Jimmy Carter

1977-1981
Background

- James Earl “Jimmy” Carter Jr. was born October 1, 1924.
- In 2002, he received the Nobel Peace Prize. He was the only president to do so after serving as president.
- He was a peanut farmer and a naval officer.
- He served two terms as a Georgia State Senator, and one as it’s Governor.
- After his presidency, Carter and his wife founded a non-profit human rights organization, called The Carter Center.
- He traveled around the country conducting peace negotiations, observed elections, and he worked on disease prevention for developing nations.
- He plays a key role in the Habitat for Humanity project.
Chief Legislature- B-

- Passed the Chrysler Corporation Loan Guarantee Act of 1979, which bailed out the Chrysler corp.
- Didn’t have a good relationship with congress.
- Passed environmental protection legislation, including the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
- He was against “pork barrel” legislation
- He was somewhat active and persuasive to congress, yet they still did not agree with most of his standpoints.
Vetoed a measure for a 2 billion dollar nuclear carrier.

Canceled the B1 bomber project.

Was a very peaceful president and wanted to avoid any war or conflict.

Lifted arms embargo on Turkey.
Carter's idea to bring his simple, austere style to the White House displeased Congress.

Also saddened with his cut of pork-barrel spending and his push for legislation.

Created two new parts of cabinet: The Department of Education and the Department of Energy

Made Cabinet follow ethics guidelines and require them to put holdings in blind trusts.

Director of the Office of Management and Budget Bert Lance resigned in 1978

Asked for resignation of all cabinet members in 1979
His speaking style focused on the need to conserve energy

His Southern style of voice charmed the public at first

Public opinion polls went down during hostage incident

The small recession didn’t help his image

Often mocked for an incident with a swimming rabbit, and commonly referred to as the “Peanut Farmer President”

Crisis of Confidence (Malaise) speech made future presidents weary of asking the public, which did not take well to it, to conserve energy.
Simplistic leadership style and limit on pork barrel spending angered his Democratic Party.

Democratic Party lost seats in Carter’s election, but not enough to cause a shift in power.

Carter lost re-election to Ford, and a dramatic number of states became Republican, with only six states having Democratic electoral votes.
Guardian of the Economy - C-

- Canceled military pay raises in a time of inflation and Government deficit.
- Increase of 8 million jobs at the end of his term
- Inflation and interest rates at a record high
- Although he did decrease the budget deficit throughout his presidency by a small amount
Camp David meetings with the prime ministers of Israel and Egypt brought together Arabs and Jews in what he called “a framework of peace”

Signed the Panama Canal Treaty, and personally ensured the required majority in Senate.

Public (and foreign) opinion of Carter wavered during the Iran hostage situation

Carter was reluctant to allow Shah, Iran’s leader, into the US, fearful of American reprisal in Iran.

Students overran the embassy and captured more than 60 Americans

Students refused to release the hostages until Shah was returned to Iran for trial.

Carter was determined to save the hostages, and tried to fight by embargoeing Iranian oil.

Khomeini, the kidnappers, released 53 hostages that were either women, african-americans, or not citizens of the United States

The remaining hostages were kept for 444 days, released when Carter’s successor was inaugurated. Carter has been given poor public opinion due to his inability to get the hostages released.
Jimmy Carter was an extremely moral man, yet, he may not have been cut out for president in all the political aspects. Although, he should be given the benefit of the doubt overall. His dedication to human rights, education, energy conservation, and global peace has shown through many years after his presidency. Yet, his term was dogged by high inflation, high unemployment and an energy crisis that was not dealt with correctly. Not to mention, the last months of his presidency were dominated by the hostage situation going on in Iran. Every president should be prepared for situations such as the Iran hostages incident, or high inflation. That is what defines a great leader. Carter has merely proved to be a mediocre one.
Work Cited