Ch. 34 – Crisis and Resurgence
The Nixon Presidency
1968-1974
The ‘Imperial’ Presidency

- The Constitution attempts to create a balance between the 3 separate branches of government.
- Since FDR’s New Deal, Presidential powers have increased dramatically.
- The New Deal, World War II, and the following Cold War added powers.
- This increase in Presidential power is called an **Imperial Presidency**.
- This expansion of power reached its peak under **Richard Nixon**.
Nixon’s Domestic Policy

• Nixon, a Republican, moved the USA towards a more conservative direction.
• Nixon felt federal social programs were inefficient and states and local governments could handle issues better.
• Nixon eliminated many of LBJ’s Great Society programs and gave those federal funds to state and local governments to decide how to spend the money.
Nixon’s Domestic Policy

• During Nixon’s Presidency, the Supreme Court continued to protect 1st Amendment rights.

• *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) – John and Mary Tinker were suspended from school for wearing black armbands to protest the Vietnam War, the Supreme Court ruled this violated their 1st Amendment right.

• *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) – struck down law requiring Amish kids to attend High School, violated 1st Amendment right of religious freedom.
Nixon and the Environment

- **Environmental Protection Agency**, or the EPA was signed into law by Pres. Nixon to protect the environment.
- EPA sets air and water pollution standards.
- **Endangered Species Act** (1973) – a law requiring the Fish & Wildlife Service to list species of plants and animals that are threatened with extinction.
- The Act also requires the government to protect these species.
The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

• In 1923, the National Woman’s Party, proposed the Equal Rights Amendment.
• In 1972, the amendment was finally approved by Congress and sent to the states for ratification, it failed.
• Phyllis Schlafly opposed the ERA, thinking it would reduce the rights of wives and harm family life.
• Schlafly claimed it would deprive women of the ‘right’ to be ‘supported and protected’ by men.
Nixon Opens China

- In 1972, Nixon became the first American president to visit China.
- Since China’s Communist Revolution, the USA had refused to establish diplomatic relations with China.
- Nixon a strong anti-communist wanted to create a more flexible situation in Asia to put more pressure on North Vietnam to end the war.
- Reopening China was one of Nixon’s greatest foreign policy achievements as it reduced tensions between the United States and China.
Nixon’s Détente with USSR

• Nixon wanted a policy of détente, or a relaxing of tensions with the USSR.
• Nixon wanted to halt the build-up of nuclear weapons.
• In 1972, Nixon became the first President to visit Moscow.
• Nixon and Soviet leaders signed an agreement (SALT) limiting development of defensive missile systems.
• USA also sold American grain to Russia and worked with the USSR to ease tension in the Middle East.
Nixon’s Vice Presidents

- Nixon had used a campaign slogan of a return to ‘law and order’, but the American people soon learned Nixon’s own government was corrupt.
- Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned when it was found he took bribes while governor of Maryland.
- Under the 25th Amendment, Nixon appointed Gerald Ford as his new VP.
- Ford would later become the only man to be President that was not elected by the people of the USA.
The Watergate Crisis

• In 1972, former CIA agents, working for Nixon’s re-election committee were caught breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic Party in the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C..

• Two investigative reporters exposed the link between Nixon and the Watergate burglars.

• Pres. Nixon attempted to cover up the investigation on the grounds that it involved national security.
The Watergate Crisis

• A Special Prosecutor was appointed to look for wrongdoing.
• Under oath, a Nixon aide stated Nixon was a part of the Watergate cover-up.
• Nixon had recorded all of his White House conversations and the Senate wanted to listen to them, but Nixon refused claiming executive privilege.
• Nixon claimed if he turned over the tapes it would lead to Judicial control over the Executive branch, violating the separation of powers of the Constitution.
The Watergate Crisis

- **United States v. Nixon** (1974) – the Supreme Court ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes, proving that no one is above the law.

- When the ‘Nixon Tapes’ were released, they revealed Nixon had lied about his involvement in a cover-up and had even deleted portions of tapes.

- The House of Representatives moved to **impeach** (remove from office) Nixon.

- Fearing removal from office, Nixon became the 1st President to resign.
Pres. Richard Nixon Resigns
August 8, 1974
The Impact of Watergate

- First time a President resigned!
- Lowered public confidence in the government, again.... (LBJ – Vietnam)
- Showed Presidential power gave opportunity for abuses.
- Proved our government is based on laws and the system of check & balances works.
- Strengthened role of the press in informing public. (muckraking)
- Congress passed new laws to limit Presidential powers.
The Ford Presidency
1974-1977

Stagflation
Economic Growth
Inflation

OPEC
President Gerald Ford

- When Nixon resigned, **Gerald Ford** became the next President.
- Ford had not even been elected as Vice-President, he had been appointed by Nixon after VP Agnew had been forced to resign.
- One of Ford’s first acts as President was to **pardon** Nixon for any crimes.
- The pardon was not popular!
- Pres. Ford felt Nixon had suffered enough and he particularly wanted the nation to heal.
President Gerald Ford

• Pres. Ford’s main worries were economic ones.

• **Inflation** - means **rising prices** and is usually associated with **economic growth** and **full employment**.

• **Stagflation** – is inflation but with **high unemployment**.

• During the Ford Presidency stagflation drove our economy.
Ford and the Energy Crisis

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries aka OPEC.

- In the 1960s, OPEC was formed by several oil producing nations located mostly in the Middle East.
- In 1973, OPEC used oil as a political weapon by placing an oil embargo on the USA & Western Europe for supporting Israel in a Middle East war.
- Overnight the price of gas shot up!
- Even after the war ended, OPEC continued with high oil prices, making them rich and costing us increased prices for fuel and electricity.
The Carter Presidency
1977-1981
President Jimmy Carter

• Many Americans continued to blame Nixon and the Republican party for the Watergate scandal.
• **Jimmy Carter**, a Democrat from Georgia, ran against and defeated Pres. Ford in 1976.
• Carter promised to ‘clean up’ Washington and end corruption.
• Like Pres. Ford, Carter’s main problem was the U.S. economy.
• Inflation was 10%, interests rates at 21% and price of oil continued rising.
Pres. Jimmy Carter’s Domestic Policy

- **The Energy Crisis** – dependence on foreign oil and rising gas prices forced Carter to create Department of Energy.

- **The Environment** – Three Mile Island nuclear accident, Carter created the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to set standards for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

- **Diversity** – Carter appointed women and minorities to government positions.

- **Community Reinvestment Act** – required banks to make loans available in low income, minority communities.
Pres. Jimmy Carter’s Foreign Policy

- Pres. Carter wanted the U.S.A. to set a moral example for the world and he made human rights a high priority.

- Carter condemned apartheid (segregation) in South Africa, he pressured the USSR into allowing its Jews to emigrate (leave), and stopped sending financial aid to dictators who violated human rights.

- Pres. Carter signed a deal with Panama returning control of the Panama Canal to Panama in the year 2000.
Pres. Jimmy Carter’s Foreign Policy

- Israel was created as a homeland for Jewish people by the U.N. in 1948.
- The U.S.A. strongly supports Israel, a pro-Western Democracy surrounded by Islamic nations that intend it harm.
- Egypt and Israel have fought several wars since Israel was created.
- Pres. Carter arranged for a meeting between Egypt’s Anwar Sadat and Israel’s Menachem Begin.
- Face to face negotiations produced the Camp David Accords ending 30 years of war between the two nations.
Pres. Jimmy Carter’s Foreign Policy

- Carter continued with Nixon’s policy of détente with the USSR, until 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.
- Pres. Carter stopped selling grain to the Soviets and the U.S. boycotted the 1980 Olympic games held in Moscow.
- Pres. Carter also postponed signing a new arms control agreement, known as SALT II.
Carter and Iran

• The Shah of Iran was an ally of the USA, however he was also a brutal dictator.
• In 1978, the Shah was overthrown by the Ayatollah Khomeini and radical religious leaders who were hostile to the USA.
• In 1979, the Shah entered the USA for medical treatment, sparking riots in Iran.
• Two weeks later, Iranian students seized 42 staff members of American Embassy in Tehran, Iran.
Carter and Iran

- These ‘hostages’ would be held for over a year (444 days).
- Pres. Carter staged a rescue attempt, but it failed.
- The U.S.A. imposed economic sanctions on Iran and other countries around the world supported the United States.
- America’s image suffered because of our inability to free the hostages.
- They remained captive until Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President in 1980.
The Reagan Presidency
1981-1989
President Ronald Reagan

• The 1980s saw a resurgence in conservatism.
• Since the ‘New Deal’ (FDR) the size and powers of the federal government had been steadily increasing.
• Pres. Reagan decided it was time to cut down the size of federal government by:
  – Reducing taxes and federal regulations on businesses.
  – Increasing private competition.
  – Increasing the strength of the military.
• Reagan wanted to expand the size of the government in one direction while reducing it in another.
The Reagan Presidency

- Reagan was a popular Hollywood actor before entering politics.
- Reagan was originally a Democrat, until he realized the federal government was too powerful and intrusive.
- Reagan was elected Governor of California and twice ran and lost the Presidential race in 1968 & 1976.
- In 1980, rising inflation and the Iran hostage situation gave Reagan the winning edge over Pres. Carter for President.
- Reagan selected George H. W. Bush as his Vice-President.
Pres. Reagan’s Domestic Policy

• As Reagan took office the main problem facing the nation was still stagflation.

• Reagan’s answer to the problem was called supply-side economics aka Reaganomics.

• Reagan wanted to lower taxes and decrease business regulations so that producers could create a larger supply of goods.

• He reasoned this larger supply of goods would drive down prices and stop inflation.

• It would also lead to higher employment as business needed increased workers.
Pres. Reagan’s Domestic Policy

- But, the U.S. debt rose due to a decrease in tax revenues and an increase in military spending.
- Unemployment rates also rose as Americans bought more things from overseas than were sold overseas.
- Mazzoli-Simpson Act changed U.S.A.’s immigration policy to deal with illegal immigration by ‘legalizing’ illegal aliens who had lived in U.S. since 1981.
- Reagan nominated Sandra Day O’Connor to be the 1st woman justice on the Supreme Court.
Peace Through Strength

- Reagan set out to rebuild American confidence after Vietnam and have the USA continue to act as the world’s defender of freedom & democracy.
- Reagan sent the Marines to Grenada after a Communist takeover.
- **Peace through Strength** meant the best way to prevent war was to make our enemies think the USA had the means and the will to stop Communist aggression.
- **Star Wars** or **Strategic Defense Initiative** was to be a space based system to shoot down missiles, deterring the Soviets.

“Let he who desires peace prepare for war”
War on Terrorism

• **Terrorism** is the use of bombings, assassinations, kidnapping, or other acts of terror to make sure a political group's voice is heard and that governments will yield to their demands.

• 1983 – Reagan sends Marines to *Lebanon* as part of a multinational peace keeping force, but a suicide bomber attacked the American Embassy in Beirut, killing 241 Marines.

The Iran-Contra Affair

- The Iran-Contra Affair was a secret operation run by Reagan White House officials.
- Reagan had stated he would refuse to negotiate with terrorists, but his administration sold weapons to Iran gain release of American hostages in Lebanon.
- Profits from weapons sales were then given to anti-Communists Nicaraguan Contras who were fighting Communism in Nicaragua.
- When the scandal was revealed the image of the USA was tarnished.
- Americans again wondered if they could trust their government.
Democracy Triumphs

- Reagan often referred to the USSR as the ‘*Evil Empire*’.  
- Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced free-enterprise reforms to the failing Russian economy. 
- Some say that Pres. Reagan deserves credit for the fall of Communism, because of his strong stand on defense and support of democracy.  
- Others believe Reagan benefitted from a weak Russian economy and Gorbachev’s reform efforts.
The Bush Presidency
1989-1993
Pres. George H. W. Bush

- George H.W. Bush had served two terms as Reagan’s V.P., before being elected as President.
- Pres. Bush had experience in foreign affairs but faced many challenges on the home front.
- The Military spending of the Reagan years meant less spending on domestic projects along with higher taxes and a higher deficit.
- Bush had promised he would not raise taxes, but he soon had too.
Pres. Bush’s Domestic Policy

- George H.W. Bush had served two terms as Reagan’s V.P., before being elected as President.
- Pres. Bush had experience in foreign affairs but faced many challenges on the home front.
- The Military spending of the Reagan years meant less spending on domestic projects along with higher taxes and a higher deficit.
- Bush had promised he would not raise taxes, but he soon had to.
Impact of Geography on History

• Until the 1970s, most Americans lived in the Northeast and Midwest, with its hot summers and cold winters.
• The Southeast was considered to hot and humid, while the West considered to dry and remote.
• But technology changed this ....
  – Government built dams making water available in dry areas.
  – Air-conditioning made it possible to keep cool in the South.
  – Construction of federal highways
• Combine a deteriorating economy and new technology and people started moving to the Sun Belt, leaving behind the Rust Belt and decaying cities.
Rust Belt to the Sun Belt
Pres. Bush’s Domestic Policy

- **Civil Rights** and **Civil Unrest** – progress in Civil Rights had been made, but the recession hit young African Americans really hard.

- Riots erupted in Los Angeles when a jury found LA policemen not guilty for beating Rodney King, even though it was caught on tape.

- **ADA** or **American With Disabilities Act** signed by Pres. Bush prohibited discrimination against the disabled in employment and public facilities.
Pres. Bush’s Foreign Policy

• 1989 – USA invaded Panama and removed the drug dealing dictator **Manuel Noriega** from power and put him in a U.S. prison.

• 1989 – 1991 the **Cold War** came to an end with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reuniting of East and West Germany.

• 1990 – The **Gulf War** was Pres. Bush’s greatest success as the USA forced Iraq’s Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait.

The Clinton Presidency 1993-2001
Pres. Bill Clinton

- Bill Clinton came from a poor Arkansas background, but he attended Yale Law School and met his future wife Hillary.
- In 1992 Bill Clinton was Governor of Arkansas when he ran for President against George Bush and Ross Perot.
- Americans believed Pres. Bush hadn’t done enough and Independent party candidate Perot split the vote allowing Clinton to win the presidency.
- Ross Perot’s 3rd Party candidacy was one of the most successful in history
Pres. Clinton’s Domestic Policy

• Pres. Clinton cut federal spending, raised taxes on the rich, and lowered taxes on the poorest Americans.

• Clinton proposed health care reforms but failed to get them passed into law.

• The end of the Cold War saw our national debt drop as military spending decreased.

• The U.S. economy prospered as:
  – Unemployment went down
  – Consumer spending increased
  – Business profits were at all time highs, especially the computer industry
Pres. Bill Clinton’s Impeachment

• In 1999, Pres. Clinton faced a major scandal and for just the second time in history a President faced impeachment proceedings.
• Clinton had a sexual affair with a White House intern and then lied about it.
• *Impeachment* means the removal from office under the following rules:
  – House of Representatives vote to impeach
  – Senate holds a trial requiring a two-thirds vote to convict

The Senate failed to convict, but once again the American public felt they could not trust their leaders.
Pres. Clinton’s Foreign Policy

• Yugoslavia, Bosnia, & Kosovo – following the end of the Cold War, there was an increase in tensions between several nations on the Balkan Peninsula.

• Christian Serbs attempted to massacre Muslims living in Bosnia and Kosovo in a policy called ‘*ethnic cleansing*’.

• Fearing *genocide*, like the Holocaust might be repeated, Pres. Clinton sent U.S. troops and used **NATO** airstrikes to stop Serbians from attacking Kosovo.
Pres. Clinton’s Foreign Policy

- NAFTA opened trade between the USA, Mexico, and Canada by lowering tariffs and regulations with the hope of increasing trade and stimulate the economies of the three nations involved.
- Some say this causes a loss of U.S. jobs, because other nations have lower wages, fewer government regulations, and fewer environmental concerns.
- U.S. also joined **GATT** (General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs) to increase world trade.
Entrepreneurs

An Entrepreneur is someone who takes the risks of starting a business in hopes of making a profit.

The following are some examples:

• Bill Gates – Microsoft founder - personal computers
• Sam Walton – Walmart founder
• Estee Lauder – Cosmetics lines founder
• Robert Johnson – African American founder of BET
• Lionel Sosa – Hispanic advertising genius
• Oprah Winfrey – talk show host