

ON THE WEB

Timeline of the Reagan Years

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This timeline offers a quick look at the life of Ronald Reagan, from PBS's American Experience.

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Ronald Reagan swept into office in 1980 with a sizeable victory over incumbent Jimmy Carter. Tax cuts and military spending were the hallmark of his administration.

best system of government. It's time to feel good about American again.



Before the news of his involvement in a tawdry sex-scandal broke, Jimmy Swaggart had been one of America's most popular televangelists. In 1986, the last full year before the

Americans were fed up.

In 1980, confidence in the American economy and government hit a low point. Looking for a change and the promise of a better future, voters turned to **REAGAN** for answers.

His message was clear. Government has become too big and needs to be brought down to size. Taxes are insane and need to be cut to stimulate growth and investment. Military spending has increased to fix the degeneration of the American war machine. More emphasis on character need to be reemphasized in American life. The United States is the largest superpower in the world.

Reagan's election brought a dramatic change to the federal government. As president, Republican or Democrat, he attempted to reduce the size of government since Franklin Roosevelt initiated his New Deal. The tax burden was handed to the American people, with the wealthy Americans most, with the burden that their increased income was passed down to poorer Americans — the trickle-down theory. The economic stagnation of the 1970s did come to an end, but at the cost of huge federal deficits and the increasing poverty rate.

The 1980s were a decade of scandals. The Iran-Contra Scandal proved that White House officials were willing to break the



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scandal, his television ministry raised nearly \$142 million dollars.

law to carry out their political Religious leaders like **JIM BAKER** **SWAGGERT** became mired in dirt scandals. Moral turpitude ended

political career of Colorado Democrat **GARY HART**, who have been president one day. A **SAVINGS AND LOAN SC** American taxpayers for billions and billions of bailout

American lifestyles changed dramatically during the 1980s. Cable television introduced a whole palette of new programming for the discriminating viewer. Compact discs replaced records as the most popular medium for recorded music. Banking became more convenient with the proliferation of automatic teller machines. Businesses and individuals rushed to purchase personal computers that held the promise of radically simplifying difficult tasks.

As the decade came to a close, it became clear that the malaise of the 1970s was over. The United States received a boost of confidence when the Cold War came to an end in 1991. The menace of a threatening Soviet Union now belonged to history, and the United States claimed the status of the only remaining superpower in the world.



The Iran-Contra scandal featured top government officials selling arms to Iran and using the profits to back guerillas in Nicaragua. Oliver North, seen here testifying before the Iran-Contra committee, was the chief negotiator of these deals.

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