

# Rise of conservatism and the presidency of Richard Nixon

Opposition to civil rights  
 Supported less taxes  
 Supported cuts in social welfare programs  
 Advocated less government

Barry Goldwater candidacy in 1964 against Lyndon Johnson was unsuccessful. However, the Democrats hold on the south was broken as more and more conservatives turned to the Republican Party.

1	President Richard Nixon's strength was his foreign policy skills.	1
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6	His weaknesses included his domestic policies and corruption in his administration	7
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## Nixon's Foreign Policy

Sought to improve relations with China – realized that the U.S. could take advantage of disagreements between China and U.S.S.R.

Also used diplomacy to improve relations with the U.S.S. R. The SALT I Treaty limited to development of nuclear weapons.

Ordered the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam in 1973 - 1975.

## Domestic Issues

Favored limited the scope of civil rights legislation

Appointed conservative judges to Supreme Court – didn't always support his policies

Economy suffered from stagflation – inflation of prices along with rising unemployment

Oil embargo by OPEC following Nixon's support of Israel in the Yom Kippur War

Vice President Spiro Agnew forced to resign

The break in and failed wiretapping of the DNC headquarters at the Watergate hotel would lead to Nixon's resignation (he knew about the cover up).

# Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter

## Gerald Ford 1974-1977

Attempted to calm the nation after Nixon's resignation and to repair the economy. However, he lacked the support

Jimmy Carter 1977-1981

Relations between U.S. and U.S.S.R. cooled when the U.S.S.R. invaded Afghanistan

U.S. boycott of 1980 Olympics

Carter instrumental in obtaining a peace deal between Egypt and Israel known as the Camp David Accords – still the basis for peace between the two countries.

Iran Hostage Crisis was a major failure of the Carter administration

The Iranians held Americans from the U.S. Embassy hostage until the day of President Reagan's inauguration.

President Carter also had little success with improving the economy. Inflation continued to ravage the economy and slow growth.

# Ronald Reagan

Great Communicator

Oldest elected  
President

Staunch defender  
of conservative  
principles

## Domestic policies

Plan for economy known as Reaganomics - Supply side economics and trickle down theory.

Increase corporations ability to produce goods and unemployment will decrease. Benefits to corporations will trickle down to consumers and workers.

Reagan cut taxes, especially for corporations. Cuts were also made in domestic programs.

Increases in military spending combined with tax cuts led to a record national debt.

## Foreign Policy

Military spending put pressure on ailing Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.)

Reagan provided support to Eastern European countries fight for independence from communist governments.

Developed positive relationship with Soviet reform Mikhail Gorbachev.

Germany is reunited after the fall of the Berlin Wall on 11/9/1989.

Iran Contra Scandal did not hurt the President because no evidence supported his knowledge of the illegal funding of rebels in Nicaragua.

# George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton

## President George H.W. Bush

Provided aid the newly independent countries in Eastern Europe as communist governments, including the one in the U.S.S.R., lost power.

Organized a coalition of European, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries to invade Iraq after its leader Saddam Hussein invaded the U.S. ally, Kuwait.

Angered Americans when he raised taxes in order to decrease the debt left by the Reagan administration

## William Jefferson Clinton

Elected on promises to improve economy.

By the end of his presidency, the U.S. had a budget surplus.

Clinton's presidency suffered an early defeat in health care reform.

Another major impact on the U.S. economy was the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which reduced trade barriers between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

1994 elections brought Republican control to both houses of congress and saw the rise of House Speaker Newt Gingrich and the Contract with America.

Congress and Clinton battled over the budget. Congress refusal to pass Clinton's budget led to a government shutdown. Voters blamed congress and Clinton won an easy reelection.

In 1998 Clinton was impeached for obstructing justice during a deposition concerning his relations with Monica Lewinski. The Senate acquitted him. A number of lawmakers loss their jobs in the aftermath and Clinton's presidency was forever stained.

The U.S. faced foreign policy issues in the Balkans and well as the Middle East. Despite terrorist attacks on the USS Cole and the U.S. embassy in Kenya, Clinton oversaw improvement in Middle East politics until the actions of Yasser Arafat but the peace process on hold.

# George W. Bush

- 2000 Election is now the closest in U.S. History
- Vice President Al Gore won the popular vote, however Florida's 25 electoral votes gave George W. Bush the electoral win.
- Disputes over the vote count in Florida went to the Supreme Court which ruled 5-4 to stop the count and award victory to George W. Bush
- Bush's domestic agenda included changes to Social Security and education reforms including the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Bush and the Republican Party Congress also succeeded in passing a significant tax cut bill for certain income brackets.
- Despite his domestic agenda for the country, Bush's presidency was consumed by the rise of radical Islamic terrorism
- Al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden attacked U.S. sites with planes on September 11, 2001
- Bush's responses included creating the Department of Homeland Security and guiding the passage of the US Patriot Act through congress. The goal of the act was to fight terrorism, however there were serious concerns about its threat to civil liberties.
- Operation Enduring Freedom was launched in October, 2001 after the Taliban govt. of Afghanistan and the U.S. failed to agree on handling bin Laden.
- The Taliban govt was overthrown, but bin Laden escaped.
- Bush then turned his attention to Iraq. Citing intelligence reports suggesting that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. led a coalition into Iraq in 2003.
- Hussein was removed from power, but no weapons of mass destruction were found.
- Success in Iraq was uneven at best.
- A 2007 troop surge brought more stability to the country and has allowed more Iraqi forces to take control of the country, possibly allowing for significant U.S. troop withdrawal in 2011.