**The 1970s**

**Sources of Stagnation**

The growth of the American economy slowed down in the 1970s.

* More women and teens were entering the works force; these groups typically made less money than males.
* Countries like Japan and Germany started to dominate industries that had traditionally been led by the Americans (steel, automobiles, and consumer electronics).

**Nixon "Vietnamizes" the War**

* President Nixon brought knowledge and expertise in foreign affairs to the presidency. Nixon started a policy called "**Vietnamization**," which was to withdraw 540,000 U.S. troops from South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese, with American money, weapons, training, and advice, would then gradually take over the war. Nixon did not want to end the war; he wanted to win it by other means.
* **Nixon Doctrine:** the United States would honor its existing defense commitments but in the future, Asians and other countries would have to fight their own wars without the support of large numbers of American **troops**.
* On November 3, 1969, Nixon delivered a televised speech to the "**silent majority**," who presumably supported the war; he hoped to gain supporters.

**Nixon's Détente with Beijing (Peking) and Moscow**

* The two great communist powers, the **Soviet Union**and **China**, disagreed over their interpretations of Marxism.  Nixon and his national security advisor, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, used the Chinese-Soviet tension to play off one country against the other. Nixon and Kissinger wanted to get the Soviet Union and China to pressure North Vietnam into peace.
* In 1972, Nixon visited China and paved the way for improved relations between the United States and Beijing.  In May 1972, Nixon traveled to Moscow and negotiated **détente**, or relaxed tensions between the Soviet Union and China.
* Two agreements also slowed the arms race between America and the Soviets: 1) An **anti-ballistic missile** (**AMB**) **treaty** limited the U.S. and the Soviet Union to two clusters of defensive missiles. 2) **SALT**(**Strategic Arms Limitation Talks**) froze the numbers of long-range nuclear missiles for 5 years.

**A New Team on the Supreme Bench**

Earl Warren was appointed as a Justice to the Supreme Court in 1953 and he made many controversial rulings:

* ***Griswold v. Connecticut*** (**1965**) struck down a state law that banned the use of contraceptives, even by married couples, creating a "right to privacy."
* ***Gideon v. Wainwright*** (**1963**) ruled that all criminals were entitled to legal counsel, even if they were unable to afford it.
* ***Escobedo***(**1964**) and ***Miranda*** (**1966**) ruled that those who were arrested had to the "right to remain silent." (**Miranda rights**)
* ***Engel v. Vitale*** (**1962**) and ***School District of Abington Township vs. Schempp*** (**1963**) ruled that public schools could not require prayers or Bible reading.
* ***Reynolds vs. Sims*** (**1964**) ruled that the state legislatures would be required to be reapportioned according to population.

In an attempt to end the liberal rulings, President Nixon set Warren E. Burger to replace the retiring Earl Warren in **1969**.  The Supreme Court had four new Nixon-appointed members by the end of 1971.

**Nixon on the Home Front**

* Nixon created the **Environmental Protection Agency** (**EPA**), the **Occupational Health and Safety Administration** (**OHSA**), and the **Consumer Product Safety Commission** (**CPSC**). These agencies gave the federal government more control over businesses.
* In **1962**, Rachel Carson's book ***Silent Spring*** exposed the harmful effects of pesticides.
* The **Clean Air Act of 1970** and the **Endangered Species Act of 1973** both aimed at protecting and preserving the environment.
* Worried about **inflation**, Nixon imposed a 90-day wage freeze and then took the nation off the gold standard (devaluing the dollar). This ended the "**Bretton Woods**" system of international currency stabilization, which was the agreement that each country would tie its monetary exchange rate to gold.
* Nixon's **southern strategy** helped him win the Southern vote. This strategy consisted of opposing civil rights for African-Americans.

**The Nixon Landslide of 1972**

* In the spring of 1972, the North Vietnamese burst through the demilitarized zone separating the two Vietnams.  Nixon ordered massive bombing attacks on strategic centers, halting the North Vietnamese offensive.
* Senator George McGovern won the 1972 Democratic nomination.  He based his campaign on pulling out of Vietnam in 90 days.  President Nixon, though, **won** the **election of 1972** in a landslide.
* Nixon ordered a two-week bombing campaign of North Vietnam in an attempt to force the North Vietnamese to the peace table.
* On **January 23, 1973**, North Vietnamese negotiators agreed to a **cease-fire agreement**.  This agreement was really just a disguised American retreat.

**The Secret Bombing of Cambodia and the War Powers Act**

* Despite assurances to the American public that **Cambodia**'s neutrality was being respected, it was discovered that secret bombing raids on North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia had taken place since March of 1969; this caused the public to question trust of the government.  Nixon ended the bombings in June 1973.
* Cambodia was taken over by the cruel dictator Pol Pot, who later committed genocide of over 2 million people over a span of a few years.
* In **November 1973**, Congress passed the **War Powers Act**. It required the president to tell Congress within 48 hours about all commitments of U.S. troops to foreign conflicts.  A new feeling of "**New Isolationism**" that discouraged U.S. troops from being used in other countries' wars began to take hold.

**The Arab Oil Embargo and the Energy Crisis**

* During the **Yom Kippur War** in 1973, Syria and Egypt tried to regain the territory that they had lost to Israel during the **Six-Day War**. American support helped Israel win the war, but it caused the Arab nations (OPEC) to impose an oil embargo on the United States.  To conserve oil, a**speed limit** of 55 MPH was imposed. An **oil pipeline** in **Alaska** was approved in **1974** and other forms of energy were researched.
* The embargo caused an economic recession in America and several other countries.
* **OPEC** (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) lifted the embargo in **1974**, but it quadrupled the price of oil.

**Watergate and the Unmaking of a President**

* On **June 17, 1972**, five men working for the **Republican Committee for the Re-election of the President** were caught breaking into the Watergate Hotel and bugging Democrats' rooms. After the **Watergate Scandal**, it was discovered that the Nixon administration was involved in many other cases of corruption and "dirty tricks."
* Many prominent members of the President's administration resigned. Vice President **Spiro Agnew** was also forced to resign for taking bribes. Congress replaced Agnew with **Gerald Ford**.
* A select Senate committee led an investigation into the corruption.
* Nixon claimed no knowledge of the illegal activities, but John Dean III, a former White House lawyer, testified about how Nixon tried to cover up the Watergate Scandal.
* On October 20, 1973 ("**Saturday Night Massacre**"), Nixon fired **Archibald Cox**, the prosecutor of the Watergate Scandal case who had issued a subpoena of the tapes.  The attorney general and deputy attorney general resigned because they did not want to fire Cox.
* When conversations involving the Watergate Scandal were discovered on **tapes**, President Nixon refused to hand them over to Congress, despite denying any participation in the scandal. On **July 24, 1974**, the Supreme Court ruled that President Nixon had to submit all tapes to Congress.
* On **August 5, 1974**, Nixon released the three tapes that held the most damaging information. One of the tapes (**"smoking gun" tape**) proved that Nixon had played an active part of the attempted cover-up of the Watergate Scandal.
* On **August 8, 1974**, **Nixon** **resigned** due to pressures from his own party.

**The First Unelected President**

* **Gerald Ford** became the first unelected president.
* President Ford's popularity and respect sank when he issued a **full pardon of Nixon**, thus setting off accusations of a "buddy deal."
* In **July 1975**, Ford signed the **Helsinki accords**, which recognized Soviet boundaries and helped to ease tensions between the two nations.

**The Bicentennial Campaign**

* In the election of **1976**, Democrat **Jimmy Carter** beat Republican **Gerald Ford** to win the presidency.  Carter promised to never lie to the American public.
* Carter was inexperienced in dealing with the politics of Washington.

**Carter's Humanitarian Diplomacy**

* President Carter mediated peace talks between Israel and Egypt. On **September 17, 1978**, **President Anwar Sadat** of **Egypt** and **Prime Minister Menachem Begin** of **Israel** signed **peace accords** at Camp David. Israel agreed to withdraw from territory it had gained in the 1967 war as long as Egypt respected Israel's territories.
* President Carter pledged to return the **Panama Canal** to Panama by the year 2000 and resume full diplomatic relations with China in 1979.

**Economic and Energy Woes**

* The **rate of inflation** had been steadily rising, and by **1979**, it was at **13%**.  Americans learned that they were no longer economically isolated from the world.
* To reduce America's costly dependence on foreign oil, Carter called for legislation to improve energy conservation. The legislation didn't get much public support.
* In **1979**, **Iran's** shah **Mohammed Reza Pahlevi**, who had been installed by America in 1953 and had ruled Iran as a dictator, was overthrown and succeeded by the **Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**.
* Iranian fundamentalists were very opposed Western customs, and because of this, Iran stopped exporting oil. OPEC also raised oil prices and caused another **oil crisis**.
* In **July** **1979**, Carter retreated to Camp David and met with hundreds of advisors to come up with a solution to America's problems. On **July 15, 1979**, Carter gave his **malaise speech** in which he **chastised** the **American** **people** for their obsession of **material goods**, stunning the nation.  A few days later, he fired four cabinet secretaries.

**Foreign Affairs and Iran**

* In 1979, Carter signed the **SALT II agreements** with Soviet leader**Leonid Brezhnev**, but the U.S. senate refused to ratify it.
* On **December 27, 1979**, the Soviet Union invaded **Afghanistan**, which ended up turning into the Soviet Union's version of Vietnam. Because Afghanistan bordered Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan posed a threat to America's oil supplies.  President Carter placed an embargo on the Soviet Union and boycotted the Olympic Games in Moscow.  He also proposed a "**Rapid Deployment Force**" that could quickly respond to crises anywhere in the world.
* On **November 4, 1979**, a group of anti-American Muslim militants stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took hostages, demanding that the U.S. return the exiled shah who had arrived in the U.S. two weeks earlier for cancer treatments.
* To resolve the **Iranian Hostage Crisis**, Carter first tried **economic sanctions** on Iran; this did not work. He then tried a **commando** **rescue** **mission**, but that had to be aborted.
* The hostage crisis dragged on for most of Carter's term, and the hostages were not released until **January 20, 1981** - the inauguration day of **Ronald Reagan**.