CHAPTER 39

The Stalemated Seventies, 1968–1980

PART I: REVIEWING THE CHAPTER

A. CHECKLIST OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. describe Nixon’s foreign policy in relation to Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and Communist China.
2. analyze Nixon’s domestic policies, his opposition to the “Warren Court,” his “southern strategy,” and his landslide victory against George McGovern in 1972.
3. examine the conflicts created by the secret bombing of Cambodia, the American withdrawal from Vietnam, and the first Arab oil embargo.
4. discuss the Watergate scandals and Nixon’s resignation.
5. explain the related economic, energy, and Middle East crises of the 1970s and why both Republican and Democratic administrations were unable successfully to address them.
6. describe the racial tensions of the 1970s and the rise of the new feminist movement.
7. discuss the Iranian crisis and its disastrous political consequences for President Carter.

B. GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. moratorium A period in which economic or social activity is suspended, often to achieve certain defined goals. “Antiwar protestors staged a massive national Vietnam moratorium in October 1969. . . .” (p. 940)
2. Marxism The doctrines of Karl Marx, advocated or followed by worldwide communist parties and by some democratic socialists. “The two great communist powers . . . were clashing bitterly over their rival interpretations of Marxism.” (p. 942)
3. anti-ballistic missile A defensive missile designed to intercept and destroy an offensive missile in flight. “The first major achievement was an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty. . . .” (p. 943)
4. devaluation In economics, steps taken to reduce the purchasing power of a given unit of currency in relation to foreign currencies. “. . . he next stunned the world by taking the United States off the gold standard and devaluing the dollar.” (p. 946)
5. foray a single, defined movement or attack by a military unit. “The most disturbing feature of these sky forays. . . .” (p. 947)
6. Kremlin The extensive palace complex in Moscow that houses the Soviet (Russian) government; hence, a shorthand term for the Soviet or Russian government. “Believing that the Kremlin was poised to fly combat troops to the Suez area. . . .” (p. 948)
7. **attorney general**  The presidentially appointed head of the Department of Justice and chief legal officer of the federal government. “. . . firing his own special prosecutor . . . as well as his attorney general and deputy attorney general. . . .” (p. 949)

8. **executive privilege**  In American government, the claim that certain information known to the president or the executive branch of government should be unavailable to Congress or the courts because of the principle of separation of powers. “. . . the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that “executive privilege” gave him no right to withhold evidence. . . .” (p. 950)

9. **recession**  A moderate and short-term economic downturn, less severe than a depression. (Economists define a recession as two consecutive quarters, i.e., six months, of declining gross domestic product.) “Lines of automobiles at service stations lengthened as tempers shortened and a business recession deepened.” (p. 948)

10. **born-again**  The evangelical Christian belief in a spiritual renewal or rebirth, involving a personal experience of conversion and a commitment to moral transformation. “. . . this born-again Baptist touched many people with his down-home sincerity.” (p. 960)

11. **balance of payments**  The net ratio, expressed as a positive or negative sum, of a nation’s exports in relation to its imports. (It may be calculated in relation to one particular foreign nation, or to all foreign states collectively.) “The soaring bill for imported oil plunged America’s balance of payments deeply into the red. . . .” (p. 961)

12. **Commando**  Member of a small, elite military force trained to carry out difficult missions, often within territory controlled by the enemy. “A highly trained commando team penetrated deep into Iran’s sandy interior.” (p. 964)

**PART II: CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS**

**A. True-False**

Where the statement is true, circle T; where it is false, circle F.

1. T F  Nixon’s “Vietnamization” policy sought to bring an immediate negotiated end to the Vietnam War.

2. T F  Nixon’s 1970 invasion of Cambodia provoked strong domestic protests and political clashes between “hawks” and “doves.”

3. T F  Nixon’s and Kissinger’s diplomacy attempted to play the Soviet Union and China off against each other for America’s benefit.

4. T F  Nixon attempted to reverse what he saw as the Warren Supreme Court’s excessive turn toward “judicial activism.”

5. T F  Nixon consistently opposed the expansion of social-security and pro-environmental legislation.

6. T F  The basic issue in the 1972 Nixon-McGovern campaign was inflation and the management of the economy.

7. T F  The 1973 Paris agreement on Vietnam provided for a cease-fire and American withdrawal but did not really end the civil war among the Vietnamese.

8. T F  The strongest charge against Nixon during Watergate was that he had used government agencies to burglarize and harass opponents and cover up the Watergate crimes.
9. T F The disclosure of the secret bombing of Cambodia led Congress to acknowledge the president’s sole authority to take military action in defense of America’s national security.

10. T F The 1973 Arab-Israeli War and OPEC oil embargo added to the inflation that began in the wake of the Vietnam War.

11. T F Republican leaders in Congress strenuously opposed Nixon’s resignation and urged him to fight to stay in office even after the Watergate tapes were released.

12. T F President Gerald Ford immediately set out to reverse the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente toward the Soviet Union.

13. T F The women’s movement achieved success in the 1970s by allying itself with the rising antiwar and black power movements of the decade.

14. T F President Carter’s declaration that America’s problems were due to a “moral and spiritual crisis” led the public to support his proposals to decrease dependency on Middle Eastern oil.

15. T F The Iranian revolution against the shah brought the United States into a confrontation with the new, militant Muslim leaders of the country.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. A primary cause of the economic decline that began in the 1970s was
   a. an international trade war.
   b. a rise in the price of agricultural goods.
   c. the breakup of efficient American companies.
   d. a decline in worker productivity

2. The severe inflation of the 1970s was largely caused by
   a. Lyndon Johnson’s effort to maintain the Vietnam War and the Great Society programs without raising taxes.
   b. Nixon’s decision to devalue the dollar and take the U.S. off the gold standard.
   c. the higher prices for scarce natural resources like iron, coal, and lumber.
   d. the strong demands of unionized workers for substantial wage increases.

3. President Nixon’s “Vietnamization” policy provided that
   a. the United States would accept a unified but neutral Vietnam.
   b. the United States would escalate the war in Vietnam but withdraw from Cambodia and Laos.
   c. the United States would gradually withdraw ground troops while supporting the South Vietnamese war effort.
   d. the United States would seek a negotiated settlement of the war.

4. The antiwar movement expanded dramatically in 1970 when
   a. the massacre of civilians at My Lai by some U.S. soldiers was revealed.
   c. the communist Vietnamese staged their Tet Offensive against American forces.
   d. Nixon ordered an invasion of Cambodia.

5. Nixon attempted to pressure the Soviet Union into making diplomatic deals with the United States by
   a. playing the “China card” by opening U.S. diplomacy and trade with the Soviets’ rival communist power.
   b. using American economic aid as an incentive for the Soviets.
c. threatening to attack Soviet allies such as Cuba and Vietnam.
d. drastically increasing spending on nuclear weapons and missiles.

6. The Supreme Court came under sharp political attack in the 1970s especially because of its rulings on
   a. antitrust laws and labor rights.
   b. voting rights and election laws.
   c. criminal defendants’ rights and prayer in public schools.
   d. environmental laws and immigrants’ rights.

7. The most controversial element of Nixon’s “Philadelphia Plan” was
   a. its guarantees of women’s equal right to employment in the construction trades.
   b. the extension of “affirmative action” to promote the employment of groups of minorities and women.
   c. its insistence that employers and labor provide financial compensation to individuals who had suffered discrimination.
   d. its attempt to get around Supreme Court decisions prohibiting racial and sexual discrimination by business and labor.

8. Some of President Nixon’s greatest legislative successes came in the area of
   a. upholding civil rights.
   b. stopping the growth of inflation.
   c. protecting the environment.
   d. maintaining foreign-policy cooperation with Congress.

9. Among the corrupt Nixon administration practices exposed by the Senate Watergate Committee was
   a. payments to foreign agents.
   b. bribes to congressmen and senators.
   c. the illegal use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.
   d. the illegal use of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Treasury Department.

10. The War Powers Act was passed by Congress in response to
    a. the Watergate scandal.
    b. President Nixon’s secret bombing of Cambodia.
    c. the end of the war in Vietnam.
    d. the Arab oil embargo.

11. The Arab oil embargo of 1973–1974 affected the American economy primarily by
    a. causing the successful introduction of alternative energy sources.
    b. leading the United States to open Alaskan and offshore oilfields to exploration.
    c. increasing American investment in the Middle East.
    d. ending the era of cheap energy and fueling severe inflation.

12. Gerald Ford came to be president because
    a. he had been elected as Nixon’s vice president in 1972.
    b. he was speaker of the House of Representatives and was next in line after Nixon resigned.
    c. he was elected in a special national election called after Nixon resigned.
    d. he had been appointed vice president by Nixon before Nixon resigned.

13. Despite numerous successes for women in the 1970s, the feminist movement suffered a severe setback when
    a. the Supreme Court began to oppose the extension of women’s rights.
    b. the Equal Rights Amendment failed to achieve ratification by the states.
    c. Congress refused to extend women’s right to an equal education to the area of athletics.
    d. the declining economy created a growing gap between men’s and women’s earning power.
14. President Carter’s greatest success in foreign policy was
   a. handling the Arab oil embargo and the energy crisis.
   b. negotiating successful new agreements with the Soviet Union.
   c. negotiating the Camp David peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.
   d. maintaining peace and stability in Central America.

15. President Carter’s greatest problem in foreign policy was
   a. the Panama Canal issue.
   b. the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
   c. the continuing Arab-Israeli confrontation.
   d. the Iranian seizure of American hostages.

C. Identification
Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. __________ Nixon’s policy of withdrawing American troops from Vietnam while providing aid for the South Vietnamese to fight the war

2. __________ The Ohio university where four students were killed during protests against the 1970 invasion of Cambodia

3. __________ Top-secret documents, published by *The New York Times* in 1971, that showed the blunders and deceptions that led the United States into the Vietnam War

4. __________ The first major achievement of the Nixon-Kissinger détente with the Soviet Union, which led to restrictions on defensive missile systems

5. __________ Nixon’s plan to win reelection by curbing the Supreme Court’s judicial activism and soft-pedaling civil rights

6. __________ Term for the new group affirmative action policy promoted by the Nixon administration

7. __________ A Washington office complex that became a symbol of the widespread corruption of the Nixon administration

8. __________ The law, passed in reaction to the secret Cambodia bombing, that restricted presidential use of troops overseas without congressional authorization

9. __________ Arab-sponsored restriction on energy exports after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war

10. __________ Nixon-Ford-Kissinger policy of seeking relaxed tensions with the Soviet Union through trade and arms limitation

11. __________ International agreement of 1975, signed by President Ford, that settled postwar European boundaries and attempted to guarantee human rights in Eastern Europe

12. __________ Proposed constitutional amendment promoting women’s rights that fell short of ratification

13. __________ Supreme Court decision that declared women’s right to choose abortion.

14. __________ *Two* historic sites seized by American Indian activists in 1970–1972 to draw public attention to Indian grievances
15. __________ Provision of the 1972 Education Amendments that prohibited gender discrimination and opened sports and other arenas to women

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

1. ___ Richard Nixon
2. ___ Spiro Agnew
3. ___ Rachel Carson
4. ___ Daniel Ellsberg
5. ___ Henry Kissinger
6. ___ Earl Warren
7. ___ George McGovern
8. ___ Phyllis Schlafly
9. ___ Gerald Ford
10. ___ John Dean
11. ___ James Earl Carter
12. ___ Anwar Sadat
13. ___ Allen Bakke
14. ___ Shah of Iran
15. ___ Anwar Sadat

a. Egyptian president whose 1978 summit agreement, brokered by President Carter, brought hopes of peace with Israel
b. The first appointed vice president and first appointed president of the United States
c. Supreme Court justice whose “judicial activism” came under increasing attack by conservatives
d. Nixon’s tough-talking conservative vice president, who was forced to resign in 1973 for taking bribes and kickbacks
e. Talented diplomatic negotiator and leading architect of détente with the Soviet Union during the Nixon and Ford administrations
f. Egyptian leader who signed the Camp David accords with Israel
g. California medical school applicant whose case led a divided Supreme Court to uphold limited forms of affirmative action for minorities
h. Environmental writer whose book Silent Spring helped encourage laws like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act
i. South Dakota senator whose antiwar campaign was swamped by Nixon
j. Former Georgia governor whose presidency was plagued by economic difficulties and a crisis in Iran
k. Former Pentagon official who “leaked” the Pentagon Papers
l. Winner of an overwhelming electoral victory who was forced from office by the threat of impeachment
m. White House lawyer whose dramatic charges against Nixon were validated by the Watergate tapes

n. Conservative activist who led a successful movement to stop ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

o. Repressive pro-Western ruler whose 1979 overthrow precipitated a crisis for the United States

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 6.

1. ________ The overthrow of a dictatorial shah leads to an economic and political crisis for President Carter and the United States.

2. ________ An impeachment-threatened president resigns, and his appointed vice president takes over the White House.

3. ________ A U.S. president travels to Beijing (Peking) and Moscow, opening a new era of improved diplomatic relations with the communist powers.


5. ________ The signing of an agreement with North Vietnam leads to the final withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam.

6. ________ A plainspoken former governor becomes president by campaigning against Washington corruption and for honesty in government.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ___</td>
<td>a. Spawned a powerful “backlash” that halted federal day care efforts and the Equal Rights Amendment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ___</td>
<td>b. Caused Senate defeat of the SALT II treaty and the end of détente with Moscow</td>
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<td>3. ___</td>
<td>c. Brought about gradual U.S. troop withdrawal but extended the Vietnam War for four more years</td>
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<td>4. ___</td>
<td>d. Prompted conservative protests and Nixon’s appointment of less activist justices</td>
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<td>5. ___</td>
<td>e. Led to the taking of American</td>
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<td>6. ___</td>
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the women’s movement in areas of employment and education
7. ___ Nixon’s tape-recorded words ordering the Watergate cover-up
8. ___ The communist Vietnamese offensive in 1975
9. ___ The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
10. ___ The 1979 revolution in Iran

f. Brought about a cease-fire and the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam in 1973
g. Caused protests on U.S. campuses and congressional attempts to restrain presidential war powers
h. Brought an era of relaxed international tensions and new trade agreements
i. Caused the collapse of South Vietnam and the flight of many refugees to the United States
j. Proved the president’s guilt and forced him to resign or be impeached

G. Developing Historical Skills

Understanding Political Cartoons
The more controversial a major political figure, the more likely he or she is to be the subject of political cartoons. Richard Nixon was such a controversial figure, and the cartoons in this chapter show several views of him. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the view of Nixon’s diplomacy in the cartoon Balancing Act on p. 951? What is the significance of his unusual “balance bar”?

2. In the cartoon of Nixon, the Law and Order Man on p. 960, what aspect of Nixon’s earlier career is satirized? What details suggest the cartoonist’s view of Nixon’s Watergate strategy?

3. In the cartoon How Long Will Nixon Haunt the GOP on p. 960, what is the cartoonist suggesting about Ford’s pardon of Nixon? What alleged quality of Nixon’s is common to both this cartoon and the previous one on Nixon, the Law and Order Man?

4. In the cartoon Who Lost Vietnam on p. 962, Nixon is satirized, but less harshly than in the other cartoons. What changes the perspective on him here?
PART III: APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

1. Was the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy of détente with the Soviet Union and engagement with Communist China fundamentally a great success. How does the failed end of the Vietnam War color the assessment of Nixon’s overall diplomatic achievements?

2. In what ways did Nixon’s domestic policies appeal to Americans’ racial and economic fears, and in what ways did he positively address problems like inflation, discrimination, and pollution?

3. How did Nixon fall from the political heights of 1972 to his forced resignation in 1974? What were the political consequences of Watergate?

4. How did the administrations of the 1970s attempt to cope with the interrelated problems of energy, economics, and the Middle East?

5. Why can the 1970s be characterized as a “decade of stalemate?” What caused the apparent inability of the federal government to cope with the new problems of the time?

6. In what ways were the foreign policy and economic issues of the 1970s similar to those of the whole post-World War II era, and in what ways were they different? (See Chapters 36, 37, and 38.)

7. It is sometimes said that the recent American disillusionment and even cynicism about politics dates to the paired tribulations of “Vietnam” and “Watergate.” Why were these two events so deeply unsettling to traditional American views of democracy and government. Is the linking of the two events accurate, or were there fundamental differences between them?