

UNITED STATES HISTORY

LYNDON JOHNSON,
VIETNAM, and
RICHARD NIXON

THE GREAT SOCIETY

- Following the assassination of **President Kennedy**, **Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ)** assumed the Presidency.
- **Johnson** will continue many of the ideas and reforms **Kennedy** had started and wanted to start for the country. LBJ outlined his complete social plan for America in what he called the **Great Society**- **Johnson's** plan to change America by helping the poor and poverty stricken with government backed welfare programs.
- Many issues will be addressed in American society through the **Great Society**, but he, like JFK will focus on:
 - Civil Rights
 - Anti-Poverty legislation



– Civil Rights Issues

- Civil Rights Act of 1964- prohibited discrimination in public places; desegregated public facilities.
- Voting Rights Act 1965- ended literacy tests as a voting requirement and allowed for federal monitoring of voter registration
- 24th Amendment- abolished the poll tax in federal elections
- Immigration Act 1964- ended immigration quotas based on nationality
- Civil Rights Act of 1968- prohibited discrimination in housing

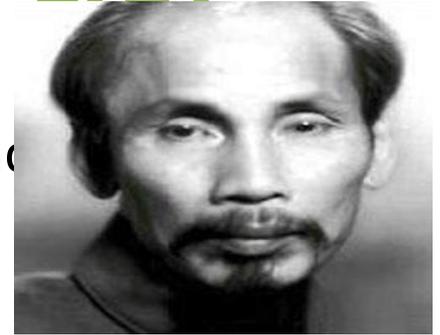
- In early 1964, **President Johnson** will declare “unconditional war on poverty in America” to help the lower classes and poverty stricken. Some of these anti-poverty programs were:
 - **Economic Opportunity Act (EOA)**- a bill containing a number of antipoverty measures; the three most important programs were:
 - **Head Start**- provides a pre-K education to underprivileged citizens
 - **VISTA(Volunteers in Service to America)**-a Peace Corps for the U.S.
 - **Job Corps**-provided job training to citizens
 - **Tax Relief Act**-provided for income tax cuts (\$10 billion total)
 - **Medicare Act**- established the **Medicare** program (healthcare for old people) and **Medicaid** (healthcare for the underprivileged)
 - **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**- formed to administer and oversee federal housing projects (helps to provide affordable housing)

- Johnson's Great Society is often compared to Progressive Movement programs and Roosevelt's New Deal.
- **All of these programs provided government aid and assistance in society and made the government a bigger part of the lives of citizens.**
 - **What effect did it have on government spending?**

The Warren Court

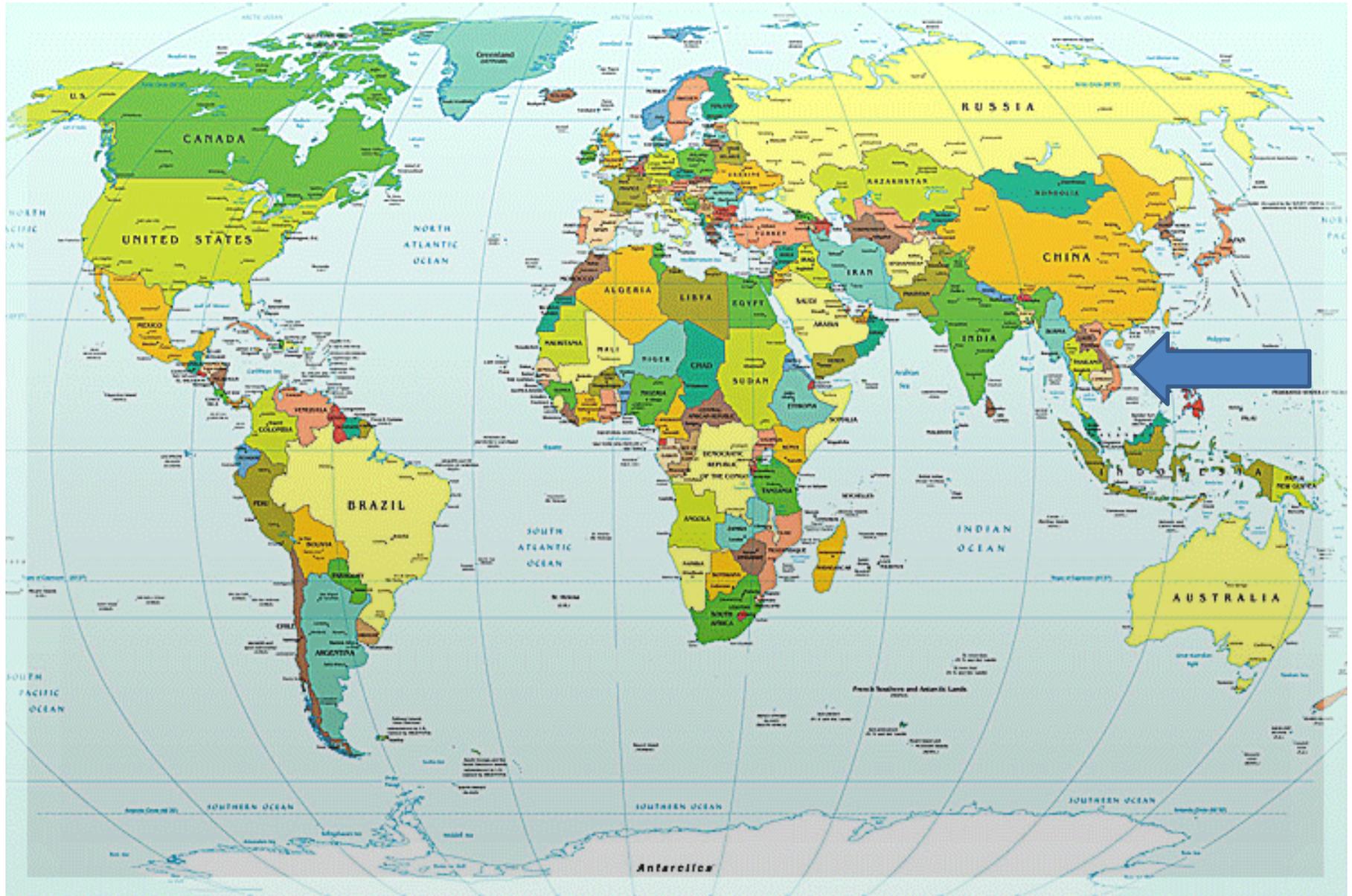
- The U.S. Supreme Court was headed by **Chief Justice Earl Warren** during the 1960s, and the Warren Court made numerous important decisions.
 - Mapp v. Ohio- evidence obtained illegally may not be used at trial.
 - Gideon v. Wainwright-required criminal courts to provide attorneys for defendants if needed.
 - Escobedo v. Illinois-criminal suspects had the right to an attorney during questioning.
 - Miranda v. Arizona- all suspects had to be read their rights before being questioned
- Many of these decisions were controversial and not well-liked by the citizens of the U.S., but all of the decisions expanded **rights of the accused**.

MOVING TOWARD CONFLICT



- Vietnam background info:
 - France controlled **Indochina** (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos) until WWII
 - Japan controlled it during WWII
 - France (with U.S. support) came to reclaim it after WWII ended, but they were met with great resistance from the **Vietminh (Vietnamese Communists)** led by **Ho Chi Minh**
 - French will be defeated for good in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu
- When the French left Vietnam, **Eisenhower** felt that containing communism was all that mattered. He then spoke of the **domino theory**- **countries on the brink of communism were like a row of dominos, if one falls they all fall.**
- The U.S. and others came up with the **Geneva Accords** in 1954:
 - Vietnam was divided along the 17th parallel with **Ho Chi Minh** ruling the (Communist)north and the nationalists, led by **Ngo Dinh Diem**, ruling the (Democratic)south.
 - Unifying elections would be held in 1956.

WORLD MAP



- The U.S. will approach Vietnam much like we did Korea. The main objective will be to contain communism.
- U.S. Presidents had funneled financial and military advisory aid into noncommunist resistance for years. This did little to slow aggressive attacks in the south by the **Vietcong- South Vietnamese communists that wanted to implement communism.**
- Another problem was that the South Vietnamese government, led by **Ngo Dinh Diem**, was very corrupt, and many protested his policies. (See [picture](#)) He also refused to hold the unifying elections in 1956.
 - How did the U.S. react?



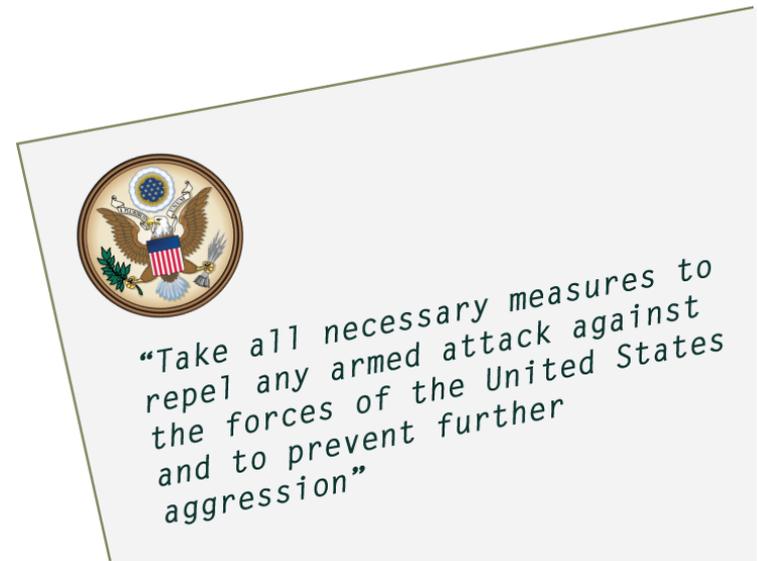
- Although the U.S. opposed it, **Diem** was assassinated. Governments and leaders that followed proved no better than **Diem**.

“Barbecue Shows”



A South Vietnamese Buddhist monk sets himself on fire (self-immolation) to protest the policies of the Diem regime. Diem's wife, Madame Nu, creates quite a stir when she refers to these protests as “barbecue shows.”

- In August, 1964, a Vietnamese patrol boat fired on a U.S. naval ship in the **Gulf of Tonkin**. A few days later, U.S. naval ships reported being fired upon again.
 - **President Johnson** asked Congress for power to take all necessary action to combat further aggression.
 - Congress agreed and passed the **Tonkin Gulf Resolution**- **it was not a declaration of war, but gave Pres. Johnson broad military powers to combat aggression with respect to Vietnam.**



- The U.S. began the policy of **escalation** (steady increase in the number of American troops involved in the fighting in Vietnam), and the Vietnam Conflict had become Americanized.

U.S. Troops in Vietnam

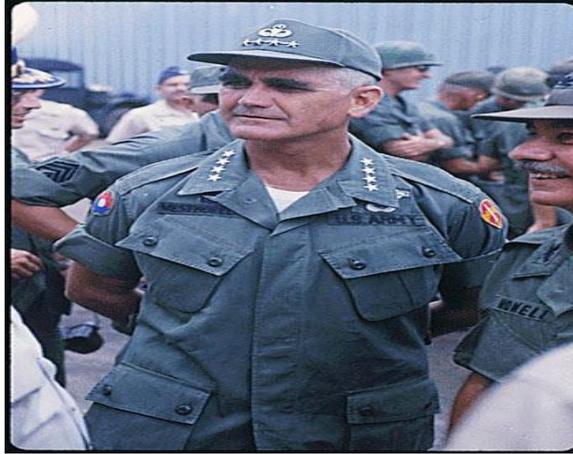
Escalation

- *Jan. 1965 – 20,000*
- *Dec. 1965 – 200,000*
- *Jan. 1968 – 540,000*



U.S. INVOLVEMENT AND ESCALATION

- By the end of 1965, 200,000 U.S. troops were in Vietnam. American commander in Vietnam, **General William Westmoreland**, continued to request more troops



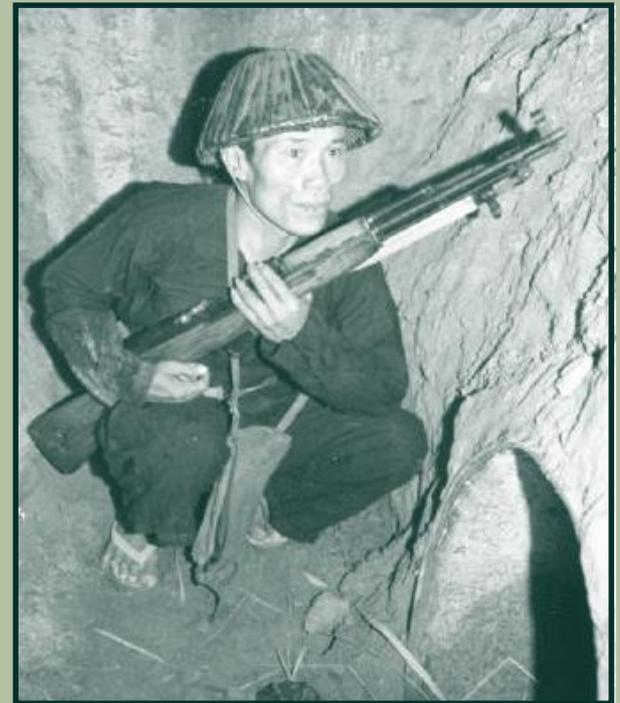
- The **North Vietnamese (Vietminh)** and **Viet Cong (South Vietnamese communists)** proved to be an elusive enemy.
 - Not only did they blend in with the innocent civilians (**VC**), but they built elaborate tunnel systems from which to attack and escape.
 - They also used **Ho Chi Minh Trail** to run supplies and troops into South Vietnam. **Ho Chi Minh Trail**- trail that ran alongside Vietnam through neighboring Laos and Cambodia

VIETNAM



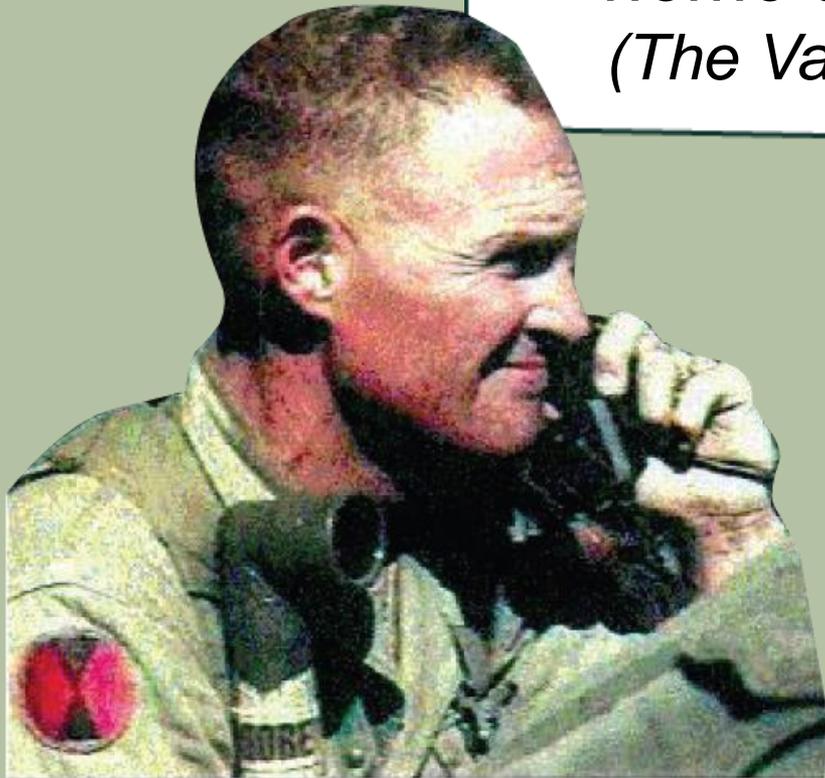
Vietnam Battle Tactics

- *Disguised themselves as locals*
- *Don't face Americans on battlefield*
- *Retreat to tunnels*
- *125 miles of tunnels in 1965*
- *Landmines and booby traps*



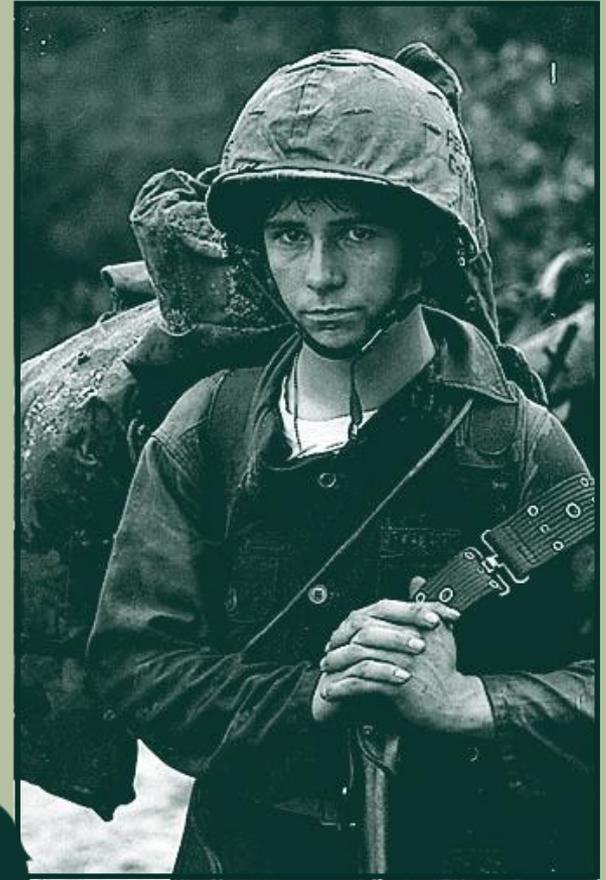
Lt. Colonel Hal Moore

*"I will leave no man behind...
Dead or alive. We will all come
home together."
(The Valley of Death, 1965)*



Tunnel Rats

- *Small American soldiers*
- *Crawled into tunnels to fight Viet Cong*
- *Tunnels were booby trapped*
- *Played a valuable role in the war*



- Early support of the war was high in the country, but began to fade as the wounded and death toll began to rise. Television showed the war entirely different than **President Johnson** and commanding officers reported it. This led to the growth of what critics called a **credibility gap**- **public distrust of the government about the war because of what they said didn't match with what we saw on television.**
 - By the end of 1967, the American public was split over supporting and opposing the war. Discontent would continue to grow and protests became more common.
- Economic issues caused by the escalation of the war in Vietnam:
 - Higher **inflation**- **value of the money declines as more is in circulation**
 - Loss of some money being spent on Great Society programs
 - What effect would this loss of funding have on the effectiveness of the Great Society programs?

1968: A TUMULTUOUS YEAR

- Major events of 1968: (5 in total)
 - Tet Offensive- large scale attacks by the **Vietcong** all over South Vietnam (over 100 cities and towns) that occurred during the Vietnamese New Year (late-Jan/early-Feb) .
 - This was particularly bad because Americans had been told the war was nearly over
 - TV showed much of this and it widened the credibility gap and caused war support to further decline
 - Americans saw that we couldn't win



Lyndon B. Johnson

"I will not, I shall not, seek another term as your President." (March 31, 1968)



1968

- *MLK Jr. is assassinated in April*
- *LBJ announces that he won't run for re-election and Democratic Presidential front-runner Robert F. Kennedy is assassinated in June*
- *Major riots (anti-war protests) in August at the Democratic National Convention*



1968 Election

- *Nixon is elected POTUS over Hubert Humphrey (D) and George Wallace*
- *His campaign slogan was “Peace with Honor”*
- *18 year olds could fight, but could not vote—this would lead to the passage of the **26th Amendment***



END OF THE WAR AND ITS LEGACY

- During his campaign for president, Richard Nixon vowed to pull U.S. troops out of Vietnam. He held true to his word (eventually), but it was very slow and with continued aggressive fighting.
- President Nixon's plan to accomplish withdrawal of troops from Vietnam was called Vietnamization- **the South Vietnamese army would take a more active role in combat while American troops were withdrawn.**
- A major issue that infuriated, saddened, and sickened the American people came to light in early 1969. It further widened the credibility gap.

My Lai Massacre

- *March 16, 1968*
- *Led by Lt. Calley*
- *350 innocent Vietnamese women, children, and elderly were killed*
- *The war had reached its lowest point*



- In response to the My Lai massacre and **Nixon** allowing the invasion of Cambodia, student protests around the country erupted. Some of these protests ended in violence and death.
- Violence and death occurred on both the campuses of **Kent State University in Ohio and Jackson State University in MS**. National Guard troops feeling threatened and being hit by thrown objects fired into both crowds killing 6 total.
- To make matters worse in the eyes of the public, information from a document called the **Pentagon Papers** leaked to the public. This info. showed that **Pres. Johnson** had made plans to enter the war even while telling the people we would stay out. Distrust of the government and its officials was at an all time high. The credibility gap was HUGE!
- In the midst of continued growing opposition, the U.S. removed all troops in March, 1973. Our military involvement in Vietnam had ended.

Kent State University

- *Demonstrations at Kent State University in 1970*
- *Ohio National Guard is called in*
- *Four students are killed and ten wounded*
- *Nixon calls demonstrators “Bums”*



Click here to play a sample from “Ohio”



- The Vietnam Conflict/War had many great costs:
 - The death of over 58,000 Americans with another 300,000+ wounded.
 - The public's loss of trust in the government as a whole (**credibility gap**).
 - **War Powers Act**- passed by Congress in 1973 and did the following:
 - **President must inform Congress within 48 hours of sending forces into a hostile area w/o a war declaration**
 - **Those troops can be there no more than 90 days unless the action has Congressional approval or a war declaration issued**

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON



THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

- **Richard Nixon** had won the 1968 presidential election by the slimmest of margins. One method he used to gain support in the South was called the **Southern Strategy**-
 - Nixon's attempt to gain support of conservative southern Democrats by promising to slow integration, as well as appoint a southerner to the Supreme Court.
- Once in office, **President Nixon** was faced with a troubled economy.
 - **Stagflation**- high inflation coupled with high unemployment
 - **Heavy dependency on foreign oil**- the U.S. received much of its oil from the Middle East from a collection of countries called **OPEC**- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
 - Arab **OPEC** nations cut off oil sales (**embargo**) to the U.S. in 1973 when we supported Israel against Egypt and Syria in the Yom Kippur War
 - When they resumed oil sales to us in 1974, oil prices had quadrupled further contributing to our high inflation dilemma

OPEC NATIONS WORLDWIDE

OPEC Member Countries



OPEC NATIONS-ARABIAN PENINSULA



- To combat the growing problem of inflation, **President Nixon** will place a freeze on worker's wages, business prices, and business fees for 90 days. This will ease inflation for a period of time, but did not solve the problem.

- Where Nixon had troubles in the economy, his fortune was reversed when it came to foreign policy. Nixon is going to have great success and triumph in this area.

- Nixon chose a more flexible approach in dealing with communist nations called **détente**- **Nixon's flexible policy in dealing with communist nations that focused on a willingness to negotiate and ease Cold War tensions**

- U.S. and Soviet Union signed the **SALT I Treaty (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty)**- five year agreement limiting the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine launched missiles

- Continued withdrawal of U.S. soldiers from Vietnam

WATERGATE: NIXON'S DOWNFALL

- The ultimate downfall of **President Richard Nixon** will come in the form of a scandal known as Watergate- the **Nixon** administration's attempt to cover up a burglary of the **Democratic National Committee (DNC)** headquarters at the Watergate office and apartment complex in Washington, DC
- Two reporters, **Bob Woodward** and **Carl Bernstein**, continued to probe into the attempted burglary, as it appeared it was more than just a "burglary". Eventually the entire scandal exploded into situation that consumed the office of the presidency.
- As the situation continued to escalate, more and more incriminating evidence came out against **President Nixon** and his staff. The final straw was a set of audio tapes **Nixon** had with conversations concerning **Watergate**. **Nixon** recorded things in his office to help with his future memoirs. (????)

- With overwhelming evidence against the President, Congress approved three articles of impeachment. On August 8, 1974, before the full house could vote on his impeachment, **President Nixon** resigned his office. **Gerald Ford** was then sworn in as the 38th President of the United States.
- Eventually, 25 members of **Nixon's** staff will serve jail time for their involvement in the Watergate scandal/cover-up. The biggest impact of **Watergate**, however, was that the American public lost even more respect and trust in our elected officials and government.