

Political Challenges of the 1970s



Gerald Ford (1974-1976)

- Ford was the only American president who was never elected either Vice-President or President. He was appointed to office in 1973 after Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned under charges of tax evasion and money laundering.

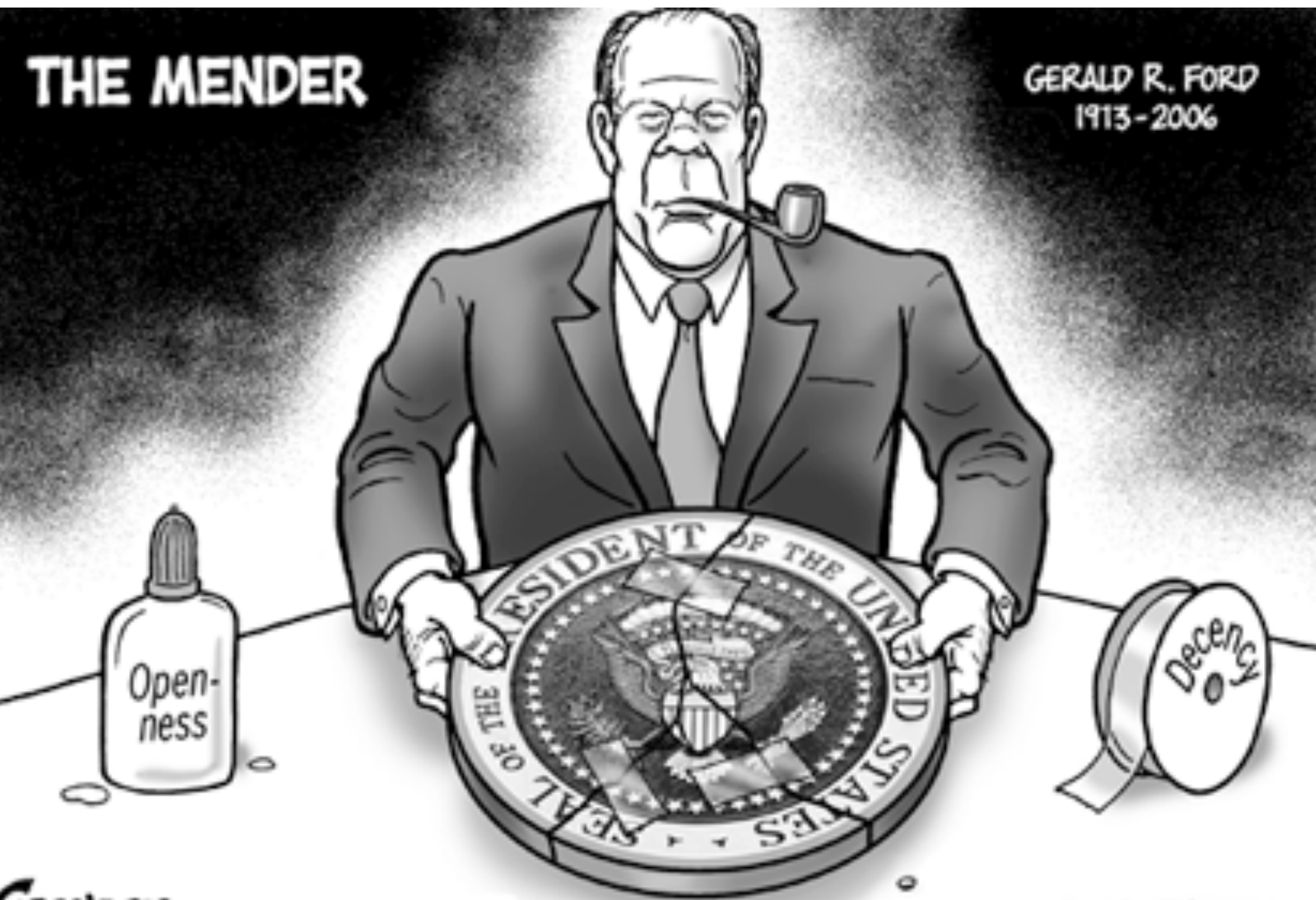


Background

- Born in Omaha, NB in 1913. Star athlete, full athletic scholarship to University of Michigan. Turned down pro offers from the Green Bay Packers and the Detroit Lions and instead went to Yale to coach football and boxing.
- Attended Yale Law and later founded a law practice with a friend in Grand Rapids, MI. Left to enlist in the Navy after Pearl Harbor.
- Ran for the House of Representatives in 1948. Spent next 25 years in the House. Rose through the ranks to House Minority Leader – “didn’t have enemies”.
- When Nixon's surprise offer of the vice presidency arrived, Ford told a colleague, "It would be a good way to round out my career.”

THE MENDER

GERALD R. FORD
1913-2006



On September 8, 1974, in an attempt to move the country away from Watergate, Ford gave Richard Nixon a full pardon.

Approval ratings plummeted from 71% to 49% and many began to regard him as a bumbler - a reputation that was only reinforced by his trademark clumsiness.





Ford the Bumbler – Presidential Bloopers



- For an accomplished ex-athlete, Ford sometimes displayed surprising physical awkwardness.
 - He tripped, in full view of cameras, while descending the stairs from an airplane.
 - During a charity golf event, the President's wildly errant tee shot conked a spectator.

Presidential Bloopers – *SNL*



- Slips like this wouldn't have mattered a few years earlier, before the dawn of TV. Unfortunately for Ford, NBC had launched *Saturday Night Live*, designed to attract a young audience. Chevy Chase began playing Ford in skits and taking elaborate, tumbles, leaving the props and set in shambles. Viewers loved it.
- [Ford Christmas Eve](#)
- [Ford Address](#)

Jimmy Carter (1976-1980)

In 1976, the Democrats nominated a peanut farmer and former governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter. Voters found his straight-forward manner appealing. He promised the American public, “I’ll never tell a lie.”



Carter and his family brought a down-to-earth style to Washington.

Background

- A born-again Christian, Carter was a former Navy officer and nuclear engineer, turned peanut farmer. State senator and one term GA governor.
- He did not have a lot of national or international experience when he ran for office but voters liked that he was a political outsider.
- Carter ran as a reformer with deep moral values.





Carter was the first president to walk to his inauguration. “I felt a simple walk would be a tangible indication of some reduction in the imperial status of the President and his family,” said Carter.

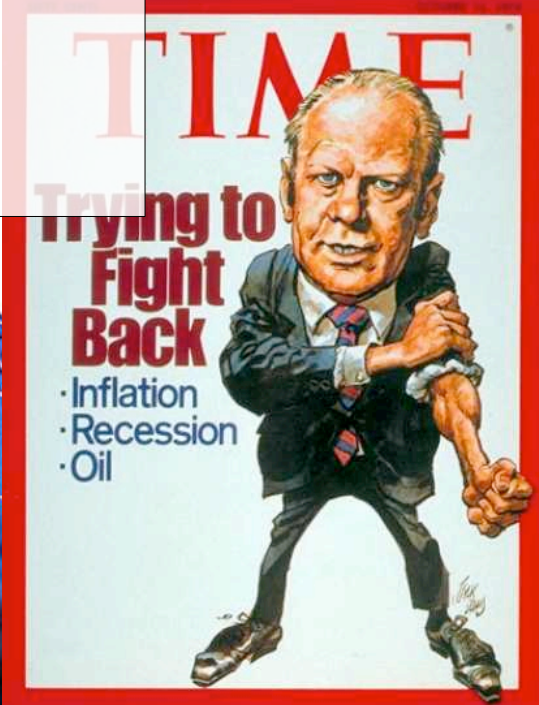
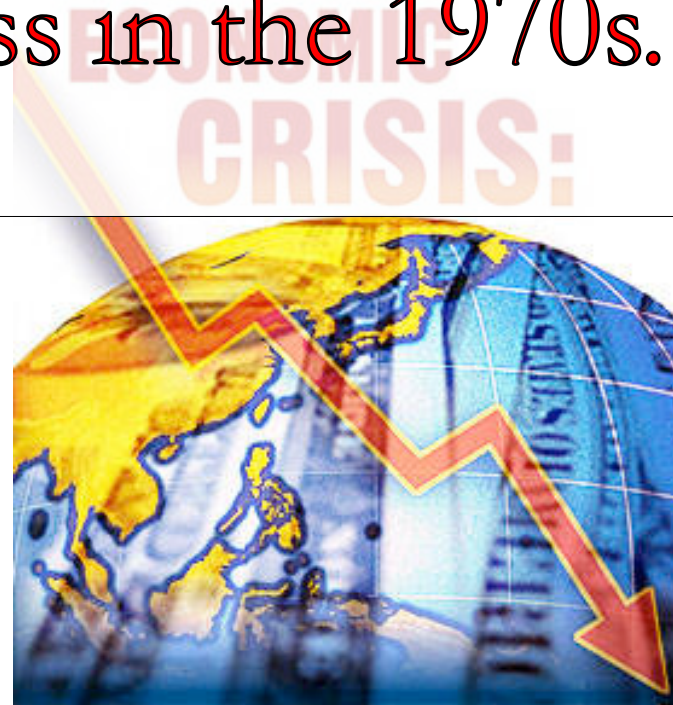
Carter's Accessibility

- Carter held Franklin D. Roosevelt like “Fireside Chats” on radio and TV throughout his administration as a way to stay in touch with the American people.
- Carter struggled to build relationships in Congress & instead relied on a team of advisors from Georgia. (Both parties ultimately opposed most of his budget proposals as a result.)

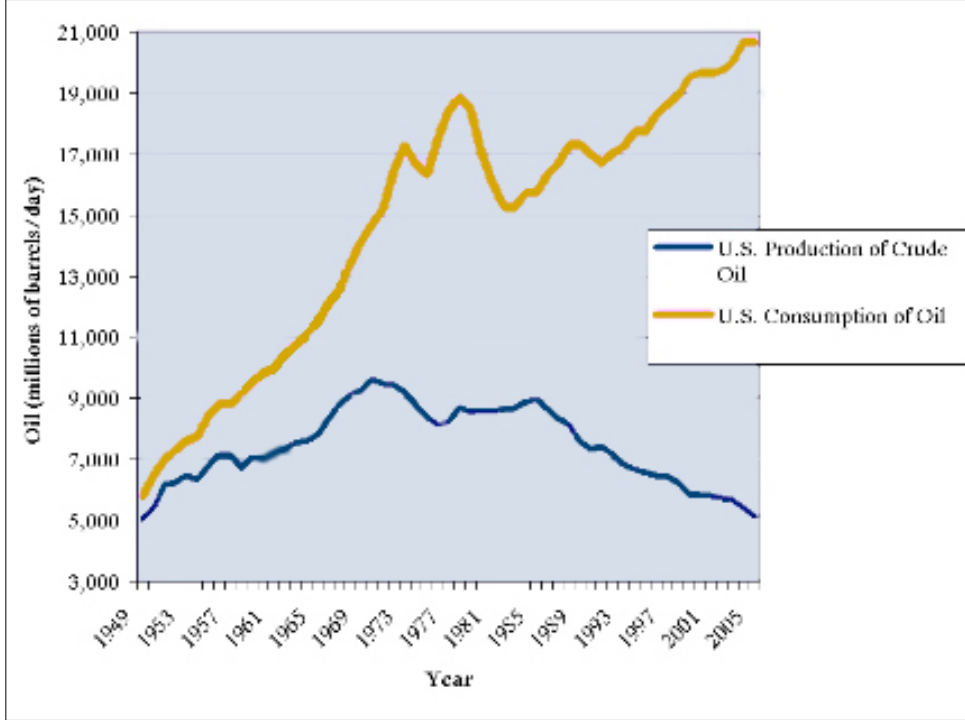


resident Publicly Backs Landestine C.I.A. Activity
FORD OFFERS AMNESTY PROGRAM REQUIRING 2 YEARS PUBLIC WORK; DEFENDS HIS PARDON OF NIXON

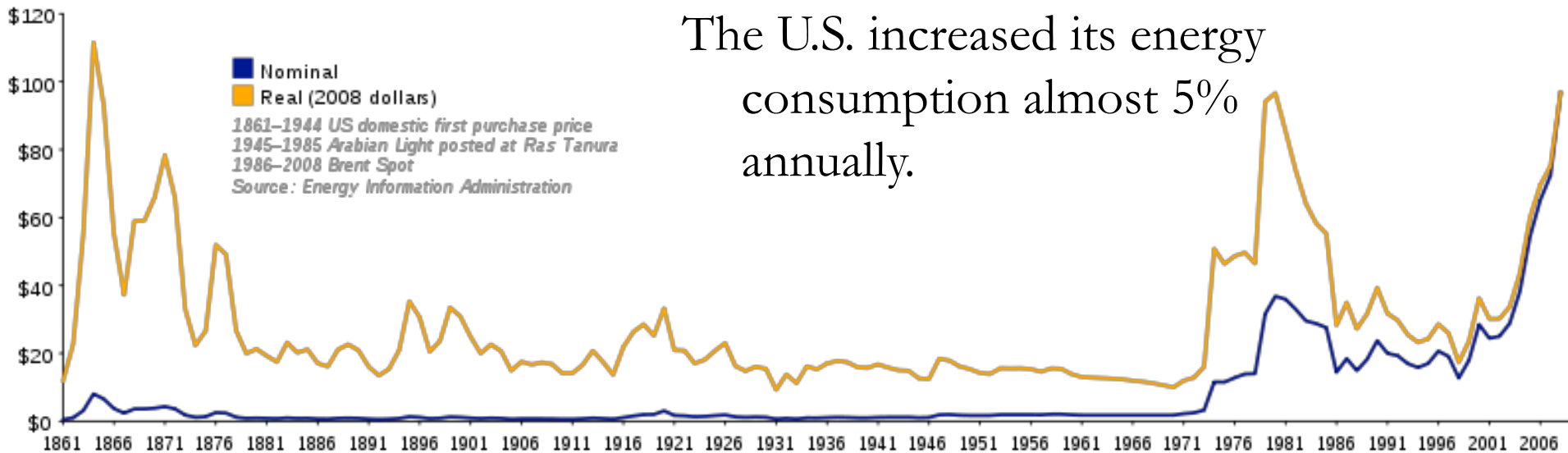
Despite their best efforts, the nation was a mess in the 1970s.



ENERGY: the U.S.' growing dependence on oil was complicated by repeated flare-ups in the Middle East and the U.S. gov't's support for Israel.



The U.S. increased its energy consumption almost 5% annually.



Graph of oil prices from 1861–2007, showing a sharp increase in 1973, and again during the 1979 energy crisis. The orange line is adjusted for inflation.



UP/BETT MANN



Chronicle 1974 / Susan Ehmer

The first fuel shortage occurred in 1973 and the second in the summer of 1979. Violence in the Middle East led to skyrocketing oil prices. Which then led inflation to soar from 7.6% to 11.3%.



Nixon, Ford and Carter's many attempts to solve the crisis failed.

Nixon's Response

- Signed the Emergency Highway Conservation Act. The law offered the states a choice: impose a 55 mph maximum speed limit or forego federal highway funds.
- December 1973: President Nixon announces that the national Christmas tree will not be lit because of the energy crisis brought on by the Arab oil embargo.
- The Nixon Administration began negotiations with Arab oil producers to end the embargo.
- Arab oil producers lifted the embargo in March 1974 but America's oil dependency was an issue which would not be resolved for decades. (Still an issue today!)





Energy Crisis

- Carter considered the energy crisis the most important issue facing the nation and urged Americans to cut their consumption of oil and gas.
- Carter presented Congress with more than 100 proposals on energy conservation and development, and most were opposed. ☹️
- One piece of approved legislation was the National Energy Act that placed a tax on gas-guzzling cars and granted tax credits for the development of alternative energy. This Act slightly eased U.S. dependence on foreign oil.
- Installed solar panels on the roof of the White House. (They were later removed during the Reagan administration.)



Inflation & unemployment continued to rise and the economy worsened throughout the 1970s.

Inflation rose from 6% to over 10% by the end of 1974. This, accompanied by a **growing deficit** (\$2 trillion in 1970) plagued both the Ford & Carter administrations.



Economic Policy

- Ford tried to stop inflation by cutting government spending and raising interest rates.
- The plan backfired and instead caused the **worst economic recession in 40 years.**



Economic Issues continued in the Carter Administration

- During Carter's term the US was in a period of continued **stagflation** (when the interest rate & unemployment rates are high), double-digit inflation and an economic recession.
 - By 1980, inflation had climbed to nearly 14%.
 - The standard of living in the U.S. slipped from first place to fifth place in the world.
 - Carter's popularity as well slipped.



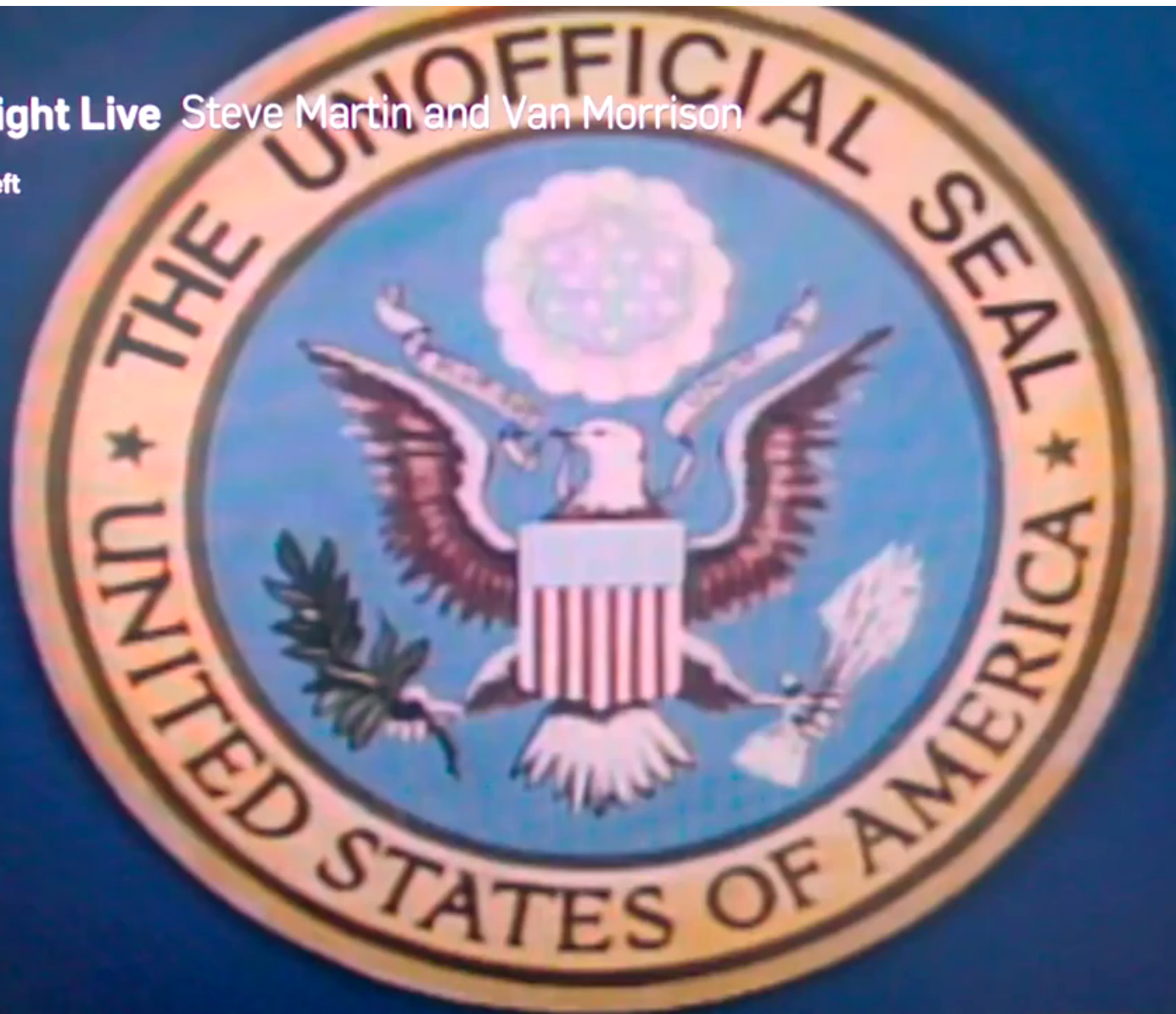
Carter's Struggle – Balance!

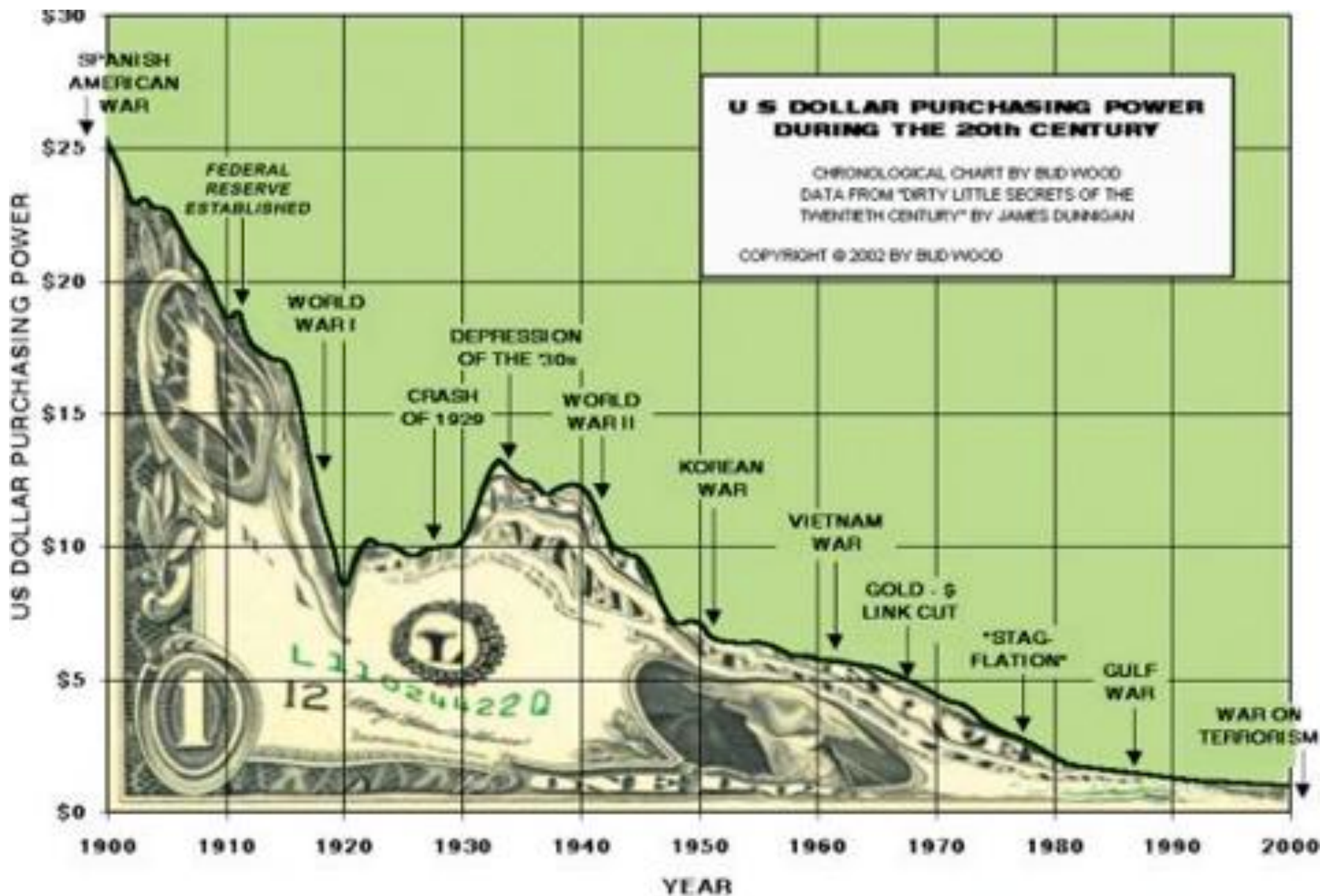
Remember Carter's straight talking, peanut farmer, nice guy background...

You are watching

Saturday Night Live Steve Martin and Van Morrison

1 hour 8 minutes left





Contributing to the Struggling Economy...



Overseas Competition



- Overseas competitors cut into many American markets causing lay-offs, plant closings, and cut backs in the production of iron, steel, rubber, clothing, and automobiles.
- High energy costs + foreign competition + computerized production = companies eliminated tens of thousands of jobs.



GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

GOING OUT
OF BUSINESS

EVERYTHING
MUST
GO!

CLOSING *THIS* STORE

PICTURES
FOR SALE

100-2004-
BUSINESS

GOING OUT-BUSINESS

GOING
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GOING OUT-BUSINESS

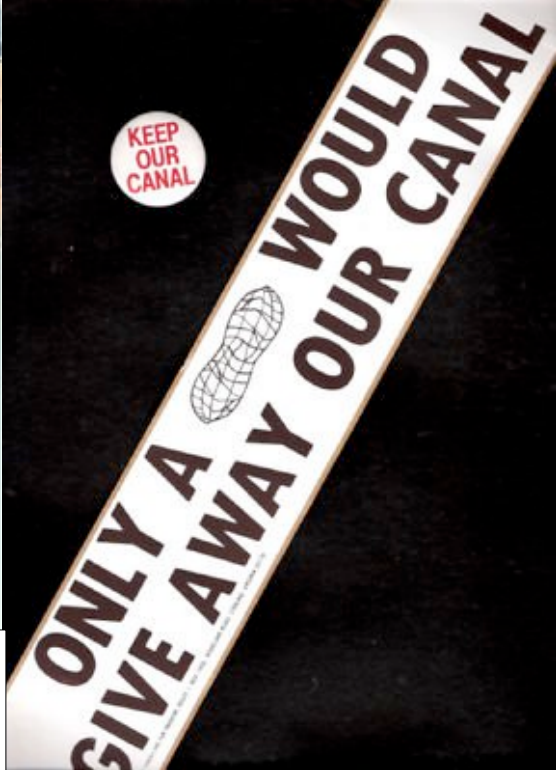
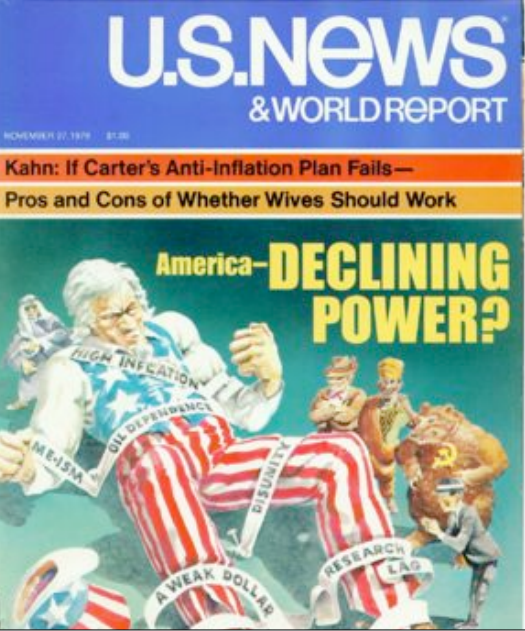
GOING OUT-BUSINESS

GOING OUT-BUSINESS

50 St. Station
Up only

19





Foreign Policy Challenges





Ford's Policy in Southeast Asia

- Vietnam became communist in 1975 – Ford was criticized by some for not doing enough to aid South Vietnam
 - This criticism came in spite of the fact that Ford had asked Congress for over \$722 million to help South Vietnam, but Congress refused.



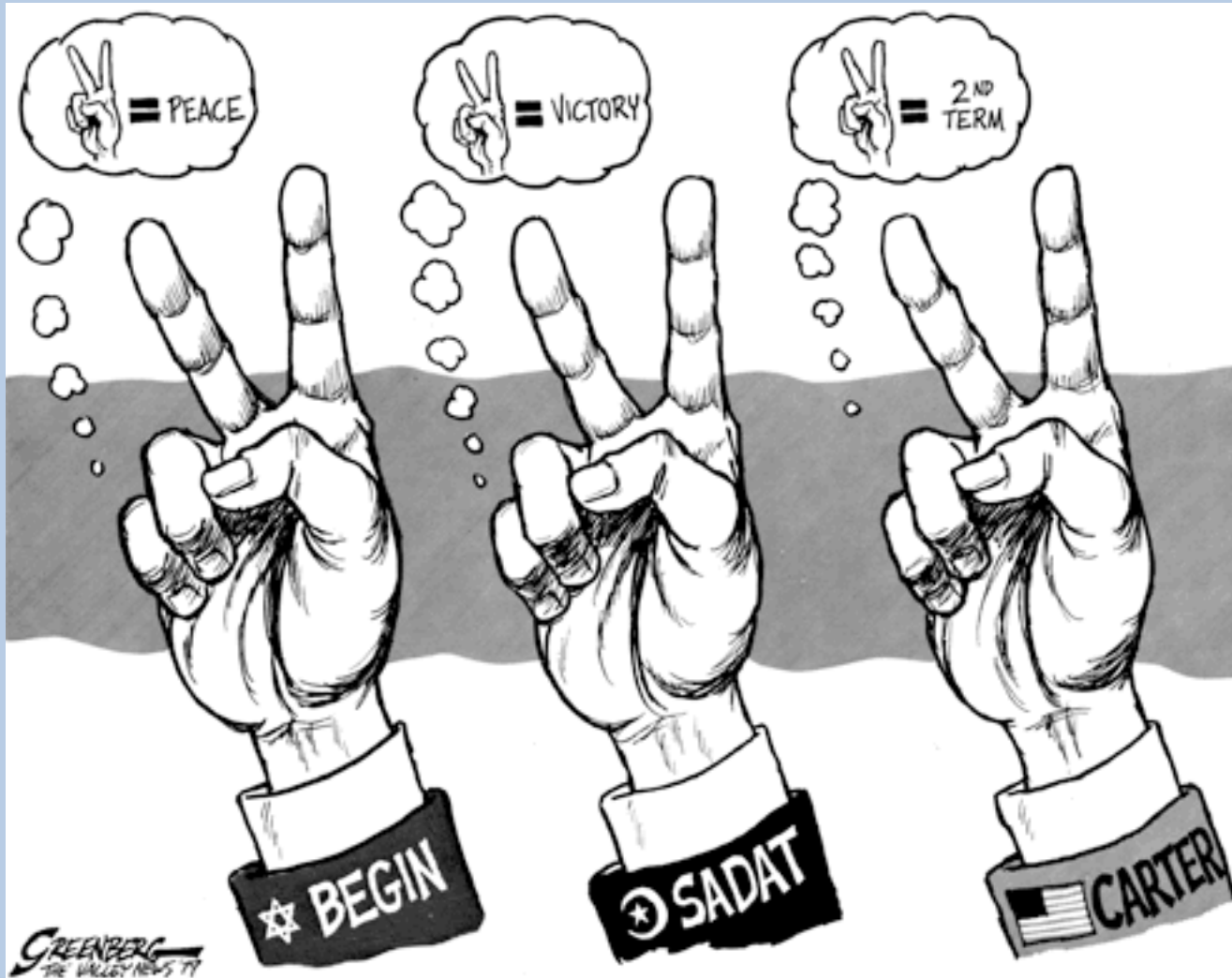
- In 1975, the Communist government of Cambodia seized a U.S. merchant ship in the Gulf of Siam. Cambodia claimed the ship was on a spy mission, which Ford denied.
 - Ford sent the military to rescue 39 crew members aboard the ship. He hadn't received word that Cambodia had already released the entire crew.
 - At first, Americans applauded the show of strength and the return of the crew. Once Americans received news that 15 U.S. soldiers had died in the needless raid, critics said the mission cost more lives than it had saved.

Middle East Peace

- Ford presided over “one of the worst periods in American-Israeli relations.”
- In the Middle East, Carter helped bring about peace between Israel & Egypt.
 - In 1977, Carter met with Egyptian president and Israeli prime minister in Jerusalem to discuss peace between the two nations.
 - When peace talks stalled, Carter invited Sadat and Begin to Camp David.
 - After 12 days of negotiations, the three leaders reached an agreement known as the Camp David Accords (first signed peace agreement with an Arab country.)



Camp David Accords



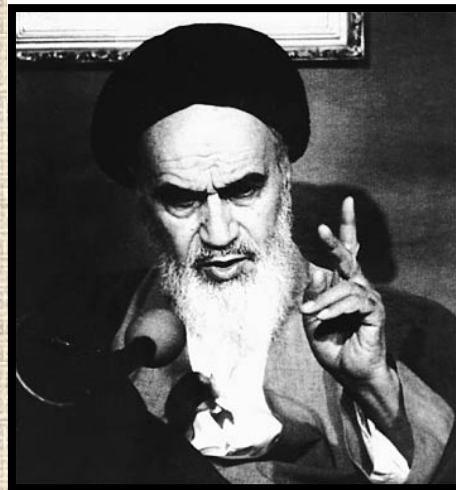
Israeli Prime
Minister

Egyptian
president

* Begin & Sadat would later
be given the 1978 Nobel
Peace Prize for their roles in
this peace treaty.

Iran

- In January 1979, a revolution broke out in Iran.
- The Muslim religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini led rebels to overthrow the Shah of Iran, an ally of the United States.



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Ayatollah Khomeini established a religious state based on strict obedience to the Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam.

Iran Hostage Crisis

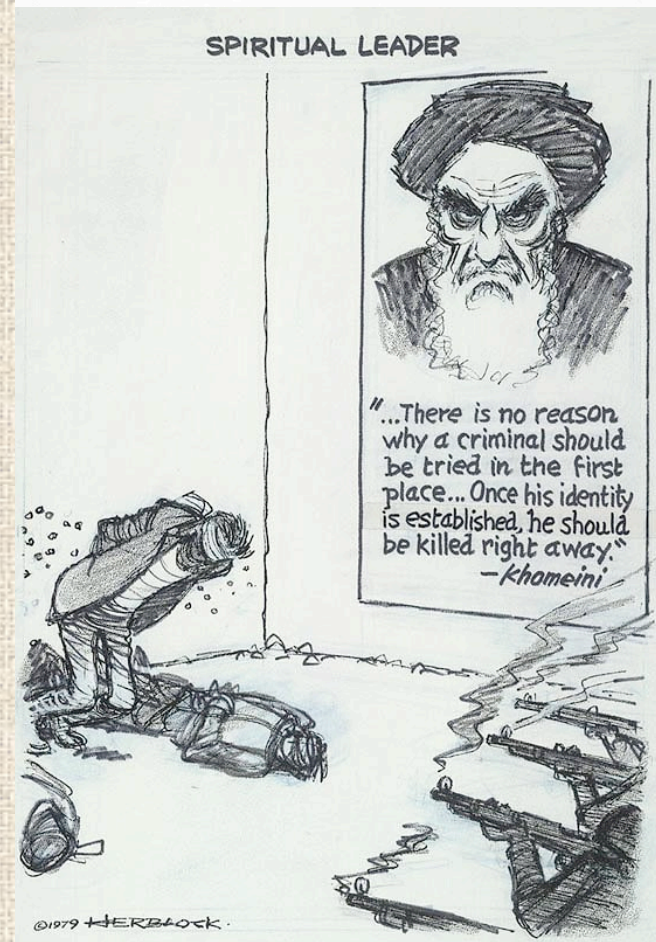
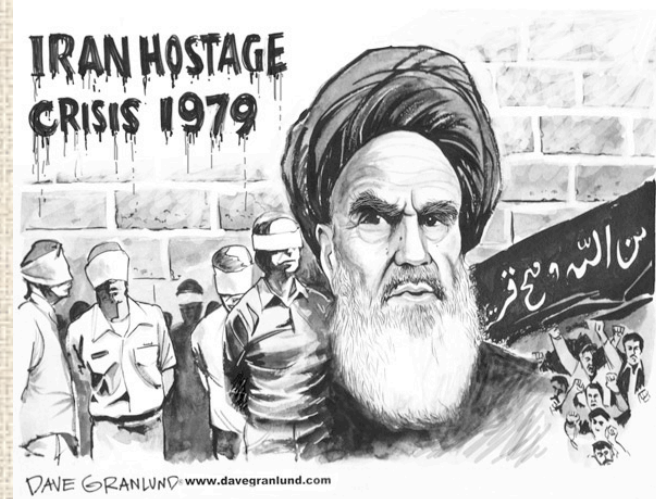
Jan. 16, 1979: The Shah of Iran leaves his country.

April 1, 1979: Khomeini established an Islamic republic in Iran, calling it "the first day of the government of God."

Under Khomeini's fanatic rule, firing squads executed the Shah's political allies.

Oct. 22, 1979: The Shah was allowed to come to the U.S. for gall bladder surgery, heating up the tensions between the two countries even more. Iran's gov't thought it was a plot by the US to gain more power.

Nov. 4, 1979: Khomeini's followers seized the American embassy in Teheran and took hostages.



Iran Hostage Crisis

- The militants ultimately held the 52 Americans hostage for 444 days & demanded that the U.S. send the Shah back to Iran in return for the release of the hostages.







- Nov. 1979, Carter sent negotiators to meet with Khomeini – he refused to meet with them. It wasn't until a year later that Khomeini agreed to negotiate.
- April 1980, Carter cut diplomatic ties with Iran, put in place sanctions and expelled all Iranian diplomats from the U.S.
- April, 1980 Carter took a risk & approved a high-risk rescue operation, called "Desert One," that had been in the works for months.
 - Carter was devastated when he had to abort the mission due to three malfunctioning helicopters. Another helicopter crashed into a C-130 transport plane while taking off, 8 servicemen were killed and three more were injured.

Negotiations took place from Nov. 1980-Jan. 1981.

An agreement was reached in Dec. but the Iranians waited until the day that the new president, Ronald Reagan was sworn in on January 20, 1981 to release the hostages.



The Iran Hostage Crisis became Carter's most tragic defeat.

WHO'S THE WORST PRESIDENT EVER? CONTEST

UM... THERE'S BEEN A
MISTAKE, MR. CARTER.
WHEN WE ASKED YOU
ONTO THE SHOW, WE
DIDN'T MEAN AS A
JUDGE...





Since leaving office, Jimmy Carter has become the most active ex-President in the country's history -- a humanitarian activist, best-selling author and traveling ambassador of peace, resolving international disputes and helping to monitor elections in newly emerging democracies.



Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for his "untiring effort" to seek peaceful resolution for international conflicts and to advance basic human rights and democracy on several continents.

