

Chapter 39 (14th)

The Staleated Seventies

1. Sources of Stagnation
 1. America had enjoyed a long economic boom in the 1950s and 60s. The 1970s would see that boom end.
 2. No year's productivity during the 70s would equal any year in the 50s or 60s. There were several reasons for slow-down.
 1. Women & teens increasingly entered the workforce. Generally, they were less skilled, often had temporary jobs.
 2. Machinery was getting old and run down by this time.
 3. The major cause was the upward spiral of inflation. Vietnam War spending helped cause inflation, but it was caused mostly from increased oil prices.
 4. What's more, the boom-years had put more money in people's hands. *Anytime* this is the case, prices go up.
 3. America's economic lead had dwindled as Germany and Japan had by then rebuilt and caught back up.
2. Nixon "Vietnamizes" the War
 1. Nixon entered the White House promising an honorable end to the war. He pursued "Vietnamization", or returning U.S. troops and turning the war over to the Vietnamese.
 1. This became the "**Nixon Doctrine**" saying the U.S. would honor its commitments, but the Vietnamese would have to go it without massive American troop numbers.
 2. The policy was middle-of-the-road, enough to get him elected. Still, with America so divided, there were still opponents—hawks wanted *more* action, doves wanted to leave immediately. The doves protested loudly.
 1. Nixon appealed the "**silent majority**", who supported the war, but without the sound and fury of the protesters.
 3. In the earlier part of the war especially, the fighting was done disproportionately by the poorer classes.
 1. Being in college got young men a deferment from the draft (a free pass).
 2. African-Americans suffered casualties at higher rates than whites.
 3. The result was that most Vietnam "grunts" (ground soldiers) were fresh out of high school (average age was 19).
 4. Morale was low too. A bogged down war, with high casualties and no clear mission led to drugs, mutiny, sabotage, and "fraggings" troop's own officers. Frustration was best seen in the infamous **My Lai Massacre** (1968).
 1. At that village, U.S. troops snapped and killed the entire village, including women and children.
 2. My Lai increased protest at home and helped lead to charges of "baby killers"—unfair for nearly all of the troops.
3. Cambodianizing the Vietnam War
 1. The North Vietnamese had been using their neighbor as a staging-ground for attacks. The land was out-of-bounds for U.S. troops, but the North channeled supplies through Cambodia down the "**Ho Chi Minh Trail**."
 1. In 1970, Nixon ordered the U.S. to invade Cambodia to put a stop to the uneven playing field.
 2. On U.S. universities, there was much protest to moving into Cambodia. The logic went, "The U.S. is not at war with Cambodia, why are we invading there?"
 1. A protest at **Kent State University** got out of hand and the National Guard was called in to disperse the protestors. For some reason, the Guard opened fire and killed four protesters.
 2. A similar situation occurred at Jackson State College killing two.
 3. The rift between hawks and doves had widened. Nixon pulled out of Cambodia after only two months. U.S. troops resented Nixon's reversal and having to fight with "one hand tied behind their back."
 3. Congress was regretting the blank check (Tonkin Gulf Resolution). Senate repealed the Resolution (symbolic only).
 4. The **Twenty-sixth Amendment** (1971) was passed. It lowered the voting age to 18. The reasoning was that 18 and 19 year olds should be allowed to vote for the politicians sending them off to war.
 5. The *New York Times* dropped a bombshell in June 1971. They broke the "**Pentagon Papers**"—a top secret study that showed goof-ups by JFK and LBJ.
 1. The Pentagon Papers helped to the "**credibility gap**" which was the gap between what the governments said (the war is going great) and the reality (it wasn't).
4. Nixon's Détente with Beijing (Peking) and Moscow
 1. China and the Soviet Union were fighting (literally at times) over what it means to be a communist. Nixon saw this as a chance to step in and play one against the other.
 2. National security adviser **Henry A. Kissinger** had been secretly meeting in Paris with North Vietnamese officials in hopes of working to an end of the war. He was also preparing the way for Nixon to visit China and Russia.
 3. Nixon did visit China, in 1972. It was a symbolic visit where each side promised to get along better. Three months later, Nixon went to Russia. With better U.S.-China relations, he felt Russia would be inclined to give in a bit. He was right.
 1. The U.S.S.R. was low on food. A deal was struck where the U.S. would sell \$750+ million grain to the Soviets.
 2. There was some disarmament as well. America and the Soviets agreed to an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) reduction and to a string of "Strategic Arms Limitations Talks" (SALT).
 1. This was a hollow victory though. The *quantity* may have been limited, but agreements could be easily ignored and were by both sides.
 2. Plus, the move was now toward "**MIRVs**" (multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles) where several nuclear weapons were mounted on a single missile.
 4. Still, getting along better with China and Russia brought on another round of détente (eased tensions).
 5. Nixon was against communism. This is seen in involvement in Latin American governments that were possibly going red.

5. A New Team on the Supreme Bench
 1. Under **Chief Justice Earl Warren**, the Supreme Court had made a noticeable shift to the left (liberal side) and was activist. Nixon fussed about this move. Several cases showed the trend...
 2. *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) - Struck down a state law banning contraceptive use as a "right of privacy."
 3. A series of cases gave rights to defendants in criminal cases.
 1. *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) - Said all defendants were entitled to a lawyer.
 2. The *Escobedo* and *Miranda* cases (1966) - Said arrested individuals must be told their rights.
 4. *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) - A public figure could only sue for libel if "malice" on the writer's part could be proven. This opened wide the door for jobs at politicians and movies stars.
 5. *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp* (1963) - Removed prayer and the Bible from schools, arguing the First Amendment separates church and state.
 6. *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964) - Forbade creative district lines that made some people's votes weigh more than others. This type of gerrymandering had been used by southern whites to keep power.
 7. Nixon sought to change the Court's liberal trend by appointing otherwise-minded justices. **Warren E. Burger** was quickly nominated, accepted, and became chief justice. Nixon appointed a total of four supposedly conservative justices.
 1. However, justices are free to rule as they wish, not how the president wants. The Burger Court was reluctant to undo what the Warren Court had done.
 2. Evidence of how court was *not* conservative came with *Roe v. Wade* decision (1973) which legalized abortion.
6. Nixon on the Home Front
 1. Contrary to what one might guess from a conservative, Nixon made the Great Society programs grow. For example:
 1. Money for Medicare, Medicaid, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) increased. The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) was created to help the old, blind, and disabled. Social Security would be automatically increased with inflation.
 2. In his controversial "Philadelphia Plan", trade-unions were required to set "goals and timetables" for hiring blacks.
 1. The policy was extended to all federal contracts. It forced businesses to hire a quota of minorities.
 2. The Supreme Court backed Nixon in *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (1971).
 1. The court prohibited things like intelligence tests, saying they limited women and minorities in some fields. The court suggested hiring proportions should be the same ratio as the population.
 3. The idea of "affirmative action" had turned into "preferential treatment" or "reverse discrimination."
 3. Environmental laws were passed.
 1. The godmother of the modern environmental movement was **Rachel Carson**. She wrote *Silent Spring* (1962) about the ill-effects of the pesticide DDT.
 2. The **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) was formed in 1970 along with the Occupational Health and Safety Admin. (**OSHA**) to set safety standards in workplaces.
 3. **Clean Air Act** (1970) and the **Endangered Species Act** (1973) were passed. Symbolically, "Earth Day" began.
 4. Back to the economy, Nixon tried to halt inflation by imposing a 90-day wage and price freeze in 1971.
 1. He surprisingly took the U.S. off the gold standard and devalued the dollar. This ended the "Bretton Woods" system of currency stabilization set after WWII.
 5. As a minority president (he'd gotten only 43% of the votes), Nixon gathered southern support by appointing conservative justices, paying little attention to civil rights, and opposing school busing.
7. The Nixon Landslide of 1972
 1. N. Vietnam attacked across the dividing line ("DMZ"), 1972. Nixon ramped up bombings & mined the harbors of North.
 1. The fear was that Russia and China might respond—they didn't, thanks to Nixon's smoothing of relations.
 2. 1972 saw Nixon seek reelection. Democrats nominated **George McGovern** who promised to end war in 90 days.
 1. McGovern was supported by young adults and women. His campaign was hurt when it became known that his V.P. candidate, **Thomas Eagleton**, had received psychiatric treatment.
 2. 12 days before the election, Henry Kissinger announced that "peace is at hand" and an agreement would be announced in a few days. Nixon won in a huge way, 520 to 17.
 3. The agreement Kissinger had spoken of didn't come just yet. Nixon ramped up the bombings in attempt to drive the North back to the bargaining table, it work, and on January 23, 1973 a cease-fire was reached.
 1. Nixon declared "peace with honor", but it was hollow. The U.S. would withdraw, but the North kept 145,000 soldiers and 30% of the South occupied.
8. The Secret Bombing of Cambodia and the War Powers Act
 1. In mid-1973, people were surprised to learn that the U.S. had made some 3,500 secret bombings of Cambodia. This despite assurances from the government that Cambodia's neutrality was intact. The "credibility gap" widened.
 1. Nixon's goal had been to hurt the communists there and help the non-communists.
 2. The end result was that, in the chaos, a tyrant named **Pol Pot** killed some 2 million of his own people.
 2. Congress set out to ensure that no "blank check" like the Tonkin Gulf Resolution would be passed again.
 1. Congress passed the **War Powers Act** (1973). It said (1) the president must report to Congress within 48 hours of putting troops in harm's way in a foreign country and (2) there would be a 60 to 90 day limit.
 2. This law helped start what was called the "New Isolationism."
9. The Arab Oil Embargo and the Energy Crisis
 1. The Arab nations were unhappy about their loss to Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967. In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel trying to win back lands lost.
 1. America aided Israel, while Kissinger kept Soviets out of the fray. After tense times, uneasy peace was reached.

2. But, Arab nations were not pleased at America's support of Israel.
2. In October of 1973, Arab nations placed an embargo on oil.
 1. Long lines formed at gas stations and prices of gas skyrocketed in the U.S.
3. The "energy crisis" changed things in America.
 1. The Alaska pipeline was approved to flow oil southward.
 2. A 55 MPH speed limit was set to conserve fuel. Americans also moved to smaller cars, like the VW Bug.
 3. There were calls for more use of coal and nuclear power.
4. The embargo was lifted after 5 months. But, the message was clear: America was addicted to oil and the Middle East had nearly all of the cards in their hands.
 1. Using OPEC to exert their will, the Arab nations nearly quadrupled the price of oil by the end of the 70s.
10. Watergate and the Unmaking of a President
 1. During the campaign, five men had been caught breaking into the Democratic Party's headquarters in the Watergate building. They were snooping files and planting microphones. It was discovered they were part of **CREEP** (the Committee to Reelect the President).
 1. The question became, "Who ordered this and who knew of this?" Nixon said he knew nothing of the business.
 2. At about the same time, Nixon's V.P., **Spiro Agnew**, had his own mini-scandal involving past bribes. Agnew resigned and Gerald Ford was chosen as the new Vice President.
 2. The Senate investigated Watergate. A former White House lawyer, **John Dean**, accused Nixon of a cover-up (to quiet anyone with any knowledge). It was then learned Nixon had tape recordings of all Oval Office conversations, so the tapes were sought. Nixon refused which looked bad.
 1. In the "Saturday Night Massacre", Nixon fired Watergate investigators & the attorney general, which looked bad.
 2. Some tapes were handed over in 1974 at the Supreme Court's ruling. They revealed Nixon's foul mouth—embarrassing but not impeachable.
 3. A month later, impeachment for "obstruction of justice" was going forward so Nixon handed over all of the tapes. Those revealed Nixon had indeed ordered a cover-up—this was an impeachable offense.
 3. Rather than get booted out of office, Nixon resigned on August 8, 1974. Gerald Ford was sworn in as the new president.
11. The First Unelected President
 1. **Gerald Ford** became president without anyone ever voting for him, either for president or vice president.
 2. He was seen as a nice guy, more of an everyman, but a bit of an average-minded and clumsy fellow. None of the negatives were really fair, but that was much of the public view.
 3. Surprisingly, Ford pardoned Nixon for any illegal actions he might have done.
 1. The deal *appeared* to have been...Ford was chosen V.P. so that if Nixon ever got into trouble, Ford would cover his back. There is no way to *know* this, but that was the perception. This would hurt Ford in the 1976 election.
 2. Later, Ford's popularity went downhill when he gave amnesty to draft dodgers. He felt they'd *not* served out of heartfelt reasons, so they were welcome to return to the U.S.
 4. Ford's foreign relation activities centered on the **Helsinki accords** with the U.S.S.R. In these agreements, (1) the boundaries of Eastern Europe were agreed upon, (2) agreements were made on traveling from the U.S. and U.S.S.R., and (3) guarantees were made of human rights.
 1. Too many Americans, détente was benefiting Russia, but America was getting little in return.
12. Defeat in Vietnam
 1. America's goal in Vietnam was to contain communism. America left in 1973, *generally* having done that. In 1975, however, North Vietnam overran and took over South Vietnam.
 1. It was embarrassing that the last Americans evacuated from the rooftop of the American embassy by helicopter.
 2. Technically, America didn't lose the war. America left at a tie, and then the U.S.-supported South Vietnam lost.
13. Feminist Victories and Defeats
 1. The feminist movement of the 60s gained some steam entering the 70s.
 2. Congress passed "**Title IX**" (1972) which prohibited sex discrimination in any federally-funded educational program. This was best seen in the rise of girls' sports to equal boys'.
 3. The Supreme Court heard cases regarding women.
 1. *Reed v. Reed* and *Frontiero v. Richardson*, dealt with sex discrimination in laws and jobs.
 2. The *Roe v. Wade* (1973) case legalized abortion.
 4. The proposed "**Equal Rights Amendment**" (ERA) passed Congress in 1972. ERA sought to legislate equality by stating equal rights can't be denied due to gender.
 1. 38 states needed to ratify ERA as a Constitutional Amendment. 28 ratified quickly. Energizing Feminists.
 2. At this point, opposition stalled ERA. Essentially, opposition felt ERA would undercut & deteriorate the family.
 1. National child care was proposed. The thinking was that this would weaken family life.
 2. Feminist movement was seen as cause of divorce. The divorce rate had tripled between 1960 and '76.
 3. Many despised abortion. Catholics and other Christians viewed pregnancy as a blessing and charged the feminists viewed it as an inconvenience.
 4. The leader against ERA was **Phyllis Schlafly**. She traveled the country advocating "STOP ERA" and advocating traditional roles for women.
 5. ERA was failed in 1982, 3 states short of the needed 38.
14. The Seventies in Black and White
 1. *Milliken v. Bradley*, Supreme Court ruled, while integrating schools, officials couldn't force students across district lines.
 1. Integration took a hit. If students went to their *nearest* school, the schools would stay largely segregated.

2. The "white flight" to the suburbs sped up. What were left behind to deal with the tensions of integration were the less-advantaged classes of society.
 2. "Affirmative action" (giving preference to minorities in selection) led to charges of "reverse discrimination."
 1. The idea was that affirmative action meant selection for colleges or jobs based on race, not on achievement.
 2. In the **Bakke case** (1978), the Supreme Court dealt with reverse discrimination.
 1. Bakke had sued saying he'd been turned down grad school due to policies that favored minorities. He won. The Court said admission preference could not be based on race.
 2. Paradoxically, the court also said race *can* be used in the *overall* admission policies to help balance out the student body's demographics.
 3. **Thurgood Marshall** was the only black justice. He voted against Bakke and said the decision might undo years of civil rights progress.
15. The Bicentennial Campaign and the Carter Victory
1. 1976 was the nation's bicentennial celebration. After years of race problems, Vietnam, and Watergate. Despite all of the turmoil and ousting a president, America and the Constitution had survived. America needed a celebration.
 2. It was also an election year. President Ford tried to get elected on his own, the Democrats chose **Jimmy Carter**.
 1. Carter capitalized on being a "Washington outsider," and therefore untainted by the supposed corruption of D.C. (he'd previously been governor of Georgia).
 2. Elections were close, but Republican "brand" had been too tarnished by Watergate. Carter won 297 to 240.
 3. Congress also went heavily Democrat. During his "honeymoon period", Carter got a new **Dept. of Energy** established. He also got a tax cut through.
 1. Carter's honeymoon was short though. Being a political outsider was good during the election, but not good inside Washington D.C. where "back-slapping" and "back-scratching" is how things get done.
16. Carter's Humanitarian Diplomacy
1. Carter was a devout Christian having high concern for human rights - his guiding principle when it came to foreign policy.
 1. For example, he expressed concern and support for the oppressed people of Zimbabwe (called Rhodesia then).
 2. Carter's crowning foreign policy achievement was a Middle East peace settlement.
 1. Egyptian president **Anwar Sadat** and Israeli president **Menachem Begin** met Carter at Camp David in 1978.
 2. They shook hands and agreed that Israel would withdraw from lands gained in the Six-Day War (1967) and Israel's borders would be respected.
 3. Full diplomatic relations with China were reestablished.
 4. Another agreement planned to turn over the Panama Canal to Panama by the year 2000 (and did).
 5. To many, Carter's policies seemed nice, but soft and too willing to give.
 1. Plus, the Cold War kept on going. Thousands of Soviet backed Cuban troops showed up in various African countries to support communist forces there. Carter made no response.
17. Economic and Energy Woes
1. Carter had worse problems than foreign affairs—the economy was tanking.
 1. Inflation was rising by 13% in 1979 (4% is normal). The cost of importing oil was skyrocketing.
 2. Carter proposed energy conservation laws, but they weren't well received.
 3. Interest rates were high as well. This meant borrowing money (to buy a home for example) was too expensive.
 2. Along with oil, the Middle East gave Carter more headaches in 1979 when the shah of Iran was ousted by Islamic fundamentalists. Shah had been put into power with help from the CIA and was seen as a symbol of the West and the U.S.
 1. New Muslim government took over the oil fields. Oil production went down and OPEC raised oil prices farther.
 2. Carter went to Camp David, talked with energy experts, and then scolded America for its dependence on oil and materialism. This was probably true, but it was a scolding, not an energy solution.
 1. Within a few days he fired four cabinet members and reverted to his close-knit Georgia crew. Some wondered if Carter was losing touch with the people.
18. Foreign Affairs and the Iranian Imbroglio
1. A high-note for Carter came with SALT II. He met with Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** agreeing limit nuclear weapons.
 1. The high-note was short lived—the Senate was very reluctant to ratify the agreement.
 2. At the same time, militant Muslim radicals in Iran stormed the U.S. embassy in Teheran and took everyone hostage.
 1. The militants demanded that the U.S. hand over the shah who'd fled earlier. Worse, what would the U.S. do about the 52 Americans being held hostage?
 2. Another bad event at the same time mixed the Cold War, oil, and the Muslim World.
 1. The Soviet Union suddenly attacked and took over Afghanistan (Dec. 1979). This move threatened (1) to expand communism, (2) oil fields and production, and (3) next-door neighbor Iran.
 3. Carter reacted by placing an embargo on the U.S.S.R. and by boycotting the 1980 summer Olympics in Moscow.
 1. He proposed setting up a "Rapid Deployment Force" for trouble-spots and asked that young people, including women, be required to register for a possible military draft.
 2. Carter admitted he'd misjudged the Soviets at the SALT II talks. This is when SALT II died.
 4. The Iran hostage situation was still going—it would be the undoing of Carter.
 1. The U.S. tried economic sanctions, they failed.
 2. A secret rescue mission was planned and tried. It literally went down in flames in a sandstorm.
 3. Carter was unable to resolve the Iran hostage situation. Fair or not, the American hostages in Iran became a symbol of problems which Carter could not solve.