Oil and Security

Trace how an oil embargo shaped U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf.

USH.C.8.1.C "Explain reaction to the OPEC oil embargo and issuance of the Carter Doctrine regarding national interests in the Persian Gulf."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two effects of the embargo, circle two U.S. responses to oil supply risks, and draw a box around the sentence that states Carter's warning. Use your marks to trace why oil became a national security concern.

From Gas Lines to the Carter Doctrine

1. At a gas station in 1973, a driver might have faced a long line and a sign limiting purchases. During the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Arab oil exporters in OPEC stopped selling oil to the United States and other countries that supported Israel. The embargo cut shipments, while broader production cuts helped push world oil prices sharply higher. Americans saw gasoline shortages and rising fuel costs. Because the United States depended partly on imported oil, events far from home could disrupt daily travel and the economy. The crisis made access to oil a question of national interest, not just a business concern.

2. The embargo ended in 1974, but U.S. leaders did not want another supply shock to leave the country as vulnerable. Congress set a national speed limit of 55 miles per hour to save fuel. In 1975, Congress authorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a federal stockpile of crude oil for major supply interruptions. Leaders also encouraged more domestic energy production and efforts to use less oil. These responses had different time scales: driving more slowly could reduce demand right away, while storing oil offered a backup for future emergencies. Together, they aimed to protect the economy by reducing the harm from interrupted imports.

3. By 1980, concern had shifted from a temporary cutoff to who might control the Persian Gulf, a major source of oil for world markets. Iran's 1979 revolution had unsettled the region, and Soviet troops entered Afghanistan later that year. In his January 1980 State of the Union address, President Jimmy Carter declared that an outside power's attempt to dominate the Persian Gulf would threaten vital U.S. interests. He said the United States would repel such an attempt by any means necessary, including military force. This Carter Doctrine did not promise cheap gasoline. It warned foreign powers that the United States might fight to prevent hostile control of the region.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the 1973 embargo make access to oil a U.S. national interest rather than only a business concern?

2. How did the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit and the Strategic Petroleum Reserve address different risks exposed by the embargo?

3. Why did Carter warn against an outside power dominating the Persian Gulf in 1980?

4. How did the Carter Doctrine extend the earlier U.S. reaction to the embargo?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 1980 briefing for a new member of Congress. Recommend one energy-supply measure from the passage, state whether you support Carter's military warning, and justify your choices using the embargo's effects and at least one event from 1979. Explain how preparing for a shortage differs from deterring foreign control.

ANSWER KEY

Oil and Security

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.8.1.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two effects of the embargo, circle two U.S. responses to oil supply risks, and draw a box around the sentence that states Carter's warning. Use your marks to trace why oil became a national security concern. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the 1973 embargo make access to oil a U.S. national interest rather than only a business concern?	**The cutoff contributed to gasoline shortages and rising costs, disrupting travel and threatening the economy because the United States relied partly on imported oil.**
2	How did the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit and the Strategic Petroleum Reserve address different risks exposed by the embargo?	**The speed limit aimed to reduce fuel use immediately. The reserve stored crude oil as a backup for future major supply interruptions.**
3	Why did Carter warn against an outside power dominating the Persian Gulf in 1980?	**After Iran's revolution and the Soviet entry into Afghanistan, Carter viewed possible outside control of the oil-rich Persian Gulf as a threat to vital U.S. interests.**
4	How did the Carter Doctrine extend the earlier U.S. reaction to the embargo?	**Earlier measures sought to reduce the harm from oil shortages. The doctrine warned that the United States might use military force to prevent an outside power from dominating the Persian Gulf.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend maintaining the Strategic Petroleum Reserve because the 1973 embargo showed that interrupted imports can bring gasoline shortages and damage the economy. A stockpile could soften the effects of another supply cutoff, but it cannot stop a foreign power from dominating the Persian Gulf. I support Carter's warning because Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in 1979, raising fears about outside influence near the region's oil supplies. Preparing for a shortage helps Americans withstand a disruption; warning that the United States might use force tries to prevent hostile control before a disruption occurs.

For the marking job, accept any two effects of the embargo and any two U.S. measures described in the passage. For the briefing, accept support for or opposition to Carter's warning if the student justifies the position with passage evidence and distinguishes managing a shortage from deterring outside control.