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Answer Key: Diplomacy and Disruption: A 7th Grade Modern US History Mystery

Students analyze complex geopolitical shifts and evaluate the domestic impacts of globalization and constitutional crises through critical evidence-based reasoning.

1. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter brokered the Camp David Accords. Based on the geopolitical challenges of the era, what was the primary analytical significance of this event?

Answer: B) It marked the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab neighbor, Egypt.

The Camp David Accords were a landmark diplomatic achievement where Carter used mediation to help Egypt and Israel reach a peace agreement after decades of conflict.

2. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed in the 1990s, was designed to increase trade barriers between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to protect local manufacturing.

Answer: B) False

NAFTA actually eliminated or reduced trade barriers and tariffs to create a free-trade zone, which sparked intense debate over job outsourcing and economic globalization.

3. During the late 1970s, the U.S. economy struggled with _____, a combination of stagnant economic growth and high inflation that challenged traditional economic theories.

Answer: C) Stagflation

Stagflation occurs when prices rise (inflation) while the economy remains slow (stagnation) with high unemployment, which was a defining problem during the Carter administration.

4. The Iran-Contra Affair in the 1980s involved a secret operation that bypassed Congressional authority. What was the core constitutional conflict of this event?

Answer: A) The Executive branch violated the separation of powers by funding rebels against a law.

The Iran-Contra Affair involved officials secretly selling arms to Iran and using the profits to fund 'Contra' rebels in Nicaragua, despite a Congressional ban (the Boland Amendment) on such funding.

5. The 'Contract with America' was a legislative agenda introduced by Republican congressmen in 1994 to promote smaller government and welfare reform.

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Answer: A) True

Led by Newt Gingrich, this document outlined specific conservative goals that helped Republicans win control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years.

6. Passed in 1990, the _____ was a landmark piece of civil rights legislation that prohibited discrimination based on disability in jobs, schools, and transportation.

Answer: B) Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensured equal opportunity and access for people with disabilities, changing the physical and social landscape of American public life.

7. Which 21st-century environmental development represented a major shift in how the U.S. balances economic growth with ecological responsibility?

Answer: B) The widespread adoption of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas.

Fracking led to a boom in U.S. energy production but sparked intense debate over its impacts on groundwater and its role in climate change, reflecting modern economic-environmental tensions.

8. The 2010 Supreme Court case 'Citizens United v. FEC' ruled that the government could not restrict independent expenditures by corporations and unions for political communications.

Answer: A) True

The ruling significantly changed modern elections by allowing 'Super PACs' to spend unlimited sums of money, arguing that such spending is a form of protected free speech.

9. The 2001 _____ expanded the government's authority to monitor communications and conduct surveillance in the name of national security shortly after the 9/11 attacks.

Answer: B) USA PATRIOT Act

The USA PATRIOT Act aimed to prevent terrorism but became controversial due to concerns that it compromised citizens' Fourth Amendment rights regarding privacy and searches.

10. How did the 2008 'Great Recession' differ from most 20th-century economic downturns in the United States?

Answer: B) It was triggered by a collapse in the housing market and complex financial derivatives.

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The 2008 crisis was unique due to its roots in the subprime mortgage market and the interconnectedness of global financial institutions, leading to massive government bailouts.