

# The Nixon Administration

## Guide to Reading

### Connection

In the previous chapter, you learned about the social, political, and environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In this section, you will discover how President Nixon worked to restore traditional values at home and ease Cold War tensions abroad.

### Main Idea

- Nixon won the 1968 election by appealing to a “silent majority” of conservatives. (p. 851)
- With the support of national security adviser Henry Kissinger, Nixon forged better relationships with China and the Soviet Union. (p. 854)

### Content Vocabulary

revenue sharing, impound, détente, summit

### Academic Vocabulary

supplement, notion, potential

### People and Terms to Identify

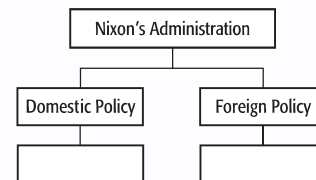
Southern strategy, Henry Kissinger

### Reading Objectives

- **Describe** Nixon’s domestic agenda.
- **Discuss** Nixon’s foreign policy achievements.

### Reading Strategy

**Organizing** As you read about President Nixon’s administration, complete a graphic organizer by listing his domestic and foreign policies.



### Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

**11.8.4** Analyze new federal government spending on defense, welfare, interest on the national debt, and federal and state spending on education, including the California Master Plan.

**11.9.3** Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the following: the era of McCarthyism, instances of domestic Communism (e.g., Alger Hiss) and blacklisting; the Truman Doctrine; the Berlin Blockade; the Korean War; the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis; atomic testing in the American West, the “mutual assured destruction” doctrine, and disarmament policies; the Vietnam War; Latin American policy.

## The Big Idea

**International competition can lead to conflict and cooperation.** Richard Nixon won the 1968 presidential election by appealing to Southern states and a large number of conservative voters. As president, Nixon instituted his policy of New Federalism, finding ways to give state and local governments more control. The president also set out to improve relations with China and the Soviet Union. The U.S. policy of détente enabled the countries to cooperate with one another and led to the signing of a treaty limiting nuclear arms between the Soviet Union and the United States.

**11.11.2** Discuss the significant domestic policy speeches of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton (e.g., with regard to education, civil rights, economic policy, environmental policy).

**11.11.6** Analyze the persistence of poverty and how different analyses of this issue influence welfare reform, health insurance reform, and other social policies.

**11.11.7** Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

## Appealing to Middle America

**Main Idea** Nixon won the 1968 election by appealing to a “silent majority” of conservatives.

**Reading Connection** Do you view your community as politically and socially liberal or conservative? Read on to find out about the strategies Nixon used to convince conservative Southerners to vote for him.

Many Americans longed for an end to the violence and turmoil that seemed to plague the nation in the 1960s.

### ★ An American Story ★

Millions of Americans saw police and demonstrators clash on the streets of Chicago at the Democratic National Convention in late August 1968. Many television viewers were outraged at the police tactics they saw. G.L. Halbert, however, was not one of them. To make his support of police efforts public, Halbert wrote a letter to *Newsweek* magazine:

““Congratulations to Mayor Daley and the Chicago police on their tough handling of the yippies, Vietniks, and newsmen. If more mayors and police departments had the courage to crack down on those who carry only the flags of our enemies and newsmen who consistently slant their coverage of events in favor of those who would undermine and disrupt our country, there would be greater freedom for the majority of Americans rather than greater lawlessness for the few. It is a tragedy that such individuals are allowed to cringe behind our constitutional guarantees after they have wreaked destruction by their agitation.””

—quoted in *Newsweek*, September 16, 1968

The views expressed by G.L. Halbert were not unusual. While they did not shout as loudly as the protesters, many Americans supported the government and desired change. The presidential candidate in 1968 who appealed to many of these frustrated citizens was Richard Nixon, a Republican. Nixon aimed many of his campaign messages at these Americans, whom he referred to as “Middle America” and the “silent majority.” He promised them “peace with honor” in Vietnam, law and order, a streamlined government, and a return to more traditional values at home.

**The Election of 1968** Nixon’s principal opponent in the 1968 presidential election was Democrat Hubert Humphrey, who had served as vice president under Lyndon Johnson. Nixon also had to wage his campaign against a strong third-party candidate, George Wallace, an experienced Southern politician and avowed supporter of segregation. In a 1964 bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, the former Alabama governor had attracted considerable support.

On Election Day, Wallace captured an impressive 13.5 percent of the popular vote, the best showing of a third-party candidate since 1924. Nixon managed a victory, however, receiving 43.4 percent of the popular vote to Humphrey’s 42.7 and 301 electoral votes to Humphrey’s 191.

**The Southern Strategy** One of the keys to Nixon’s victory was his surprisingly strong showing in the South. Even though the South had long been a Democratic stronghold, Nixon had refused to concede the region. To gain Southern support, Nixon had met with powerful South Carolina senator Strom Thurmond and won his backing by promising several things: to appoint only conservatives to the federal courts, to name a Southerner to the Supreme Court, to oppose court-ordered busing, and to choose a vice presidential candidate acceptable to the South. (Nixon ultimately chose Spiro Agnew, governor of the border state of Maryland.)

Nixon’s efforts paid off on Election Day. Large numbers of white Southerners deserted the Democratic Party, granting Humphrey only one victory in that region—in Lyndon Johnson’s home state of Texas. While Wallace claimed most of the states in the Deep South, Nixon captured Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina. Senator Strom Thurmond’s support delivered his state of South Carolina for the Republicans as well.


▼ *Students and police clash at the 1968 Democratic National Convention*



Following his victory, Nixon set out to attract even more Southerners to the Republican Party, an effort that became known as the **Southern strategy**. Toward this end, the president fulfilled his agreements with Thurmond and took steps to slow desegregation. During his tenure, Nixon worked to overturn several civil rights policies. He reversed a Johnson administration policy, for example, that had cut off federal funds for racially segregated schools.

**A Law-and-Order President** Having also won the presidency with a promise of law and order, Nixon immediately set out to battle crime in America. His administration specifically targeted the nation's antiwar protesters. Attorney General John Mitchell declared that he stood ready to prosecute "hard-line militants" who crossed state lines to stir up riots. Mitchell's deputy, Richard Kleindienst, went even further with the boast, "We're going to enforce the law against draft evaders, against radical students, against deserters, against civil disorders, against organized crime, and against street crime."

President Nixon also went on the attack against the recent Supreme Court rulings that expanded the rights of accused criminals. Nixon opposed these rulings and openly criticized the Court and its chief justice, Earl Warren. The president promised to fill vacancies on the Supreme Court with judges who would support the rights of law enforcement over the rights of suspected criminals.

When Chief Justice Warren retired shortly after Nixon took office, the president replaced him with Warren Burger, a respected conservative judge. The president also placed three other conservative justices on the Court, including one justice from the South. The Burger Court did not reverse Warren Court rulings pertaining to the rights of criminal suspects. It did, however, refuse to expand those rights further. For example, in *Stone v. Powell* (1976), it agreed to limits on the rights of defendants to appeal state convictions to the federal judiciary. The Court also continued to uphold capital punishment as constitutional.  (See page 1007 for more information on *Stone v. Powell*.)

**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

**The Election of 1968**



Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Political Party
Nixon	301	31,785,480	Republican
Humphrey	191	31,275,166	Democrat
Wallace	46	9,906,473	Independent

**Geography Skills**

- Interpreting Maps** What regions provided Nixon with solid support?
- Applying Geography Skills** Nixon barely won the popular vote. How did he win so many electoral votes?

## Profiles IN HISTORY

### Romana Acosta Bañuelos 1925–

On her first day of business in downtown Los Angeles, California, Romana Acosta Bañuelos made \$36 selling tortillas. That was in 1949. She made great strides after that, becoming a successful businessperson and serving as U.S. treasurer in the 1970s.

Born in 1925 in a small town in Arizona to Mexican American immigrants, Bañuelos spent part of her childhood on a relative's small ranch in Mexico. Rising early, she tended the crops and helped her mother make empanadas (Mexican turnovers) to sell to local restaurants. "My mother was the type of woman that taught us how to live in any place and work with what we have."

That lesson inspired Bañuelos to start her own business when she returned to the United States at the age of 19. Gradually her business grew, and by the mid-1960s, it was thriving. In 1979 Romana's Mexican Food Products employed about 400 people and had sales of some \$12 million annually.

Bañuelos worked at more than accumulating wealth. She contributed to scholarships for Mexican American students, especially those interested in business, which Bañuelos believes is an important path to political influence. With a number of partners, she also founded the Pan-American National Bank. It too was successful.

Bañuelos' success and community leadership led to President Nixon's appointing her as U.S. Treasurer in 1971.



**The New Federalism** President Nixon's Republican constituency also favored dismantling a number of federal programs and giving more control to state and local governments. Nixon called this New Federalism. He argued that it would provide the government agencies that were closest to the citizens the opportunity to address more of their issues.

"I reject the patronizing idea that government in Washington, D.C., is inevitably more wise and more efficient than government at the state or local level," Nixon declared. "The idea that a bureaucratic elite in Washington knows what's best for people . . . is really a contention that people cannot govern themselves." Under the New Federalism program, Congress passed a series of revenue-sharing bills that granted federal funds to state and local agencies.

Although **revenue sharing** was intended to give state and local agencies more power, over time it gave the federal government new power. As states came to depend on federal funds, the federal government could impose conditions on the states. Unless they met those conditions, their funds would be cut off.

While he worked to limit federal government responsibilities, Nixon also sought to increase the power of the executive branch. Nixon did not build many strong relationships in Congress. His lack of camaraderie with lawmakers and the fact that the Republican Party controlled neither house led to struggles with the legislative branch. Nixon often

responded by trying to work around Congress and use greater executive authority. For instance, when Congress appropriated money for programs he opposed, Nixon **impounded**, or refused to release, the funds. The Supreme Court eventually declared the practice of impoundment unconstitutional.

**The Family Assistance Plan** One federal program Nixon sought to reform was the nation's welfare system—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The program had many critics, Republican and Democratic alike. They argued that AFDC was structured so that it was actually better for poor people to apply for benefits than to take a low-paying job. A mother who had such a job, for example, would then have to pay for child care, sometimes leaving her with less income than she had on welfare. There was also great inequity among states since each was allowed to develop its own guidelines.

In 1969 Nixon proposed replacing the AFDC with the Family Assistance Plan. The plan called for providing needy families a guaranteed yearly grant of \$1,600, which could be **supplemented** by outside earnings. Many liberals applauded the plan as a significant step toward expanding federal responsibility for the poor. Nixon, however, presented the program in a conservative light, arguing it would reduce federal supervision and encourage welfare recipients to become more responsible.

Although the program won approval in the House in 1970, it soon came under harsh attack from the public and politicians. Welfare recipients complained that the federal grant was too low, while conservatives, who disapproved of guaranteed income, also criticized the plan. Such opposition led to the program's defeat in the Senate.

**Reading Check** **Evaluating** What impact did third-party candidate George Wallace have on the 1968 election?

## Nixon's Foreign Policy

**Main Idea** **With the support of national security adviser Henry Kissinger, Nixon forged better relationships with China and the Soviet Union.**

**Reading Connection** How do you think a president should balance his efforts between domestic and foreign affairs? Read on to learn about Nixon's strategies for dealing with communist countries.

Despite Nixon's domestic initiatives, a State Department official later recalled that the president had a "monumental disinterest in domestic policies."

▼ *Henry Kissinger*



Nixon once expressed his hope that a "competent cabinet" of advisers could run the country. This would allow him to focus his energies on the subject that truly fascinated him, foreign affairs. Embarking on an ambitious foreign policy agenda that included historic encounters with both China and the Soviet Union, Nixon set out to leave his mark on the world stage.

**Nixon and Kissinger** In a move that would greatly influence his foreign policy, Nixon chose as his national security adviser **Henry Kissinger**, a former Harvard professor. As a teenager Kissinger had fled to the United States from Germany with his family in 1938 to escape Nazi persecution of Jews. He had served as a foreign policy consultant for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Though Secretary of State William Rogers technically outranked him, Kissinger soon took the lead in helping shape Nixon's foreign policy.

Nixon and Kissinger shared views on many issues. Both believed simply abandoning the war in Vietnam would damage the United States's position in the world. Thus they worked toward a gradual withdrawal. Nixon and Kissinger also believed in shaping a foreign policy rooted in practical approaches rather than ideologies. They felt the nation's decades-long anticommunist crusade had created a foreign policy that was too rigid and often worked against the nation's interests. While both leaders wanted to continue to contain communism, they believed that engagement and negotiation with Communists offered a better way for the United States to achieve its international goals. As a surprised nation watched, Nixon and Kissinger put their philosophy into practice by forging friendlier relations with the Soviet Union and China.

**The Establishment of Détente** The Soviet Union was not initially pleased when Nixon, a man with a history of outspoken anticommunist actions, became president. The Washington correspondent for the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*, Yuri Barsukov, had called the election "unwelcome news for Moscow" and predicted that Soviet leaders "would have to deal with a very stubborn president."

Things did not turn out that way, however. Nixon was still a staunch anticommunist, but he came to reject the **notion** of a bipolar world in which the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union confronted one another. He believed the United States needed to understand the growing role that China, Japan, and Western Europe would soon play. This "multipolar" world of the future demanded a different approach to American foreign policy.

With Kissinger's help, Nixon fashioned an approach called **détente**, or relaxation of tensions, between the United States and its two major Communist rivals, the Soviet Union and China. In explaining détente to the American people, Nixon said that the United States had to build a better relationship with its main rivals in the interests of world peace:

“We must understand that détente is not a love fest. It is an understanding between nations that have opposite purposes, but which share common interests, including the avoidance of a nuclear war. Such an understanding can work—that is, restrain aggression and deter war—only as long as the **potential** aggressor is made to recognize that neither aggression nor war will be profitable.”

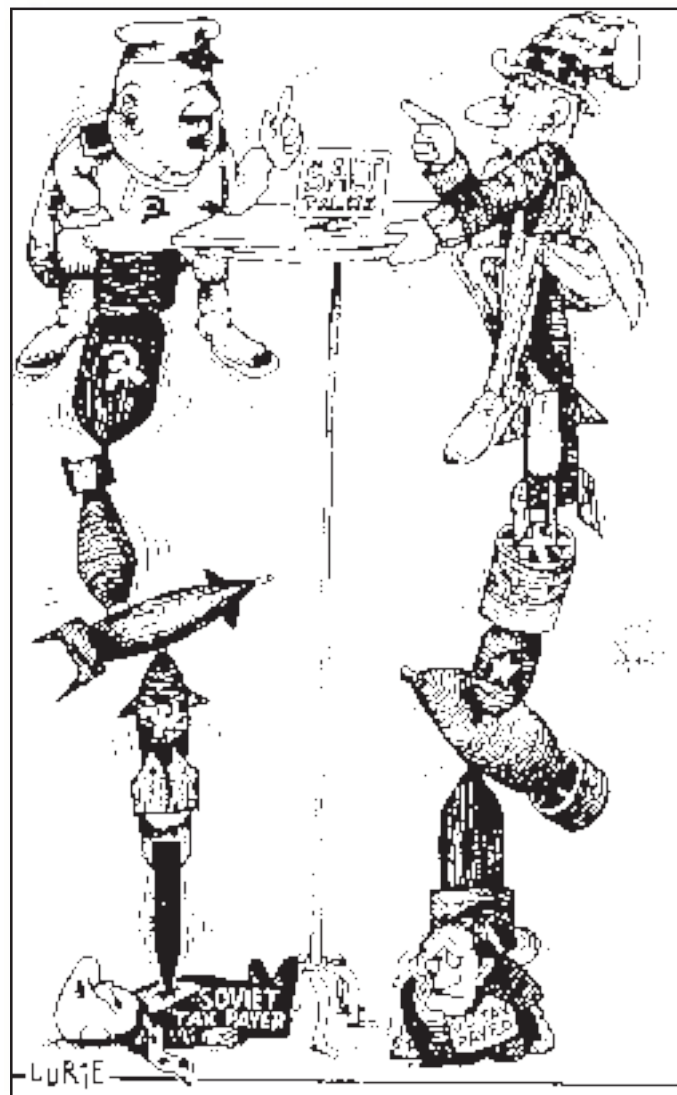
—quoted in *The Limits of Power*

**Nixon Visits China** Détente began with an effort to improve American-Chinese relations. Since 1949, when a Communist government came to power in China, the United States had refused to recognize the Communists as the legitimate rulers. Instead, the American government recognized the exiled regime on the island of Taiwan as the Chinese government. Having long supported this policy, Nixon now set out to reverse it. He began by lifting trade and travel restrictions and withdrawing the Seventh Fleet from defending Taiwan.

After a series of highly secret negotiations between Kissinger and Chinese leaders, Nixon announced that he would visit China in February 1972. During the historic trip, the leaders of both nations agreed to establish “more normal” relations between their countries. In a statement that epitomized the notion of détente, Nixon told his Chinese hosts during a banquet toast, “Let us start a long march together, not in lockstep, but on different roads leading to the same goal, the goal of building a world structure of peace and justice.”

In taking this trip, Nixon hoped not only to strengthen ties with the Chinese, but also to encourage the Soviets to more actively pursue diplomacy. Since the 1960s, a rift had developed between the Communist governments of the Soviet Union and China. Troops of the two nations occasionally clashed along their borders. Nixon believed détente with China would encourage Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev to be more accommodating with the United States.

**U.S.-Soviet Tensions Ease** Nixon's feelings about the Soviets proved correct. Shortly after the public



### Analyzing Political Cartoons

**Arms Buildup Anxiety** The urgent need to negotiate a reduction in nuclear arms is demonstrated in this 1970 cartoon. [When was the SALT I agreement finally signed?](#)

learned of U.S. negotiations with China, the Soviets proposed an American-Soviet **summit**, or high-level diplomatic meeting, to be held in May 1972. On May 22, President Nixon flew to Moscow for a weeklong summit. Thus, he became the first American president since World War II to visit the Soviet Union.

Before Nixon's visit, Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans spent 11 days in the Soviet Union. In his visits to a tractor plant, a steel mill, and an oil field, Stans recalled, “It was as friendly a meeting as if I were representing California and negotiating with the state of Arizona.” Before leaving, however, Stans requested a favor from his Soviet host, Alexei Kosygin:



During the historic Moscow summit, the two superpowers, the United States and Soviet Union, signed the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, or SALT I, a plan to limit nuclear arms. The two nations had been working on this plan for over two years. Nixon and Brezhnev also agreed to increase trade and the exchange of scientific information.

Détente profoundly eased tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. By the end of Nixon's presidency, one Soviet official admitted that "the United States and the Soviet Union had their best relationship of the whole Cold War period."

President Nixon indeed had made his mark on the world stage. For the first time in over two decades, the world breathed a sigh of relief because nuclear war seemed less likely. As he basked in the glow of his 1972 foreign policy triumphs, however, trouble was brewing on the home front. A scandal was about to engulf his presidency and plunge the nation into one of its greatest constitutional crises.

**Reading Check** **Summarizing** What were the results of the 1972 American-Soviet summit?

### **Picturing History**

**Détente Discussion** Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev listens to President Nixon during Brezhnev's June 1973 visit to Washington, D.C. On June 22 the two signed an agreement on the prevention of nuclear war. **What does the word détente mean?**

“There is one thing I hope you will take care of: on the highway into Moscow there is a great big billboard with the United States pictured as a vicious killer, with a sword in one hand and a gun in the other, killing people all over the world. I don't think that will be a good entrance for President Nixon, and the sign ought to come down.’ He said, ‘It will.’”

—quoted in *Nixon: An Oral History of His Presidency*

### **HISTORY Online Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Study Central**.

## **SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT**

### **Checking for Understanding**

- Vocabulary** Define: revenue sharing, impound, supplement, notion, détente, potential, summit.
- People and Terms** Identify: Southern strategy, Henry Kissinger.
- Describe** Nixon's New Federalism policy.

### **Reviewing Big Ideas**

- Explaining** What were the results of Nixon's policy of détente?

### **Critical Thinking**

- Presidential Analysis** **Evaluating** How did Nixon's China visit affect Soviet relations? **CA HI 1**
- Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to describe how President Nixon established détente in the countries listed.

China	
Soviet Union	

### **Analyzing Visuals**

- Analyzing Political Cartoons** Study the cartoon on page 855. What is the artist's message about the impact of the arms buildup on the average citizen in both the Soviet Union and the United States?

### **Writing About History**

- Expository Writing** Take on the role of a member of President Nixon's staff. Write a press release explaining Nixon's domestic and foreign policies.

**CA 11WS1.2**

## Guide to Reading

**Connection**

In the previous section, you learned about the 1968 election of President Nixon and détente. In this section, you will discover how a scandal forced President Nixon to resign during his second term.

**Main Idea**

- President Nixon sought reelection amid a scandal over the Watergate break-in. (p. 858)
- After the televised 1973 Watergate hearings in the Senate, President Nixon resigned from office. (p. 859)
- The Watergate scandal eroded public confidence in the federal government. (p. 861)

**Content Vocabulary**

executive privilege, impeach

**Academic Vocabulary**

attribute, obtain, inevitable

**People and Terms to Identify**

Sam J. Ervin, John Dean, Federal Campaign Act Amendments

**Reading Objectives**

- **Describe** the character of Richard Nixon and the attitude of his White House.
- **Explain** the Watergate scandal and discuss its effects.

**Reading Strategy**

**Taking Notes** As you read about the Watergate scandal, use the major headings of the section to create an outline similar to the one below.

**The Watergate Scandal**

- I. The Roots of Watergate
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
- II.
  - A.
  - B.

**Preview of Events**

The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

**11.11.4** Explain the constitutional crisis originating from the Watergate scandal.

**The Big Idea**

**Societies change over time.** Scandals consumed President Nixon's second term as president. The revelation that Vice President Spiro Agnew had accepted bribes when he was a governor forced him to resign. Then a burglary trial revealed that the Nixon administration had orchestrated a break-in at the Democratic headquarters. The Watergate cover-up began to crumble with testimony of White House and campaign officials and news of recordings. Faced with impeachment, Nixon resigned from office. In the wake of the scandals, Congress enacted a series of new laws to limit the power of the executive branch. Still, Watergate left the American people with weakened trust in the government.



## The Roots of Watergate

**Main Idea** President Nixon sought reelection amid a scandal over the Watergate break-in.

**Reading Connection** What actions would you consider acceptable in a political campaign? Read on to learn about the efforts of Nixon’s campaign team.

A seemingly simple burglary at the Watergate complex soon developed into a major political scandal.

### ★ An American Story ★

As Bob Woodward, a young reporter for the *Washington Post*, sat in a Washington, D.C., courtroom on the morning of June 17, 1972, he was in a rather foul mood. His editor had ruined his Saturday by calling him in to cover a seemingly insignificant but bizarre incident. In the early hours of that morning, five men had broken into the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters in the city’s Watergate apartment-office complex.

Woodward sat toward the back of the courtroom listening to the bail proceedings for the five defendants. At one point, the judge asked each man his occupation. One of the men, James McCord, answered that he was retired from government service. “Where in government?” asked the judge. “CIA,” McCord whispered. Woodward sprang to attention. Why was a former member of the Central Intelligence Agency involved in what seemed to be nothing more than a burglary?

Over the next two years, Woodward and another reporter, Carl Bernstein, would investigate this question. In so doing, they uncovered a scandal that helped bring about a grave constitutional crisis and eventually forced the president to resign.

—adapted from *All the President’s Men*

The scandal known as Watergate originated from the Nixon administration’s attempts to cover up its involvement in the break-in at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters, along with other illegal actions committed during Nixon’s reelection campaign. A number of scholars **attribute** the scandal in large part to the character of Richard Nixon and the atmosphere that he and his advisers created in the White House.

**Nixon and His “Enemies”** Richard Nixon had fought hard to become president. He had battled back from numerous political defeats, including a loss to John Kennedy in the 1960 presidential election, to win the presidency in 1968. Along the way, however, Nixon had grown defensive, secretive, and often resentful of his critics.

In addition, Nixon had become president during a time when the United States was still very much at war with itself. Race riots and protests over the Vietnam War continued to consume the country. In Nixon’s view, these protesters and other “radicals” were out to bring down his administration. Nixon was so consumed with his opponents that he compiled an “enemies list” filled with people—from politicians to members of the media—whom he considered a threat to his presidency.

**Mounting a Reelection Fight** As Nixon’s reelection campaign got under way in 1972, many in his administration expressed optimism about winning a second term. The president had just finished triumphant trips to China and the Soviet Union. In May, former Alabama governor George Wallace, who had mounted a strong third-party campaign in 1968, had dropped his bid for another run at the White House after an assassin’s bullet paralyzed him. Meanwhile, Nixon’s Democratic opponent, South Dakota senator George McGovern, was viewed as too liberal on many issues.

At the same time, Nixon’s hold on the presidency was uncertain. Despite the high approval ratings for the president’s summit meetings in Beijing and Moscow, the unpopular Vietnam War still raged. Nixon staffers also remembered how close the margin of Nixon’s 1968 victory had been. Seeking to gain an

▼ Reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein



edge in every way they could, Nixon's team engaged in a host of subversive tactics, from spying on opposition rallies to spreading rumors and false reports.

These tactics included an effort to steal information from the Democratic Party's headquarters. In the early hours of June 17, 1972, five Nixon supporters broke into the party's office at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. They had intended to **obtain** any sensitive campaign information and to place wiretaps on the office telephones. While the burglars were at work, a security guard making his rounds spotted a piece of tape holding a door lock. The guard ripped off the tape, but when he passed the door later, he noticed that it had been replaced. He quickly called police, who arrived shortly and arrested the men.

**The Cover-Up Begins** In the wake of the Watergate break-in, the media discovered that one of the burglars, James McCord, was not only an ex-CIA official but also a member of the Committee for the Reelection of the President (CRP). Reports soon surfaced that the burglars had been paid to execute the break-in from a secret CRP fund controlled by the White House.

As questions swirled about a possible White House connection to the burglary, the cover-up began. Administration officials destroyed incriminating documents and provided false testimony to investigators. Meanwhile, President Nixon stepped in. While the president may not have ordered the break-in, he did order a cover-up. With Nixon's consent, administration officials asked the CIA to intervene and stop the FBI from inquiring into the source of the money paid to the burglars. Their justification was that such an investigation would threaten national security.

All the while, the White House strongly denied any involvement in the break-in. Nixon's press secretary dismissed the incident as a "third-rate burglary attempt," while the president himself told the American public, "The White House has had no involvement whatever in this particular incident."

The strategy worked. Most Americans believed President Nixon. Despite efforts by the media, in particular the *Washington Post*, to keep the story alive, few people paid much attention to the Watergate affair during the 1972 presidential campaign. On Election Day, Nixon won reelection by one of the largest margins in history with nearly 61 percent of the popular vote compared to 37.5 percent for George McGovern. The electoral vote was 520 votes for Nixon and 17 for McGovern.

**Reading Check** **Examining** Why did members of the CRP break into the Democratic National Committee headquarters?

## The Cover-Up Unravels

**Main Idea** After the televised 1973 Watergate hearings in the Senate, President Nixon resigned from office.

**Reading Connection** Who takes over the presidency if both the president and vice president resign or are otherwise incapacitated? Read on to learn why both the president and vice president resigned in 1973.

Shortly after his triumphant reelection, an exuberant and confident Nixon told his cabinet and staff that 1973 "can be and should be the best year ever."



**Student Web Activity** Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 19** for an activity on the 1970s.



### Picturing History

**Watergate Hotel** The hotel gave its name to the scandal that brought down President Nixon. Hotel guard Frank Willis, pictured here, reported to police the evidence of a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters there. [What was Nixon's response to the break-in?](#)

In a matter of months, however, the Watergate affair would erupt, and the coming year would be one of the president's worst.

**The First Cracks Show** In 1973 the Watergate burglars went on trial. Under relentless prodding from federal judge John J. Sirica, McCord agreed to cooperate with both a grand jury investigation and with the Senate's Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, which had been recently established under Senator **Sam J. Ervin** of North Carolina. McCord's testimony opened a floodgate of confessions, and a parade of White House and campaign officials exposed one illegality after another over the next several months. Foremost among the officials was counsel to the president **John Dean**, a member of the inner circle of the White House who leveled allegations against Nixon himself.

**A Summer of Shocking Testimony** In June 1973, John Dean testified before Senator Ervin's committee that former Attorney General John Mitchell had ordered the Watergate break-in and that Nixon had played an active role in attempting to cover up any

White House involvement. As a shocked nation absorbed Dean's testimony, the Nixon administration strongly denied the charges.

A standoff ensued for the next month, as the Senate committee attempted to determine who was telling the truth. Then, on July 16, the answer appeared unexpectedly. On that day, White House aide Alexander Butterfield testified that Nixon had ordered a taping system installed in the White House to record all conversations. The president had done so, Butterfield said, to help him write his memoirs after he left office. For members of the committee, however, the tapes would tell them exactly what the president knew and when he knew it.

**The Case of the Tapes** All the groups investigating the scandal sought access to the tapes. Nixon refused, pleading **executive privilege**—the principle that White House conversations should remain confidential to protect national security. A special prosecutor appointed by the president to handle the Watergate cases, Archibald Cox, took Nixon to court in October 1973 to force him to give up the recordings. Nixon, clearly growing desperate, ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson, and then Richardson's deputy, to fire Cox. Both men refused to follow the order and resigned in protest. Solicitor General Robert Bork finally fired Cox, but the incident, nicknamed the "Saturday Night Massacre" in the press, badly damaged Nixon's reputation with the public.

The fall of 1973 proved to be a disastrous time for Nixon for other reasons as well. His vice president, Spiro Agnew, was forced to resign in disgrace. Investigators had discovered that Agnew had taken bribes from state contractors while he was governor of Maryland and that he had continued to accept bribes while serving in Washington. Gerald Ford, the Republican leader of the House of Representatives, became the new vice president. Nixon then had to defend himself against allegations about his own past financial dealings.

**Nixon Resigns** In an effort to quiet the growing outrage over his actions, President Nixon appointed a new special prosecutor, Texas lawyer Leon Jaworski, who proved no less determined than Cox to obtain the president's tapes. In April 1974, Nixon released edited transcripts of the tapes, claiming that they proved his innocence. Investigators felt otherwise and went to court again to force Nixon to turn over the unedited tapes. In July the Supreme Court ruled that the president had to turn over the tapes

### **Picturing History**

**Sitting in Judgment** Representative Barbara Jordan from Texas was an outspoken member of the House Judiciary Committee. **What was this committee's role in the impeachment process?**



Fred Maroon/Folio



### **Picturing History**

**High Political Drama** After resigning his office on August 9, 1974, President Nixon and his family say goodbye to aides and friends on the White House lawn. On the capital's streets, a reader takes in the news in the *Washington Post*, the newspaper that started the Watergate investigation. [Who replaced Nixon as president?](#)

themselves, not just the transcripts. With nowhere else to appeal, Nixon handed over the tapes.

Several days later, the House Judiciary Committee voted to **impeach** Nixon, or officially charge him of presidential misconduct. The committee charged that Nixon had obstructed justice in the Watergate cover-up; misused federal agencies to violate the rights of citizens; and defied the authority of Congress by refusing to deliver tapes and other materials that the committee had requested. The next step was for the entire House of Representatives to vote whether or not to impeach the president.

As the nation held its collective breath in anticipation, investigators finally found indisputable evidence against the president. One of the unedited tapes revealed that on June 23, 1972, just six days after the Watergate burglary, Nixon had ordered the CIA to stop the FBI's investigation of the break-in. With this news, even the president's strongest supporters conceded that impeachment and conviction in the Senate now seemed **inevitable**. On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned his office in disgrace. Gerald Ford took the oath of office and became the nation's 38th president.

**Reading Check Explaining** What was the significance of John Dean's testimony before the Senate committee?

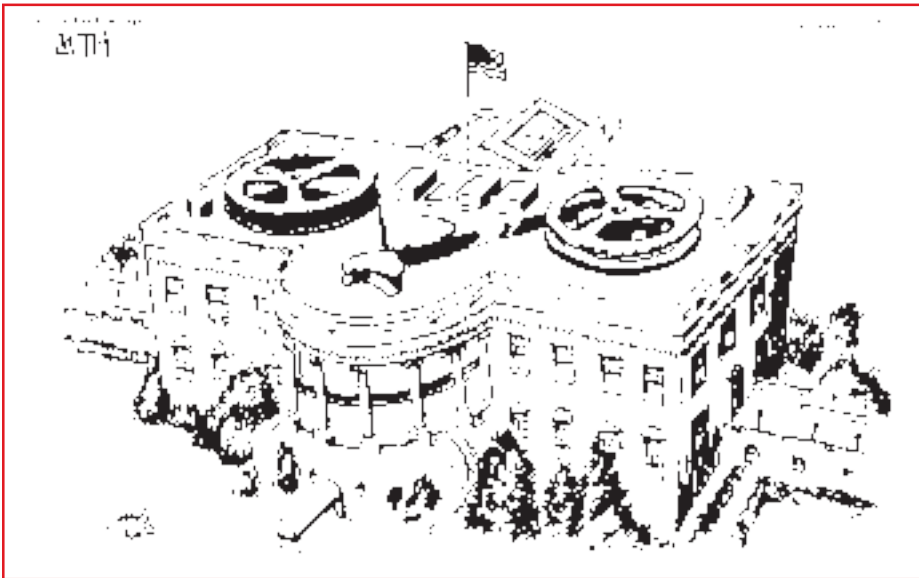
## **The Impact of Watergate**

**Now Info** The Watergate scandal eroded public confidence in the federal government.

**Reading Connection** Do you believe in limiting the amount of money that a politician can spend on an election? Read on to learn about Congress's attempts in the 1970s to limit campaign spending and to enforce election laws.

Upon taking office, President Ford urged Americans to put the Watergate affair behind them and move on. "Our long national nightmare is over," he declared. The effects of the scandal, however, endured long after Richard Nixon's resignation.

The Watergate crisis prompted a series of new laws intended to limit the power of the executive branch. In the 1970s Congress passed a number of laws aimed at reestablishing a greater balance of power in government. **The Federal Campaign Act Amendments** limited campaign contributions and established an independent agency to administer stricter election laws. The Ethics in Government Act required financial disclosure by high government officials in all three branches of government. The FBI Domestic Security Investigation Guidelines restricted



**Analyzing Political Cartoons**

**Watergate Scandal** In this cartoon, the top of the White House is represented by a tape recorder. **What effect did the Watergate affair have on the nation?**

the bureau’s political intelligence-gathering activities. After Watergate, Congress also established a means for appointing an independent counsel to investigate and prosecute wrongdoing by high government officials.

Despite these efforts, Watergate left many Americans with a deep distrust of their public officials. Speaking some 20 years after the Watergate affair, Alexander Haig, a former high-level Nixon aide, said the scandal had produced, “a fundamental discrediting of respect for the presidency . . . [and] a new skepticism about politics, in general,

which every American feels to this day.” On the other hand, some Americans saw the Watergate affair as proof that in the United States, no person is above the law. As Bob Woodward observed:

“Watergate was probably a good thing for the country; it was a good, sobering lesson. Accountability to the law applies to everyone. The problem with kings and prime ministers and presidents is that they think that they are above it, and there is no accountability, and that they have some special rights, and privileges, and status. And a process that says: No. We have our

laws and believe them, and they apply to everyone, is a very good thing.”

—quoted in *Nixon: An Oral History of His Presidency*

After the ordeal of Watergate, most Americans attempted to put the affair behind them. In the years ahead, however, the nation encountered a host of new troubles.

**Reading Check Evaluating** Why did Congress pass new laws after the Watergate scandal?

**HISTORY Online Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Study Central**.

**SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT**

**Checking for Understanding**

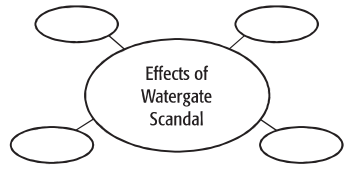
- Vocabulary** Define: attribute, obtain, executive privilege, impeach, inevitable.
- People and Places** Identify: Sam J. Ervin, John Dean, Federal Campaign Act Amendments.
- Evaluate** the effects of the Watergate scandal on the way American citizens viewed the federal government.

**Reviewing Big Ideas**

- Explaining** How did the Watergate scandal alter the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government?

**Critical Thinking**

- Historical Analysis Evaluating** How did the discovery of the White House tapes change the Watergate cover-up investigation? **CA HI1; HI4**
- Organizing** Using a graphic organizer similar to the one below, fill in the effects of the Watergate scandal.



**Analyzing Visuals**

- Analyzing Photographs** Study the photograph on page 861. How would you describe the scene of Nixon’s leave taking? What in the photo suggests that this is a formal occasion? Why do you think this ceremony might be important for the nation?

**Writing About History**

- Descriptive Writing** Take on the role of a television news analyst. Write a script in which you explain the Watergate scandal and analyze the factors that led to the scandal. **CA 11WS1.2**