**Period 9: 1980 to Present (Reagan’s Election through the Present)**

**Key Concept 9.1:**

A newly ascendant conservative movement achieved several political and policy goals during the 1980s and continued to strongly influence public discourse in the following decades.

I. Conservative beliefs regarding the need for traditional social values and a reduced role for government advanced in U.S. politics after 1980.

A. Ronald Reagan’s victory in the presidential election of 1980 represented an important milestone, allowing conservatives to enact significant tax cuts and continue the **deregulation** of many industries. (one example of each)

**Examples:** Economic Recovery Tax Act, Reaganomics, supply side theory, air traffic controllers’ strike, deregulation of transportation industries, financial deregulation, cutting budgets of regulatory agencies and undermining them by staffing them with opponents, Contract with America, Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act of 2001

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B. Conservatives argued that liberal programs were counterproductive in fighting poverty and stimulating economic growth. Some of their efforts to reduce the size and scope of government met with inertia and liberal opposition, as many programs remained popular with voters.

**Examples:** Expansion of Medicare and Medicaid, growth of the budget deficits, rising national debt, increased defense spending, Family and Medical Leave Act (1993), Welfare reform

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C. Policy debates continued over free-trade agreements, the scope of the government social safety net, and calls to reform the U.S. financial system.

**Examples:** North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Affordable Health Care Act (Obamacare), Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, retirement of the boomers and proposals for Social Security reform, Trans-Pacific Partnership, American Health Care Act (Trumpcare)

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| **NAFTA** |  |  |
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**Key Concept 9.2:**

Moving into the 21st century, the nation continued to experience challenges stemming from social, economic, and demographic changes.

I. New developments in science and technology enhanced the economy and transformed society, while manufacturing decreased.

A. Economic **productivity** increased as improvements in digital communications enabled increased American participation in worldwide economic opportunities. (one example of digital communications increasing productivity and one example of increased US participation in global economics)

**Examples:** Outsourcing, the World Wide Web (Internet), email, World Trade Organization, globalization, the Group of 8 (G8)

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B. Technological innovations in computing, digital mobile technology, and the Internet transformed daily life, increased access to information, and led to new social behaviors and networks.

**Examples:** PC, Macintosh, iPod, iPhone, Facebook, Google, Wikipedia, YouTube, Wikileaks, SnapChat

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C. Employment increased in service sectors and decreased in manufacturing, and union membership declined.

**Examples:** Walmart and Starbucks vs. Ford and GE, growing use of automation and robotics, US manufacturing relocating abroad

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D. Real wages stagnated for the working and middle class amid growing economic inequality. (one example linked to each item)

**Examples:** Recession of 2008-2009, Emergency Economic Stability Act, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Tea Party movement, rising income gap, Occupy Wall Street protests, growing income gap between college educated and non-college educated workers, appeal of Sanders and/or Trump

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II. The U.S. population continued to undergo significant **demographic** shifts that had profound cultural and political consequences.

A. After 1980, the political, economic, and cultural influences of the American South and West continued to increase as population shifted to those areas.

**Examples:** Sunbelt population gains, elections of Sunbelt presidents, immigration to CA, TX and FL,

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B. International migration from Latin America and Asia increased dramatically. The new immigrants affected U.S. culture in many ways and supplied the economy with an important labor force.

**Examples:** Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Latinos become largest minority group in America (2000)

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C. Intense political and cultural debates continued over issues such as immigration policy, diversity, gender roles, and family structures.

**Examples:** Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, CA Proposition 187, CA Proposition 209, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and/or its repeal, Defense of Marriage Act and/or it being ruled unconstitutional, legalization of same-sex marriage, DREAM Act, debate over bathrooms for trans usage, Trump travel ban

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**Key Concept 9.3:**

The end of the Cold War and new challenges to U.S. leadership forced the nation to redefine its foreign policy and role in the world.

I. The Reagan administration promoted an **interventionist** foreign policy that continued in later administrations, even after the end of the Cold War**.**

A. Reagan asserted U.S. opposition to communism through speeches, diplomatic efforts, limited military interventions, and a buildup of nuclear and conventional weapons.

**Examples:** Reagan’s “evil empire” speech, “tear down this wall”, US-Soviet summit meetings, invasion of Grenada, peacekeepers in Beirut, Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars), Iran-Contra scandal, MX missile, 500 ship navy, trillion dollar defense budget

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B. Increased U.S. military spending, Reagan’s diplomatic initiatives, and political changes and economic problems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were all important in ending the Cold War. (focus on providing and explaining how your example *contributed* to the ending of the Cold War)

**Examples:** Solidarity movement in Poland, Pope John Paul II, Gorbachev’s *Glasnost* and *perestroika* in the USSR, START I Treaty, INF Treaty

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C. The end of the Cold War led to new diplomatic relationships but also new U.S. military and peacekeeping interventions, as well as continued debates over the appropriate use of American power in the world. (focus on explaining how your examples illustrate the *effects* of the Cold War ending)

**Examples:** Persian Gulf War, Operation Desert Storm, Oslo Accords, former Soviet satellites join NATO, NATO bombing of Yugoslavia

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II. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. foreign policy efforts focused on fighting terrorism around the world.

A. In the wake of attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States launched military efforts against terrorism and lengthy, controversial conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**Examples:** 9/11 Attacks, Axis of Evil speech, War on Terror, Operation Enduring Freedom, Iraq War, capture of Saddam Hussein, capture of Osama Bin Laden, drone strikes

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B. The **war on terrorism** sought to improve security within the United States but also raised questions about the protection of civil liberties and human rights.

**Examples:** USA Patriot Act, Guantanamo detainees, Department of Homeland Security, mass surveillance, Snowden leaks, “extreme vetting”

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| **Patriot Act** |  |  |
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C. Conflicts in the Middle East and concerns about **climate change** led to debates over U.S. dependence on fossil fuels and the impact of economic consumption on the environment.

**Examples:** Paris Climate Agreement, Global warming debate, Keystone pipeline, British Petroleum oil spill, increase in fracking industry, rise of alternative energy forms (e.g. solar, wind), Tesla,

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D. Despite economic and foreign policy challenges, the United States continued as the world’s leading superpower in the 21st century.

**Examples:** Russian involvement in Crimea, Ukraine and/or 2016 US presidential election, Iran Nuclear Treaty, ISIS (ISIL) in the Mideast, debate over the growing number of refugees from the Mideast into Europe, debate over the use of drones in the military and in commerce

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