

# **The Reagan to Obama Years**

A Presentation Based on the  
Georgia Standards of Excellence  
(GSE) Objectives for High School  
History Students

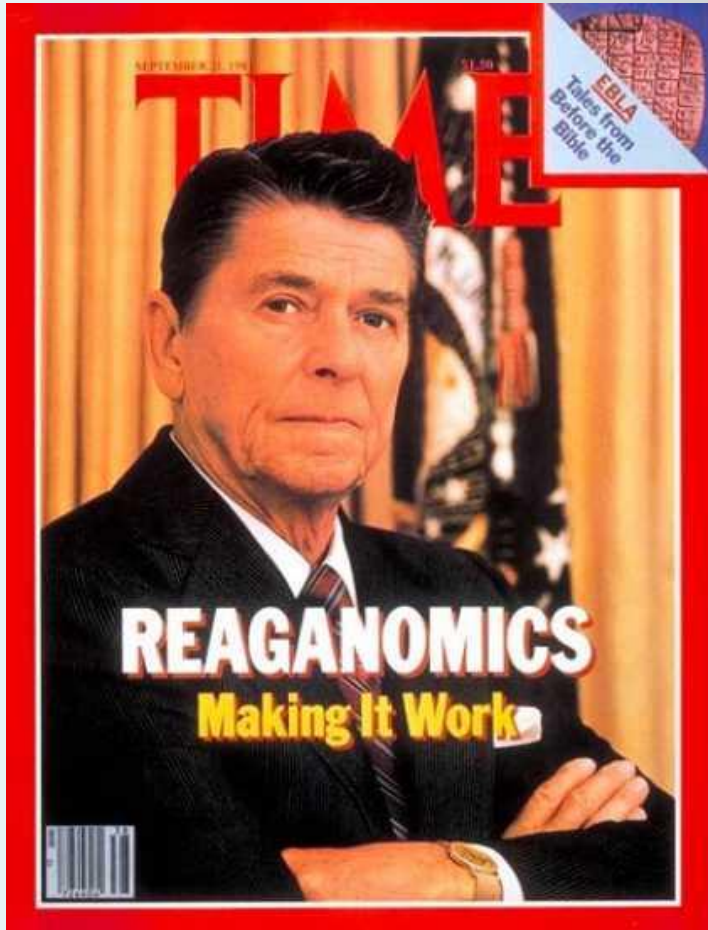
- SSUSH23 Assess the political, economic, and technological changes during the **Reagan**, George H.W. **Bush**, **Clinton**, George W. **Bush**, and **Obama** administrations.
- a. Analyze challenges faced by recent presidents including the **collapse of the Soviet Union**, **Clinton's impeachment**, the attacks of **September 11**, 2001, and the **war against terrorism**.
- b. Examine **economic policies of recent presidents** including **Reaganomics**.
- c. Examine the influence of **technological changes** on society including the **personal computer**, the **Internet**, and **social media**.
- d. Examine the historic nature of the presidential **election of 2008**.

# President Ronald Reagan

- Ronald Reagan, a Republican, was elected President in 1980 and served two terms (1981-1989).
- One of his first priorities in office was to fix the nation's economy.
- Dubbed “Reaganomics,” Reagan's economic policy was based on a “trickle down” theory, that is, that as businesses recovered, so the benefits would “trickle down” to employees and the rest of the nation.
- The components of Reaganomics were:
  1. Reduce government spending
  2. Reduce income tax and capital gains tax
  3. Reduce government regulation
  4. Control the money supply to reduce inflation



# Reaganomics



- Reagan's deregulation led to "price wars," lower prices, and increased spending by consumers.
- Though Reagan's policy had many critics, by 1983 the U.S. economy had rebounded.

# The Iran-Contra Scandal

- In 1979, communist rebels overthrew the U.S. supported government in Nicaragua, and began accepting aid from Cuba and Russia



- Why would the U.S. be concerned by a communist government in Nicaragua? Stopping the spread of Communism was called what?

# The Iran-Contra Scandal

- The Reagan administration began to secretly send aid to Nicaraguan “Contras,” rebels who wanted to overthrow the Communist government.
- When Congress learned of this secret aid, it banned Reagan from sending aid to the rebels.
- Individuals within the Reagan administration also secretly sold weapons to Iran (in hopes of the return of American hostages in Lebanon) and sent the profits from the sales to the Nicaraguan rebels.

# The Iran-Contra Scandal

- In November 1986, Congress learned of the Iran-Contra connection and began an investigation.
- Though Reagan approved the sale of arms to Iran, he said was not informed about the aid going to Nicaragua.
- Marine Colonel Oliver North was fired for secretly raising money to send to the Contras.

Marine Colonel  
Oliver North



# Collapse of the Soviet Union

- Reagan and Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev met in 1987, agreeing to remove some nuclear weapons from Europe.
- This agreement led Gorbachev to reduce Soviet spending on defense and aid to other communist-controlled countries in Europe.
- The U.S. also negotiated with Saudi Arabia and other OPEC nations to lower oil prices, and the Soviet Union began losing income as oil prices dropped.





# End of the Cold War: Collapse of Communism in Europe

- Economic problems continually plagued the Soviet Union and its satellite states.
- In 1989, the communist governments in Poland, Hungary and East Germany were replaced by democratic forms.
  - Poland's *Solidarity* labor union movement spearheaded reforms
  - Most symbolic was the November 9, 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall which led to the reunification of Germany as a democracy.





# Collapse of the Soviet Union

- When **George H. W. Bush** became President in 1989, he continued Reagan's friendly relationship with Gorbachev & Russia.
- In 1989, several former Soviet controlled countries were allowed to form non-communist governments.
- In November of 1989, the Berlin Wall, which separated East and West Berlin, was torn down.
- Trying to preserve their power, Communist leaders and some Russian Army officers tried to overthrow Gorbachev in a *coup d'etat*.
- Their coup was unsuccessful: in December 1991, the communist-controlled Soviet Union collapsed, and Gorbachev announced the end of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
- All but three of the former Soviet states later joined in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

# Reasons for the Collapse of the Soviet Union

1. Economic planning failed to meet needs of the State.
2. Economic decline chiefly because:
  - a. Drop in oil prices hurt Soviet economy
  - b. The continual arms race with the U.S.
3. Ethnic tensions in the country. (Non–Russians were a majority and resisted assimilation into a Russianized State.)
4. The ideology of Communism was never embraced by the populace.
5. The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.

# The Persian Gulf War: Operation Desert Storm

- On August 2, 1990, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq ordered an invasion of its neighboring country Kuwait.
- Hussein wanted to take over the oil fields of Kuwait.
- U.S. President Bush issued an ultimatum to Hussein to withdraw. He did not.



**Saddam Hussein**

# Persian Gulf War: Operation Desert Storm

- President Bush convinced a coalition of nations to force the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait and back into Iraq.
- By February 28, 1991, the coalition had accomplished that victory.
- Under the aegis of the United Nations, sanctions were placed on Iraq, including a “no fly zone” and prohibition of making or obtaining weapons of mass destruction.

# The U.S. Economy Under George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton

- Although President G.H.W. Bush's popularity briefly soared as a result of the Persian Gulf War, he was defeated in his re-election bid chiefly because of an economic downturn.
- Bush had made a campaign promise in 1988 of "no new taxes," but as a result of economic circumstances he had to renege on that promise.
- During his successor Bill Clinton's presidency, the economy rebounded with reduced federal spending and a reduction in the budget deficit.

# Continuing the Chinese Regime: Tiananmen Square, June 3-4, 1989



Tiananmen Square 1989  
(CNN)

- A park in Beijing, the capital of China, called Tiananmen Square has been a rallying point for student demonstrations for decades.
- In the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989 (also called the June Fourth Incident or 6/4), several hundred people were killed by the Chinese Army and thousands were injured as they demonstrated for increased freedoms.
- Ironically, the square derives its name from the massive stone *Tiananmen*, or Gate of Heavenly Peace

from <http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-282100> and  
<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-9072375>



# The Clinton Presidency



- William J. (“Bill”) Clinton defeated George H. W. Bush in the 1992 election.
- President Clinton, a Democrat, had a mixed relationship with Congress, which had a majority Republican membership.
- Early on, Clinton faced Congressional resistance to many of his proposed policies.

# North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

- NAFTA was a means to open up freer world trade, and to drop trade barriers between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
- Though Clinton faced some resistance from Democrats in Congress, he was able to gain the support of Republicans and get NAFTA approved.

# The Impeachment of President Clinton

- In January 1998 Clinton was linked to an improper relationship with a White House intern.
- For the next 7 months Clinton denied a relationship ever existed between the two.



# The Impeachment of President Clinton

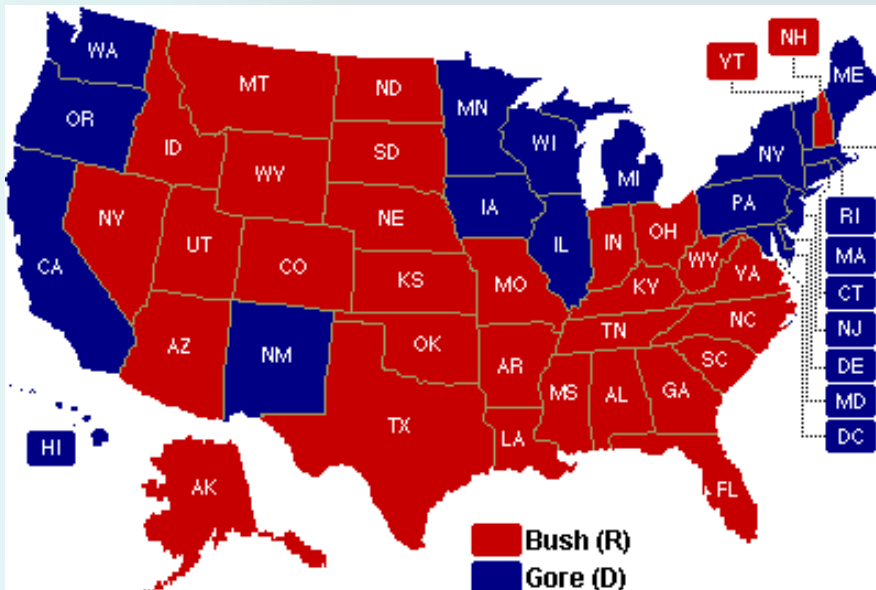
- By mid-August 1998, Clinton finally acknowledged that he had had an inappropriate relationship.
- In January 1999, the House of Representatives began impeachment hearings, charging Clinton had committed perjury and obstruction of justice during the investigation of this affair.
- **Impeachment** is the process of bringing charges against a public official.
- In February 1999, the Senate **acquitted** Clinton of the charges.
- Clinton became only the second President to face impeachment.

# The 2000 Presidential Election and Its Outcome

- The 2000 Presidential election pitted Republican **George W. Bush** against Vice-President **Al Gore**.
- For a person to win the Presidential election, they needed 270 electoral votes
- Though Gore won the popular vote, the electoral vote came down to the state of Florida.
- The results were so close in Florida that under state law a recount had to be conducted.

# 2000 Presidential Election

- By November 2000, the state of Florida, able to only count a percentage of the cast ballots, declared George Bush the winner by 537 votes.



# 2000 Presidential Election

- Al Gore then sued, arguing the results of the election were flawed.
- Because of the importance of the case and the Constitutional requirement to cast the electoral vote by a certain date, the issue went immediately to the Supreme Court in a case called ***Bush v. Gore***.
- The Court ruled in a 5-4 vote that there was insufficient time under the law for a full recount.
- The ruling left George W. Bush the winner of the 2000 Presidential election.

# The Electoral College and the 2000 Presidential election

- Be aware that George W. Bush won fewer popular votes than Al Gore, but Bush earned more electoral votes because of the “winner-take-all” arrangement of the electoral college system.

	<b>Bush</b>	<b>Gore</b>
Total (Popular) Votes	<b>50,<u>4</u>56,062</b>	<b>50,<u>9</u>96,582</b>
Total Electoral Votes	<b>271</b>	<b>266</b>



# Hussein and bin Laden

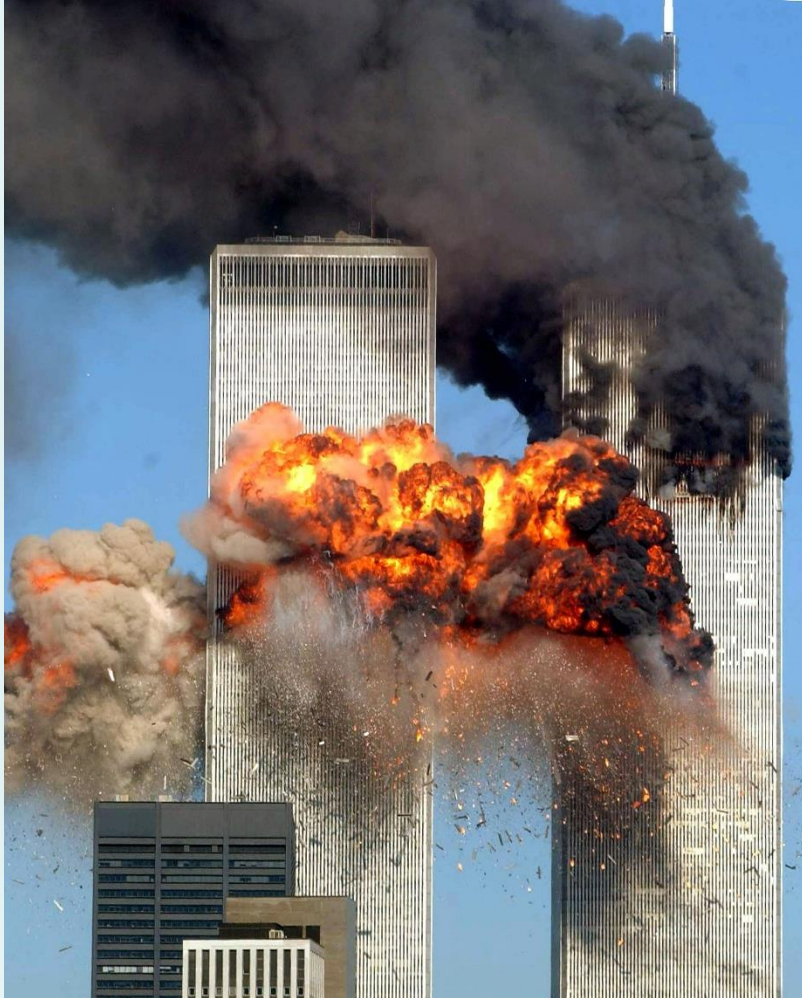


**Saddam Hussein, Iraqi Dictator**



**Osama bin Laden, leader of al Qaeda**

# 9/11



# 9/11

- On September 11, 2001, hijackers took over four jetliners, crashing two into the World Trade Center Towers, one into the Pentagon, and one in a Pennsylvania field (after, it is believed, passengers tried to retake control of the plane.)



# Pennsylvania's 9/11 Memorial



# The War on Terrorism

- The attacks were quickly linked to a terrorist named **Osama bin Laden** and his group **Al Qaeda**.
- In 1996, bin Laden issued a declaration of jihad against the United States; in 1998 he issued (without authority) a fatwa (religious order) for Muslims to kill all Americans.
- President Bush ordered air strikes and ground troops into Afghanistan, where bin Laden kept his headquarters.
- The U.S. eventually tracked bin Laden down to a compound in Pakistan, and he was killed by a U.S. Navy Seal team on May 2, 2011.



# The Patriot Act

- As part of the war on terrorism, President Bush approved the Patriot Act.
- This law gave authorities the power to detain foreign terror suspects for seven days without charging them with a crime.
- It also allowed law enforcement to search private data and records to prevent future terror attacks.
- Some people complained that this law violated people's rights to privacy, but most Americans approved of this measure.

# Department of Homeland Security

- Another of Bush's responses to the war on terrorism was the creation of a new government department called the Department of Homeland Security.
- This department is responsible for protecting the U.S. from terrorist attacks as well as responding to natural disasters.

# War in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom

- After 9/11, the United States invaded Afghanistan because the Taliban government allowed al Qaeda to train in that country and was believed to be sheltering Osama bin Laden.
- The U.S. military, with the help of allied and Afghanistan's Northern Alliance forces, overthrew the Taliban government and began the hunt for terrorist cells and bin Laden.
- As of today, the U.S. military continues to occupy Afghanistan in efforts to rid the country of terrorists, secure its territory, and to help it rebuild and become stable.



# The Iraq War

## (aka Second Persian Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn)

- In 2003, concerned that Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein was supporting terrorists and hiding weapons of mass destruction that threatened the U.S. and its allies, President Bush ordered an attack on Iraq.
- U.S. troops took over most of the country within six weeks.
- Hussein was captured in December 2003, but no weapons of mass destruction were ever found.
- Hussein was later convicted of crimes by an Iraqi court, sentenced to death, and executed.
- The U.S. military remained in Iraq to help rid the country of terrorists, keep the peace, and help Iraq rebuild.
- In 2009, the U.S. began withdrawing its military from Iraq. By December 18, 2011, all U.S. combat forces had exited the country. A small number of U.S. military and civilian advisors remain there.

# 2008 Presidential Election

1. Barack Obama was the first African-American President of the United States.
2. An estimated 136.6 million Americans voted in this election, up from 122.3 million in 2004. . . [for a] 64.1% voter turnout rate, the highest since 1908.
3. States achieved record voter turnout numbers of African-Americans and Hispanics.
4. Obama raised more money in this election than any candidate in history.
5. He won a second term in the 2012 election.



# President Obama and the Great Recession

- Partly attributed to massive government spending during the war on terrorism, the country entered another economic setback beginning in December 2007.
- This was the worst economic setback since the Great Depression.
- During this recession, the unemployment rate reached double digits.
- After Obama took office in 2009, his administration introduced an economic stimulus package to jump-start economic recovery.
- Although this recession technically ended in June 2009, the subsequent global recession contributed to American economic woes through at least mid-2011.

# The Digital Age and the Computer Revolution

- Although mechanical computational devices had been used as early as the AD1600s, the earliest devices that relate to what we call computers today emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Early digital computation machines such as ENIAC were developed and used by universities, research labs and the military.
- However, it was not until the **late 1970s** when the first **desktop-sized personal computers** were available.
- In the 1980s wireless cellular telephones were available.
- Today, we have smartphones in our pockets that have considerably more computer power than the gigantic mainframes in the 1940s to 1960s.

# The Internet and the World Wide Web

- The Internet was designed beginning in the late 1950s by ARPA, an association of universities, research labs and the U.S. Department of Defense Internet service first became widely available to the general public in the 1990s.
- The World Wide Web is only one part of the overall Internet system, but browser based-communications developed in 1989 led to wide-scale acceptance by the general public.
- Still the internet also includes e-mail, instant messaging, user groups and many other functional elements.
- In all, computers and the Internet have made people, industries and governments more productive than before their existence.

# Social Media

- Social Media allows people to create and participate in personalized or custom-tailored virtual communities.
- Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are just a few of the most popular social media outlets by which people chat and post text video and audio messages.
- Social Media lets friends and acquaintances communicate, but it can also be a platform for cyber bullying or misleading messages.

# Virtues and Dangers of the Internet and Social Media

- There are positive and negative aspects of digital life.
- A wide range of news and information is available on the Internet, but one must be careful to discern what is credible or reliable and what is not.
- For example, the Internet makes commerce fast and selection nearly unlimited; conversely, people participate in black market transactions of illegal materials and services via the dark web.
- The Internet allows people to communicate with others throughout the world, but some use it in predatory or criminal ways.
- Viruses and data breaches are also negative consequences of the digital era.

- See USH PowerPoints - SSUSH23 - GSE Based - Addendum - History of Computers.ppt