors had been in South Vietnam for years, Americans did not become heavily involved in fighting until 1964 when Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and gave President Johnson authority to carryout combat operations.

Vietnam turned out to be more complicated than Korea. The Vietnamese were fighting a war for independence and American soldiers were often viewed as foreigners to be expelled rather than as protectors. Furthermore, Ngo Dinh Diem, the leader of non-communist South Vietnam was an unpopular leader for a variety of reasons, whereas Ho Chi Minh, the communist leader of North Vietnam was beloved.

To make matters worse, the Americans faced an enemy that used guerilla warfare. Unable to adapt, the Americans ended up doing significant harm to the civilian population, further alienating potential allies.

As the war dragged on through the later 1960s and into the 1970s, Americans began to doubt the rationale for fighting the war and a vocal anti-war movement emerged, especially on college campuses. Violent clashes between protesters and police focused attention on the divide between the people and political and military leaders.

Eventually, President Nixon adopted a strategy of Vietnamization in which American forces left and responsibility was transferred to the South Vietnamese army. In really, this was a dignified way to surrender. In 1975, Vietnam fell to the communists as the last Americans left.

Americans who lived through that time continue to struggle with difficult memories of conflicts on the battlefield and at home.



KEY CONCEPTS

Baby Killer: Derogatory name that anti-war protesters called returning soldiers. It referred to the killing of civilians.

Rich man's war and a poor man's fight: Phrase that exemplified the idea that wealthy politicians were making choices about the conduct of the war but that poor Americans, especially African Americans, had to do the fighting.

Vietnam Syndrome: A fear on the part of American leaders to send the military into action due to the loss in Vietnam.



LOCATIONS

Free-Fire Zones: Areas of the Vietnamese countryside. All civilians in these areas were supposed to move to camps and anyone left in the zones was considered an enemy. In reality, many civilians refused to leave and were killed. The policy made the government of South Vietnam and the Americans unpopular with the civilian population.

Ho Chi Minh Trail: Route taken by North Vietnamese to supply the Viet Cong in the South. The route went through Laos and Cambodia.

Vietnam War Memorial: Also known as the Vietnam Wall, the memorial in Washington, DC bears the names of all Americans who died in the war. It takes the shape of a long granite V sunken into the earth. Visitors see themselves reflected in the polished stone.



TREATIES, LAWS & POLICIES

Geneva Accords: International agreement after World War II to unify Vietnam and hold nation-wide elections. Diem in the South ignored the accords knowing he would lose an election.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: Resolution passed by Congress in 1964 that granted President Johnson wide authority to use armed force in Vietnam. It was used by presidents Johnson and Nixon to go to war without an actual declaration of war.

Vietnamization: Nixon's policy of withdrawing American troops and turning responsibility for fighting over to the South Vietnamese Army. It was a way of ending the war without surrendering.

26th Amendment: Constitutional amendment ratified in 1971 granting the right to vote to anyone age 18 and older. Previously citizens had to be 21 to vote.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Ho Chi Minh: Communist leader of North Vietnam who fought the French, Japanese and then Americans in an effort to realize independence for Vietnam.

Viet Minh: The North Vietnamese army.

Ngo Dinh Diem: Dictator of South Vietnam. He was widely hated due to his corrupt government, policies that favored the Catholic minority and was eventually killed in a coup that was tacitly supported by the US.

Thich Quang Duc: Buddhist monk who self-immolated on a street corner in Saigon to protest Diem's government. A photograph of the even captured the world's attention.

Robert McNamara: Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam War. He is often blamed for the failure.

Viet Cong: Guerilla fighters in South Vietnam who supported the North.

William Westmoreland: American commander in Vietnam.

Walter Cronkite: Respected television news anchor who went to Vietnam during the Tet Offensive and reported that he believed that war would end in a stalemate. His opinion influenced many Americans.

Students for a Democratic Society: Group of college students who organized protests, most notably large rallies in Washington, DC.

Muhammad Ali: Heavyweight boxing champion who went to jail instead of going to Vietnam when he was drafted. He lost his title but served as an example for other draft dodgers.

Vietnamese Boat People: South Vietnamese refugees who escaped the advancing North Vietnamese Army by boarding small boats and travelling to neighboring countries. They were one part of a larger refugee crisis that followed the fall of South Vietnam.

Maya Lin: Young Chinese-American architect who won a competition to design the Vietnam War Memorial.



EVENTS

Assassination of Diem: South Vietnamese army officers arranged the assassinate Diem and his brother and take over the government. The plot was carried out in November 1963. The CIA knew about the plot and did nothing to stop it.

Operation Rolling Thunder: Major bombing campaign initiated in 1965 in an effort to force the North Vietnamese to surrender. It inflicted heavy damage but failed in its primary objective.

Tet Offensive: Major operation undertaken by the North Vietnamese to attack cities in the South during the new year's celebration (Tet) of 1968. It ultimately failed but did demonstrate that the North was not about to surrender.

1968 Democratic Primary: In 1968 senator Eugene McCarthy challenged sitting president Lyndon Johnson. McCarthy ran as an anti-war candidate. When McCarthy did surprisingly well in the first primary election Johnson withdrew from the race. Robert Kennedy joined as another anti-war candidate and vice president Hubert Humphry joined as a pro-war candidate. Humphry eventually won the nomination but lost the general election to Richard Nixon.

My Lai Massacre: Attack by American troops on the village of My Lai in 1968. The American commander ordered his soldiers to kill everyone in the village, including women and children. The massacre caused many in the around the world to doubt the good intentions of the United States.

Invasion of Cambodia: In 1970 President Nixon decided to send American ground forces into Cambodia to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail. His move intensified the anti-war movement.

Columbia University Protest: Protest in which students occupied the campus of Columbia University in 1968. They were violently ousted by the NYC police.

Kent State Shooting: Clash between students and the Ohio National Guard at Kent State University in 1970. The guardsmen opened fire on unarmed students resulting in nine deaths. The massacre shocked the nation as it seemed the war was coming home.

Jackson State Shooting: A less publicized shooting similar to the Kent State Massacre that occurred a few weeks later at the predominantly African American Jackson State College. Twelve students were wounded and two were killed by police.

Operation Frequent Wind: A military airlift to transport escaping American and Vietnamese supporters out of Saigon as the North Vietnamese closed in in 1975.

Surrender of South Vietnam: April 30, 1975. North Vietnamese troops entered Saigon and the South Vietnamese government fell. Vietnam was united under communist leadership.



TECHNOLOGY

Agent Orange: Chemical sprayed from aircraft that caused the leaves to fall off of trees, thus making it easier to find enemy fighters. It is widely believed to have caused serious health problems for the soldiers who were exposed.

2

S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N S H O U L D W E T R U S T O U R N A T I O N ' S L E A D E R S ?



INTRODUCTION

It is a running joke that politicians lie. However, in general we expect those in positions of authority to inform the public truthfully about what is happening. In the case of the people we elect, we expect that they will be honest, and for most of the nation's history, Americans usually believed what their presidents told them. That is not the case today. Now, our first instinct is to question and we and the media are on the lookout for lies. Some newspapers even keep a running log of each time a president says something that is even partially untrue. The Washington Post's famous fact checkers award Pinocchios to politicians the way reviewers give stars to movies.

How did this change happen? How is it that we came to be so distrusting? Furthermore, does our mistrust extend to other leaders, such as CEOs, generals, superintendents, principals, or even teachers?

This shift happened during the 1970s. A simple chart showing the percentage of people who trust the president over time falls off dramatically during this decade, and an exploration of the events of those years can give us a good idea as to why this shift happened. In the 1970s, leakers revealed that a series of presidents had been lying about the Vietnam War, a president resigned in disgrace after participating in a criminal conspiracy, and all three presidents during the decade failed to turn around a struggling economy.

That brings us to our question. The 1970s certainly proved that sometimes our presidents are untrustworthy, or at least unable to achieve the goals we wish they could. But does that mean we can't trust our leaders in general, or just that we should expect them to earn our trust?

What do you think? Can we trust our nation's leaders?

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THE PENTAGON PAPERS

In 1967, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara created a special study group charged with writing an “encyclopedic history of the Vietnam War.” McNamara claimed that he wanted to leave a written record for historians, to prevent policy errors in future administrations, but he neglected to inform either President Lyndon Johnson or Secretary of State Dean Rusk about the study.

Instead of using existing Defense Department historians, McNamara assigned close aides. Thirty-six analysts worked on the study. They largely used existing files in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in order to keep the study secret, and conducted no interviews or consultations with the armed forces, with the White House, or with other federal agencies.

McNamara left the Defense Department in February 1968, and his successor Clark Clifford received the finished study on January 15, 1969, five days before President Richard Nixon's inauguration, although Clifford claimed he never read it. The study comprised 3,000 pages of historical analysis and 4,000 pages of original government documents in 47 volumes, and was classified as “Top Secret – Sensitive.”

But the report did not remain secret. One of the analysts who had access to the report, **Daniel Ellsberg** opposed the war, and he and his friend **Anthony Russo** photocopied the study in October 1969 intending to disclose it. Ellsberg said the documents “demonstrated unconstitutional behavior by a succession of presidents, the violation of their oath and the violation of the oath of every one of their subordinates.”

In February 1971, Ellsberg discussed the study with New York Times reporter Neil Sheehan, and gave 43 of the volumes to him in March. Before publication, The New York Times sought legal advice. The paper's regular lawyers, Lord Day & Lord, advised against publication, but in-house counsel James Goodale prevailed with his argument that the press had a First Amendment right to publish information significant to the people's understanding of their government's policy.

The New York Times began publishing excerpts on June 13, 1971, in a series titled “Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces Three Decades of Growing US Involvement.” The study was dubbed **The Pentagon Papers** during the resulting media publicity.

The Pentagon Papers revealed that four presidents – Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson – had misled the public regarding their intentions in Vietnam. For example, the Eisenhower Administration actively worked against the Geneva Accords. The Kennedy administration knew of plans to overthrow South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem before his death in the November 1963 coup. President Johnson had decided to expand the war while promising, “we seek no wider war” during his 1964 presidential



Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo:

Analysts who helped write the Pentagon Papers report and released it to the press.



The Pentagon Papers: Nickname for a secret report about the Vietnam War. It was released to the public

and showed that the government and military had deceived the public about the progress of the war.

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campaign, including plans to bomb North Vietnam well before the 1964 Election. President Johnson had been outspoken against doing so during the election and claimed that his opponent Barry Goldwater was the one that wanted to bomb North Vietnam, but in the end, Johnson authorized the bombing of Cambodia and Laos, and coastal raids on North Vietnam, none of which had been reported by the American media.

President Nixon at first planned to do nothing about publication of the study since it embarrassed the Johnson and Kennedy administrations rather than his own, but Henry Kissinger convinced the president that not opposing the publication might encourage future leaks that would hurt Nixon. Government lawyers argued that Ellsberg and Russo were guilty of violating the Espionage Act of 1917 because they had no authority to publish classified documents. After failing to persuade the New York Times to voluntarily cease publication, Attorney General John Mitchell and Nixon obtained a federal court injunction forcing the Times to cease publication after three articles. The newspaper appealed the injunction, and the case **New York Times Co. v. United States** quickly rose through the legal system to the Supreme Court.

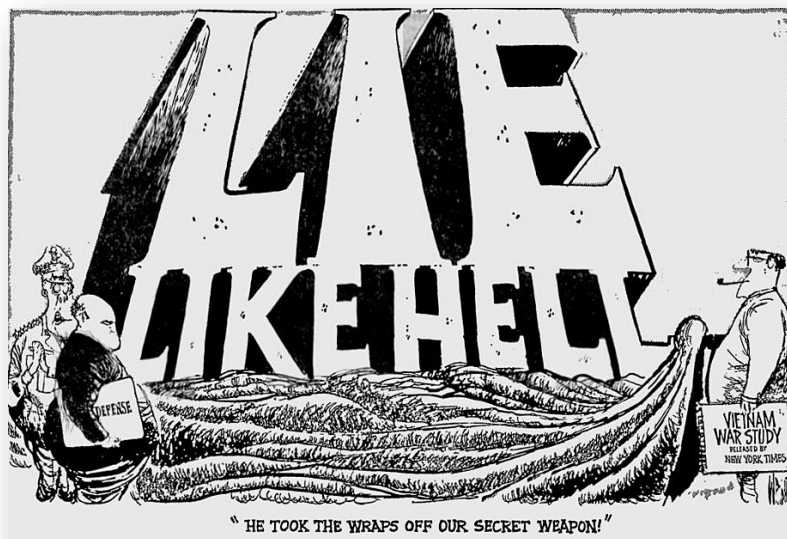


New York Times Co. v. United States:

1971 Supreme Court case that granted the press wide latitude in publishing classified documents with the purpose of informing the public about government activities.

Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

A 1971 cartoon by Don Wright panning the military and government for their deception during the Vietnam War.



On June 18, 1971, The Washington Post, which had also received portions of the documents from Ellsberg, began publishing its own series of articles based upon the Pentagon Papers. That same day, Assistant U.S. Attorney General William Rehnquist asked the Post to cease publication. After the newspaper's owners refused, Rehnquist sought an injunction in district court. Judge Murray Gurfein declined to issue such an injunction, writing that, "the security of the Nation is not at the ramparts alone. Security also lies in the value of our free institutions. A cantankerous press, an obstinate

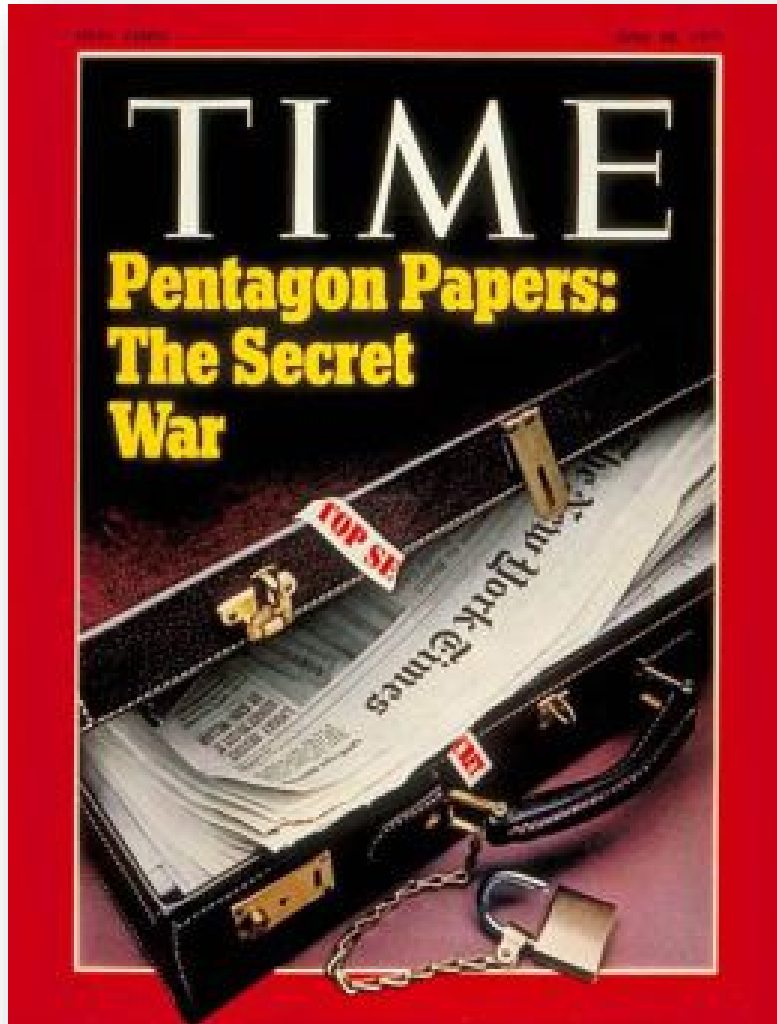
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press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know.” The government appealed that decision, and on June 26, the Supreme Court agreed to hear it jointly with the New York Times case. In the meantime, fifteen other newspapers received copies of the study and began publishing it.

Primary Source: Magazine Cover

Many news sources published stories about the Pentagon Papers, including Time Magazine.



On June 30, 1971, the Supreme Court decided, 6-3, that the government failed to meet the heavy burden of proof required to obtain a prior restraint injunction. The nine justices wrote nine opinions disagreeing on significant, substantive matters, but the essential takeaways from the case were clear.

In the words of Justice Black, “Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the

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government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell."

The outcome was a major victory for newspapers, and the media in general. Even today, the *New York Times Co. v. United States* case protects the right of the press to report what government officials are doing, even if those officials don't want the public to know.

Ellsberg himself surrendered to authorities and admitted that he had given the papers to the press stating, "I felt that as an American citizen, as a responsible citizen, I could no longer cooperate in concealing this information from the American public. I did this clearly at my own jeopardy and I am prepared to answer to all the consequences of this decision." He was indicted by a grand jury in Los Angeles on charges of stealing and holding secret documents. But the Nixon Administration botched the case. In their paranoia about preventing future leaks, Nixon's henchmen, called the **Plumbers**, had decided to humiliate Ellsberg and had illegally broken into the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist in a failed attempt to steal embarrassing files.

Federal District Judge William Matthew Byrne, Jr. declared a mistrial and dismissed all charges against Ellsberg and his partner Russo on May 11, 1973, after it was revealed that agents acting on the orders of the Nixon administration had approached the trial judge and offered to make him director of the FBI. Judge Byrne ruled, "the totality of the circumstances of this case... offend a sense of justice." Ellsberg and Russo were freed and the public began to think that Nixon was no more honest than his predecessors.

On May 4, 2011, the National Archives and Records Administration announced that the complete Pentagon Papers would be declassified and released. Today, anyone can download and read the Papers from the Archive's website.

NIXON'S REELECTION

After the chaotic convention in Chicago in 1968, the Democratic Party redesigned its procedure for selecting its presidential candidate. The new rules, set by a commission led by George McGovern, a senator from South Dakota, awarded delegates based on a candidate's performance in state primaries. As a result, a candidate who won no primaries could not receive the party's nomination as Hubert Humphrey had controversially done in Chicago.

The new system gave a greater voice to people who voted in the primaries and reduced the influence of party leaders and power brokers who might manipulate the nominating process at the convention itself. It also led to a more inclusive political environment. In 1972, Shirley Chisholm, a member of the House of Representatives from New York became the first African-American and first woman to win official support for a major party nomination when she garnered 156 votes on the first ballot.



The Plumbers: A group of criminals that worked for the Nixon reelection team. They tried to prevent leaks of secret information that might hurt the president, but their ineptitude ultimately led to Nixon's resignation.



Read the Pentagon Papers

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Eventually, the nomination went to **George McGovern**, a strong opponent of the Vietnam War. However, many Democrats refused to support his campaign. Working and middle class voters turned against him after allegations that he supported abortion and the decriminalization of drug use. McGovern's initial support of vice presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton in the face of revelations that Eagleton had undergone electroshock treatment for depression, followed by his withdrawal of that support and acceptance of Eagleton's resignation, also made McGovern look indecisive and disorganized.


Nixon and the Republicans held a strong lead in public opinion from the start. Nixon's foreign policy successes, including his visit to China and a healthy economy bolstered his reputation. To increase their advantage, Republicans attempted to paint McGovern as a radical leftist who favored amnesty for draft dodgers. In the Electoral College, McGovern carried only liberal Massachusetts and Washington, DC. Nixon won a decisive victory of 520 electoral votes to McGovern's 17. One Democrat described his role in McGovern's campaign as "recreation director on the Titanic." It was one of the most lopsided victories in American presidential history. Unfortunately for Nixon, the seeds of his downfall were already sown.


THE WATERGATE BREAK-IN


During the presidential campaign, the **Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP)**, the fundraising arm of the Nixon Campaign, decided to play "dirty tricks" on Nixon's opponents. Before the New Hampshire democratic primary, they released a forged letter supposedly written by democratic-hopeful Edmund Muskie in which he insulted French Canadians, one of the state's largest ethnic groups. Men were assigned to spy on both McGovern and democratic hopeful Senator Edward Kennedy. Men pretending to work for the campaigns of Nixon's Democratic opponents contacted vendors in various states to rent or purchase materials for rallies. The rallies were never held, of course, and democratic politicians were accused of failing to pay their bills. CREEP's most notorious operation, however, was its break-in at the offices of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in the **Watergate** office complex in Washington, DC.


According to a plan originally proposed by CREEP's general counsel and White House aid **G. Gordon Liddy**, five men were to break in to the offices of the DNC, photograph documents, and wiretap telephones. The break-in went badly. The burglars were discovered by a security guard, arrested by the police, tried and either pled guilty or were convicted.

Criminal wrongdoing in an election is never good for a politician, but even from the beginning, James Neal, the prosecutor on the case, didn't believe Nixon had any knowledge of what the conspirators were planning. The problem for Nixon, was his paranoia. Nixon always believed that his political opponents were going to get the better of him, and that his supporters might

 **George McGovern:** Democratic candidate for president in 1972. He was anti-war, but lost in one of the most lopsided elections in American history.

 **Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP):** Group that worked to fundraise for Nixon's reelection campaign and used underhanded and illegal methods to hurt his opponents.

 **Watergate Complex:** Office complex and hotel in Washington, DC. It was the location of the Democratic National Committee's offices during the 1972 presidential election.

 **G. Gordon Liddy:** Lawyer for CREEP and aid in the Nixon White House. He planned the Watergate break in.

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turn against him. He had even ordered the creation of an “enemies list” of people who he hated and were not allowed to visit the White House or speak with him.

The Watergate break-in was exactly the sort of problem Nixon was terrified of, and although Nixon himself was innocent, his efforts to hide the entire operation brought down his presidency.

In the weeks following the Watergate break-in, **Bob Woodward** and **Carl Bernstein**, young reporters for The Washington Post, received information from several anonymous sources, including one known to them only as “**Deep Throat**,” that led them to realize that people in the White House were trying to cover up the truth about the break-in. While most of the press focused on other events, Woodward and Bernstein continued to dig and publish their findings.



Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein:

Young reporters working for the Washington Post who uncovered much of the Watergate cover-up.



Deep Throat: Pseudonym for Mark

Felt, Associate FBI Director who met secretly with Woodward and Bernstein and gave them information about the Watergate cover-up.

Primary Source: Photograph

Reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward in the newsroom of the Washington Post.

What Woodward and Bernstein found led the Senate to appoint a special committee to investigate the Watergate affair. Throughout the spring and the long, hot summer of 1973, Americans sat glued to their television screens, as the major networks took turns broadcasting the **Senate hearings**. One by one, disgraced former members of the administration confessed, or denied, their role in the Watergate scandal. The top lawyer at the White House, **John Dean** testified that Nixon was involved in the conspiracy, allegations the president denied. In March 1974, the President’s Chief of Staff, **H.R. Haldeman**, top aid **John Ehrlichman**, and **John Mitchell**, the head of Nixon’s reelection campaign were indicted and charged with conspiracy.



Watergate Hearings: Hearings in 1973 in which the Senate tried to uncover the extent of the Watergate cover-up.



John Dean, H.R. Haldeman, John

Ehrlichman and John Mitchell: Aids to Nixon who lost their jobs and went to jail because of their involvement in the Watergate cover-up.

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Nixon fired Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Dean. In an effort to show that he was innocent, he authorized the appointment of a special prosecutor, **Archibald Cox** to investigate the entire affair.


THE END OF NIXON'S PRESIDENCY

Without evidence clearly implicating the president, the investigation might have ended if not for the testimony of **Alexander Butterfield**, a low-ranking member of the administration. Butterfield was asked if there were any recordings of Nixon himself. In fact, Butterfield had helped Nixon install a recording system that would turn on whenever anyone in the Oval Office spoke, or any time the president was on the phone. Nixon wanted the recordings for his personal use and kept them a secret because he thought his aids would not be candid if they knew they were being taped.

Cox and the Senate subpoenaed the tapes. Nixon, however, refused to hand them over, citing executive privilege, the right of the president to refuse certain subpoenas. When he offered to supply summaries of the conversations, Cox refused. On October 20, 1973, in an event that became known as the **Saturday Night Massacre**, Nixon ordered Attorney General Richardson to fire Cox. Richardson refused and resigned, as did Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus when confronted with the same order. Control of the Justice Department then fell to Solicitor General Robert Bork, who complied with Nixon's order.

 **Archibald Cox:** Special prosecutor appointed by Nixon to investigate the Watergate affair.

 **Alexander Butterfield:** Minor White House official who revealed that there were secret recordings of Nixon's conversations and telephone calls.

 **Saturday Night Massacre:** Nickname for the day Nixon forced the resignation of his Attorney General and the firing of Archibald Cox. The event led many Americans to believe that Nixon was trying to hide his own wrongdoing.

Primary Source: Newspaper

The front page of the New York Times the day after the Saturday Night Massacre.

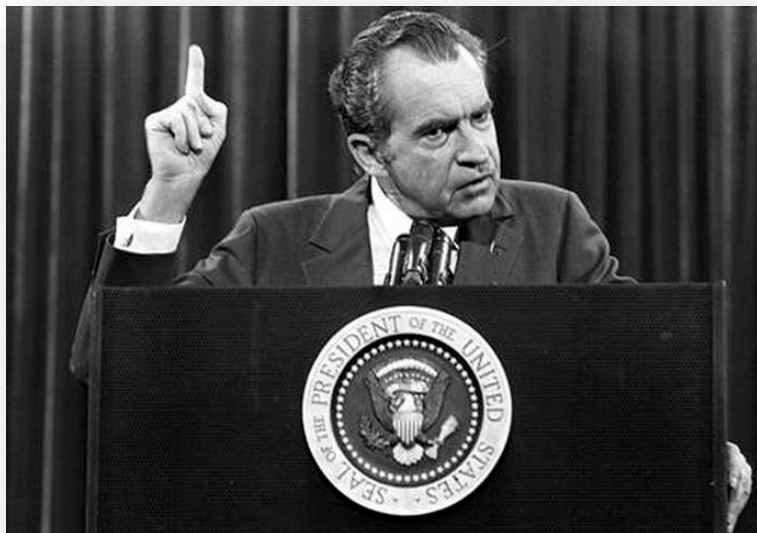


The public was enraged by Nixon's actions. It seemed as though the president had placed himself above the law. Telegrams flooded the White House. Nixon went on the defensive. At a press conference in November,

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he argued that he was innocent and that he wanted a full investigation, stating, "...in all of my years of public life, I have never obstructed justice. And I think, too, that I can say, that in my years of public life, that I welcome this kind of examination because people have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, **I'm not a crook.**" It was a claim that would tarnish his legacy forever.



"I'm not a crook": Famous claim by Nixon to the press during the Watergate Scandal.

Primary Source: Photograph

Nixon declares that his is "not a crook."



Watch Nixon's
Press Conference

When Nixon finally agreed to release transcripts of the tapes in April of 1974, he released only edited versions. In July, The Supreme Court ruled in **United States v. Nixon** that the president could not claim executive privilege and ordered him to hand over the unedited versions.

The tapes revealed several crucial conversations that took place between the President and his counsel, John Dean, and focused on the cover-up, in which Dean described it as a "cancer on the presidency." The burglary team was being paid hush money for their silence and Dean noted that Nixon's top aides were involved. In the end, Nixon himself gave orders on tape to pay off witnesses.

It was now clear that Nixon was personally involved in the cover-up. Perhaps worst of all, he had tried to **obstruct justice** by firing the special prosecutor and ordering his aids to pay hush money to people who knew what had happened.

The release of the tapes destroyed Nixon politically. The House of Representatives was ready to vote to **impeach** the president. On the night of August 7, 1974, the republican leaders of the House and Senate met with Nixon in the Oval Office to warn him that his support in Congress had all but disappeared. They told him that he would face certain impeachment when



United States v. Nixon: 1974 Supreme Court case in which the court decided that the president could not claim executive privilege to hide evidence such as the recordings of his conversations.



Obstruction of Justice: Charge that an official uses his or her authority to prevent investigation of a crime.



Impeachment: The Constitutional process of removing an elected official or judge. In the case of a president, the House of Representatives serves as the prosecutors and the Senate as the jury.

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the House voted and that there were enough votes in the Senate to convict him.

Realizing that he had no chance of staying in office and that public opinion was not in his favor, **Nixon decided to resign**. On August 9, he left the White House in disgrace.



Nixon's Resignation: Nixon resigned the presidency on August 9, 1974. He was replaced by Vice President Gerald Ford.

Primary Source: Photograph

Richard Nixon flashes his trademark V for victory one last time before boarding Marine One and leaving the White House after his resignation.



Watch Nixon's Resignation Speech

THE EFFECTS OF THE WATERGATE SCANDAL

It was indeed an unprecedented time. The new president, **Gerald Ford** was the first vice president chosen under the terms of the new **25th Amendment**, which provides for the appointment of a vice president in the event the incumbent dies or resigns. Nixon had appointed Ford, a longtime representative from Michigan known for his honesty following the resignation of embattled vice president Spiro T. Agnew over a charge of failing to report income, a lenient charge since this income stemmed from bribes he had received as the governor of Maryland. Ford was also the first vice president to take office after a sitting president's resignation, and the only chief executive never elected either president or vice president.

Ford understood that his most pressing task was to help the country move beyond the Watergate scandal. His declaration that "Our long national nightmare is over... our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men" was met with almost universal applause. But the nation's goodwill evaporated when **he granted Richard Nixon a full pardon**. Ford thus prevented Nixon's indictment for any crimes he may have committed in office and ended criminal investigations into his actions. The public reacted with suspicion and outrage. Many were convinced that the extent of Nixon's wrongdoings would never been known and he would never be called to account. When Ford chose to run for the presidency in 1976, the pardon returned to haunt him.



Gerald Ford: Vice President who became president after Nixon Resigned in 1974. He lost the 1976 presidential election to Jimmy Carter.



25th Amendment: Constitutional amendment providing a method for replacing the Vice President.



Pardon of Nixon: President Gerald Ford pardoned Nixon for any and all crimes associated with the Watergate Scandal. This ended the possibility of an investigation and trial of the former president.

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Nixon's resignation and Ford's pardon did not make the **Watergate scandal** vanish. Instead, it fed a growing suspicion of government felt by many. The events of Vietnam and the release of the Pentagon Papers had already showed that the government could not be trusted to protect the interests of the people or tell them the truth. For many, Watergate confirmed these beliefs. Since Nixon's resignation, Americans have shown a much greater reluctance to trust their presidents.

Today, the suffix gate attached to a word has come to mean a scandal, in politics or otherwise. News sources have reported on Apple's Bendgate and Antennagate, the NFL's Deflategate and Seatgate, and myriad wrongdoings of politicians dubbed Bridgegate, Travelgate, Emailgate, Nannygate and Strippergate, to name just a few.

THE IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

One of the most tragic events of the late 1970s was a result of American Cold War activities in the Middle East, and set the stage for a conflict that is ongoing. It also revealed the limitations of American military power. The military's reputation had already been tarnished by the debacle in Vietnam, and Americans took out their frustration on their president. It all happened in Iran.

For years, the United States had supported the king, or shah or Iran as an anti-communist. The shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi had come to power during World War II and had worked hard in his thirty years in power to modernize his country. He promoted industrialization and rights for women. Unfortunately for the Shah and his supporters, a powerful conservative backlash was brewing among the Islamic clergy who believed the Shah's policies ran counter to the teachings of the Quran. In 1979, led by cleric **Ruhollah Khomeini**, mostly student revolutionaries **overthrew his government** and seized the American embassy in Tehran. They took 52 Americans at the embassy hostage.

At the time, terrorism was on the rise around the globe. The world had watched in horror as Arab gunmen cut down eleven Israeli weightlifters at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was fighting an ongoing struggle to gain independence for Northern Ireland and had already killed thousands of English and Irish citizens in car bombings and similar acts of terror. Americans began to see the world slipping into anarchy and felt powerless to fix the problem. The Iranian Revolution and **hostage crisis** was just another example of the chaos they could not control.



Watergate Scandal: The name for all of the crimes, investigations and ultimate resignation of President Nixon associated with the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up.



Watch Ford
Pardon Nixon



Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini: Religious leader who led the Iranian Revolution and became the first leader of the theocracy.



Iranian Revolution: Overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and establishment of the Islamic Republic.



Iranian Hostage Crisis: The 444-day holding of 52 Americans by the new revolutionary government of Iran.

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Primary Source: Photograph

Iranian students carrying posters with a photograph of Khomeini climb the gate of the American embassy.

The Shah had escaped the Revolution and was in the United States receiving treatment for cancer. The revolutionaries demanded that he be returned to Iran in exchange for the hostages. President Carter refused, stating that the United States would “not yield to blackmail.” For 444 days, Americans watched helplessly as their fellow citizens were held in confinement. A rescue effort, entitled **Operation Eagle Claw**, ordered by President Carter failed in April 1980 when a helicopter and support plane crashed in the Iranian desert. Eight American service members and one Iranian died. It was an embarrassment for the American Special Forces and the President, who took responsibility for the failure.

Because of the hostage crisis, the failure of the rescue mission, and the struggling economy, Carter lost his bid for reelection to Ronald Reagan. It was one of the most lopsided elections in American history. While usually viewed by historians as a failed president, Carter worked tirelessly in his long post-presidency to promote human rights around the world, and is considered a great humanitarian.

In a final insult to Carter, the new Iranian government, a **theocracy** led by the nation’s clerics, released the hostages minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn into office.



Operation Eagle Claw: Failed attempt to rescue the American hostages from Iran. The mission embarrassed the military and President Carter.



Watch Carter’s speech after the failed Eagle Claw Operation



Theocracy: A system of government based on a particular religion in which religious leaders hold power in government.

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Primary Source: Photograph

A photograph of American Barry Rosen released by the Iranians during the hostage crisis. Images such as these infuriated the American public who blamed President Carter for his inability to find a way to bring the hostages home.

THREE MILE ISLAND

The nation's trust of its leaders and institutions took another hit in 1979 at the **Three Mile Island** nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania.

On March 28, a valve in the cooling system got stuck in the open position which allowed large amounts of nuclear reactor coolant to escape. In normal operation, the coolant would maintain safe temperatures inside the reactor. Without it, the reactor would overheat, melt, and spew out radioactive material. The mechanical failure was compounded by the failure of plant operators to recognize the situation due to inadequate training and design flaws that made control room indicators ambiguous. As a result, an operator mistakenly believed that there was too much coolant water present in the reactor and manually overrode the automatic emergency system.

By early the next morning it had become clear that things were going wrong. The temperatures inside the reactor were too high. The station manager announced a general emergency. The electric company that owned the plant, Metropolitan Edison (Met Ed) notified the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, which in turn contacted state and local agencies, Governor Richard L. Thornburgh. The uncertainty of operators at the plant was reflected in fragmented, ambiguous, or contradictory statements made by Met Ed to government agencies and to the press, particularly about the possibility and severity of an off-site release of radiation.



Three Mile Island: Nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, and site of a nuclear meltdown in 1979.

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Scranton held a press conference in which he was reassuring, yet confusing about this possibility, stating that though there had been a “small release of radiation...no increase in normal radiation levels” had been detected. These were contradicted by another official, and by statements from Met Ed, who both claimed that no radioactivity had been released. In fact, readings from instruments at the plant and off-site detectors had detected radioactivity releases, albeit at levels that were unlikely to threaten public health as long as they were temporary, and providing that containment of the then highly contaminated reactor was maintained.

Angry that Met Ed had not informed them before conducting a steam venting from the plant, and convinced that the company was downplaying the severity of the accident, state officials turned to the Nuclear Regulatory Agency (NRC), the federal agency charged with oversight of commercial nuclear power plants.

After receiving word of the accident from Met Ed, the NRC activated its emergency response headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland and sent staff members to Three Mile Island. NRC chairman Joseph Hendrie initially viewed the accident as a cause for concern but not alarm. However, the NRC faced the same problems in obtaining accurate information as the state, and was further hampered by being organizationally ill-prepared to deal with emergencies, as it lacked a clear command structure and the authority to tell the utility what to do, or to order an evacuation of the local area.

In the end, the United States was lucky. The reactor at Three Mile Island overheated and melted, but not so much that it breached the protective shell that surrounded it. However, the Three Mile Island accident showed once again that leaders, in business and technology, as well as in politics were not immune from mistakes and were not to be trusted to provide accurate, truthful information when the public’s safety was on the line.

The Three Mile Island accident also marked a significant turning point in the global development of nuclear power. The accident did not initiate the demise of the nuclear power industry, but it did halt its historic growth. At the time of the incident, 129 nuclear power plants had been approved for construction, but of those, only 53 were built. Clearly, many **anti-nuclear activists** argued, scientists and business leaders were willing to take shortcuts and nuclear power was too dangerous to be used as a source of electricity. Globally, the end of the increase in nuclear power plant construction came with the more catastrophic **Chernobyl** disaster in the Soviet Union in 1986.



Anti-Nuclear Movement: A movement to end the use of nuclear power for electricity production.

Despite the fact that nuclear power produces almost no pollution, activists feared the potential for catastrophic accidents.



Chernobyl: Nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union (Ukraine) that melted down in 1986, released large amounts of nuclear radiation.

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Primary Source: Photograph

Anti-nuclear activists demonstrate outside the Pennsylvania State Capitol building after the Three Mile Island incident.



Watch a New York Times documentary about American attitudes toward nuclear power

CONCLUSION

So, we learned from the 1970s that sometimes the people we elect to the most powerful positions of authority are imperfect. They make poor decisions. They try and to solve important problems and fail. Sometimes they lie and break the law to hide their lies. After the stringing disappointments of that decade, Americans have come to be much less trusting of our leaders.

What do you think? Should we trust our leaders?

2 SHOULD WE TRUST OUR NATION'S LEADERS?



SUMMARY

The 1970s were a time when some of America's most important leaders failed. In the case of the Pentagon Papers, reporters revealed that the Presidents of the 1950s and 1960s had lied to the American people about their real reasons for fighting the war in Vietnam, and about how the war was progressing.

President Nixon was forced to resign in 1974 when it became clear that he had abused his authority in an attempt to hide crimes committed by his supporters. The Watergate Scandal, named after the Watergate Hotel and Office Complex, along with the Pentagon Papers, marked a change in America. After the early 1970s, many fewer Americans trust presidents and other powerful leaders.

In the later decade, President Carter faced his own challenges. Although he was not corrupt like Nixon, he was unable to solve significant problems. Most embarrassingly, revolutionaries in Iran held 52 Americans hostage. Carter could not negotiate their release and a military rescue mission failed.

A meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant showed Americans that its top scientists, engineers and business leaders were also imperfect.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo: Analysts who helped write the Pentagon Papers report and released it to the press.

The Plumbers: A group of criminals that worked for the Nixon reelection team. They tried to prevent leaks of secret information that might hurt the president, but their ineptitude ultimately led to Nixon's resignation.

George McGovern: Democratic candidate for president in 1972. He was anti-war, but lost in one of the most lopsided elections in American history.

Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP): Group that worked to fundraise for Nixon's reelection campaign and used underhanded and illegal methods to hurt his opponents.

G. Gordon Liddy: Lawyer for CREEP and aid in the Nixon White House. He planned the Watergate break in.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein: Young reporters working for the Washington Post who uncovered much of the Watergate cover-up.

Deep Throat: Pseudonym for Mark Felt, Associate FBI Director who met secretly with Woodward and Bernstein and gave them information about the Watergate cover-up.

John Dean, H.R. Halderman, John Ehrlichman and John Mitchell: Aids to Nixon who lost their jobs and went to jail because of their involvement in the Watergate cover-up.

Archibald Cox: Special prosecutor appointed by Nixon to investigate the Watergate affair.

Alexander Butterfield: Minor White House official who revealed that there were secret recordings of Nixon's conversations and telephone calls.

Gerald Ford: Vice President who became president after Nixon Resigned in 1974. He lost the 1976 presidential election to Jimmy Carter.

Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini: Religious leader who led the Iranian Revolution and became the first leader of the theocracy.



SPEECHES

"I'm not a crook": Famous claim by Nixon to the press during the Watergate Scandal.



KEY CONCEPTS

Impeachment: The Constitutional process of removing an elected official or judge. In the case of a president, the House of Representatives serves as the prosecutors and the Senate as the jury.

Obstruction of Justice: Charge that an official uses his or her authority to prevent investigation of a crime.

Theocracy: A system of government based on a particular religion in which religious leaders hold power in government.

Anti-Nuclear Movement: A movement to end the use of nuclear power for electricity production. Despite the fact that nuclear power produces almost no pollution, activists feared the potential for catastrophic accidents.



EVENTS

Watergate Scandal: The name for all of the crimes, investigations and ultimate resignation of President Nixon associated with the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up.

Watergate Hearings: Hearings in 1973 in which the Senate tried to uncover the extent of the Watergate cover-up.

Saturday Night Massacre: Nickname for the day Nixon forced the resignation of his Attorney General and the firing of Archibald Cox. The event led many Americans to believe that Nixon was trying to hide his own wrongdoing.

Nixon's Resignation: Nixon resigned the presidency on August 9, 1974. He was replaced by Vice President Gerald Ford.

Pardon of Nixon: President Gerald Ford pardoned Nixon for any and all crimes associated with the Watergate Scandal. This ended the possibility of an investigation and trial of the former president.

Iranian Revolution: Overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and establishment of the Islamic Republic.

Iranian Hostage Crisis: The 444-day holding of 52 Americans by the new revolutionary government of Iran.

Operation Eagle Claw: Failed attempt to rescue the American hostages from Iran. The mission embarrassed the military and President Carter.



LOCATIONS

Watergate Complex: Office complex and hotel in Washington, DC. It was the location of the Democratic National Committee's offices during the 1972 presidential election.

Three Mile Island: Nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, and site of a nuclear meltdown in 1979.

Chernobyl: Nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union (Ukraine) that melted down in 1986, released large amounts of nuclear radiation.



DOCUMENTS

The Pentagon Papers: Nickname for a secret report about the Vietnam War. It was released to the public and showed that the government and military had deceived the public about the progress of the war.



COURT CASES AND LAWS

New York Times Co. v. United States: 1971 Supreme Court case that granted the press wide latitude in publishing classified documents with the purpose of informing the public about government activities.

United States v. Nixon: 1974 Supreme Court case in which the court decided that the president could not claim executive privilege to hide evidence such as the recordings of his conversations.

25th Amendment: Constitutional amendment providing a method for replacing the Vice President.

3

T H I R D Q U E S T I O N IS IT BAD FOR AMERICA THAT SO FEW OF THE THINGS WE BUY ARE MADE HERE?



INTRODUCTION

A quick glance at the tags on your clothes or the labels on products at our favorite stores will reveal that very few of the things we buy are actually produced in the United States. Instead, countries such as China, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, India and Bangladesh appear frequently. Why is this? What happened to the gigantic factories of the Midwest and Northeast that fueled the industrial revolution of the late 1800s? What happened to the workers who made the United States the Arsenal of Democracy during World War II?

Some might say that this is good for our country. We have more options. We can compare American cars with Japanese, Korean, and European imports and buy the one that is best. But, when did these foreign automakers start selling their cars in the United States to begin with? And, why didn't the Detroit automakers do something to protect their market share? What about our presidents and congress? Why didn't they do something to protect American business and workers?

Then, there is the question of America's wealth. What's happening to the money we spend when we go to the store? Is it leaving the country to pay foreign workers?

What do you think? Is it bad for America that so few of the things we buy are made here?

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THE NIXON SHOCK

In 1944 in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, representatives from 44 nations met to develop a new international monetary system that came to be known as the **Bretton Woods system**. Conference members hoped to find a way to ensure global financial stability and promote economic growth. In the Bretton Woods system, countries agreed to settle their international accounts in American dollars. For example, France used American dollars to pay its debts to West Germany rather than using French Francs or German Marks. The dollar was fixed at \$35 per ounce in gold, which was guaranteed by the United States Government. This system is called the **gold standard**. Thus, the United States was committed to backing every dollar with gold, and other currencies were pegged to the dollar.

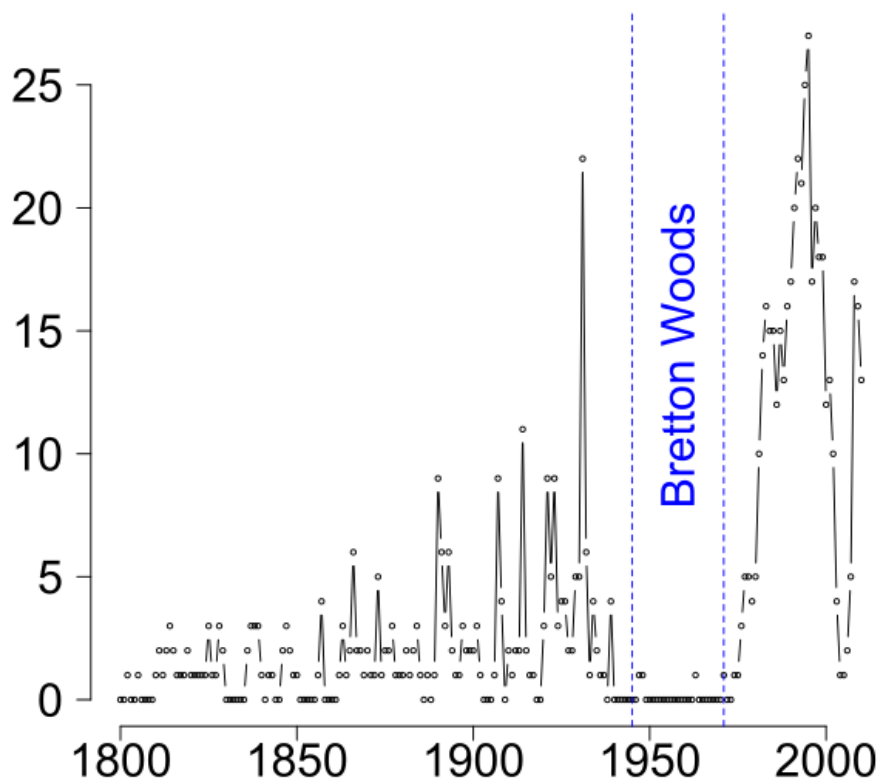
For the first years after World War II, the Bretton Woods system worked well. Western capitalist systems thrived. With the Marshall Plan, Japan and Europe rebuilt from the war, and countries outside the United States wanted dollars to spend on American goods. Because the United States owned over half the world's official gold reserves, the system appeared secure.



Bretton Woods System: An agreement between the leading nations of the world after World War II designed to stabilize the global economy. The US Dollar was set at \$35/oz. of gold and the all nations set a fixed exchange rate for their currencies.



Gold Standard: When a currency is backed by the government in gold. The currency is always worth a certain amount of gold.



Secondary Source: Chart

This chart shows the number of banking crisis each year beginning in 1800. While the Bretton Woods System was in place, there were almost no incidents.

However, from 1950 to 1969, as Germany and Japan recovered and increased production, America's proportion of the world's economic output dropped significantly, from 35% to 27%. Furthermore, American began spending more on foreign goods than it sold. Money started flowing out of the United States. At the same time, public debt was growing as a result of

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spending on the Vietnam War, and monetary inflation by the Federal Reserve caused the dollar to become increasingly overvalued.

By the end of the 1960s, other nations were beginning to dislike the Bretton Woods system. As American economist Barry Eichengreen summarized, "It costs only a few cents for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to produce a \$100 bill, but other countries had to pony up \$100 of actual goods in order to obtain one."

By 1966, the United States did not have enough gold on hand to back up all the dollars held by foreign governments. In May 1971, West Germany was fed up with the limitations of staying in the Bretton Woods system. Unwilling to revalue the Deutsche Mark, the West German government decided instead to abandon the system altogether. In the following three months, this move strengthened the West German economy. Simultaneously, the dollar dropped 7.5% against the Deutsche Mark. Other nations began to demand redemption of their dollars for gold. Switzerland redeemed \$50 million. France acquired \$191 million in gold. Under the Bretton Woods system, the American dollar was always valued at \$35 per ounce of gold. As the European nations abandoning the system, the dollar fell in value.

To combat these problems, President Nixon decided to break up Bretton Woods by suspending the convertibility of the dollar into gold. This prevented a run on the American gold by foreign governments. To prevent panic in the markets, he also instituted a 90-day freeze on wages and prices.

The **Nixon Shock**, as his decision is now known, has been widely considered a political success, but had mixed results for the global economy. The dollar plunged in value by a third during the 1970s. In 1996, Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman summarized the post-Nixon Shock era as follows: "The current world monetary system assigns no special role to gold; indeed, the Federal Reserve is not obliged to tie the dollar to anything. It can print as much or as little money as it deems appropriate. There are powerful advantages to such an unconstrained system. Above all, the Fed is free to respond to actual or threatened recessions by pumping in money. To take only one example, that flexibility is the reason the stock market crash of 1987 – which started out every bit as frightening as that of 1929 – did not cause a slump in the real economy. While a freely floating national money has advantages, however, it also has risks. For one thing, it can create uncertainties for international traders and investors. Over the past five years, the dollar has been worth as much as 120 yen and as little as 80... Furthermore, a system that leaves monetary managers free to do good also leaves them free to be irresponsible..."



Nixon Shock: The decision by Richard Nixon to abandon the gold standard and the Bretton Woods System.

The most immediate result of the Nixon Shock, was economic stagflation.

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STAGFLATION

Americans were accustomed to steady economic growth since the end of World War II. Recessions had been short and were followed by robust economic growth. But in the 1970s, for the first time since the Great Depression, Americans faced an economy that could result in a lower standard of living for their children. The problem was a dangerous combination of three factors.

Inflation is the slow increase of prices over time. Some inflation is usually good for an economy, but inflation, which had crept along at 1% to 3% for the previous two decades, exploded into double digits. At the same time, the unemployment rate was nearing the dangerous 10% line. Not since the Great Depression of the 1930s had so many Americans been looking for work. Economic output also stalled. Americans were simply not able to produce and sell as much as they were accustomed to. This situation is **stagflation**, a disastrous blend of high inflation, high unemployment, and low economic growth.

Americans' confidence faltered. They began to ask themselves what had gone wrong.

Richard Nixon tried to fight inflation first by cutting government spending, but ultimately by imposing wage and price controls on the entire nation. President Ford watched the inflation rate soar above 11% in 1974. He enacted a huge propaganda campaign called **Whip Inflation Now (WIN)**, which asked Americans to voluntarily control spending, wage demands, and price increases. The struggling economy, along with his pardon of Nixon after the Watergate Scandal, led Americans to sour on President Ford and they handed the presidency to **Jimmy Carter** in the 1976 election.

Carter was viewed by many as a breath of fresh air. He was deeply religious, a peanut farmer, and the governor of Georgia. Unlike Nixon, Carter had the reputation of being an honest tell-it-like-it-is person. Carter tried tax and spending cuts, but the annual inflation rate topped 18% under his watch in the summer of 1980. At the same time, the unemployment rate fluctuated between 6% and 8%.

OIL, CARS, AND CRISIS

Before the 1970s, the most popular cars in America were large, heavy, and powerful. In 1971, the standard motor for the popular Chevrolet Caprice was a 400-cubic inch (6.5 liter) V8, which achieved no more than 15 highway miles per gallon. Detroit's **Big Three** - General Motors, Chrysler and Ford - had dominated the automobile market for decades. Without completion, they had grown complacent, making ever larger, heavier and less efficient vehicles. To make matters worse, in the 1970s, Americans fell in love with big, powerful muscle cars that boasted the least fuel-efficient engines of all.



Inflation: The slow rise in prices over time.



Stagflation: A situation in which there is high inflation, high unemployment, and low economic growth.



Whip Inflation Now (WIN): President Ford's campaign to encourage Americans to voluntarily control spending, wage demands and price increases in order to end the stagflation of the 1970s.



Jimmy Carter: Democratic governor of Georgia who was elected president in 1976. He served only one term and was defeated by Ronald Reagan in 1980.



Big Three: The three large American automakers based in Detroit, Michigan. Ford, Chrysler and General Motors.

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They might have been fun to drive, but they were time bombs for America's economy.



1970 Chevelle SS 396.

It's getting tougher and tougher to resist.

The standard V8 has been kicked up to 350 hp.

A new air-gulping Cowl Induction Hood awaits your order.

You can also order your choice of a floor-mounted 4-speed or the 3-range Turbo Hydra-matic.

Under that lean and hungry look is a lean

and agile suspension. F70 x 14 white-lettered wide oval treads. 7"-wide mag-type wheels. And power disc brakes.

Your mission is to infiltrate your Chevy dealer's and escape with this car.

It will go willingly.

Putting you first, keeps us first.



**In ten seconds,
your resistance will
self-destruct.**

Primary Source: Advertisement

The 1970s Chevelle SS 396, a classic example of the large, fuel-hungry, muscle cars popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were fun to drive but terrible to own when gas prices soared.

When Israel defeated its Arab neighbors in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Arab oil producers retaliated against Israel's allies by leading the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** to enact an **embargo**. They agreed to significantly limit the quantity of oil they exported to the United States. The prices of oil-based products skyrocketed in the United States as demand outstripped supply. Automobiles and drivers sat in long lines at service stations, and everyone felt the pain of paying more at the pump as the price of gasoline quadrupled.



Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): A cartel of the major oil producing nations. They attempt to work together to set production rates and the price of oil on the world market.



1973 Oil Embargo: OPEC agreed to limit oil shipments to the United States in 1973. This caused a crisis as fuel prices increased dramatically.

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With skyrocketing prices, the much smaller, far more efficient Japanese and European cars that utilized four-cylinder engines, unibody construction, and front-wheel drive dramatically increased in popularity. American automakers' attempts at compensating were relatively poorly received as the offered vehicles that were still less efficient and less well constructed than the imports. The Detroit automakers simply could not adapt fast enough. Some of the failed American cars of the 1970s such as the Chevrolet Nova and Ford Pinto are remembered as cautionary examples of hubris. It took General Motors, Chrysler and Ford a decade to recover. In the meantime, Japanese and European cars became common on American roads.



Primary Source: Advertisement

A magazine ad for a Toyota. These smaller, more fuel-efficient imports became popular during the fuel shortages of the 1970s and were a major blow to the Big Three American carmakers.

The government's response to the embargo was quick but had limited effectiveness. A national speed limit of 55 mph was imposed to help reduce consumption. President Nixon named William E. Simon as Energy Czar, and in 1977, a cabinet-level Department of Energy was created. The government established the **Strategic Petroleum Reserve**. Today the reserve holds roughly 700 million barrels of oil in tanks in Louisiana and Texas, enough to provide the United States with all the oil it needs for about a month.



Strategic Petroleum Reserve:

Government owned oil located in huge tanks in Louisiana and Texas. The reserve was created in 1977 in case of emergency and could supply the nation with oil for about one month.

But with demand high and supply low, gas stations were hurting. The American Automobile Association reported that in the last week of February 1974, 20% of American gasoline stations had no fuel to sell. Tens of thousands of local gasoline stations closed during the fuel crisis.

In an effort to reduce consumption and alleviate the pressure on gas stations, some state governments instituted rationing. Odd-even rationing allowed vehicles with license plates having an odd number as the last digit to buy gas only on odd-numbered days of the month, while others could buy only on even-numbered days. Americans loved their cars. American cities had been built with cars in mind. Americans drove from the suburbs to shopping malls and into downtowns to work. They took long vacations in

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their cars. Cars were to the modern American what horses had been to the cowboys. Americans hated rationing. Limits on gasoline even led to violent incidents when truck drivers chose to strike for two days in December 1973. In Pennsylvania and Ohio, non-striking truckers were shot at by striking truckers, and in Arkansas, trucks of non-strikers were attacked with bombs.



Primary Source: Photograph

Lines of cars waiting to purchase gasoline during the oil crisis. Notice the rationing sign indicating even numbered cars only on that day.

THE GREAT MALAISE

In 1979, President Carter left for the presidential retreat of Camp David, conferring with dozens prominent political leaders and other individuals to try to find a solution to the nation's trouble. His pollster, Pat Caddell, told him that the American people simply faced a crisis of confidence stemming from the assassination of major leaders in the 1960s, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal.

When he came back to the White House on July 15, 1979, Carter gave a nationally televised address in which he told the American people, "I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy... I do not refer to the outward strength of America, a nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world, with unmatched economic power and military might. The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation..."

This came to be known as his **Malaise Speech**, although Carter never used the word in the speech. Carter juxtaposed crisis and confidence to explain how overconsumption in the United States was leading to an energy crisis. Although at first this resonated with the public and he went up in opinion polls, there was a boomerang effect and the speech prompted a public backlash. Some thought that Carter was blaming the American people for



Watch Carter's
Crisis of Confidence
Speech



Malaise Speech: Speech by President Carter on July 15, 1979 in which he discussed the energy crisis and blamed the problem on a loss of spirit. He was criticized for being overly negative.

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having lost a can-do spirit. Carter's critics argued that it was the president himself was suffering from a malaise. If he were actually a strong leader, they said, he would fix the energy crisis himself.

Three days after the speech, Carter asked for the resignations of all of his cabinet officers, and ultimately accepted those of five who had clashed with the White House the most. The Malaise Speech and the subsequent cabinet shake-up were poorly received by the public and media who viewed it as evidence that Carter didn't have a clear plan to fix the nation's ailing economy.

In the presidential election of 1980, former Hollywood actor and California governor **Ronald Reagan** easily defeated Carter. Americans were drawn to his confident, optimistic message. One of his campaign ads asserted that it was "Morning Again in America." After years of scandal and economic hardship, Americans were indeed ready for a new start.



Ronald Reagan: Republican former governor of California who won the presidency in 1980, defeating Jimmy Carter. Reagan was seen as a confident, optimist who could turn around the nation's struggling economy.

GLOBALIZATION

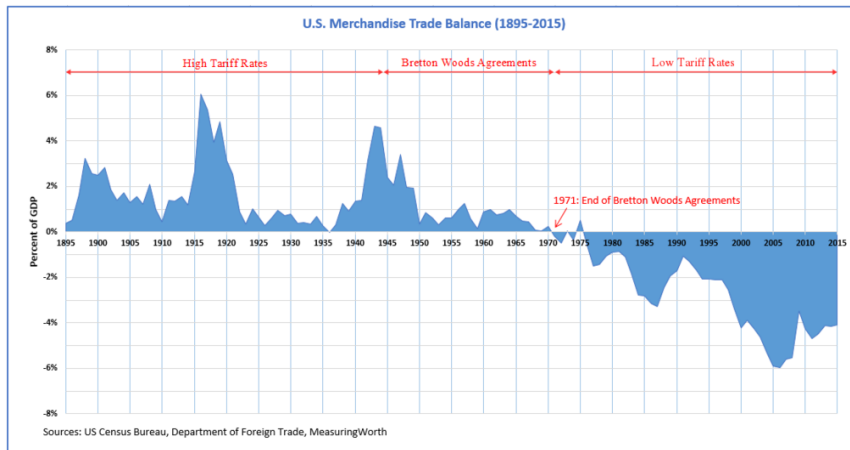
Trade between cities and nations has been a reality since ancient times. The United States was involved in international trade even before it was a nation. Spanish conquistadors exported gold and silver. French trappers sent beaver pelts home to Europe and the colonists in New England and Virginia shipped tobacco, fish and lumber to England. But for the most part, producers and consumers in the United States dealt mostly with products that were not from other countries. They ate food grown in nearby farms. Americans drove cars built in Detroit. They flew in planes built in Seattle. They toasted their bread, mowed their lawns, washed their clothes and cooked their food with appliances made in America.

All that changed in the last quarter of the 20th Century in a process dubbed **globalization**. Beginning in the 1970s, American manufacturing companies found it harder and harder to compete with foreign importers. Sometimes it was because of years of poor choices, as was the case of the Detroit automakers who simply were not designing cars that people wanted to buy. In other cases, larger factors such as the Nixon Shock changed the value of American money in the global marketplace and gave foreign companies an advantage. Without the Bretton Woods system maintaining the value of the dollar for example, Japanese electronics companies could sell televisions in the United States and make more money than before. Sony, Panasonic, Sharp, Pioneer, Casio, and Yamaha became familiar names on American store shelves.



Globalization: The process of increasing connections around the world of communication and trade.

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Secondary Source: Chart

This chart shows the balance to trade for the United States beginning in 1895. Until 1970, America sold more products to the world than it purchased. After 1975, Americans have always imported more than exported. This is called the trade deficit.

As the years wore on, more and more products that had once been built in the United States were being made elsewhere. In the case of the auto industry, foreigners simply replaced American companies. In others, American companies **outsourced** their production to where the cost of labor was significantly less. This was especially true in the textile industry. During the 1970s and 1980s, 95% percent of the looms in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia shut down. The effect was devastating for the local economies. In some towns everyone either worked in a textile mill, was related to someone who did, or worked in a business that supported these workers.



Outsource: When a company attempts to save money by moving a factory to another location where labor is cheaper, or by firing workers and hiring an outside company to do the work for less. Ford building cars in Mexico, or a store hiring a cleaning company instead of their own janitors are examples.

From coast to coast, the working class people of America faced growing competition from workers in distant countries and more often than not, the American workers were losing. Nowhere was this more evident than in the industrial heartland of the Midwest.

THE RUST BELT

In the 1800s, the cities of the Midwest boomed and immigrant workers flooded in to find work in the Industrial Revolution's new factories. Carnegie's steel mills and Henry Ford's auto plants, Rockefeller's oil refineries and Pullman's railroad car company stood out as examples of the ingenuity that were hallmarks of the age. The industrial heartland of the United States reached its zenith during World War II when its factories transformed themselves into the Arsenal of Democracy.

With the decline of manufacturing jobs in the 1970s and 1980s, the great industrial cities of the Midwest were dealt a massive blow. Factories closed. Workers were laid off. People moved away to look for work. Business owners faced loss revenue as their customers had less to spend. City governments struggled to maintain services as tax revenue fell. Schools closed. In some places, whole neighborhoods were abandoned. Crime and drug abuse increased. Middle class families who could, moved into more prosperous suburbs leaving inner cities empty. In many cities only the poor

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African American families remained. Demographic maps of cities like Detroit or Cleveland show rings of mostly White suburbs around nearly 100% African American urban cores. Laws, government policies, and racist business practices ensured that neighborhoods remained segregated.



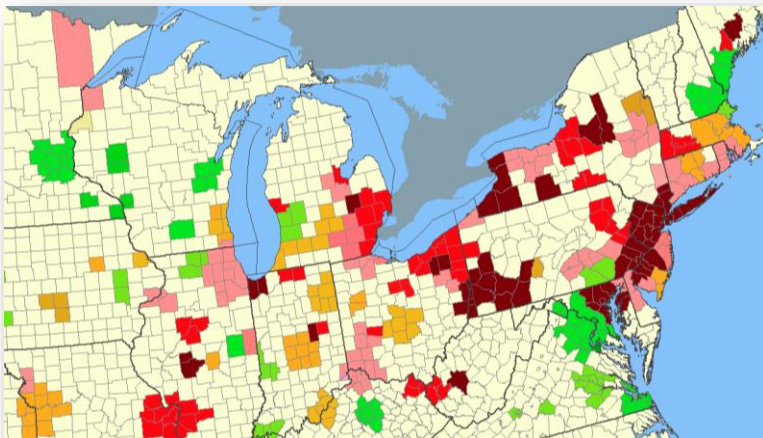
Primary Source: Photograph

One of the many abandoned houses in Detroit, Michigan. These were once thriving neighborhoods of row houses, but are now abandoned.

A new term was coined to describe the region of abandoned steel mills, railroad yards, automobile factories and manufacturing centers: the **Rust Belt**. What had once been a source of American pride, the region that had fueled the growth of the nation, became a symbol of its decline. Abandoned factories, boarded up storefronts, and graffiti-covered vacant homes continue to be scars that show how far America's heartland fell.



Rust Belt: The region of the country across the Northeast and Midwest that includes the industrial centers of Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, etc. They thrived during the Industrial Revolution of the late 1800s and early 1900s, but have struggled as manufacturing moved overseas.



Secondary Source: Map

This map shows the rate of manufacturing job loss in the past four decades. The darker red the color, the greater number of manufacturing jobs disappeared.

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Problems associated with the Rust Belt persist even today, particularly around the eastern Great Lakes states. From 1970 to 2006, Cleveland, Detroit, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh lost about 45% of their population. Median household incomes fell in Cleveland and Detroit by about 30%, in Buffalo by 20%, and Pittsburgh by 10%.

Not all production in the United States ended, however. In the late-2000s, American manufacturing recovered faster from the Great Recession of 2008 than the other sectors of the economy, and a number of initiatives both public and private, are encouraging the development of new technologies that will provide jobs for unemployed laborers. Despite its decline, the Rust Belt still composes one of the world's major manufacturing regions. While there are examples all across the Midwest of decay, there are places where prosperity seems to be growing out of the ashes. The great Bethlehem Steel Works in Pennsylvania closed its doors in 1995 after 140 years of production, but the rusting hulk was torn down and the site is now the home to a hotel and casino.

THE FORMAL STRUCTURES OF GLOBALIZATION

In the wake of the Second World War, the major nations of the world sought ways to develop a more integrated, stable and peaceful world. The Bretton Woods system and the United Nations were aspects of this effort. In addition, the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank** were established. The WTO provides a framework and forum for negotiating and formalizing trade agreements. In effect, the WTO exists to help eliminate barriers to trade between countries. The IMF was created to be a super-bank for the governments of the developing world to help them access funds when private banks were too weak, thus ensuring stability in global markets. The World Bank uses money loaned from wealthy nations to finance development projects such as constructions of airports, irrigation systems, or programs to fight hunger and disease in the Third World.

Like most nations, the United States has concluded many free trade treaties. Most famous of these is the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**. Concluded in 1994, the agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico eliminates tariffs on products transferred between the three nations. For example, Canada will not charge a tariff, or tax, on pork products brought across the border from American farms and sold to Canadian consumers. Globally, the most famous of all such free trade zones is the European Union's open market, which encompasses most of mainland Europe and many of the United States' closest allies.

The leaders of the major industrial nations of the world meet every few years to discuss economic issues. These grand summits of the leaders of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Japan are known as the **G7**, short for **Group of Seven**. For a while, it was the



World Trade Organization (WTO): International organization developed to promote free trade agreements and to serve as a judge for trade disputes between nations.



International Monetary Fund (IMF): A super-bank for the governments of the developing world to help them access funds when private banks were too weak, thus ensuring stability in global markets.



World Bank: A bank that governments in the Third World can use to finance development projects such as constructions of airports, irrigation systems or programs to fight hunger and disease.



North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): An agreement signed in 1994 between the United States, Canada and Mexico to eliminate tariffs.



Group of Seven (G7): The United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. With the exception of China, they are the eight largest economies in the world.

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G8 while Russia was invited. Interestingly, China is not included although it is the world's second largest economy.

ANTI-GLOBALIZATION

There are outspoken critics of the process of globalization, and the visible manifestations of globalization such as the IMF, WTO, G7 and NAFTA are their favorite targets. Sometimes called the **anti-globalization movement**, these activists base their criticisms on a number of related ideas. Some members of the movement oppose large, multinational corporations. Specifically, they accuse corporations of seeking to maximize profit at the expense of workers, pay, and environmental conservation. They point to examples of Third World workers being paid wages far less than American workers and being forced to work long hours in dangerous factories as evidence of unregulated corporate evil.

Other participants in the movement fear that globalization is leading to a decrease in democratic representation as more and more of the decisions that affect daily life are made by corporate executives and the leaders of multi-national organizations such as the World Trade Organization. Unlike a mayor who might be voted out of office for failing to maintain city roads, the leaders of global organizations seem far away from the ability of individual voters to control. For some, this is a threat to national sovereignty itself. What makes someone American if globalization has made markets and public policy a matter of international concern? These anti-globalists believe modern companies are manipulating even the United States government, just like American Dollar Diplomacy made use of corporate power to manipulate governments in Latin America. In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled in **Citizens United v. FCC** that corporations and organizations have an equal right to free speech under the First Amendment. This decision erased limits on political spending by companies. Without limits, the executives of a company like Exxon-Mobile can spend billions of dollars on political ads to influence an election. Although companies cannot vote, their leaders can use corporate money to control political debate in ways that everyday citizens cannot. Some of the people who worried about this loss of political control were motivated in 2016 to vote for Donald Trump with his promises of "America First" and "Drain the Swamp." The Occupy Wall Street movement that started in New York City in 2011 is an example of people organizing against perceived influence of powerful banks.

Another criticism of globalization is the destruction of local culture. If Italians start drinking Starbucks instead of stopping at local cafes, local identity suffers. If people in the mountains of Bolivia give up indigenous styles of dress in favor of American jeans and t-shirts, local culture begins to fade. When Mongolian teenagers watch Hollywood movies and listen to American pop music, they are diluting their own culture with the global culture of the American entertainment industry. In these and many other cases, anti-globalists point to the loss of diversity and identity as downsides of



Anti-Globalization Movement: A movement of protesters opposed to many of the aspects of globalization, including the growth of large corporations, environmental impacts, worker safety and pay, cultural degradation, etc.



Citizens United v. FCC: Supreme court case in 2010 in which the Court decided that corporations have the right to free speech and that laws cannot be passed that restrict corporations from political advertising.



McWorld: Nickname for the aspect of globalization in which certain brands, such as McDonald's become common around the world and supplant local culture with American culture.

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globalization. Because of the title of Benjamin Barber's famous book describing this process, it is often called "**McWorld**."

Many anti-globalization activists do not oppose globalization in general. Rather, they call for forms of global integration that better provides for democratic representation, advancement of human rights, fair trade and sustainable development. For example, these people believe free trade agreements should include protections for the workers and the environment. Rather than anti-globalist, this group is now known as the **Social Justice Movement**.



Social Justice Movement: An aspect of the anti-globalization movement that focuses on human rights, fair trade, worker pay and good government rather than opposing globalization in general.



Primary Source: Photograph

An activist at the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York City in 2011. The 99% rallying cry makes the case that only 1% of the world's people control most of the world's wealth. The protestors believed that this situation damages the democratic principle of one person, one vote.

It appears the process of globalization is irreversible. We seem to be more and more integrated with each passing year. The question that remains for both proponents and opponents of globalization is: what will the costs and benefits be, and for whom?

FIGHTING GLOBALIZATION

Some activists have taken to the streets to protest the injustices they feel are being done in the process of globalization. Most notably in the United States, when the World Trade Organization member nations met in Seattle, in November 1999, protesters blocked delegates from entering meetings and forced the cancellation of the opening ceremonies. Protesters and Seattle riot police clashed in the streets after police fired tear gas at demonstrators. In what protesters called the **Battle in Seattle**, over 600 people were arrested and thousands were injured. Three police officers were injured by friendly fire, and one by a thrown rock. Some protesters destroyed the windows of storefronts of businesses owned or franchised by targeted corporations such as a large Nike shop and many Starbucks



Battle in Seattle: Clash between anti-globalization protesters and police in Seattle, Washington in 1999 during the meeting of the World Trade Organization. It was the first large-scale protest against globalization.

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locations. The mayor put the city under the municipal equivalent of martial law and declared a curfew. The Seattle protests shocked American leaders who underestimated public discontent and Americans in general were surprised to see images of peaceful protesters being attacked with tear gas in the streets. For many, it reminded them of the chaos of the 1960s. By 2002, the city of Seattle had paid over \$200,000 in settlements of lawsuits filed against the Seattle Police Department for assault and wrongful arrest, with a class action lawsuit still pending.



Primary Source: Photograph

Seattle police officers in riot gear spray protesters with tear gas during the Battle in Seattle. Police tactics in Seattle and Washington, DC were seen as evidence that governments were siding with corporations against the will of the people.

After the Seattle WTO protests, Canadian author Naomi Klein published a book entitled “**No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies**” which became the unofficial manifesto of the anti-globalist movement. In her book, Klein argued that corporations have used their economic influence to hurt workers, muzzle dissent, and enrich their shareholders at the expense of average citizens in both wealthy and developing nations.



No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies: Book by Naomi Klein arguing that major corporate brands are bad for the world. It is the unofficial manifesto of the anti-globalization movement.

Encouraged by the disruption they caused and media attention their actions received, **protesters repeated their efforts in Washington, DC** in 2000 when roughly 15,000 people demonstrated at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Police raided the activists’ meeting hall. DC police arrested more than 1,300 people and after lawsuits, \$13.7 million in damages were awarded to the protesters who had been arrested and injured. In 2002, some 1,500 or more people gathered again to demonstrate against the annual meetings of IMF and World Bank in the streets of Washington DC. Again, hundreds of people were arrested, and just like before, the city had to pay the protesters to end a lawsuit.



Washington DC Protests: Anti-globalization protests in Washington, DC in 2000 and 2002 that included clashes between protesters and police.

Similar protests have erupted in cities around the world when economic summits were held in Genoa, Berlin, Paris, and Madrid, among others.

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Despite the public attention these clashes have produced, they seem to have had little effect on the process of globalization itself. One argument often made by their critics is that a major cause of poverty among Third World farmers is the trade barriers put up by rich nations and poor nations alike. The WTO was created specifically to work towards removing those trade barriers. Therefore, they argue, people really concerned about the plight of the Third World should be encouraging free trade, rather than attempting to fight it. Indeed, people from developing countries have been relatively accepting and supportive of globalization while the strongest opposition to globalization has come from wealthy First World activists and labor unions.

In the past few years, however, anti-globalization activists have found a receptive ear among some politicians in Europe and the United States, especially regarding free trade agreements. In the United States, President Trump won popularity in his 2016 campaign by attacking NAFTA and as president renegotiated the agreement. In 2020, he signed the **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)** which is an update to NAFTA. As a candidate Trump also criticized another free trade agreement called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that was to include 12 nations on either side of the Pacific Ocean. Although former president Obama had committed the United States to joining the TPP, as president, Trump withdrew from the pact. Around the same time that Trump was capitalizing on fears of free trade in the United States, a movement developed in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. A referendum held in 2016 led to a narrow victory for those seeking to leave and over the next four years British and European leaders had to negotiate the complicated legal details of separating European and British trade law. The entire event, nicknamed **Brexit** as a shortened version of British exit, has shown both the complications of international trade agreements and the fact that such deals are not universally popular among everyday citizens.

THE CASE FOR GLOBALIZATION

Globalization has had positive effects in the United States. The production of goods in foreign countries with lower labor costs mean lower prices for American consumers. Televisions, clothing, cell phones, fruit, and a myriad of the things for sale in America are all less expensive because of the globalization of markets.

Economic globalization has also made it possible for American businesses to make more money selling to foreign consumers. Coca-Cola, Pepsi, McDonalds, Starbucks, Microsoft, Apple, Google, Amazon, Visa, Nike, Levi's and many more have become successful around the world.

Improvements in communications that have accompanied increased trade mean that journalism is now global. Social media networks are global as well. Email, online messaging, voice and video calls from one side of the



United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA): A free trade agreement signed in 2020 that updated and replaced the former NAFTA trade deal.



Brexit: Nickname for the referendum and legal negotiations between 2016 and 2020 in which the United Kingdom left the European Union.

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world to another are now common. Only a decade ago such communication was the thing of wild imagination.

Despite the negative effects critics point to, globalization has benefited the developing world. People in the Third World have found jobs producing the things people in wealthy countries want to buy. And Third World consumers now have access to the same products Americans can buy. Overall, has poverty around the world has decreased.



Primary Source: Photograph

A McDonald's in Thailand. Anti-globalists point to these as evidence of the destruction multinational corporations have on local culture. Globalists argue that corporations such as these increase the standard of living in Third World nations.

CONCLUSION

The world is more integrated now than it was just a decade ago, and far more integrated than it was at the end of World War II. Great nations have done much to ensure that the world's economic health remains stable. Although the Bretton Woods system of monetary stability is gone, major institutions such as the WTO, IMF and agreements like NAFTA have increased trade, lowered prices, created new opportunities and on average, decreased poverty.

But the cost of this change is dramatic in some places. The Rust Belt is clear, ugly, evidence that some Americans are the losers in globalization. American presidents, from Nixon, Ford and Carter in the 1970s up through Trump

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today, have all made efforts to reverse these negative effects – often to no avail. Despite the sometimes flashy efforts of the anti-globalization activists, it seems that globalization is a process that is beyond anyone's control

What do you think? Is it bad for America that so few of the things we buy are made here?

SUMMARY

The 1970s are remembered as a decade of difficult economic times. The United States abandoned the Bretton Woods system of international monetary policy and the gold standard.

An oil embargo forced Americans to pay higher prices for gasoline and other goods. A combination of high unemployment, low growth and high inflation ensued. Called stagflation, American political and financial leaders were unable to turn things around.

Imported cars that were more fuel-efficient made a significant impact on the American automobile industry and imported products became familiar sights on store shelves.

Global trade was increasing and in response, some Americans looked to their government for protection. These anti-globalists oppose trade for a variety of reasons and have sometimes mobilized huge rallies and during the Trump presidency, found some success in changing trade policy.

Globalization has hurt some Americans, especially in the Rust Belt of the Northeast and Midwest where manufacturing dried up and workers lost their jobs. On the other hand, globalization has resulted in lower prices and a higher overall standard of living.



KEY CONCEPTS

Bretton Woods System: An agreement between the leading nations of the world after World War II designed to stabilize the global economy. The US Dollar was set at \$35/oz. of gold and the all nations set a fixed exchange rate for their currencies.

Gold Standard: When a currency is backed by the government in gold. The currency is always worth a certain amount of gold.

Inflation: The slow rise in prices over time.

Stagflation: A situation in which there is high inflation, high unemployment, and low economic growth.

Globalization: The process of increasing connections around the world of communication and trade.

Outsource: When a company attempts to save money by moving a factory to another location where labor is cheaper, or by firing workers and hiring an outside company to do the work for less. Ford building cars in Mexico, or a store hiring a cleaning company instead of their own janitors are examples.

McWorld: Nickname for the aspect of globalization in which certain brands, such as McDonald's become common around the world and supplant local culture with American culture.



BOOKS

No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies: Book by Naomi Klein arguing that major corporate brands are bad for the world. It is the unofficial manifesto of the anti-globalization movement.



SPEECHES

Malaise Speech: Speech by President Carter on July 15, 1979 in which he discussed the energy crisis and blamed the problem on a loss of spirit. He was criticized for being overly negative.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Jimmy Carter: Democratic governor of Georgia who was elected president in 1976. He served only one term and was defeated by Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Big Three: The three large American automakers based in Detroit, Michigan. Ford, Chrysler and General Motors.

Ronald Reagan: Republican former governor of California who won the presidency in 1980, defeating Jimmy Carter. Reagan was seen as a confident, optimist who could turn around the nation's struggling economy.

Anti-Globalization Movement: A movement of protesters opposed to many of the aspects of globalization, including the growth of large corporations, environmental impacts, worker safety and pay, cultural degradation, etc.

Social Justice Movement: An aspect of the anti-globalization movement that focuses on human rights, fair trade, worker pay and good government rather than opposing globalization in general.



EVENTS

Nixon Shock: The decision by Richard Nixon to abandon the gold standard and the Bretton Woods System.

1973 Oil Embargo: OPEC agreed to limit oil shipments to the United States in 1973. This caused a crisis as fuel prices increased dramatically.

Battle in Seattle: Clash between anti-globalization protesters and police in Seattle, Washington in 1999 during the meeting of the World Trade Organization. It was the first large-scale protest against globalization.

Washington DC Protests: Anti-globalization protests in Washington, DC in 2000 and 2002 that included clashes between protesters and police.

Brexit: Nickname for the referendum and legal negotiations between 2016 and 2020 in which the United Kingdom left the European Union.



LOCATIONS

Rust Belt: The region of the country across the Northeast and Midwest that includes the industrial centers of Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, etc. They thrived during the Industrial Revolution of the late 1800s and early 1900s, but have struggled as manufacturing moved overseas.



COURT CASES

Citizens United v. FCC: Supreme court case in 2010 in which the Court decided that corporations have the right to free speech and that laws cannot be passed that restrict corporations from political advertising.



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

World Trade Organization (WTO): International organization developed to promote free trade agreements and to serve as a judge for trade disputes between nations.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): A super-bank for the governments of the developing world to help them access funds when private banks were too weak, thus ensuring stability in global markets.

World Bank: A bank that governments in the Third World can use to finance development projects such as constructions of airports, irrigation systems or programs to fight hunger and disease.

Group of Seven (G7): The United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. With the exception of China, they are the eight largest economies in the world.

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): A cartel of the major oil producing nations. They attempt to work together to set production rates and the price of oil on the world market.

Whip Inflation Now (WIN): President Ford's campaign to encourage Americans to voluntarily control spending, wage demands and price increases in order to end the stagflation of the 1970s.

Strategic Petroleum Reserve: Government owned oil located in huge tanks in Louisiana and Texas. The reserve was created in 1977 in case of emergency and could supply the nation with oil for about one month.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): An agreement signed in 1994 between the United States, Canada and Mexico to eliminate tariffs.

United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA): A free trade agreement signed in 2020 that updated and replaced the former NAFTA trade deal.

Q U E S T I O N E I G H T E E N



The 1960s were a decade of social upheaval and conflict, but also of hope and reform. The decade that followed, however, saw many examples of failure. The military failed. Presidents failed. Businesses failed. Technologies failed. The national spirit waned.

The catastrophes the nation passed through in the 1970s chastened Americans. We learned that despite our tremendous natural and human resources, success is not inevitable. Past victories do not necessarily guarantee the same in the future. Sometimes hope and good intentions are not enough. Sometimes the best ideas, more honest leaders and greater resolve are found in other countries.

But is this all bad for the country? The 1970s held more failures than Americans were accustomed to, but are we better or worse because of those difficulties? Can nations, like people learn from their mistakes? Did Americans learn from the failures of the 1970s? Are we better able to avoid the same problems in the future? Is there evidence to support this idea?

What do you think? Can failure make us a better country?



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