

The 1970's

Post-Watergate



Presidential Pardon

- After Nixon resigned, **Gerald Ford** took over the Presidency
- The **only President never to be elected** by the American people
- **Issued a Presidential pardon to Nixon** so that the country could begin to heal



The War Powers Act

- Passed by Congress to **limit the President's emergency powers** in sending troops overseas
- Seen as necessary **after Vietnam and abuse of Presidential power**



Jimmy Carter

- A major reason he won the Presidency in 1976 was because of the public's distrust of the Washington establishment after Watergate
- **He seemed like a down-to-earth, soft spoken and humble man**



Carter's weakness

- Carter's gentleness also worked against him as he **lacked the ability to deal well with Congress** and was **not viewed as a "strong" leader by the rest of the world**



Human Rights

- As the **cornerstone of his foreign policy**, President Carter promoted human rights



Economic Problems

- Like Ford before him, Carter faced the severe economic problems of **high inflation** and **high unemployment**
- **Oil prices shot up** (almost doubled from 1973 to 1974) and **gasoline shortages** caused **long lines at the gas pumps**



Failure of Technology

- The unshakable American faith in technology was severely shaken by a **faltering auto industry, decaying infrastructure, and a near nuclear meltdown** at the **Three Mile Island** reactor in Pennsylvania



Three Mile Island ~ 1979

- A nuclear reactor at the electric generating plant in Pennsylvania lost coolant water, thereby allowing an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction, which generated tremendous heat and initiated a **partial meltdown of the reactor's intensely radioactive core**



China Syndrome

- A fictional movie with this title had just been released showing the catastrophic effects of a nuclear meltdown that would cause the reactor's core to burn it's way straight through the earth "all the way to China"



Nuclear Meltdown

- People near the site were warned to stay indoors and pregnant women were told to evacuate the area for fear of radioactive steam and gases that had been released into the atmosphere
- A few years later (1986) the *Chernobyl* disaster in the Soviet Ukraine was much worse



Yet another failure

- Three Mile Island seemed to many people just one more in a long string of terrible failures of American business, technology, and know-how
- People questioned the use of nuclear power for energy with the dangers it presented



Iranian Hostage Crisis

- In 1979 a revolution in Iran toppled the longtime ruler (the Shah) and U.S. ally who fled into exile
- After becoming ill and coming to the U.S. for treatment, Iranians protested when 500 of them **stormed the U.S. Embassy and took 66 embassy employees hostage**, demanding the return of the Shah



Failed Rescue

- President Carter refused this demand and instead authorized an army Special Forces unit to attempt a rescue
- Errors led to aborting the rescue mission and this was seen as a humiliating defeat



Finally Released

- After agreeing not to interfere in Iranian affairs and a lifting of U.S. sanctions the Iranian govt. **finally agreed to release the hostages over a year later**



Delayed Release

- Despite signing the agreement while Carter was still President, the release of the hostages was **deliberately delayed until the day Carter left office and Reagan took over**



The Reagan “Miracle”

- This event was viewed as the crowning failure of the Carter administration and was **regarded as a kind of miracle performed by the incoming President**



Election of 1980

- **Hostage crisis** had been a **major reason** why **Reagan defeated Carter** in the election of 1980

