

BROOKINGS

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How We're Doing: A Composite Index of Global and National Trends

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*We the People, of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union,
establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility,
provide for the common defense,
promote the general Welfare and
secure the Blessings of Liberty
to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this
Constitution for the
United States of America*

“Common Defense”



	Jimmy Carter (1977)	Ronald Reagan (1981)	George HW Bush (1989)	Bill Clinton (1993)	George W. Bush (2001)	Barack Obama (2009)
U.S. defense budget (billions of constant fiscal 2009 dollars)	\$383	\$428	\$502	\$416	\$395	\$697
Number of U.S. military personnel stationed abroad	459,000	502,000	510,000	308,000	255,000	476,000
U.S. defense budget as a percentage of GDP	4.8%	5.7%	5.5%	4.2%	2.9%	4.2%
Number of U.S. military combat fatalities	0	0	23	29	3	212
Number of nations that have tested a nuclear weapon	5	5	5	5	7	8
Armed conflicts worldwide	23	30	34	32	28	26
Civilian casualties due to armed conflicts worldwide	64,000	207,000	97,000	103,000	42,000	25,000
World population (in millions)	4,134	4,438	5,108	5,456	6,115	6,747
Share of global population living on less than \$1 a day	NA	41.4%	29.8%	27.0%	20.3%	16.1%
Greenhouse gas concentrations in atmosphere (CO2 and equivalents; 470 parts per million is considered dangerous)	361	375	392	400	420	439

“General Welfare”



	Jimmy Carter (1977)	Ronald Reagan (1981)	George HW Bush (1989)	Bill Clinton (1993)	George W. Bush (2001)	Barack Obama (2009)
Real GDP growth (annualized for first quarter of presidency)	4.9%	8.4%	4.1%	0.5%	-.05%	-5.5%
Unemployment Rate	7.2%	7.5%	5.3%	7.0%	4.5%	9.5%
Consumer confidence (Conference Board)	98.2	83.0	117.2	58.6	118.9	49.3
Inflation (6-mo change in CPI, annualized)	7.3%	9.7%	5.7%	2.8%	3.6%	2.7%
Interest Rate on 30- year fixed mortgage	8.86%	16.70%	10.20%	7.42%	7.16%	5.42%
Public debt as a percentage of GDP	27.8%	25.8%	40.6%	49.4%	33.0%	54.8%
Percentage of large metros with house price drops	NA	78%	59%	69%	1%	61%
Percentage of large metros with employment declines	11%	20%	7%	13%	37%	97%

“General Welfare”



	Jimmy Carter (1977)	Ronald Reagan (1981)	George HW Bush (1989)	Bill Clinton (1993)	George W. Bush (2001)	Barack Obama (2009)
Oil imports (as a percentage of U.S. oil consumption)	48.0%	46.2%	50.3%	55.9%	70.6%	78.4%
Federal Reserve balance sheet as a percentage of GDP	7.04%	5.69%	5.69%	6.20%	6.29%	14.51%
Personal savings rate	8.0%	9.8%	7.9%	5.7%	1.9%	4.3%
Life expectancy for people born in year of election	72.6	73.7	74.9	75.8	77.0	77.8 (est.)
Percentage of non-elderly Americans lacking health insurance in year of election	14.1%	12.0%	15.6%	16.8%	16.8%	16.6%

“Blessings of Liberty”



	Jimmy Carter (1977)	Ronald Reagan (1981)	George HW Bush (1989)	Bill Clinton (1993)	George W. Bush (2001)	Barack Obama (2009)
Approval rating of the president as of July 15	62%	60%	49%	45%	57%	60%
Approval rating of Congress, as of July 15	34%	38%	28%	24%	49%	33%
“Satisfied with the way things are,” as of July 15	NA	33%	44%	24%	51%	31%
Satisfaction improvement over 6 months	NA	+16%	-1%	-5%	-5%	+14%
Approval rating of the president by independent voters, as of July 15	59%	60%	48%	41%	52%	54%
Gap between Republican and Democratic presidential approval ratings	30	44	50	58	59	65

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