

Ch 24 An age of Limits

Nixon's New Conservatism – an attempt to turn America in a more conservative direction by decreasing the power of the federal government and instilling a sense of order

1. Law and Order Politics – Nixon had been elected in 1968 on the dual promise of ending the war in Vietnam and mending the divisiveness with America that the war created

a. Vietnam – de-escalated America's involvement and oversaw peace negotiations with North Vietnam

b. Divisiveness

- i. FBI illegally wiretapped numerous left-wing individuals and organizations
- ii. FBI infiltrated the ranks of the Students for a Democratic Society and radical African American groups in an effort to spread conflict within the organizations
- iii. CIA investigated and compiled documents on thousands of American dissidents (people who objected to the government's policies)
- iv. IRS audited the tax returns of antiwar and civil rights activists
- v. Built an enemies list prominent Americans whom the administration would harass

- vi. Sent his Vice-President, Spiro Agnew, on a public speaking tour to attack antiwar protesters and the media who he viewed as liberal cheerleaders for the antiwar movement

Nixon's Southern Strategy – his attempt to attract the support of Southern conservative Democrats who were unhappy with federal desegregation policies and the liberal Supreme Court

1. Since Reconstruction the South had been a Democratic stronghold, but by 1968 many Democrats had become disillusioned with the party because it had grown too liberal
2. Nixon reversed several civil rights policies:
 - a. Ordered the Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare to delay desegregation plans for school districts in SC and Miss (1969)
 - i. Violated *Brown v. Board of Education* decision
 - ii. Supreme Court ordered Nixon to abide by the court's decision
 - b. Opposed the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Congress voted to extend the act
 - c. Opposed integration through busing and went on national television to urge Congress to halt the practice

- i. *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* – 1971 Supreme Court case in which the court ruled that school districts may bus students to other schools to end the pattern of all-black and all-white schools

3. Nixon criticized the Warren Court for being too liberal

- a. During his first term four justices, including Warren, left the bench through death, retirement, or resignation
- b. Nixon was able to appoint 4 conservative judges

Nixon Confronts a Stagnant Economy

1. Stagflation – economic condition marked by both inflation and high unemployment
 - a. Between 1967-1973, the nation's inflation rate doubled from 3% to 6%
 - b. Unemployment rate increased from 4% when Nixon took office to 6% by 1971
2. Causes of Stagflation
 - a. Deficit spending utilized by Johnson to pay for Vietnam and his Great Society led to inflation
 - b. America began to lose out in international trade markets to West Germany, Japan, and other rising industrial powers
 - c. The nation could not absorb the flood of new workers brought on by the baby boomers and women entering the labor market

i. Between 1965-1980, America's labor force grew by almost 30 million workers

d. Heavy dependence upon foreign oil

i. OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) – an economic association of oil producing nations that is able to set oil prices

ii. During the 1960s OPEC gradually raised oil prices

iii. Yom Kippur War – 1973, Israel against Egypt and Syria, U.S. aided Israel so the Arab OPEC nations cut off all oil sales to the U.S.

1. From the fall of 1973 to March of 1974, when the embargo ended, American motorists faced long lines at gas stations as well as the closing of several factories and schools

2. OPEC quadrupled the price when they resumed selling to the U.S.

3. Nixon Battles Stagflation

a. Attempted to raise taxes and cut the budget but Congress refused

b. Urged interest rates to be raised in order to reduce the amount of money in circulation (drove the country into a mild recession instead)

c. Froze workers' wages as well as businesses' prices and fees for 90 days

d. None were effective

Nixon's Foreign Policy Triumphs

1. Henry Kissinger – Nixon's adviser for national security affairs and later his Secretary of State, was the architect of Nixon's foreign policy

a. Realpolitik – “realistic politics,” involved dealing with other nations in a practical and flexible way rather than according to a rigid policy

b. More important to evaluate a nation's power instead of its philosophies or beliefs

c. Marked a departure from containment (China & Soviet Union)

d. Détente – policy aimed at easing Cold War tensions which involved a willingness to negotiate with Communist nations

2. Nixon visits China – Feb 1972

a. U.S. officially recognizes Communist China in 1971 (hadn't been recognized since 1949)

b. Nixon was trying to take advantage of the decade long rift between China and the Soviet Union

i. China had criticized the Soviet Union for being too soft in its policies against the West and broke off relations in 1960

c. Both nations agreed that neither would dominate the Pacific and that both would cooperate in settling disputes peacefully

d. Also agreed to participate in scientific and cultural exchanges as well as to eventually reunite Taiwan with the mainland

3. Nixon travels to Moscow – May 1972

a. No U.S. president had ever visited the Soviet Union

b. SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) I Treaty – five year agreement that limited the number of ICBMs and submarine-launched missiles to 1972 levels

c. Nixon's visits to China and the Soviet Union helped him to secure the 1972 presidential election (in addition to announcing imminent peace in Vietnam)

Section 2 – Watergate: Nixon's Downfall

Watergate – scandal arising from the Nixon administration's attempt to cover up its involvement in the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate apartment complex

1. Imperial Presidency – Nixon expanded the power of the presidency and gave little thought to constitutional checks and balances

2. The "President's Men" – small group of fiercely loyal group advisors whom Nixon confided in

a. H.R. Haldeman – Chief of Staff

b. John Ehrlichman – Chief Domestic Adviser

c. John Mitchell – Attorney General

Drive Toward Reelection – Nixon lived with an overwhelming fear of losing elections

1. A Bungled Burglary – at 2:30 a.m., June 17, 1972 a guard at the Watergate complex in D.C. caught five men breaking into the DNC headquarters
 - a. Plumbers – Nixon supporters who had the job of plugging any government leaks to the media and to aid the administration in other, sometimes illegal, ways
 - i. Were trying to photograph documents and to bug the phones
 - ii. James McCord – the groups leader, former CIA agent and member of the CRP
 - b. Committee to Reelect the President (CRP) – designed to help Nixon win the 1972 presidential election, run by John Hill who had resigned as attorney general
2. The Cover Up
 - a. Workers shredded all incriminating evidence in Haldeman's office
 - b. The White House asked the CIA to urge the FBI to stop its investigations into the burglary on the grounds of national security
 - c. CRP passed out nearly \$500,000 to the Watergate burglars to buy their silence after they were indicted in Sept 1972

- d. Bob Woodward & Carl Bernstein – *Washington Post* reporters who kept on the story while many Americans lost interest
 - i. In a series of articles they uncovered information that linked numerous members of the administration to the burglary
- 3. Election of 1972 – despite the beginnings of the scandal, Nixon scored the largest victory of any Republican presidential candidate in history
 - a. Nixon defeated George McGovern by capturing 61% of the popular vote

The Cover-up Unravels

- 1. Trial of Watergate Burglars – Jan 1973, all burglars except James McCord changed their pleas from innocent to guilty (McCord was found guilty by a jury)
 - a. Judge John Sirica – made clear his belief that the Watergate burglars and their supervisors from the CRP, G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, had not acted alone
 - b. McCord sent a letter to Sirica on March 20th indicating that had lied under oath and hinted that powerful members of the Nixon administration were involved
- 2. April 30, 1973 – Nixon dismisses John Dean, White House counsel, and announces the resignation of Haldeman and Ehrlichman

3. Nixon went on national TV and denied any attempt at a cover up and appointed a new attorney general, Elliot Richardson, to investigate Watergate.
4. May 1973 – the Senate launched its own investigation, led by Sen. Sam Ervin of North Carolina
 - a. John Dean – informed the Senate that Nixon had been deeply involved in the cover up
 - b. Alexander Butterfield – a presidential aide, informed the Senate that Nixon had taped virtually all of his presidential conversations
 - c. Archibald Cox – the special prosecutor appointed by Elliot Richardson to investigate Watergate took the president to court in Oct 1973 to obtain the tapes
 - i. Nixon refused and ordered Richardson to fire Cox
5. Saturday Night Massacre – Richardson refused Nixon's order and resigned as attorney general, the deputy attorney general also refused the order and was fired
 - a. Solicitor General Robert Bork finally fired Cox, but Cox's replacement, Leon Jaworski, was just as determined to get the tapes
 - b. After the massacre, the House Judiciary Committee began examining the possibility of impeachment

6. Spiro Agnew – Nixon’s vice-president, resigned days before the Saturday Night Massacre after it was revealed that he accepted bribes from Maryland engineering firms before and during his vice-presidency
 - a. Nixon nominated House minority leader Gerald Ford to replace Agnew

The Fall of a President

1. March 1974 – a grand jury indicted Mitchell, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and 4 other presidential aides on charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and perjury
2. April 30, 1974 – Nixon tells a television audience that he’s releasing 1,254 pages of edited transcripts of White House conversation about Watergate
 - a. Nixon refused to release unedited tapes, but the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Nixon must turn over the unedited tapes on July 24, 1974
3. July 27, 1974 – the House Judiciary Committee approved 3 articles of impeachment
 - a. Obstruction of justice
 - b. Abuse of power
 - c. Contempt of Congress for refusing to obey a congressional subpoena
4. August 5, 1974 – Nixon releases the unedited tapes, although 18 minutes worth of tape were still missing

- a. Admits to H.R. Haldeman on June 23, 1972 that he knew of his administrations involvement in the break-in and he agrees to the plan to obstruct the FBI's investigation
- 5. August 8, 1974 – Nixon resigns as president while admitting no guilt
 - a. Gerald Ford is sworn in as the 38th President of the U.S.

Section 3 – The Ford and Carter Years

Ford Travels a Rough Road

- 1. Sept. 8, 1975 – Ford pardons Nixon in an attempt to move the country beyond Watergate
 - a. Cost Ford a good deal of public support
- 2. Economy – by the time Ford had taken office the economy had grown from bad to worse
 - a. Inflation and unemployment (8.5% by 1975) continued to rise
 - b. Inflation increase from 6% to 11% by the end of 1974
 - c. Whip Inflation Now (WIN) – Ford called on Americans to cut back on their use of oil and gas and to take energy saving measures
 - i. No incentives were provided, program failed

- d. “Tight Money” – Ford cut government spending and encouraged the Fed Reserve Board to restrict credit through higher interest rates
 - i. Triggered the worst economic recession in 40 years
- e. Ford’s policies held stagflation (unemployment 8%, inflation 10% by 1976) steady but offered no lasting solutions

Carter Enters the White House

1. Election of 1976 – Gerald Ford vs. Jimmy Carter
 - a. Key Issues – inflation, energy, and unemployment
 - b. Popular Vote – Carter 40.8 million, Ford 39.1 million

Carter’s Domestic Agenda

1. Energy Crisis – considered by Carter to be the single most important issue facing the nation
2. Economy – renewed violence in the Middle East produced a second major fuel shortage in the U.S. and OPEC announced another major price hike
 - a. Inflation soared from 7.6% to 11.3% in 1979
 - b. Inflation climbed to nearly 14% by 1980 (highest since 1947)
 - c. Standard of living slipped from 1st to 5th in the world

- d. Carter's approval rating slipped to 26% – none of his economic measures proved to be effective
- 3. Changing Economy – many of the problems Carter faced stemmed from long-term trends beginning in the 1950s
 - a. Automation and foreign competition had reduced the number of manufacturing jobs
 - b. Service sector was expanding rapidly, during the 1970s this shift was propelled by the development of microchip that allowed computers to be mass produced cheaply
 - c. Service jobs required more education and specialization leaving many to face a more complex job market

Human Rights Foreign Policy

1. Human Rights – U.S. needed to commit itself to promoting the freedoms and liberties listed in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights throughout the world
2. Yielding the Panama Canal – U.S. had controlled the canal since 1914 which was resented by the Panamanians
 - a. 1977 – U.S. promised to turn over control of the canal to the Panamanians on Dec 31, 1999, treaty was barely approved by the Senate
3. Collapse of Détente (relaxation of tensions between the world's superpowers)

- a. Carter's dismay over the Soviet Union's treatment of dissidents (opponents of government policies) delayed a second round of SALT negotiations
 - i. SALT II – June 1979, provided limits on the number of strategic weapons and nuclear missile launchers that each side could produce
 - ii. SALT II met resistance in the Senate and then the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in Dec 1979, which made Carter refuse to fight for it

Triumph and Crisis in the Middle East

1. Camp David Accords – first major break in Middle Eastern hostilities since the creation of Israel in 1948
 - a. 13 days of intense negotiations between Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt and Menachem begin of Israel
 - i. Provided for a five year transition period during which Israel and Jordan would work out the issue of self-rule for the Palestinians (Arabs living on the West bank and the Gaza Strip which were captured by Israel during earlier wars)
 - ii. Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula in exchange for Egypt's recognition of Israel's existence as a nation (first Arab nation to do so)

2. Iran Hostage Crisis – Jan 1979 a revolution broke out in Iran protesting widespread corruption and dictatorial tactics of the Shah who was supported by the U.S.
 - a. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini – Muslim religious leader who led the rebels in overthrowing the Shah
 - i. Khomeini established a religious state based on strict obedience to the Qur'an (sacred book of Islam)
 - b. Carter allowed the Shah to enter the U.S. for cancer treatment shortly after the revolution
 - i. Infuriated by this action, revolutionaries of Iran seized 52 Americans from the U.S. embassy in Tehran
 - ii. The militants demanded the return of the Shah in exchange for the release of the hostages
 - c. Carter responded by banning all trade to Iran and eventually severing diplomatic relations with the country
 - d. Jan 20, 1981 – after 444 days of captivity the hostages were released
 - i. Ronald Reagan received most of the credit because he had just been inaugurated as President although Carter had done all of the work

Section 4 – Environmental Activism

Roots of Environmentalism

1. *Silent Spring* – written by Rachel Carson in 1962, warned Americans of the harmful effects of pesticides being used by farmers
 - a. Sold nearly ½ a million copies while alerting Americans to the dangers that human activity posed to the natural environment
 - b. DDT – powerful pesticide outlawed by Congress in 1972
2. Clean Air Act – passed in 1963 regulated automotive and industrial emissions

Environmental Concerns in the 1970s

1. Earth Day – April 22 (1970 was the first) of every year, millions of people around the world gather to heighten public awareness of environmental problems
2. Environmentalist – someone who takes an active role in advocating measures to protect the environment
3. Environmental Protection Agency – formed by Nixon in 1970 to enforce pollution standards, to conduct environmental research, and to assist state and local gov'ts in pollution control
4. Clean Air Act – 1970, gave the nation's industries five years to meet new pollution standards, including a mandate to autoworkers that they reduce tailpipe

emissions of their new cars by 90% (eventually extended to the 1980s)

5. Nuclear Energy – advocates argued that this was the energy of the future: it was cheap, plentiful, and environmentally safe while critics argued that wastes were dangerous to humans and the environment
 - a. Three Mile Island – March 28, 1979, one of the nuclear reactors at this plant near Harrisburg, PA malfunctioned and leaked low levels of radiation
 - i. Forced more than 100,000 residents to evacuate
 - ii. April 9, 1979 – the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ruled that the immediate danger was over and they strengthened their safety standards and improved inspection procedures
 - b. By 1988 there were at least 17 new nuclear power plants and none had suffered a breakdown
6. *Exxon Valdez* – oil tanker that hit a reef in Prince William Sound, off the coast of Alaska, spilling 11 million gallons of oil into the water
 - a. Worst oil spill in our nations history
 - b. Fouled more than 1200 miles of coastline and killing at least 10% of the wildlife
 - c. Exxon was forced to pay \$287 million in damages to thousands of Alaskans and \$5 billion in punitive damages

Continuing Movement

1. Balancing environmental concerns with jobs and progress
2. Depletion of the ozone layer
3. Global Warming