

The cold war early years essay sample

[War](#)



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America emerged from World War II as the world's strongest power and commenced a postwar economic boom that lasted for two decades. A bulging population migrated to the suburbs and sunbelt, leaving the cities increasingly to minorities and the poor.

The end of WWII left the United States and the Soviet Union as the two dominant world powers, and they soon became locked in a “ cold war” confrontation. The Cold War spread from Europe to become a global ideological conflict between democracy and communism. Among its effects were a nasty hot war in Korea and a domestic crusade against “ disloyalty.”

In the immediate postwar years there were widespread fears of a return to a depression economy. But, fueled by cheap energy, increased workers productivity, and government programs like the GI Bill of Rights, the economy began a spectacular expansion that lasted from 1950 to 1970. This burst of affluence transformed American society, and particularly drew more women into the workforce.

Footloose Americans migrated to the Sunbelts of the South and West, and to the growing suburbs, leaving the northeastern cities with poorer populations. Families grew rapidly, as the “ baby boom” created a population bulge that would last for decades.

The Yalta agreement near the end of WWII left major issues undecided and created controversy over postwar relations with the Soviet Union. With feisty Truman in the White House, the two new superpowers soon found themselves at odds over Eastern Europe, Germany, and the Middle East.

The Truman Doctrine announced military aid and an ideological crusade against international communism. The Marshall Plan provided the economic assistance to starving and communist-threatened Europe, which soon joined the United States in the NATO military alliance.

The Cold War and revelations of spying aroused deep fears of communist subversion at home that culminated in the McCarthy witch-hunts. Truman overcame Democratic divisions to win an underdog victory in 1948.

The Communist Chinese won a civil war against the Nationalists. North Korea invaded South Korea, and the Americans and Chinese joined in a seesaw war that ended in a bloody stalemate.

Historian's viewpoint:

–Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1984* (1985)—his thesis: The United States was primarily responsible for the Cold War

“ Having failed to budge the Russians in face to face negotiations, even when backed by atomic bombs, the State Department next tried to buckle Stalin's iron fence with economic pressures. ...More important, it made American officials ponder the awful possibility that Stalin's ambitions included not only strategic positions in Eastern Europe, but the imposition of Communist regimes upon Asia and the Middle East. Stating the Soviet dictator's alternatives in this way no doubt badly distorts his true policies.... Stalin's thrust after 1944 were rooted in the Soviet's desire to secure certain specific Western encirclement of Russia.... However, American officials saw little reason to worry about such distinctions.”

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–John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origin of the Cold War* (1972)

—his thesis: the Cold War was caused primarily by Soviet aggression

“ If one must assign responsibility for the Cold War, the most meaningful way to proceed is to ask which side had the greater opportunity to accommodate itself, at least in part, to the other’s position, given the range of alternatives as they appeared at the time. Revisionists have argued that American policy-makers possessed greater freedom of action, but their view ignores the constraints imposed by domestic policies.... The Russian dictator was immune from pressures of Congress, public opinion, or the press.... This is not to say that Stalin wanted a Cold War.... But his absolute powers did give him more chances to surmount the internal restraints on his policy than were available to his democratic counterparts in the West.”

Terms:

Taft-Hartley Act (1947)

National income and unemployment 1945-1960

Housewife vs. worker

Social mobility

Sunbelt, Frostbelt, Rustbelt

Suburbssuburbanites

Federal Housing Authority (FHA)

Levittown, New Jersey

“ white flight” “ black, brown, and broke”

Northgate mall

‘ baby boom’

Truman as the “ accidental president”

Yalta

Chiang Kai-shek

Soviet/U. S. ideology

United Nations Security Council

Iron Curtain speech

Germany as four zones—Berlin?

Berlin Airlift (1949)

X-Article George Kennan Containment

Truman Doctrine, 1947

Marshall Plan, 1947

Greece and Turkey

Czechoslovakia

National Security Act CIA Department of Defense

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Warsaw Pact

Truman’s stained record—China?

Soviet atomic bomb, 1949

U. S. H-bomb, 1952

Soviet H-bomb, 1953

Arms race

Loyalty Review Board

House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)

Richard Nixon and Alger Hiss pumpkin tapes

Sen. Joseph McCarthy

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg

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Fair Deal (1949) Minimum wage, Housing Act (1949), Social Security Act (1950) Dean Acheson Korea 38th parallel MacArthur vs. Truman

Past AP test questions

APUSH Study Guide 37

We Like Ike—The Eisenhower Years: 1952-1960

Themes/Constructs:

The Eisenhower years were characterized by prosperity and moderate conservatism at home and by ups and downs within the Cold War abroad.

Using the new media of television to enhance his great personality, grandfatherly “ Ike” was ideally suited to soothe an America badly shaken by the Cold War and Korea.

Eisenhower was slow to go after McCarthy, but the demagogue’s bubble finally burst after he attacked the military. Eisenhower also reacted cautiously to the beginnings of the civil rights movement but sent troops to Little Rock to enforce the rulings of the Supreme Court. While his domestic policies were moderately conservative, they left most of the New Deal in place.

Despite John Foster Dulles’ tough talk, Eisenhower’s foreign policies were generally cautious. He avoided military involvement in Vietnam, although aiding Diem, and pressured by Britain, France, and Israel to resolve the Suez crisis.

He also refused to intervene in the Hungarian revolt and sought negotiations to thaw the frigid Cold War. Dealing with Khrushchev proved difficult, as Sputnik, the Berlin Crisis, the U-2 incident, and Castro's Cuban revolution all kept the Cold War tensions high.

Terms:

Election of 1952—Adlai Stevenson, Richard Nixon, Eisenhower, Robert A. Taft

“ Checkers speech” McCarthyism 205 communists in the State Department?

Army-McCarthy hearings Emmitt Till, 1955

Thurgood Marshall

Rosa Parks, 1955

Montgomery bus boycott

Chief Justice Earl Warren

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas

Orval Faubus Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1955 Civil Rights Act

(1957) Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Sit ins Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

“ Dynamic conservatism”

“ Operation Wetback”

Interstate Highways Act (1956)

AF of L and CIO merger

John Foster Dulles brinkmanship

Nikita Khrushchev

Geneva Conference (1955)

Hungarian uprising

‘ military industrial complex’ and Ike’s warnings

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Ho Chi Minh

Dienbienphu, 1954

Multinations Conference (Geneva)

Ngo Dinh Diem

Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)

Soviets end presence in Austria, 1955

CIA coup in Iran Mohammed Reza Pahlevi

Suez Crisis U. S. no longer an oil power

OPEC

Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957—U. S. military and economic aid to Middle

Eastern countries Sputnik National Defense and Education Act, 1958 U-2 spy plane Cuban revolt Fidel Castro

Khrushchev declares the Monroe Doctrine dead

1956: white-collar workers outnumber blue-collar workers decline of unions “cult of domesticity” Father Knows Best Ozzie and Harriet Leave it to Beaver McDonald’s Disneyland TV Urban renewal Baseball goes west Elvis and rock and roll Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960

TV debates

Past AP test questions

1. Reform movements of the twentieth century have shown continuity in their goals and strategies. Assess the validity of this statement for ONE of the following pairs of reform movements. (FRQ, 1986) a. Progressivism and the New Deal b. Woman’s suffrage and post-Second World War feminism c. The New Deal and the Great Society

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2. To what extent did the decade of the 1950s deserve its reputation as an age of political, social, and cultural conformity? (FRQ, 1994)

3. What were the Cold War fears of the American people in the aftermath of the Second World War? How successfully did the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower address these fears? Use the documents and your knowledge of the years 1948-1961 to construct your response. (DBQ, 2001—Mr. D has the documents)

APUSH Study Guide 38

The Turbulent Sixties—1960-1968

Themes/Constructs:

The Kennedy administration's "flexible response" doctrine to combat Third World communism bore ill fruit in Cuba and especially in Vietnam. Johnson's massive escalation of the war failed to defeat the Communist Vietnamese forces, while growing domestic opposition forced him from power.

The Kennedy administration's domestic stalemate ended in the mid-1960s, as Johnson's Great Society and the black civil rights movement brought a tide of liberal social reform. But the diversion of resources and social upheavals caused by the Vietnam war wrecked the Great Society.

Kennedy's New Frontier initiatives bogged down in congressional stalemate. Cold War confrontation over Berlin and Russian missiles in Cuba created threats of war. Countering Third World communism through flexible response led the administration into dangerous involvement in Vietnam and elsewhere.

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Johnson succeeded Kennedy—whose administration is one based more on mystique than substance—and overwhelmingly defeated Barry Goldwater. The black movement for integration and voting rights won great victories. Johnson used his huge congressional majorities to push through a mass of liberal Great Society legislation. Northern black ghettos erupted in violence amid calls for black power.

Johnson escalated military involvement in the Dominican Republic and in Vietnam. As the number of troops and casualties grew without producing military success, dovish protests against the war gained strength. Political opposition forced Johnson not to seek reelection, and the deep Democratic divisions over the war allowed for Richard Nixon to win the White House.

Historian's viewpoints:

-Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987)

“ Say what we will about the sixties' failures, limits, disasters, America's political and cultural space would probably not have opened up as much as it did without the movement's divine delirium.... This side of an ever-receding millennium, the changes wrought by the Sixties, however beleaguered, averted some of the worst abuses of power, and made life more decent for millions. The movement in its best moments and broadest definition made philosophical breakthroughs which are still working themselves out.”

-William O'Neil, *Coming Apart* (1971)

“ Though much in the counter-culture was attractive and valuable, it was dangerous in three ways. First, self-indulgence frequently led to self-

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destruction. Second, the counter-culture increased social hostility. The generation gap was one example, but the class gap another. Working-class youngsters resented the counter-culture. The counter-culture flourished in cities and on campuses. However, in Middle America, it was hated and feared. The result was a national division between the counter-culture and those adults who admired or tolerated it, and the silent majority of workers and Middle Americans who didn't. The tensions between these groups made solving social and political problems more difficult and were, indeed, part of the problem. Finally, the counter-culture was hell on standards."

Terms:

John F. Kennedy
Robert Kennedy

J. Edgar Hoover

Robert McNamara

Peace Corps

"Ich bin ein Berliner"—Jelly donuts for all

"Americans on the moon"

JFK and Krushchev, 1961

Berlin Wall goes up.

Vietnam

Flexible response

Diem's government

Military advisors and the 1961 coup

Cuba

Bay of Pigs, 1961

Cuban Missile Crisis

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Cuba and Turkey

Civil Rights

Sit ins

James Meredith

Birmingham, Alabama

March on Washington “ I have a Dream...”

Medgar Evers killed, 1963

Assassination

Lee Harvey Oswald

Mystique vs. substance

LBJ

Civil Rights Act (1964)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

War on Poverty Great Society

Election, 1964

Barry Goldwater

Gulf of Tonkin Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 1964

Great Society

Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)

Department of Transportation and Department of Urban Development (HUD)

—new cabinet members National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities

(NEA) Voting Rights bills Medical care for the elderly Head Start VISTA

Voting Rights Act (1965)

24th Amendment—no more poll taxes for federal elections

Black Power

Watts, LA, 1965

Malcolm X

Black Panthers

Stockely Carmichael

SNCC

MLK's assassination, 1968

Vietnam

Teach-ins

Doves vs. Hawks

LBJ orders CIA to spy on domestic antiwar activists

Tet Offensive, 1968

Election, 1968

Johnson won't run

Nixon's election

Counter-culture

Timothy Leary LSD and pot flower children

Sexual revolution gay rights

Free speech movement, 1964 acid rock

Distrust of authority

Past AP test questions

1. A Presidential election that results in defeat of the party in power usually indicates the failure of the party in power to have dealt effectively with the nation's problems, rather than indicating the positive appeal of the winning candidate and his party's platform. Assess the validity of this generalization

with reference to TWO of the following elections in which the party in power was defeated: 1912, 1920, 1932, 1952, 1960, 1968. (FRQ, 1980)

2. What accounted for the growth between 1945 and 1965 of popular and government concern for the position of blacks in American society? (FRQ, 1985)

3. Reform movements of the twentieth century have shown continuity in their goals and strategies. Assess the validity of this statement for ONE of the following pairs of reform movements (FRQ, 1986)

- a. Progressivism and the New Deal
- b. Women's suffrage and post-Second World War feminism
- c. The New Deal and the Great Society

4. Vice Presidents who have succeeded to the presidency on the death of the President have been less effective in their conduct of domestic AND foreign policy than the men they replaced. Assess the validity of this statement for any TWO of the following pairs: (FRQ, 1989) a. William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt b. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S Truman c. John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson

5. Foreign affairs rather than democratic issues shaped presidential politics in the election year 1968. Assess the validity of this statement with specific reference to foreign and domestic issues. (FRQ, 1990)

6. In what ways did the Great Society resemble the New Deal in its origins, goals, and social and political legacy? Cite specific programs and policies in support of your arguments. (FRQ, 1992)

7. Analyze the changes that occurred during the 1960s in the goals, strategies, and support of the movement for African-American civil rights. Use the documents and your knowledge of history of the 1960s to construct your responses. (DBQ, 1990—Mr. D has the documents)

8. Discuss with respect to TWO of the following, the view that the 1960s represented a period of profound cultural change. (FRQ, 2000)

- a. Education
- b. Gender roles
- c. Music
- d. Race relations

APUSH Study Guide 39

The Stalemated Seventies: 1968-1980

Themes/Constructs:

As the war in Vietnam finally came to a disastrous conclusion, the United States struggled to create a more stable international climate. Detente with the two communist powers temporarily reduced Cold War tensions, but trouble in the Middle East threatened America's energy supplies and economic stability.

Weakened by political difficulties of their own and others' making, the administrations of the 1970s had trouble coping with America's growing economic problems.

Nixon's vietnamization policy reduced American ground participation in the war, but his Cambodian invasion sparked massive protests. Nixon's journeys to Communist Moscow and Beijing (Peking) established a new rapprochement with these powers. In domestic policy, Nixon and the Supreme Court promoted affirmative action and environmental protection.

The 1972 election victory and the cease-fire in Vietnam were negated when Nixon became bogged down in the Watergate scandal and congressional protests over the secret bombing of Cambodia, which led to the War Powers Resolution. The Middle East War of 1973 and the Arab oil embargo created energy and economic difficulties that lasted through the decade. Americans gradually awoke to their costly and dangerous dependence on Middle Eastern oil and began to take tentative steps toward conservation and alternative energy sources.

Nonelected Gerald Ford took over after the Watergate scandal forced Nixon to resign the presidency. The Communist Vietnamese finally overran the South Vietnamese government in 1975, unifying the country under a communist flag.

Campaigning against Washington and Watergate, outsider Jimmy Carter proved unable to master Congress or the economy once he took office. The Camp David Accords brought peace between Egypt and Israel, but the Iranian revolution led to new energy troubles. The invasion of Afghanistan and the holding of American hostages in Iran added to Carter's woes.

Terms:

Stagflation

Median income for families stagflates in the two decades after 1970 Vietnam drained tax dollars for other social domestic programs High inflation Germany and Japan take over technology domination Nixon and Vietnamization Nixon Doctrine

Vietnamization

My Lai, 1968

Nixon and Cambodia/Laos

Cambodian invasion, 1970

Kent State University Jackson State University

Amending the Gulf of Tonkin—War Powers Resolutions (your text mix titles it.) 26th Amendment—voting age 18 Nixon and Détente Henry Kissinger

China-Moscow visits, 1972

Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)

Nixon and the Supreme Court

' judicial activism' Chief Justice Earl Warren

Griswold v. Connecticut, 1965—protection of women's abortion rights Gideon v. Wainwright, 1963—criminal cases entitled to counsel Miranda rights

Warren E. Burger—Nixon's appointee to the S. C.... by 1971, Nixon appointed 4 conservatives Roe v. Wade, 1973 Nixon and homefront Food

Stamps Medicaid Continuation of Great Societies attack on poverty

' affirmative action'

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 1970

Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA)

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Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962)—influenced environmental reform
Clean Air Act, 1970 Endangered Species Act, 1973 Election of 1972 “ Peace is
at hand” Nixon wins by a landslide Paris Peace Conference—four conditions

Watergate

Committee for the Re-Election of the President (CREEP)

Use of FBI, CIA and IRS (Internal Revenue Service)

V. P. Agnew resigns

‘ plumbers’

White House tapes

Executive privilege

Archibald Cox—special prosecutor

House Judiciary Committee and tapes

U. S. v. Nixon (1974)—executive privilege did not extend to taped

conversations Nixon's resignation 8 August 1974 Ford as first Unelected

President Pardon of Nixon War Powers Resolution

Secret bombings in Cambodia

Pol Pot

War Powers Resolution

Middle East Crisis

Egyptian-Syrian Israel War 1973

Energy crisis Alaska oil pipeline

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

International Energy Agency, 1974—big cars, gas slobs

Carter's Administration

Dark horse president

Camp David

Panama Canal to Panama

Double digit inflation

Energy crusade to end gas guzzling cars

Mohammed Reza Pahlevi

CIA

Carter and Brezhnev SALT II

Teheran, Iran hostage crisis Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini Past AP test questions

1. In the period since 1945, the Republican Party, as represented in the administrations of Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) and Richard Nixon (1969-1974), virtually abandoned the opposition to the New Deal it expressed during the 1930s. Assess the validity of this generalization. (FRQ, 1975)

2. Greater similarities than differences have characterized the experiences of all ethnic and racial groups who have migrated to American cities. Assess the validity of this generalization with reference to the Irish and Germans from the 1840s to the 1890s and Black Americans from 1915-1970. (FRQ, 1975)

3. Compare the goals and strategies of Black reform movements in the period 1890-1910 to the goals and strategies of Black reform movements in the period 1950-1970. (FRQ, 1982)

4. Shifts in party control of the presidency during the twentieth century have typically not brought major shifts in domestic policy. Assess the validity of this statement. Illustrate your argument by discussing the extent to which

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TWO of the following Presidents adopted the domestic programs of the previous presidential administrations given in the parenthesis beneath their names. (FRQ, 1983)

a. Woodrow Wilson

(Administrations of William H. Taft and Theodore Roosevelt) b. Franklin D.

Roosevelt (Administration of Herbert Hoover) c. Dwight D. Eisenhower

(Administrations of Harry S Truman and Franklin D. Roosevelt) d. Richard M.

Nixon (Administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson and John F. Kennedy)

5. In 1945 Winston Churchill said that the United States stood at the summit of the world. Discuss the development in the thirty years following Churchill's speech which called the global preeminence of the United States into question. (FRQ, 1992)

6. Assess the success of the United States policy of containment in Asia between 1945 and 1975. (FRQ, 1999)

APUSH Study Guide 40

The Re-Emergence of Conservatism: 1980 to present

Themes/Constructs:

Leading a conservative movement to power in Washington, Ronald Reagan vigorously pursued “new right” economic and social policies. Under Reagan and his successor George Bush, these policies brought both economic growth and massive deficits that put severe strains on the federal government

The 1980s saw a revival of Cold War confrontation, but the decade ended with the collapse of Communism, first in Eastern Europe than in the Soviet Union itself. With the end of the Cold War and the U. S.-led victory over Iraq in the Persian Gulf War, America remained the world's only superpower, and struggled to define a new foreign policy in a world still troubled by violence and political-economic conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Elected as the first baby-boom president, Bill Clinton tried to turn the Democratic Party in a more centrist direction. Conservative-led Republicans gained control of Congress, creating ideological confrontations and sharp policy swings in Washington. The election of George W. Bush was the closest in American history and his administration is being forged by the events of 11 September 2001 and terrorism.

Reagan led the Republicans to sweeping victories in 1980 and 1984 over divided and demoralized Democrats. Riding a conservative national tide, Reagan pushed both his “ supply-side” economic program of lower taxes and the “ new right” social policies, especially opposition to affirmative action, abortion, and drugs. These policies brought economic recovery and lower inflation, as well as record budget deficits that severely restricted “ big government.” The Supreme Court under Reagan and his successor, George Bush, became increasingly conservative, while the confirmation hearings of Justice Clarence Thomas highlighted issues of sexual harassment.

Reagan revived the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union, and engaged the U. S. in assertive military support for anti-leftist forces in Latin America and elsewhere. The ratcheting up of military spending, along with

the attempted reforms led by Mikhail Gorbachev, contributed to the unraveling of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-1991. With America as the only remaining superpower, George Bush led an international coalition to victory in the Persian Gulf War, but the Middle East remained a dangerous tinderbox despite new efforts to resolve the Israel-Arab conflict.

The dynamic young “ baby boomer” William Clinton defeated Bush in 1992, and tried to steer a centrist course with his “ new Democrat” policies. Clinton’s stumbles over health care reform and foreign policy opened the door to aggressive conservative Republicans, who gained control of Congress in 1994 for the first time in fifty years advocating a “ contract with America.” But the Gingrich-led Republicans’ over-reaching enable Clinton to revive and win a second term in 1996.

In 1997, Clinton reached an agreement with Congress on legislation to balance the federal budget by 2002. In 1998, Clinton became only the second President ever to be impeached by the House of Representatives. Charged with perjury and obstruction of justice in connection with an attempted cover-up of a sexual relationship with a former White House intern, he was acquitted by the Senate in 1999. In 1999, the U. S., under Clinton, joined other NATO nations in an aerial bombing campaign that induced Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw troops from the Kosovo region.

The contested election of 2000 brought George W. Bush to the White House over Vice President Albert Gore. The new President obtained his

compromised tax cut promise, and on the foreign affairs side became involved in a Cold War type confrontation with China over a downed American spy plane, but all of these policies paled, when, on 11 September 2001, Bush faced what appeared to be the key crisis of his presidency when a terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D. C. killed thousands of Americans. America has since been at war on terrorism, and very quickly, as a response, allied forces were used in Afghanistan and Iraq. As is this was not enough, Israel and Palestinian forces were at conflict in the Middle East.

Terms:

Moral Majority

Allan Bakke—reverse discrimination

Neoconservatives

Iran hostage release—Reagan election

James Watt

Supply side econ Reaganomics

Yuppies

Deficit spending

Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) Star Wars

USSR boycott of Olympics, 1984

U. S. marine barracks bombing, Lebanon, 1983

Teflon president

Sandinistas Contras El Salvador/Nicaragua

Grenada invasion, 1983

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Walter Mondale-Geraldine Ferraro

GlosnostMikhail Gorbachev

Ferdinand Marcos

Libya

Sandra Day O'Connor

Robert Bork

George Bush“ kinder and gentler America”

Tiananmen Square Massacre, 1989

Fall of the Berlin Wall

Boris Yeltsin

PanamaManuel Noriega

Saddam Hussein Kuwait, 1990

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

Clarence Thomas

27th Amendment

William Jefferson Clinton

Janet Reno

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Bob Dole

H. Ross Perot

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Whitewater Land Corporation

Monica Lewinsky

George W. Bush

9/11