Planning for the Future: President Carter and the Energy Crisis
Supporting the National Archives

Mission
We drive openness, cultivate public participation, and strengthen our nation’s democracy through public access to high-value government records.

Vision
Cutting-edge access to extraordinary volumes of government information and unprecedented engagement to bring greater meaning to the American experience.

Values
Collaborate. Innovate. Learn

Left: Transfer of Charters of Freedom to the National Archives, 12/13/1952 (National Archives Identifier: 5928179)
National Archives Facilities

40 Facilities Nationwide

- Federal Records Centers
- Presidential Libraries
- Office of the Federal Register
- National Historical Publications and Records Commission
- Information Security Oversight Office
- National Declassification Center
- Office of Government Information Services

The National Archives Building, designed by renowned architect John Russell Pope (1874-1937), Washington, D.C. (National Archives)
General Overview

- Initiated by FDR, 1939
- Formalized by Presidential Libraries Act of 1955
- Not mandatory, discretion of outgoing President
- Land acquisition & construction paid by for by private, non-federal sources
- Managed by NARA in partnership with private foundations
- 15 Total (Hoover through Trump)

Left: Map of NARA’s Presidential Libraries (National Archives)
Carter Presidential Library

• Opened October 1, 1986
• 40 million pages of written materials
• 40,000 museum objects/artifacts
• 500,000 photographs
• 2,500 hours of film, audio & video tape

Right: A portion of the Carter Library archival collections as seen from the museum floor (Carter Library)
Remote Research

www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov

- Research policies and procedures (normal operations)
- List of collections w/descriptions
- Frequently requested topics
- “Ask an Archivist/Education Specialist ” online submission form

Right: Former Vice-President Walter Mondale conducting research at the Carter Library (Carter Library)
Program Overview

How Did We Get Here?
- Circumstances of the Energy Crisis
- Cold War Connections
- U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

President Carter’s Response
- Constitutional Solutions
- Engaging Americans & the Global Community
- Impact of Other Crises

Left: An empty gasoline pump during the gas shortage, 6/1973 (National Archives Identifier: 548175)
When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.

― John Muir ―

Making Connections

Which event do YOU think is most responsible for the Energy Crisis?

- Hostage Crisis in Iran
- Post-WWII Population Boom
- Middle East Peace Process
- Cold War

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

— John Muir —

Above: Teddy Roosevelt, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot and others pose in front of a Giant Sequoyah Tree (National Archives Identifier: 2132678)
How Did We Get Here?

- **Supply & Demand of Energy Post-WWII**
  - Population Boom
  - Exponential economic growth

- **United States Foreign Policy Post-WWII**
  - Cold War with Soviet Union
  - Middle East Peace Process

Learn more from the National Archives about how The Marshall Plan supported U.S. foreign policy & its Cold War allies following WWII.

*Right: Law establishing the Marshall Plan, 4/3/1948 (National Archives Identifier: 299857)*
Population & Consumption Boom

United States 1940-1980

• Population increases 71%

• Real Gross Domestic Product increases 508%

• Heavy reliance on cheap fossil fuels/foreign oil for expanding population & economy; U.S. imported 25% of OPEC’s oil

Left: After World War II, the number and density of suburban housing developments, such as the one shown in this aerial photo, increased dramatically. Postwar prosperity and a “baby boom” fueled suburban sprawl (National Archives Identifier: 595663)
The Environmental Movement

Effects of Economic Boom

• **1950s-60s:** Heightened public concerns about deteriorating city air, natural areas littered with debris & urban water supplies contaminated with dangerous impurities

• **1970:** President Nixon creates [Environmental Protection Agency](http://www.epa.gov) to establish national guidelines & enforce them

• Lower carbon emission targets support energy conservation

*Right:* Children Play in Yard of Ruston Home, while Tacoma Smelter Stack Showers Area with Arsenic and Lead Residue, 8/1972 (National Archives Identifier: 545246)
Green — Non-self-governing possessions of US allies.

Blue — US and US allies.

Red — Soviet Union and other communist allies.

Orange — Communist countries not aligned with the USSR.

Pink — Non-Communist allies of USSR.

Light Blue — Non-NATO members of EFTA and OECD.

Gray — Unknown or non-aligned.
What connections can be made between the Cold War and the Energy Crisis?

• U.S. and Soviet Union engage in Cold War by proxy, including Arab-Israeli conflicts

• U.S. efforts to counter Soviet influence in Middle East results in Arab Oil Embargo 1973-1974; cost of oil goes up 350%

1948: First Arab-Israeli War; Arab coalition attacks Israel upon its Declaration of Independence following end of British Mandate for Palestine

1956: Egyptian President Nasser nationalized Suez Canal, sparking conflict with Israel, France and Britain

1967: Six-Day War results in decisive Israeli victory, occupation of Golan Heights (Syria), West Bank (Jordan), Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula (Egypt)

1970: War of Attrition brings Egypt, PLO and Soviets together to pressure Israel to return Sinai Peninsula to Egypt; Israel shoots down five Soviet aircraft

1973: Yom Kippur/Ramadan War pits Soviet-supported Egypt & Syria against U.S.-backed Israel; results in Israeli victory & initiation of Arab oil embargo of U.S.

Right: Political cartoon "Monopolizing the Water Hole" reflects on Egyptian President Nasser’s decision to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956 (National Archives Identifier: 5743230)
Supply & Demand

Impact on Daily Life

- Inflation soars, affecting all sectors of economy & increasing consumer prices
- Unemployment rises with increased costs to employers
- American public looks to intervention from government to control lingering “stagflation”

Right: Bird’s eye view of an average gas station in Portland, Oregon, 12/1973 (National Archives Identifier: 555457)
What Constitution-based solutions were available to President Carter to address the Energy Crisis?

• **Congressional Legislation** ([Article I, Section 1](https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/iframe?cfrPart=2&cfrSection=274&cfrDoc=1977))
  o Subject to approval or veto by the President

• **Executive Action** ([Article II, Section 1](https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/iframe?cfrPart=2&cfrSection=278&cfrDoc=1977))
  o Powers not relegated to other branches, nor explicitly denied to the Executive

• **Diplomacy** ([Article II, Section 2](https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/iframe?cfrPart=2&cfrSection=278&cfrDoc=1977))
  o Presidential appointment of U.S. Ambassadors
  o Power to make treaties with foreign nations (requires 2/3 Senate approval)
Congressional Legislation
Approved by Carter

- **Emergency Natural Gas Act, 1977**
- **Department of Energy Organization Act, 1977**
- **National Energy Act, 1978**
- **Energy Security Act, 1980**

*Right:* Attorney General Griffin Bell swears in Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger with Mrs. James Schlesinger and Jimmy Carter, 8/5/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 175828)
The Automobile Fuel Efficiency Act of 1980

- Sets new Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE) previously set in *Energy Policy & Conservation Act of 1975*
- Increase fuel efficiency & lower carbon emissions
- Promotion of domestic automobile production
- Provides flexibility for future administrations to adjust standards in response to changing economic conditions
- Judicial Branch continues to allow exemptions to *anti-trust laws* for energy companies during times of crisis

*Right:* Car bodies being dropped onto frames on the Cadillac assembly line, 6/1973 (National Archives Identifier: 549724)
## Executive Action

### Carter’s Executive Actions on Energy

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<th>Executive Order</th>
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<tr>
<td>[12185]</td>
<td>Conservation of Petroleum and Natural Gas (12/17/1979)</td>
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Engaging Americans

An Appeal to All Ages

- **Fireside Chats**
- “Wear a sweater”
- Use of Pop Culture
- Establishes [National Energy Education Day](#)

Engaging Americans

Promotion of Renewable and Domestic Energy Sources

- Solar Panels
- Wind Turbines
- Ethanol
- Coal
- Natural Gas
- Nuclear Power

Learn more about the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Carter Library.

*Right:* President Carter shows off solar panels installed on the White House roof during his administration, 6/20/1979 (Carter Library)
Engaging the Global Community

Diplomacy

- Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Agreement with Canada
- Mexican Natural Gas Agreement
- Middle East Peace Process
  - Seeks end to regional conflicts that disrupt global energy markets
  - Camp David Accords

Left: Letter written by Jimmy Carter to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, 10/21/1977 (Carter Library)
Middle East Peace Process

- All sides become deadlocked at Camp David for 12 days over withdrawal of Israel armed forces & settlements from territories occupied
- Frustrated Sadat threatened to leave summit, Carter’s “personal diplomacy” convinces him to stay

*Right:* Anwar Sadat and Jimmy Carter speak on a lodge porch at Camp David, 9/17/1978 (National Archives Identifier: 181329)
Camp David Accords

- Ends four decades of war between Egypt and Israel, normalizes diplomatic relations
- Israeli withdrawal from Sinai Peninsula
- Bolsters U.S. relationship with Egypt, erodes Soviet influence
- Mitigates future Arab-Israeli conflicts that destabilize global energy markets

Learn more about the role of the CIA and Intelligence in the Camp David Accords

Left: Jimmy Carter and Menachem Begin with members of the Israeli delegation at Camp David, 09/17/1978 (National Archives Identifier: 181417)
1979–1980: Two White Houses

One Dealing with Hostage Crisis in Iran, One with Everything Else:

- Energy Crisis
- Double-digit unemployment and inflation aka “stagflation”
- Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan
  - Boycott of 1980 Olympics in Moscow
- Three Mile Island Nuclear Disaster
- 1980 Presidential Election
  - Primary Challenge from Ted Kennedy

Right: Senator Edward Kennedy meets with Jimmy Carter, 12/5/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 177025)
Alaska National Interest Conservation Lands Act of 1980 (ANILCA)

- Carter uses Antiquities Act to pressure Congress to act
- Provides Comprehensive Federal Guidance for:
  - Wilderness
  - Subsistence
  - Transportation & Utility Corridors
  - Oil and Gas Leasing
  - Mining
  - Public Access
  - Hunting, trapping and fishing

Right: S. 4698, A Bill for the Preservation of American Antiquities (National Archives Identifier: 28264995)
Carter & The Nuclear Age

- Studies reactor technology & nuclear physics in submarine school after graduating from U.S. Naval Academy in 1946
- Assisted in the design & development of nuclear propulsion plants for naval vessels
- Led first nuclear meltdown response team in history at Chalk River Laboratories in Ontario, Canada, 1952

Left: Lieutenant James Earl “Jimmy” Carter in main control room of USS K-1 (Naval History and Heritage Command)
A Blow to Nuclear Energy

Three Mile Island Disaster, March 1979

- Partial core meltdown in one reactor, subsequent radiation leak
- Result of mechanical failure & human error
- Turns public opinion against nuclear energy, no new plants not already planned built in U.S. since
- Still accounts for 20% of U.S. energy supply today

Left: Aerial view of Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant in Middletown, Pennsylvania, 4/10/1979 (National Archives Identifier: 540012)
Hostage Crisis in Iran

Iranian Revolution & Hostage Crisis in Iran, November 1979

- Pro-American Shah flees, seeks medical treatment in U.S. after Ayatollah Khomeini takes power
- 52 Americans taken hostage in response, held 444 days
- Nationalized Iranian Oil severely reduces production, cost per barrel soars

Right: Fluctuations of OPEC net oil export revenues since 1972 (U.S. Energy Information Administration)
Analysis of Carter’s Response

- First comprehensive Energy plan in nation’s history
- U.S. imports of foreign oil drops from 8.81 million barrels/day in 1977 to 6.00 million in 1981 (U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- Conservation & use of renewable energy introduced to mainstream society
- “Stagflation” continues as a result of inflation & unemployment both exceeding 10% after sustained rises in fuel costs

*Left:* Photograph of Jimmy Carter in the White House Library during a Televised Fireside Chat on Energy, 2/2/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 173549)
Civics Review

- How effectively did the Constitution equip the government to resolve the Energy Crisis? Was it in any way hindered?

- To what extent did U.S. foreign policy overlap with domestic policies during the Energy Crisis? Can they be independent of each other?

Clockwise from top: Supreme Court Building (National Archives Identifier: 594954) The United States Capitol, 1/15/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 6384310) The White House, 1/15/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 6384319)
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<td>Briefing Material on National Energy Plan</td>
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<td>Codification of Presidential Proclamations and Executive Orders on Energy</td>
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Student Application: Primary Document Analysis Exercise

1. Review the presentation and select two different types of primary sources to further investigate.

1. Download & complete the appropriate Document Analysis Worksheets for your primary sources; it’s okay if your sources cannot provide answers for every question.

1. What connections can you draw between the historical significance of these primary sources & current events? Your answers are not limited to energy or environmental issues.

1. Discuss with class at instructor’s discretion.