

SSUSH22 – Analyze U.S. international and domestic policies including their influences on technological advancements and social change during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations.

a. Analyze the international policies and actions taken as a response to the Cold War including the opening of and establishment of diplomatic relations with China, the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the War Powers Act, the Camp David Accords, and Carter's response to the 1979 Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis.

The Cold War conflicts in Korea and Vietnam during the 1950s and 1960s gave way to efforts for deescalating the tension with world rivals. Nixon's two terms as President were marked by tremendous highs and lows. Nixon won the election in 1968 based on promises to end the war in Vietnam and to restore law and order in the United States. His efforts to secure more peaceful diplomacy with China and the Soviet Union helped to win him a second term as President. However, shortly after he was reelected in 1972, the Nixon administration fell amid domestic controversy surrounding the Watergate scandal. Under the Carter administration, the emphasis in world affairs began to shift to the Middle East.

The anti-war movement regained some support following Nixon's escalation of the Vietnam War in 1970. Instead of ending the war as he promised in the 1968 Presidential campaign, it seemed as though the war was actually expanding. President Nixon invaded Cambodia in 1970, which touched off widespread protests. One such protest was at Kent State University in Ohio. Four students were killed and several other students were wounded by the Ohio National Guard. The Vietnam anti-war movement was a key factor in the United States' decision to **withdraw from Southeast Asia**. Nixon's foreign policy goal was to establish cordial relations with the world's leading nations. The major sticking point that stalled improved relations with these other countries was the Vietnam War. In an effort to end the fighting in Vietnam, Nixon worked at **normalizing relations with the People's Republic of China**. Initially, China ignored the United States' overtures, but continued conflict between the Soviet Union and China over their shared frontier led the Chinese to secretly approach the Nixon administration.

In February 1972, Nixon, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, key advisors, and the Nixon family visited China in a well-publicized trip. Nixon and Kissinger met with Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong and China's Premier Zhou Enlai. The United States agreed to a One China policy, which meant that Taiwan was part of China and not a separate entity. The United States would assist in seeking a peaceful solution to the China-Taiwan issue. In addition to opening China up for future business relations, Nixon's visit led the Soviet Union to abandon support for North Vietnam. The Soviets also agreed to negotiate a new nuclear disarmament treaty. North Vietnam, having lost the support of both the Soviet Union and China, concluded a peace treaty with the United States in early 1973.

One key action taken in the United States following the Vietnam War was to redistribute power concerning military action among the federal branches of government. The President had been given immense unilateral power through the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to take any measures he deemed necessary to protect the United States. The Congress had been powerless through much of the Vietnam War to adjust the level of troop commitment to the region because of the Gulf of Tonkin's unlimited provisions. Once the war was over, the Congress passed the **War Powers Act** in 1973. The provisions of the new policy require the Congress to authorize troop commitments within a certain time frame. The measure redistributed power to conduct military operations between the executive and legislative branches.

Nixon resigned from office amid the Watergate scandal (discussed in SSUSH22b) and was replaced by Gerald Ford. Ford continued Nixon's foreign policy objectives. He continued to improve relations with both China and the Soviet Union. He began a re-assessment of U.S.-Israeli relations following the breakdown of Israeli-Egyptian peace talks. Ford also was in office when the South Vietnamese government collapsed. The communist North Vietnamese successfully took over South Vietnam in 1975, only a few years after the peace terms had been negotiated. Thus, the efforts of the United States to stop the spread of communism were unsuccessful in protecting South Vietnam from takeover. Ford was not re-elected.

In 1976, James (Jimmy) Earl Carter was elected President. Carter based his foreign policy on human rights. In 1978, Carter brokered a deal known as the **Camp David Accords** to end the Israeli-Egyptian conflict. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin ultimately signed a peace treaty. The two adversaries had been at the Presidential retreat known as Camp David in Maryland for almost two weeks of negotiations led by President Carter. In the resulting treaty, Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and Egypt agreed to recognize the legitimacy of Israel.

While the Camp David Accords were viewed by many to be a diplomatic success in setting the Middle East on a path toward peace, Carter's administration was rocked by other challenges in the region. The United States supported the authoritarian regime of the Shah of Iran. This led to a break in U.S.-Iranian relations. Islamic fundamentalists overthrew

the **Iranian government in a 1979 revolution**. The revolt marked the beginning of a new era in the region. The fundamentalists hated the United States for its support of Israel and for what was perceived as a corruption of the Islamic World by western ideology.

At this time, Iranian-backed terrorist groups increasingly targeted the United States and U.S. interests abroad for terrorist attacks. As a part of the revolution, the Iranians seized control of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran in November 1979. The **embassy staff was held hostage** until January 1981. After negotiations failed to obtain the hostages' release, a rescue attempt was made, but it also failed. The failure of President Carter to obtain the release of the hostages in Iran was a major reason for Carter's re-election loss in 1980.

Define

Cold War

War Powers Act

Camp David Accords

Iranian Hostage Crisis

1. What President normalized relations with China?
2. Explain how the U.S. and China got on better terms.
3. What was the War Powers Act?
4. Why did President Nixon end up resigning from office?
5. What were the Camp David Accords?
6. What happened in Iran in 1979? What was the impact on Jimmy Carter's presidency?