

# **“The Reagan and Bush Years”**

1980 to 1992

# I.) Reagan's First Term

## **The Main Idea**

In 1980 Americans voted for a new approach to governing by electing Ronald Reagan, who powerfully promoted a conservative agenda.

# A.) America a nation ready for change in 1980

## Low Spirits

- People lacked confidence in government.
- The turbulent 1960s, Watergate, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian hostage crisis, and long gasoline lines put Americans in an uneasy mood.
- Critics said Carter blamed Americans for the crisis in confidence instead of fixing the problems.
- A conservative movement that opposed liberal social and racial policies was growing.

## The 1980 Election

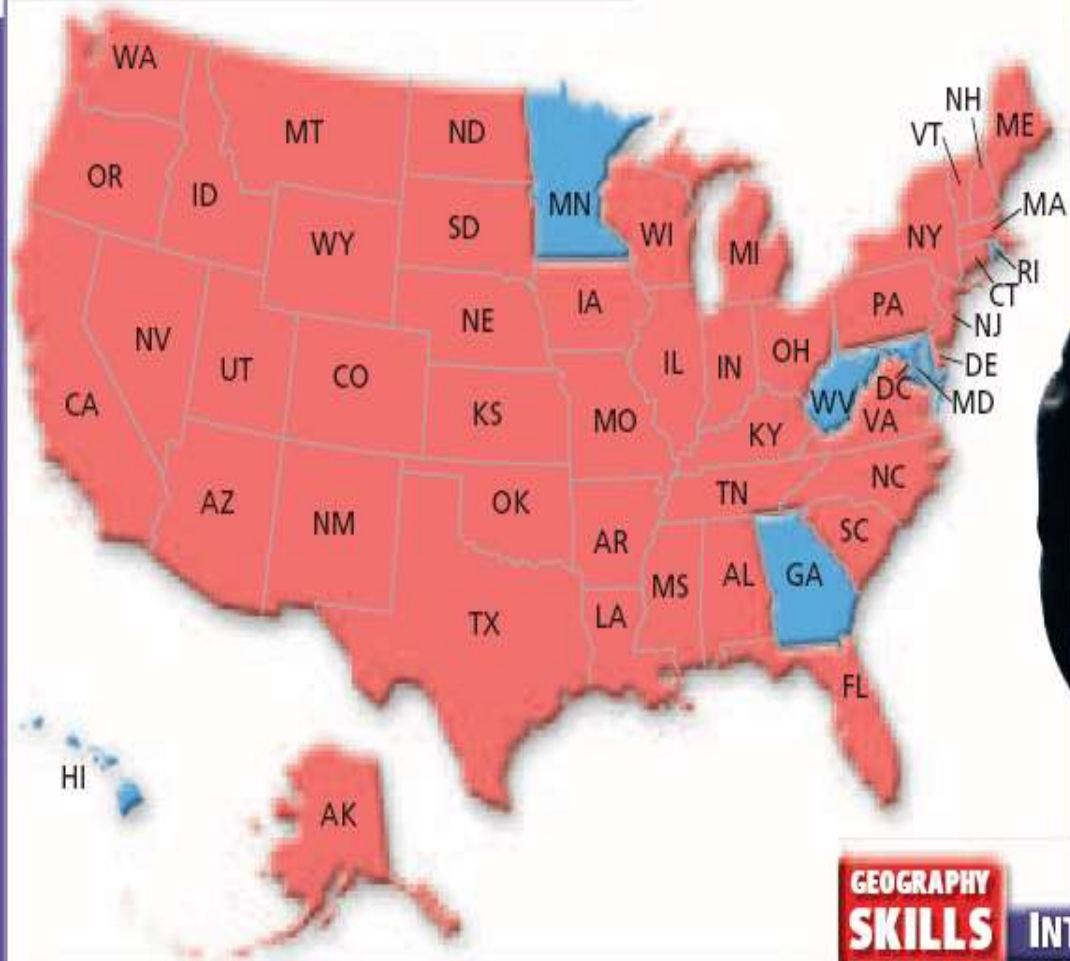
- Reagan promised to return the country to a simpler time of low taxes, smaller government, a strong military, and conservative moral values.
- Focused on “family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom.”
- Reagan asked if people were better off than they were four years ago.
- Reagan and his running mate, George H.W. Bush, won in a landslide; Republicans also gained control of the Senate.



## B.) The Reagan Background

- Hollywood Actor in 1937; made 53 films
- Although Reagan began his political life as a Democrat, by 1962 he found his home in the Republican Party.
- In 1966 he became the governor of California.
  - Had trouble meeting his goals for cutting the size of government
  - After two terms as governor, he wanted to run for the presidency
- Reagan was the hero of a growing movement called the **New Right**.
- His powerful personality, optimism, and acting skills drew many Americans—even Democrats—to his side.
- Reagan's wife, **Nancy Reagan**, was one of his greatest allies.

# THE ELECTION OF 1980



## GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

### INTERPRETING MAPS

Candidate	Political Affiliation	Electoral Votes	Popular Vote
Ronald W. Reagan	Republican	489	51.6%
James E. Carter	Democratic	49	41.7%
John Anderson	Independent	0	6.7%

**1. Region** What does this map show you about Americans' dissatisfaction with President Carter?

**2. Location** How many states did Carter carry in the election?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H21

## C.) Reagan's Presidential Agenda

- Reduce the federal bureaucracy
- Deregulate certain industries
- Cut taxes
- Increase the defense budget,
- Take a hard line with the Soviets
- Appoint conservative judges

# 1. First Terms Agenda Outcomes

- In his first few months as president, Reagan got much of what he wanted.
- Image grew stronger as he survived an assassination attempt on March 30, 1981 by John Hinckley Jr.

## D.) Reaganomics

- Reagan's plan for tax and spending cuts
- Two goals
  - Reduce taxes to stimulate economic growth
  - Cut the federal budget
- Based on **supply-side economics**
  - A theory that says breaks for businesses will increase supply of goods and services, aiding the economy



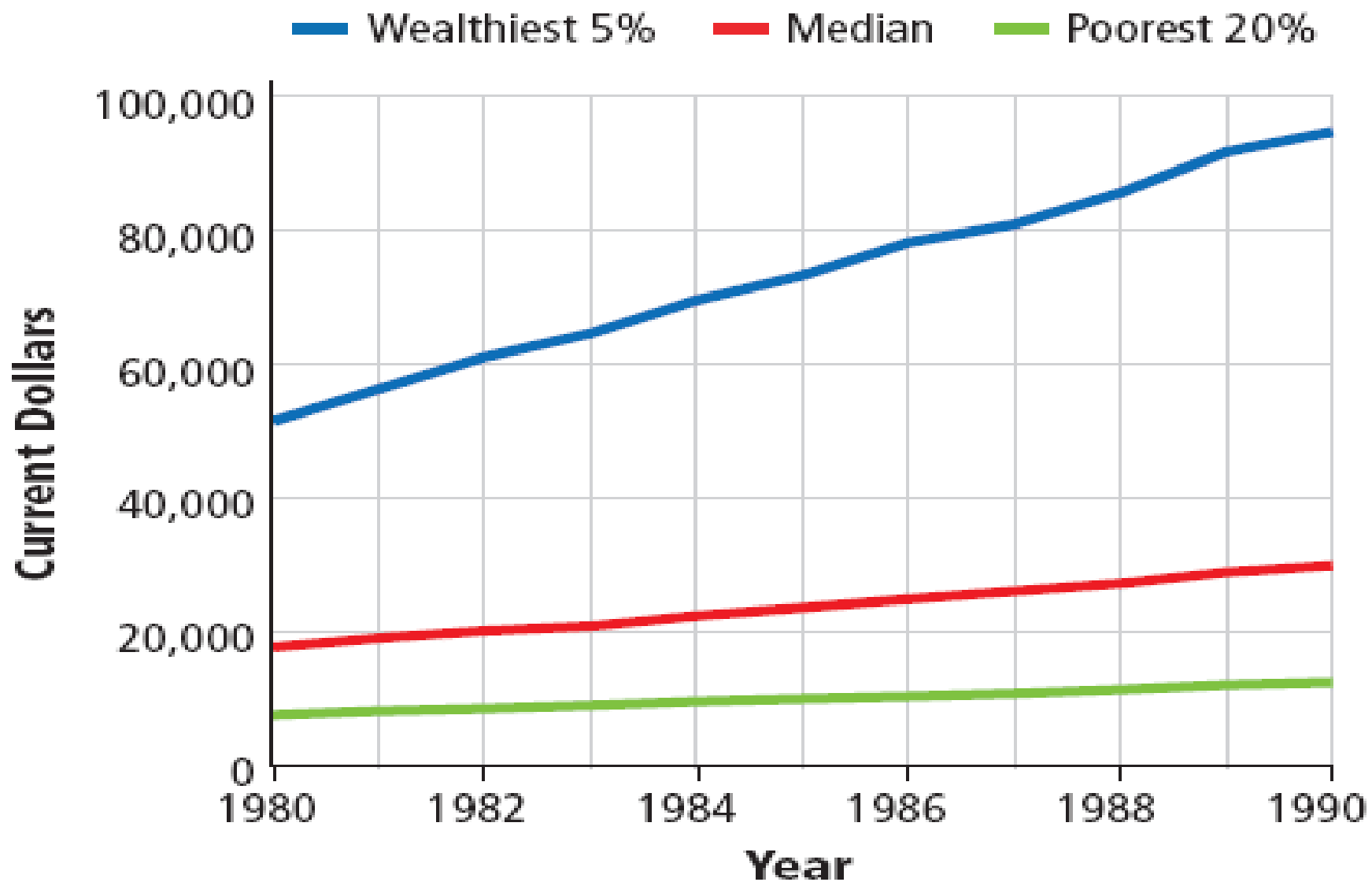
# 1. The Effects of Reaganomics

## Recession and Recovery

- 1981 & 1982 = Nation suffered the worst recession since the Great Depression.
  - Unemployment rose and government revenues fell.
  - Federal spending soared and the federal deficit skyrocketed.
- 
- 1983 = Economic upturn sends consumers on spending spree
  - Stock Market surged and GDP went up 10%



# AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME IN THE 1980s



Source: *United States Census Bureau*

## II.) Reagan's Foreign Policy

### **The Main Idea**

President Reagan took a hard line against communism around the world.

## A.) Reagan and the Cold War

- Reagan rejected the policies of containment and détente; he wanted to destroy communism.
  - Position worsened relations with the Soviets
  - Critics of his policy called Reagan reckless
- Reagan obtained massive increases in military spending.
  - Much of the new spending went to nuclear weapons.
  - Promoted the **Strategic Defense initiative** (SDI)—a shield in space to protect the United States against incoming Soviet missiles.
    - Critics called this Star Wars and said it wouldn't work.

# 1. A Thaw in the Cold War

## The Soviet Union

- By the late 1970s the Soviet economy was shrinking.
- Industrial and farm production, population growth, education, and medical care all fell.
- The Soviet Union started importing food
- The communist Satellite Nations of the Soviet Union begin to demand political and economic reforms

## U.S.-Soviet Relations

- **Mikhail Gorbachev:** becomes Soviet leader in 1984; reform minded
- Economic (**perestroika**), Social (**glasnost**), Military (**diplomacy**), and Political (**democratization**).
- Reagan and Gorbachev sign **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF)** Treaty in 1987
- **Fall of the Berlin Wall** Nov. 1989





## B.) Latin America & Middle East Policy

### El Salvador

- Violent civil war between Marxist guerrillas and government troops supported by armed extremist groups
- Reagan administration supported José Napoleón Duarte—a moderate leader who won the 1984 election.



### Nicaragua

- U.S.-backed Anastasio Somoza Debayle was ousted by the **Sandinistas**—a Marxist group.
- Reagan cut off aid to Nicaragua saying that the Sandinistas were backed by the USSR.
- Reagan then allowed the CIA to equip and train a Sandinista opposition group called the Contras.
- **Boland Amendment**: Congress banned all further direct or indirect U.S. support of the Contras



## Granada

- Island was tied to Communist Cuba
- Reagan sent 2,000 troops in 1983 to overthrow the pro-Cuban government
- 18 U.S. soldiers die



## Lebanon

- Muslim and Christian groups waged a civil war.
- Israel invaded Lebanon to expel the PLO.
- U.S. sent 800 peacekeepers.
- A suicide bomber killed 241 marines.
- Reagan withdrew the troops.





## Iran-Contra Affair

- In 1985 National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane persuaded Reagan to sell arms to Iran in hopes that Iran would help obtain the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon.
  - This violated a U.S. arms embargo.
- Vice Admiral John Poindexter and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North carried out the plan to divert arms sale money to the Contras.
- Reagan admitted authorizing the sale of arms to Iran but denied knowing that the money was then diverted to the Contras.
- Administration engaged in a cover-up of their actions.
  - North admitted destroying key documents.
  - High-level Reagan staff members lied in testimony to Congress and withheld evidence.
  - North was convicted of destroying documents and perjury. His conviction was overturned on technicalities.



## III.) A New World Order

### **The Main Idea**

In 1988 Reagan's vice president, George H.W. Bush, won election to a term that saw dramatic changes in the world.

# A.) The Candidates in the Election of 1988

**George H.W.  
Bush**

- Wealthy, World War II pilot, congressman from Texas, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, head of the C.I.A., and vice president
- Republican nomination for president in 1988



**Jesse  
Jackson**

- Major civil rights leader and a liberal candidate who ran for the Democratic Party's nomination
- Won the most votes on Super Tuesday and had significant support from both white and black voters



**Michael  
Dukakis**

- Governor of Massachusetts who ended up winning the Democratic Party's nomination
- Running mate was Texas senator Lloyd Bentsen



## 1.) Outcome

- Low voter turnout (50.1 percent)
- Most attribute low turnout to negativity of the campaign.
  - Dukakis challenged Bush on the economy.
  - Bush called Dukakis soft on crime.
- Bush won with the promise of no new taxes.

## B.) The Communist Superpower Collapses

Russia's **Boris Yeltsin**, the leader of the Russian Republic, helped foil a hard-liners' coup against Gorbachev in 1991.



Beginning in 1990, Soviet republics started declaring their independence.

Gorbachev resigned as president and the Soviet Union dissolved.



Yeltsin now led the much weaker superpower.

Bush and Yeltsin signed arms treaties in 1991 and 1993.



# An Empire Falls

Pressured by U.S. threats and the dead weight of his ailing Soviet empire, Gorbachev cracked open a door to democracy—and millions of oppressed people rushed through.



## C.) Global Conflicts

### China: Democracy Crushed

- Chinese students called on their Communist leaders to embrace reforms.
- Led huge pro-democracy demonstrations that filled Tiananmen Square.
- Tanks surrounded the protesters and opened fire.
- Hundreds of unarmed people were killed in the **Tiananmen Square massacre**.
- Bush announced an arms embargo.

### Panama: A Dictator Falls

- Colonel Manuel Noriega was a brutal dictator.
- The United States tried to indict him for drug smuggling.
- In 1989 Noriega declared a state of war with the United States.
- Noriega's soldiers killed a U.S. marine
- Bush ordered an invasion of Panama.
- Troops arrested Noriega and took him to Florida.



## The Persian Gulf War

- Iraq's **Saddam Hussein** invaded Kuwait in 1990.
- The attack shocked the United States—who depended on the region's oil—and other Arab nations.
- Reports of atrocities by Iraqi troops surfaced.
- The UN imposed sanctions but the deadline passed.
- ON January 16, 1991, the U.S.-led force attacked.
- **Operation Desert Storm** was a successful, conventional war.

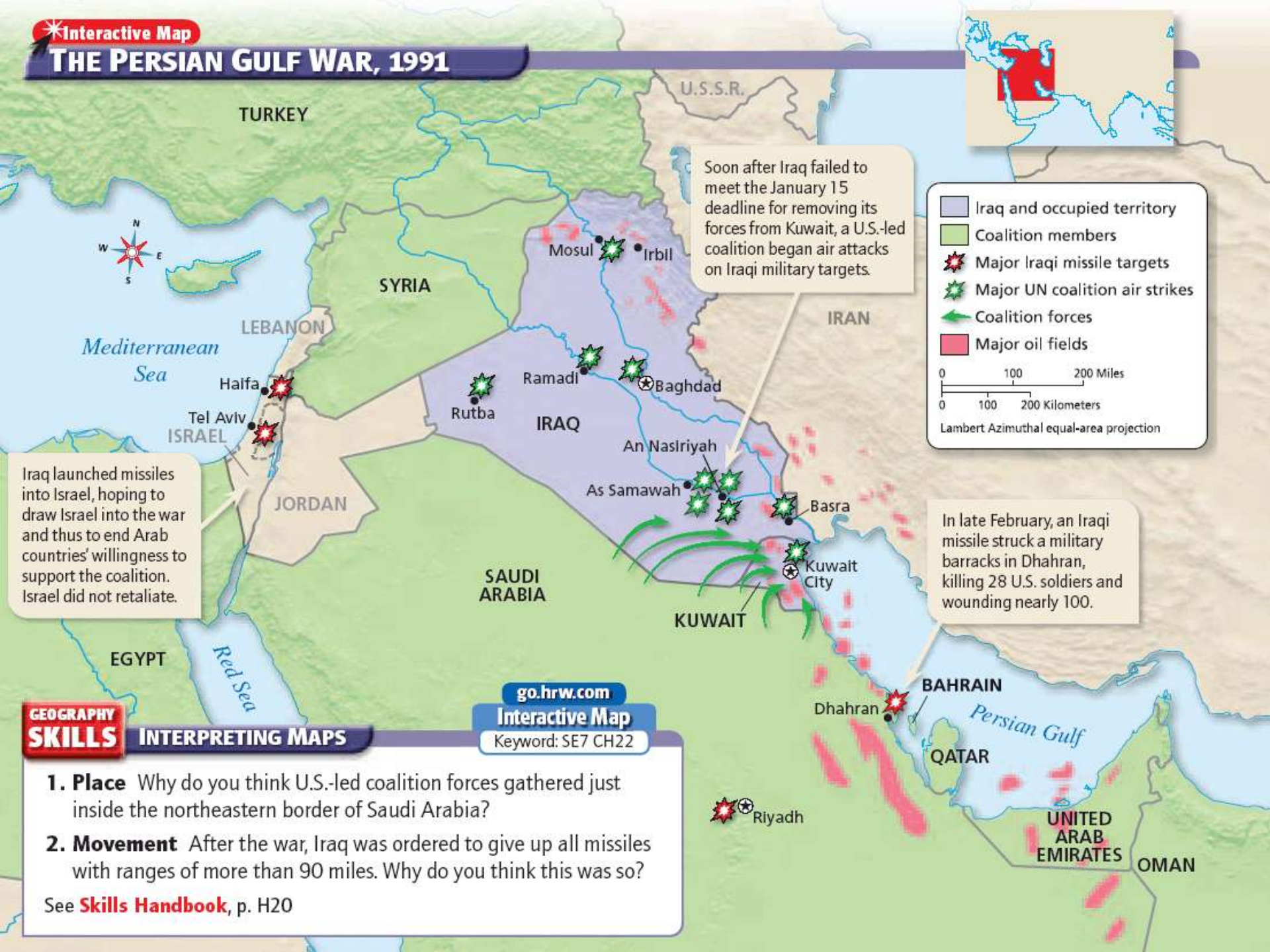
## South Africa: New Freedom

- F.W. de Klerk sought a gradual, orderly lifting of apartheid.
- He released political prisoners, including **Nelson Mandela**.
- De Klerk and Mandela worked together to end apartheid.
- A new constitution was written.
- Nation's first all-race elections were held in 1994.
- Mandela and his African National Congress won.
- De Klerk and Mandela won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.





# THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, 1991



Soon after Iraq failed to meet the January 15 deadline for removing its forces from Kuwait, a U.S.-led coalition began air attacks on Iraqi military targets.

- Iraq and occupied territory
- Coalition members
- Major Iraqi missile targets
- Major UN coalition air strikes
- Coalition forces
- Major oil fields

0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers  
Lambert Azimuthal equal-area projection

Iraq launched missiles into Israel, hoping to draw Israel into the war and thus to end Arab countries' willingness to support the coalition. Israel did not retaliate.

In late February, an Iraqi missile struck a military barracks in Dhahran, killing 28 U.S. soldiers and wounding nearly 100.

## GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

go.hrw.com  
Interactive Map  
Keyword: SE7 CH22

- Place** Why do you think U.S.-led coalition forces gathered just inside the northeastern border of Saudi Arabia?
- Movement** After the war, Iraq was ordered to give up all missiles with ranges of more than 90 miles. Why do you think this was so?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H20

## D.) Bush and the Economy



Recession that began in late 1990 forced Bush to raise taxes.

Unemployment & poverty rose significantly



Despite his foreign-policy successes, economic troubles at home proved to be Bush's political downfall.

