

Note: The following document is adopted from the AP U.S. History College Board Examples

United States History
Section II
Total Time – 1 hour, 30 minutes
Question 2 (Document-Based Question)
Suggested reading period: 15 minutes
Suggested writing period: 40 minutes

This question is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following:

- **Thesis:** Present a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or in the conclusion.
 - **Argument Development:** Develop and support a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.
 - **Use of Documents:** Utilize the content of at least six documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.
 - **Sourcing the Documents:** Explain the significance of the author’s point of view, author’s purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least four documents.
 - **Contextualization:** Situate the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the question.
 - **Outside Evidence:** Provide an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument.
 - **Synthesis:** Extend the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and one of the following
 - A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area.
 - A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual history).
1. What was the basis for opposition to the Panama Canal Treaties? How did President Carter work to turn public opinion in its favor and gain the “advice and consent” of the U.S. Senate to ratify the treaties?

Background Information

The description below is for background information. Analysis of it is not required and will not count toward the required documents.

In 1903, the United States received authority to build a canal in Panama and to control the Panama Canal Zone “in perpetuity,” in exchange for annual payments to Panama. By the 1960s, Latin American resentment of U.S. power was growing. In 1977, newly elected President Jimmy Carter, fulfilling a campaign promise, set out to negotiate a new agreement with Panama. He believed that a new treaty was needed to correct what he saw as injustices.

In spite of vocal opposition from Congress and the American public, Carter negotiated two new treaties: 1. The United States would retain the right to defend the canal forever. 2. The Canal Zone would be turned over to Panama in 1979, and a transfer of the operation of the canal would be complete by 1999. Panamanian voters approved these Carter-Torrijos Treaties in a special referendum.

The U.S. Constitution empowers the President to make treaties with “the advice and consent” of the Senate. In the case of the Panama Canal Treaties, thirty-eight Senators—more than enough to prevent ratification—had expressed opposition to the new agreements. Public opinion was also against the Treaties.

The President sent a task force across the country to make over 1500 presentations about the Treaties’ benefits. In a binder on his desk, Carter’s team kept track of conversations, rumors, and questions from Senators regarding the Treaties, quickly following up on each entry to win converts. Throughout the long Senate debate, Carter personally tracked the progress of the Treaties, talking daily with Senators, answering questions and agreeing to various Senate modifications to save the Treaties.

After three months of Senate debate in the spring of 1978, the Senate approved new Treaties governing the Panama Canal with one vote to spare: sixty-eight for—thirty-two against. Through personal attention, patience, and his willingness to make adjustments in the agreement, Carter had built support for them.

Document 1

Source description: Letter to President Jimmy Carter from U.S. Congressman Daniel J. Flood on January 27, 1977

DANIEL J. FLOOD
11TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

**CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR,
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE**

MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 27, 1977

HOME OFFICE:
1018 UNITED FIDELITY BANK BLDG.
WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA
Zip Code, 18701
PHONE, AREA CODE 717
879-3443

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
108 CANNON BUILDING
Zip Code, 20515
PHONE, AREA CODE 202
225-6311

MISS HELEN M. TOMASCIK
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

JAN 27 1977
ack / Z B

Dear Mr. President:

As a long time student of Isthmian Canal and defense policy questions, I have viewed with deep concern the current indications that your Administration is pushing ahead on the projected give away treaty for the U.S. Canal Zone and Panama Canal. In the Congress, the Canal issue is fundamental and thus transcends all partisan considerations.

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford, misled by poor advice, all made serious errors in regard to it. You are making a fresh start and there is every reason to avoid their mistakes, which could well be your "Bay of Pigs" and prevent your renomination or re-election.

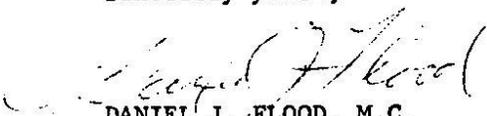
In the opinion of our most experienced engineers and other ship canal experts, the solution of the canal problem is simple: (1) retention by the United States of its full sovereign rights, power and authority over the indispensable Canal Zone; and (2) the major modernization of the existing canal according to the Terminal Lake-Third Lock Plan. This plan was developed in the Panama Canal organization during World War II and won the approval of President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a post war project. The old idea of a sea level canal is irrelevant and strongly opposed by major conservation organizations, as well as engineers, because of the danger of infesting the Atlantic with the poisonous Pacific sea snake and the crown of thorns starfish as well as the other factors.

The attached measures, H. Res. 92 and H. R. 1587, are aimed at clarifying and making definite the sovereign position of the United States over the Canal Zone and at authorizing the Canal's major modernization. I believe that I reflect the predominant view in the Congress that, in line with our historic policy, it will never approve the large expenditures involved except in territory over which the United States has full sovereign control.

I wish to add that the Panama Canal, as originally planned in 1906 under President Theodore Roosevelt, was never completed. H.R. 1587 would complete the work of that great President, render a tremendous service to world shipping, simplify canal management enormously, cause huge benefits to Panama, and bring great credit to your Administration.

With assurances of esteem, I am,

Sincerely yours,

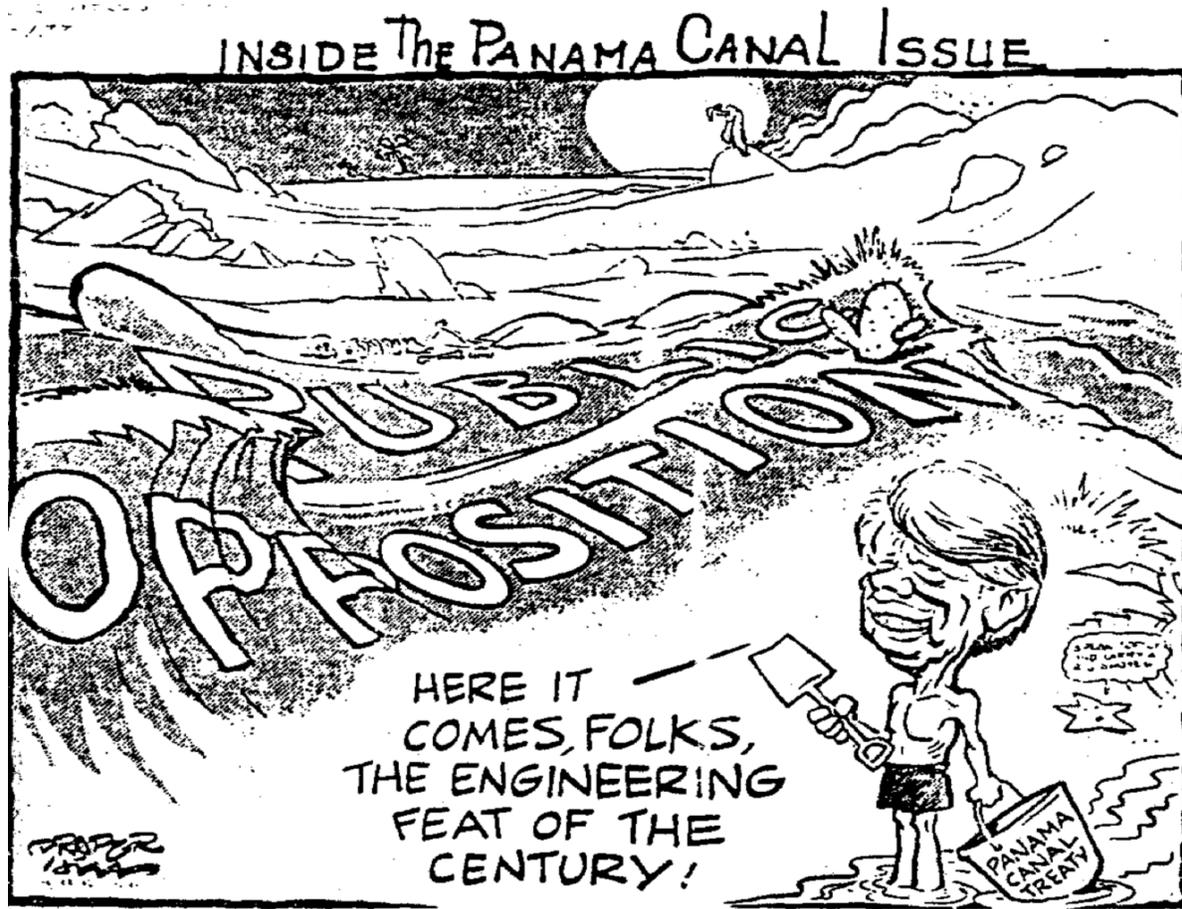

DANIEL J. FLOOD, M.C.

DJF/t.g

Document 1

Document 2

Source description: Excerpt from “Public Opposition...Here it comes, folks, the engineering feat of the century!” Cartoon by Draper



Document 3

Source description: Letter to U.S. Senators from President Jimmy Carter, November 5, 1977

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 5, 1977

To Senator

It has been four months since we negotiated an agreement on the new Panama Canal treaties. At that time I wrote to you stating my belief that these treaties are fair and equitable, and essential to assure the continued effective use of the canal for American commercial and security needs.

I am writing again to reaffirm that position and to pledge my full effort to convince the American people that the agreement serves the best interests of the United States. A recent nationwide poll by CBS-New York TIMES indicates that Americans will support the treaties when they understand that

(Note: This is typical of many personal letters President Carter wrote to members of the Senate trying to convince them to vote for treaty ratification.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

our country has the right to defend the canal. By a margin of more than 2:1 (63% to 24%) Americans say they would support the treaties if -- "the treaties provided that the United States could always send in troops to keep the canal open to ships of all nations." As you know, the Treaty of Neutrality and the recent Statement of Understanding provide the United States this right.

It is essential, therefore, that the American people be given a full, factual explanation of the new treaties. I, with members of my Administration and many distinguished Americans, will undertake this task in the coming months. I urge you to support the treaties and to help in laying

Document 14

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

the facts before the public so
that this education process can
go forward as you approach
a final decision in the Senate.

I ask this of you in what
I truly believe to be our highest
national interest. I need your
help.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

Document 14

Document 4

Source description: "Support for Panama Treaties Increases with Knowledge" by George Gallup. October 23, 1977, excerpt from Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

THE GALLUP POLL -- 10/23/77

PAGE 5

Those who have heard or read about the debate over the Panama Canal treaties were also asked what they regard as the best arguments in favor of and against the treaties.

Here are the responses, in order of frequency of mention:

BEST ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

1. A good public relations move -- remove stigma of colonialism
2. Canal is not important to U.S. interests
3. Maintaining canal is too expensive
4. To avoid a conflict/prevent hostilities
5. Not giving it totally away -- we would be able to defend it against attack from third nation
6. It belongs to the Panamanians -- it's part of their land

BEST ARGUMENTS AGAINST

1. U.S. has economic stake in canal
2. U.S. should not pay them to take the canal
3. Panama may not stick to terms of treaties
4. They will soon keep us from using the canal at all
5. Communists will take it over
6. Canal is important to our national security
7. We built and paid for it -- we should keep it

Document 11

Document 5

Source description: Photograph of protestors opposed to ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties



Document 6

Source description: "Beyond the Panama Treaties." *The New York Times*, February 2 – March 14, 1978. Excerpt from Panama Canal Pacts Status of the Senate Sheets at *Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*

Beyond the Panama Treaties

There have always been two battles between proponents and opponents of the Panama Canal treaties. One is rational—to determine whether the treaties as negotiated provide a basis for turning the canal over to the Panamanians while still guaranteeing its safety and rights of rapid American passage in an emergency. The other battle is deeply subjective. As a recent pamphlet by the American Security Council put it, there lingers among Americans a "desperate feeling that giving away the canal would be wrong in some way more important than they know how to say."

The first of these battles is, at last, about to reach the Senate floor. The chances for approval of the treaties, once doubtful, now seem high. The change is due to the careful way the Senate's leaders have approached the issue and the skill and frankness with which Panama's leader, General Torrijos, has dealt with about 40 Senators who have visited him in recent months. Senators Byrd and Baker, the majority and minority leaders, have joined in urging ratification provided the treaties can be augmented by the language of last October's statement by President Carter and General Torrijos. That statement affirmed the right of the United States to defend the canal beyond the year 2000 and the right of American warships to go to the head of the line for emergency passage through the canal. It also forswore any "right of intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Panama."

These provisions are, in fact, implicit in the treaties

signed last autumn, but it is undoubtedly useful to make them explicit. General Torrijos has been open-minded about the method—amendments to the treaty, a separate protocol, an attached "understanding," or yet something else. And even while the treaties were being written, he was cool to a provision, inserted at American request, that Senator Baker now seems to want deleted. It would oblige the United States to build any new sea-level canal in Panama and oblige Panama to allow only the United States to build one. Senator Baker must argue out that issue with the Administration, not with the Panamanians.

So the Senate battle seems destined to end with a victory for the nation's larger interests in Latin America, including recognition of the sovereign equality of all hemisphere nations and those of American interests in the canal that are truly vital.

The second battle—arising from the gut feelings of Americans about a growing tension in their relations with much of the globe's population—will continue no matter what the Senate does with these treaties. "The primary issue is the right of the United States to exist," says the American Security Council pamphlet, for "surrendering" the canal would be a step toward renouncing "the United States's right to her values and her life." Washington will have to address the deep fears of change evoked in this debate by demonstrating the benefits of working with, and not against, the aspirations of other peoples.

Document 7

Source description: Letter to U.S. Congress from President Jimmy Carter, August 12, 1977, excerpt from Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 12, 1977

To The Members of the United States Congress

As you know, Ambassadors Bunker and Linowitz have reached an agreement in principle with the Government of Panama on the Panama Canal Treaty, and have now reviewed the terms with me, the Acting Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was the unanimous conclusion of us all that our national interests will be advanced by the terms of this agreement. The Joint Chiefs have been represented in the negotiations, and give their unqualified support to the terms of the agreement.

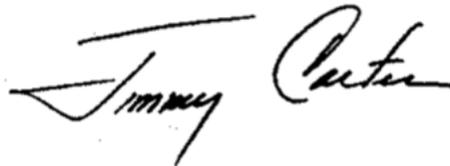
I will continue my review of these principles, and I expect to authorize the completion of the formal treaty drafting.

This is a difficult political question, and I need your help during the coming weeks.

I am convinced that the treaties are essential to ensure the continued effective use of the Canal for American commercial and security needs.

You can call us directly with specific questions, but in the meantime I am enclosing for your use a short summary of the agreement in principle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Jimmy Carter".