Nixon’s Staff

- Although he had a reserved and remote personality, many Americans respected Nixon for his experience and service.
- Believing that the executive branch needed to be strong, Nixon gathered a close circle of trusted advisors around him.

**Nixon’s Close Advisors**

- **John Mitchell** — Asked to be Attorney General after working with Nixon’s campaign in New York, Mitchell often spoke with Nixon several times a day.
- **Henry Kissinger** — Although he had no previous ties to Nixon, Harvard government professor Henry Kissinger first became Nixon’s national security advisor and later his Secretary of State.
Nixon’s Domestic & Economic Policies

- During Nixon’s first few years in office, the United States went through economic troubles.
- Unemployment and inflation rose, and federal spending proved difficult to control.

**Stagflation**: A period of high inflation combined with economic stagnation, unemployment, or economic recession that occurred during the 1970s.

- In response, Nixon turned to the practice of **deficit spending**, or spending more money in a year than the government receives in revenues.
Domestic Policy—Oil and Inflation

- Stagflation usually occurs when there is a shock in the economy (such as a sudden increase in oil)
- When the United States supported its ally Israel in a war against Egypt and Syria in 1973, the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed an embargo, or ban, on shipping oil to the United States.
- The resulting shortage resulted in high oil prices, which in turn drove inflation even higher.

  Under Nixon’s New Federalism, states were asked to assume greater responsibility for the well-being of their citizens, taking some of this responsibility away from the federal government.
The First Moon Landing

- During Nixon’s presidency, the United States achieved its goal of a successful moon landing.
- On July 20, 1969, Neil A. Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon. He was joined by Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin, Jr., a fellow crewman on the *Apollo 11* spacecraft.
- Television viewers around the world watched the moon landing, and *Apollo 11’s* crew were treated as heroes when they returned.
Relaxing Tensions

**Détente**
- Although Nixon had built a reputation as a strong anti-Communist, he and Kissinger reversed the direction of postwar American foreign policy by holding talks with China and the Soviet Union.
- Nixon and Kissinger’s greatest accomplishment was in bringing about *détente*, or a relaxation in tensions, between the United States and these Communist nations.

**Complex Foreign Affairs**
- The Soviet Union and China, once allies, had become bitter enemies.
- This development had the potential to reshape global politics.
Easing Relations Between the United States and China

**Historical Background** — After its Communist takeover in 1949, the United States refused to recognize the People’s Republic of China, viewing the government of Taiwan as the legitimate Chinese rulers.

**Steps to Ease Relations** — During the early 1970s, relations eased between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. Nixon referred to the nation by name, travel and trade restrictions were lifted.

- Kissinger encouraged Nixon to work with China. His efforts in ending the Vietnam War and easing Cold War tensions made him a celebrity.
A New Approach to China

Easing Relations Between the United States and China

- **Nixon's Visit to China** — In February 1972, Nixon became the first American President to visit China. Touring Chinese sites in front of television cameras, Nixon established the basis for future diplomatic ties during his visit.
A New Approach to China

Easing Relations Between the United States and China

- **Recognizing the Chinese Government** — The United States decided to join other nations in recognizing the Chinese government.
Limiting Nuclear Arms

- Nixon uses new relations with China to get USSR to talk about limiting the nuclear arms race.
- In 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the first **Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty**, known as **SALT I**.
- **SALT I** froze the number of strategic ballistic missile launchers at existing levels, and provided for the addition of new submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers.
- **SALT I** demonstrated that arms control agreements between the superpowers were possible.
- However, it did not reduce the number of weapons that either nation possessed, nor did it halt the development of conventional weapon technologies.
Vietnamization

Nixon had hoped to slowly remove US from the war while helping South Vietnam to defend itself.

He tried to force North Vietnam into accepting a peace plan by increasing bombing on North Vietnam and by attacking North Vietnamese strongholds in Cambodia.
Spiro Agnew

- Nixon’s belligerent Vice-President who took on opponents much like Nixon did for Ike
- Pleaded ‘no contest’ to bribe charges, resigns from office in late 1973
- Gerald Ford replaces
Nixon’s suspicious and secretive nature caused the White House to operate as if it were surrounded by political enemies.

One result of this mind-set was the creation of an “enemies list,” a list of prominent people seen as unsympathetic to the administration.

When someone in the National Security Council appeared to have leaked secret government information to the New York Times, Nixon ordered that wiretaps, or listening devices, be installed on the telephones of some news reporters and members of his staff.
In June 1971, Daniel Ellsberg leaked the *Pentagon Papers* to the *NY Times*. These are a detailed study of US policy in Vietnam commissioned in 1967. Because they showed that US leaders had planned all along to expand the war even while promising not to, Nixon and Kissinger felt threatened.
• The **Pentagon Papers** showed US leaders had lied to the American people about not wanting to expand the Vietnam War but did.

• President Nixon felt **National Security** was threatened.

• Nixon was successful in obtaining a **court order** to stop publication but **New York Times** filed a lawsuit citing free press issues and violating no **prior restraint**.

• Nixon ordered Ellsburg’s psychiatrist’s office burglarized looking for evidence to discredit him.
• Ellsberg was charged with 12 felony counts under the Espionage Act.

• Carried a maximum sentence of 115 years.

• The charges were against Ellsberg and Anthony Russo (who helped him photocopy the papers)

• Charges were dismissed in the fifth month of the trial on grounds of governmental misconduct due to illegal wiretapping and evidence tampering.
There was break-in at the Democratic Headquarters located in the Watergate Hotel in Washington.

5 burglars caught June 17, 1972, carrying cameras, wiretapping equipment and large amounts of cash.

Nixon administration denied any knowledge.

Burglars were convicted in January 1973 and, despite offers of $400K in hush money from White House Counsel John Dean, one of the burglars started to talk.
The Watergate Coverup

- Although Nixon had not been involved in the break-in, he became involved in its **cover-up**.
- He illegally authorized the CIA to try to persuade the FBI to stop its investigation of the break-in, on the grounds that the matter involved “**national security**.”
- Nixon advisors launched a scheme to bribe the Watergate defendants into silence, as well as coaching them on how to lie in court.
- During the months following the break-in, the incident was barely noticed by the public. Nixon won the 1972 election by a landslide.
The Scandal Unfolds

The Watergate Trial
- At the trial of the Watergate burglars in early 1973, all the defendants either pleaded guilty or were found guilty.
- The judge presiding over the trial was not convinced that the full story had been told.
- He sentenced the burglars to long prison terms, suggesting that their terms could be reduced if they cooperated with upcoming Senate hearings on Watergate.

Woodward and Bernstein
- Two young Washington Post reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, were influential in tracking down information to uncover the Watergate story.
- Woodward and Bernstein believed that the White House would prove to be involved in the Watergate scandal.
The Scandal Unfolds

The Senate Investigates
- Aided by Woodward and Bernstein and by the testimony of one of the Watergate burglars, a **Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities** began to investigate the Watergate affair in 1973.
- Millions of Americans watched the Senate hearings unfold on national television.
- Nixon attempted to protect himself by forcing two top aides to resign and by proclaiming that he would take final responsibility for the mistakes of others.

A Secret Taping System
- During the Senate hearings, Alexander Butterfield, a former presidential assistant, revealed the existence of a secret taping system in the President’s office.
- The taping system had been set up to provide a historical record of Nixon’s presidency. Now it could be used to show whether or not Nixon had been involved in the Watergate cover-up.
In the summer of 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted to impeach Nixon on numerous charges. Conviction, and removal from office, seemed likely.

On August 5, 1974, Nixon released the White House tapes, with an 18 1/2 minute gap. Even with this gap, the tapes revealed his involvement in the Watergate coverup.

On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned, the first President ever to do so. Gerald Ford was sworn in as the new President.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
August 9, 1974

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I hereby resign the Office of President of the United States.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
The Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520