

Topic #28 Overview

Main Themes:

1. That Nixon and Kissinger believed that stability in a "multi-polar" world could be achieved only by having the United States forge a bold new relationship with China and, at the same time, seek a detente with the Soviet Union through grain sales and arms reductions.
2. That Nixon's efforts to build a policy of less federal dominance of the states and more respect for traditional values reaped more political gain than practical result.
3. How movements by youth, ethnic minorities, and women challenged social norms.
4. That Nixon's inconsistent economic policies failed to solve "stagflation," which was as much international as domestic in origin.
5. How Nixon's fear of opposition and assumption that his own fortunes were identical to those of the nation led to his downfall through the scandals collectively known as Watergate.
6. How the environment became an issue in American life. That Gerald Ford managed to restore confidence in the presidency but remained unable to make significant breakthroughs in solving the nation's international and economic problems.
7. That the difficult problems faced by Jimmy Carter, including a sluggish economy, an energy crunch, and a Middle Eastern crisis, combined with his leadership style to ensure that he would be a one-term president

Objectives: [You should be able to explain each of these in some detail]

1. The Nixon-Kissinger policy for terminating the Vietnam War, and the subsequent Paris peace settlement.
2. The changes in American foreign policy necessitated by the new perception of the world as multi-polar.
3. The reasons for the decline of the American economy in the early 1970s, and President Nixon's reaction to the decline.
4. The ways in which the Supreme Court in the Nixon years began to change to a more conservative posture, and the reasons for this change.
5. The significance of Watergate as an indication of the abuse of executive power.
6. The significance of the environmental movement. How environmentalists sought political solutions to their demands and how the American political system responded.
7. The efforts of President Gerald Ford to overcome the effects of Richard Nixon's resignation.
8. The rapid emergence of Jimmy Carter as a national figure and the reasons for his victory in 1976.
9. Carter's emphasis on human rights and its effects on international relations.
10. Carter's role in bringing about the Camp David agreement and the impact of this agreement on the Middle East.
11. Why the United States had so much difficulty in freeing the hostages held by Iran and the effect of this episode on the Carter presidency.