

Segment One



In 1976, President Jimmy Carter is elected U.S. President. In 1974, President Ford and the Soviets had made an interim agreement on nuclear arms cuts in Vladivostok, which established ceilings for nuclear arsenals. President Carter wants to go farther. Secretary of State Vance meets with Soviet officials in March 1977 but fails to accomplish Carter's goals. In the Soviet Union, defense expenditure drains the economy. Doctors limit the time the aging Leonid Brezhnev is allowed to work.

- What conclusions can you make about President Carter based on eyewitness statements? How was he "different" from veteran politicians in Washington?
- Why did the Vance meeting fail to accomplish Carter's objectives? Why does Leslie Gelb say that, as a result of this meeting, the "fat was in the world publicity fire?" What does this mean?
- How would you define human rights? How did Carter's view of human rights affect Soviet-U.S. relations?
- How does the video describe life in the Soviet Union in the late 1970's? To what does the video attribute these conditions?

Segment Two



The pressure to address human rights increases East-West tensions. In 1975, Brezhnev, Ford and 33 other leaders had signed the Helsinki Declaration. In Czechoslovakia, dissidents sign Charter 77. It calls on the government to end human rights abuses. The authors are persecuted and imprisoned. Human rights activists in the Communist Bloc set up Helsinki Watch committees to monitor and publicize human rights abuse. Jews who are denied permission to leave the Soviet Union are called refuseniks. The fate of Soviet political prisoners becomes a key factor in American politics.

- What was the Helsinki Accord? What is a dissident? According to eyewitnesses, how was the Helsinki Accord interpreted differently by the Soviet government and the West and the dissident groups within the East Bloc? How was the Helsinki Declaration used to bring human rights to the attention of the world?
- What was the Soviet reaction to U.S. attempts to make human rights an issue in Cold War diplomacy? How did the Soviet Union justify its actions?
- What was Charter 77 and what was its significance?
- Based on eyewitness accounts, describe the treatment received by dissidents in the East Bloc. How did the U.S. Congress and public react to the evidence of human rights abuses? How did this reaction influence U.S. foreign policy with respect to detente with the Soviet Union?

Segment Three



As Moscow and Washington clash over human rights, each updates its arsenal. Negotiations for a new arms limitation treaty (SALT II) continue. The Soviet Union deploys hundreds of medium-range SS-20 missiles targeting Europe. These new missiles are not included in the SALT talks. The West adopts "Dual-Track" policy: America develops new missiles and allows the Soviet Union four years to negotiate a reduction of medium-range weapons. German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt voices concern that the United States is not tough enough on the Soviet Union. In Western Europe, fear of nuclear weapons creates new resistance to the arms race. The peace movement gains momentum in German politics.

- What were the SS-20s? Why did they cause so much concern for German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt?
- What was the European reaction to both Soviet and U.S. mid-range missiles in Europe? How do you explain this reaction?
- What claims did the peace campaigners in Germany make? How did the issue of nuclear weapons influence European politics?

Segment Four



In June 1979, the superpowers complete the SALT II treaty and agree on new strategic arms limits; Carter is charged with being soft on the Soviet Union. Cold War tensions are evidenced in wars in Angola and the Horn of Africa. In February 1979, the Shah of Iran is overthrown by fundamentalists led by Ayatollah Khomeini; American oil interests are threatened. In November, Iranian militants seize the American Embassy in Tehran and take 63 Americans hostage. The Soviets invade Afghanistan in December. The following April, the U.S. military fails in an attempt to rescue the Iranian hostages. The Iranian crisis damages the American economy and Carter's reputation. Detente ends. Congress never ratifies SALT II. The United States and many other countries boycott the Olympics in Moscow.

- How did Brezhnev's health affect diplomatic talks with President Carter?
- According to Nikolai Detinov, why was the Soviet Union motivated to limit the arms race?
- How does Leslie Gelb evaluate the success of SALT II? How does this compare with the reaction by American conservatives and Ronald Reagan? What did Carter's critics charge him with?
- Describe the effect of the Iranian hostage crisis on both the U.S. economy and U.S. foreign policy?
- How did Carter's assessment of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan compare with that of former Soviet official Karen Brutents? Why is this significant?
- What international events weakened the Presidency of Jimmy Carter? How did Cold War policy affect the elections of 1980? Based on the video, how would the events of the late 1970's have influenced your vote?

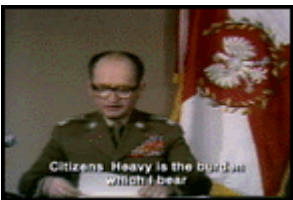
Segment Five



The Pope returns to Poland in 1979 and calls on his "flock" to recapture their country. When food prices are increased in July 1980, workers at the Gdansk shipyard wage a strike and issue a list of 21 demands. The government gives in to the workers' main demands. Throughout Poland, workers and intellectuals form a new movement called Solidarity, which soon grows to nearly 10 million members, more than half the adult population of Poland. The United States provides small amounts of covert assistance, plus overt aid through the AFL-CIO. The Soviet Union puts pressure on the Polish government led by General Jaruzelski; and Warsaw Pact troops are mobilized on Poland's borders.

- How does the Pope's presence in Poland in 1979 affect public opinion there?
- Describe the Polish economy in the late 1970's?
- What did the workers at the Gdansk shipyard demand? How does Lech Walesa account for their methods?
- What was Solidarity? How does Karol Modzelewski describe the effect of Solidarity? What role did the United States play in supporting the Solidarity movement?
- How did the Soviet Union react to Solidarity? Why did it choose not to invade Poland?

Segment Six



The 1980 election looks bad for Carter: Americans are still hostages in Iran, the economy is slack, and the Soviet Army is still in Afghanistan. Reagan wins by a large margin. Solidarity in Poland gains strength. There are strikes throughout the country. The Soviet Union tightens control over the Poles. In December 1981, riot police crush a firemen's strike. As Solidarity plans a nationwide strike, President Jaruzelski declares martial law. Troops move in and arrest Solidarity's leaders. The movement is banned.

- What did Carter mean by the "growing spirit of malaise" in the United States? What was its effect on the 1980 elections?
- While other attempts to regulate Cold War confrontation had failed in the past, what makes the failure of detente special? What was different in the public perception of the Cold War? Was the Cold War becoming obsolete for the public? For policy-makers?
- Consider the following quotation by Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle:

"It was necessary to show that detente couldn't work in order to go beyond it and to re-engage in the Cold War, to re-establish a set of objectives aimed at victory in the Cold War rather than ending it by accommodation." Why was detente no longer an option? Why did it become necessary to "win the Cold War?" How do you interpret this statement? What might that mean for U.S. foreign policy under Reagan? How does the end of detente mark the consolidation of Cold War "culture?"

- What were the Soviet Union's policies toward Poland in 1981? How did Poland respond? How did martial law in Poland affect East-West relations? Why?

