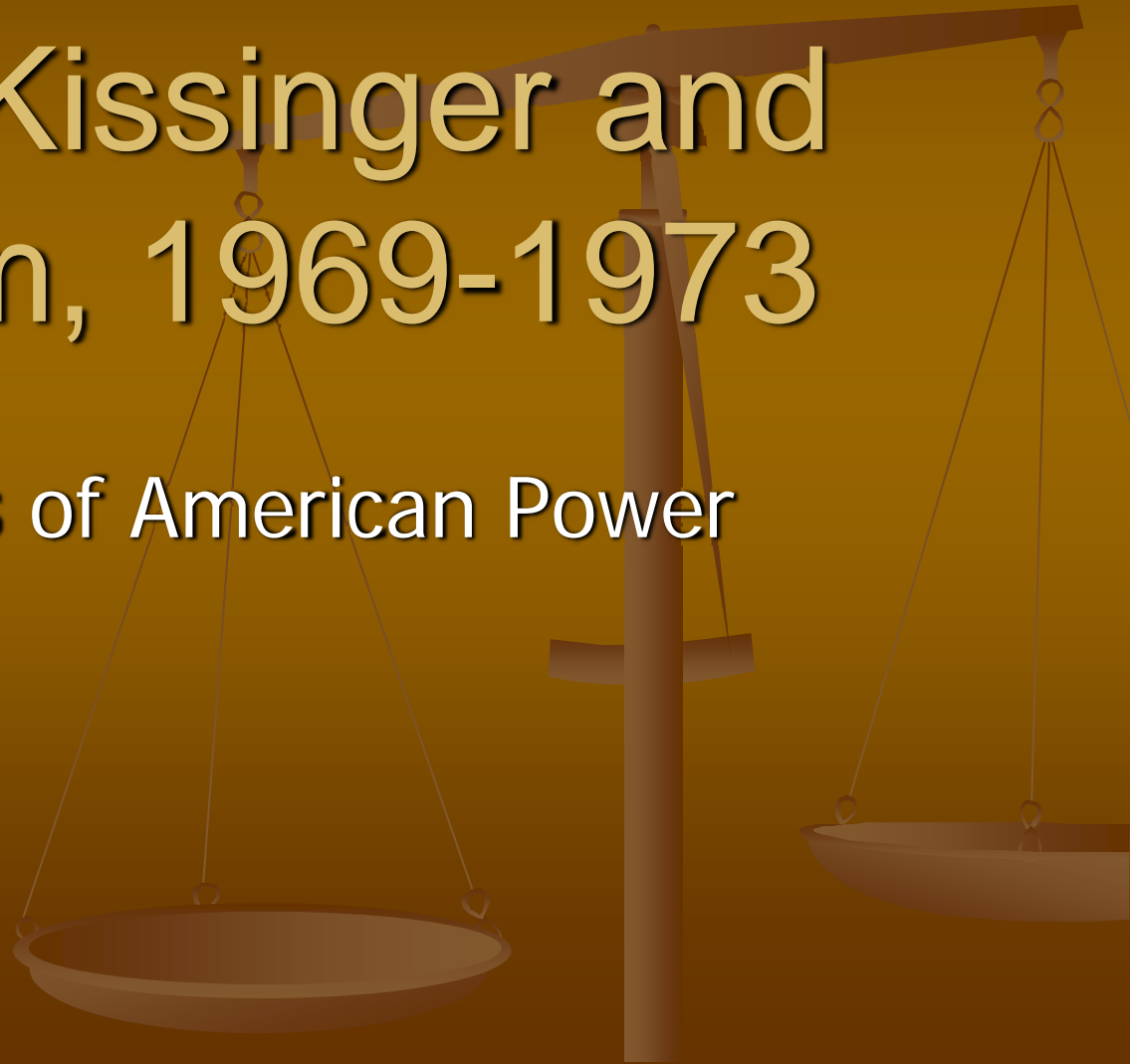


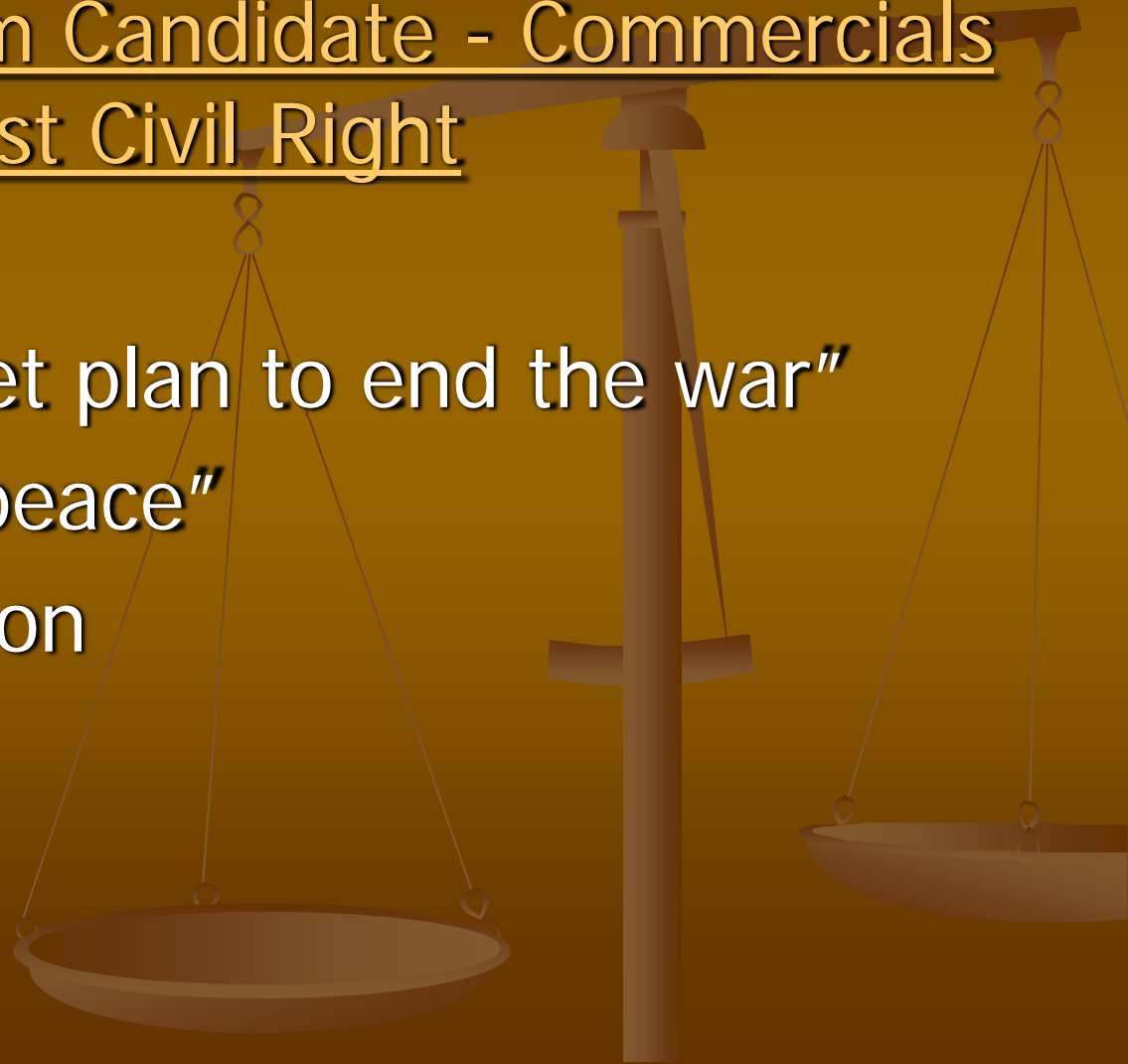
# Nixon, Kissinger and Vietnam, 1969-1973

The Limits of American Power



# Campaign ads, 1968

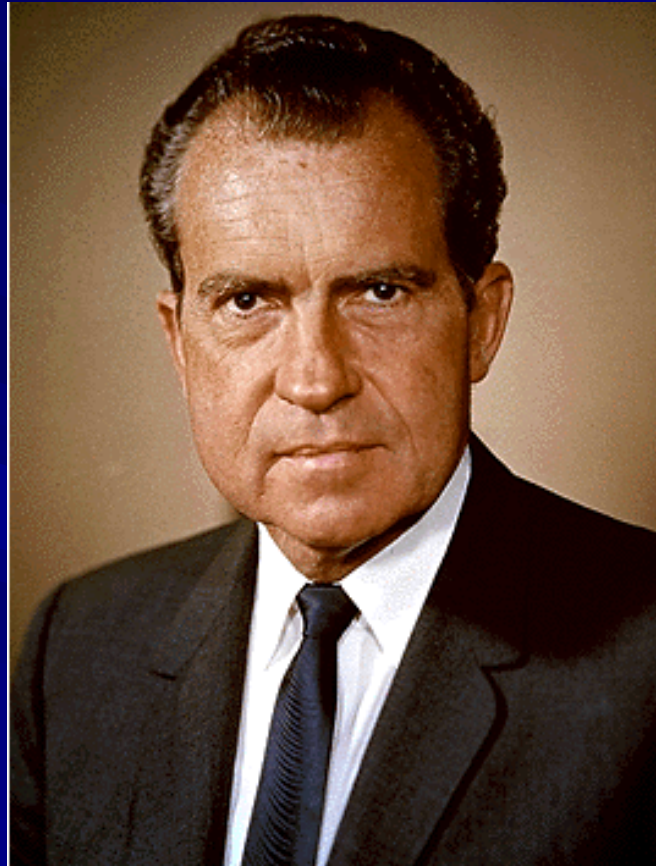
- The Living Room Candidate - Commercials  
- 1968 - The First Civil Right
- Nixon – “a secret plan to end the war”
- An “honorable peace”
- Uniting the Nation
- Law and Order



# Broader Themes of the Nixon Years

- 1.) Transformation of the Cold War/ Ending the First Cold War?
  - 2.) Loss of American Global Dominance – Politically, Economically, Militarily – Perceptions of American Decline
  - 3.) Domestic Crisis of Legitimacy – Protests at Home, Watergate, Congress and the end of the Imperial Presidency
  - 4.) New Centers of Power – Europe and Japan
  - 5.) Soviet Expansionism – Successes in the Third World
- 

# Richard Nixon



**RICHARD MILHOUS NIXON**  
(1913-1994)  
37th President (1969-1974)

World Book, Inc., 1995



# Pre-Presidential Career

- 1.) Born in Yorba Linda, California, January 9, 1913 – Quaker parents
- 2.) Educated at Whittier College and Duke Law School – served in the Navy during World War II
- 3.) Elected to Congress in November 1946 – strong anti-communist platform
- 4.) Elected to Senate in 1950 – defeated Helen Gahagan Douglas
- 5.) Nominated for Vice president in 1952 – survived scandal with “Checkers speech”
- 6.) Active Vice President – widely traveled; Kitchen debate with Khrushchev, mob attack in Venezuela

# Career in the 1960s

- 7.) Narrow loss to Kennedy in 1960 – 0.3% difference in popular vote
- 8.) Lost Governor's race in California in 1962 – anger at the media - "You won't have Nixon to kick around any more."
- 9.) Rehabilitation efforts 1962-1968 – endless campaigning; support for the war but criticism of tactics



# Nixon and Kissinger



# Kissinger's Background

- 1.) born in Fuerth, Germany, during the Weimar Republic; Orthodox Jewish upbringing; intense love for soccer
- 2.) Ten years old in 1933 when Hitler and the Nazis came to power
- 3.) Came to the United States in 1938 as an immigrant/refugee; settled in Washington Heights in New York, a German-Jewish enclave "Fourth Reich"

# Kissinger's career

- 1.) Army Service – in German occupation
- 2.) Harvard, 1947-1968
- 3.) Connection to Nelson Rockefeller



# Nixon, Kissinger, and the NSC

- 1.) Appointment of Kissinger as NSC Deputy – no Congressional oversight, outside of public view till 1971
- 2.) Centralization of Power in the NSC
- 3.) Secrecy
- 4.) Undermining the State Department and William Rogers





Kissinger in 1969 – age 45



# Power is the ultimate Aphrodisiac





# Nixon, Kissinger and Realism/Realpolitik

- 1.) Perception of the international system as anarchic
- 2.) States as dominant actors – (some disdain for domestic politics)
- 3.) Statesmen act to promote the “national interest” – maximizing power/ issue of morality
- 4.) Contrast with idealism, Wilsonianism, Kennedy’s inaugural, more ideologically-driven American policies

# Nixon's Priorities

- 1.) Vietnam – how to end the war?
- 2.) Relations with the Soviet Union – the nuclear arms race
- 3.) An opening to China?
- 4.) Dealing with the Limits of Power – the Nixon Doctrine and the maintenance of the status quo (i.e. Chile, the Middle East)
- 5.) Concept of linkage – cooperation and the regulation of competition

# The Frustrations of Vietnam, 1969-1970

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- 1.) Failure of linkage with Soviets, slow progress with China – the Korea parallel
- 2.) Secret bombing of Cambodia – “madman theory”
- 3.) Failure of negotiations with Hanoi
  - Midway conference, Nixon Doctrine, Vietnamization, beginning of troop withdrawals
- 4.) Plans for Operation Duck Hook – “savage, punishing blows”



# Kissinger and Vietnam

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- 1.) Hope for “linkage” – Soviet help in securing a settlement
- 2.) Planning for Operation Duck Hook, escalation of the war
- 3.) Opposition to Vietnamization – the “salted peanuts” memo
- <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20061001/peanuts.pdf>

# The Frustrations of Vietnam, 1969

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- 5.) Growth in antiwar sentiment – moratoriums of October and November 1969 – radicalization of part of the movement (Weather Underground, “Bring the War Home”) – Government response – COINTELPRO – covert efforts to infiltrate and discredit the movement
- 6.) Nixon’s - Silent Majority Speech -
- 7.) Revelations of My Lai massacre – Nov. 1969
- 8.) First draft lottery – December 1969

# The Frustrations of Vietnam, 1970

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- 1.) Controversies over war in Laos, Feb. 1970
- 2.) Overthrow of Sihanouk, March 1970
- 3.) Announcement of withdrawal of 150,000 men, April 20, 1970
- 4.) “Incursion” into Cambodia – May 1970 – the search for COSVN
- 5.) Intense domestic reaction – Kent State
- 6.) US troop withdrawal from Cambodia, June 1970, but war continues
- 7.) 1970 midterm elections – Nixon’s defeat, fear of being one-term president

# Nixon and Elvis – December 1970

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# The Agony of Vietnam - 1971

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- 1.) Failure of Lam Son 371 – February 1971 – US supported – ARVN (South Vietnamese) invasion of Laos
- 2.) April 1971 – Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Washington – John Kerry
- 3.) Verdict in the Calley Trial – Public Outrage
- 4.) The Pentagon Papers and Daniel Ellsberg – June 1971, Supreme Court Case against prior censorship

# South Vietnamese Forces in Laos





# Nixon and Kissinger – A Complex Relationship

- 1.) Kissinger as National Security Adviser – a constituency of one
- (Decent Interval - [http://web1.millercenter.org/dci/1970\\_1221\\_nixonwithdrawal.html](http://web1.millercenter.org/dci/1970_1221_nixonwithdrawal.html))
- 2.) Reassurances to Nixon – conversation April 1971 [Nixon Tapes Transcript](#)  
• [Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger • 4/7/1971 • 001-010](#)
- Nixon on Jews
- [http://whitehousetapes.net/clips/1971\\_0705\\_jews/](http://whitehousetapes.net/clips/1971_0705_jews/)
- Nixon on Diem
- [http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/1971\\_0407\\_billygraham/main.swf](http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/1971_0407_billygraham/main.swf)
- 3.) Nixon as Strategist, Kissinger as Tactician? (April 14 conversation)
- China: <http://nixontapes.org/hak.html>
- 4.) Nixon on young people - [http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/nixon\\_students\\_1971\\_03\\_25.swf](http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/nixon_students_1971_03_25.swf)

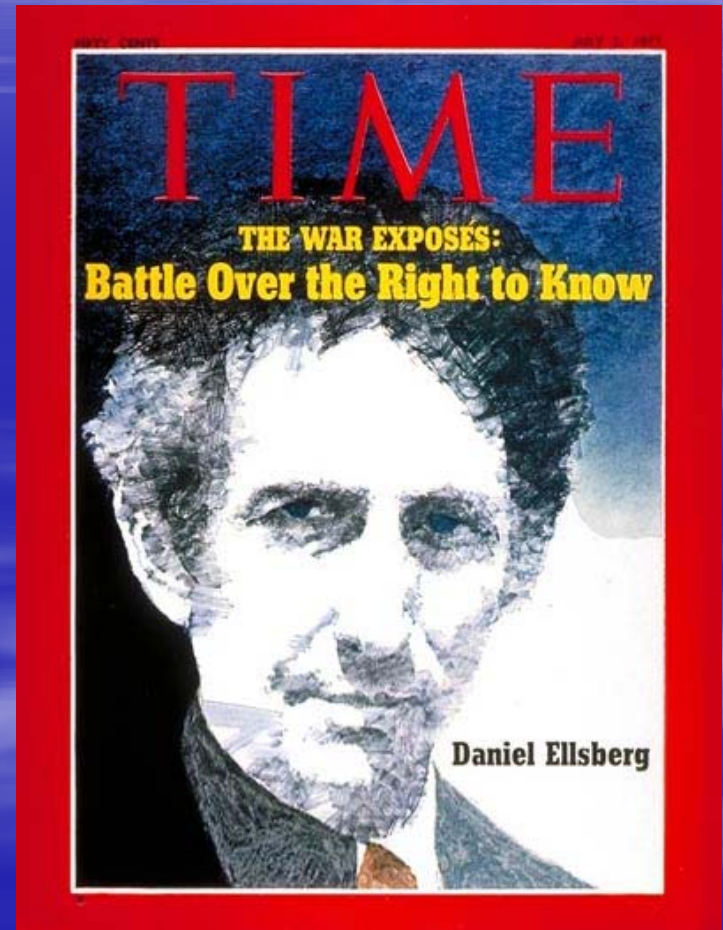
# Vietnam Veterans Against the War: Operation Dewey Canyon III



# My Lai Massacre – March 1968



# William Calley and Daniel Ellsberg





# Nixon's Change of Fortune

- 1.) Breakthrough with China – Kissinger in China July 1971
- 2.) New Economic Policy, August 1971 – US off gold, wage and price controls, 10 percent tariff
- 3.) Soviets agree to summit



# A conversation: Nixon and LBJ

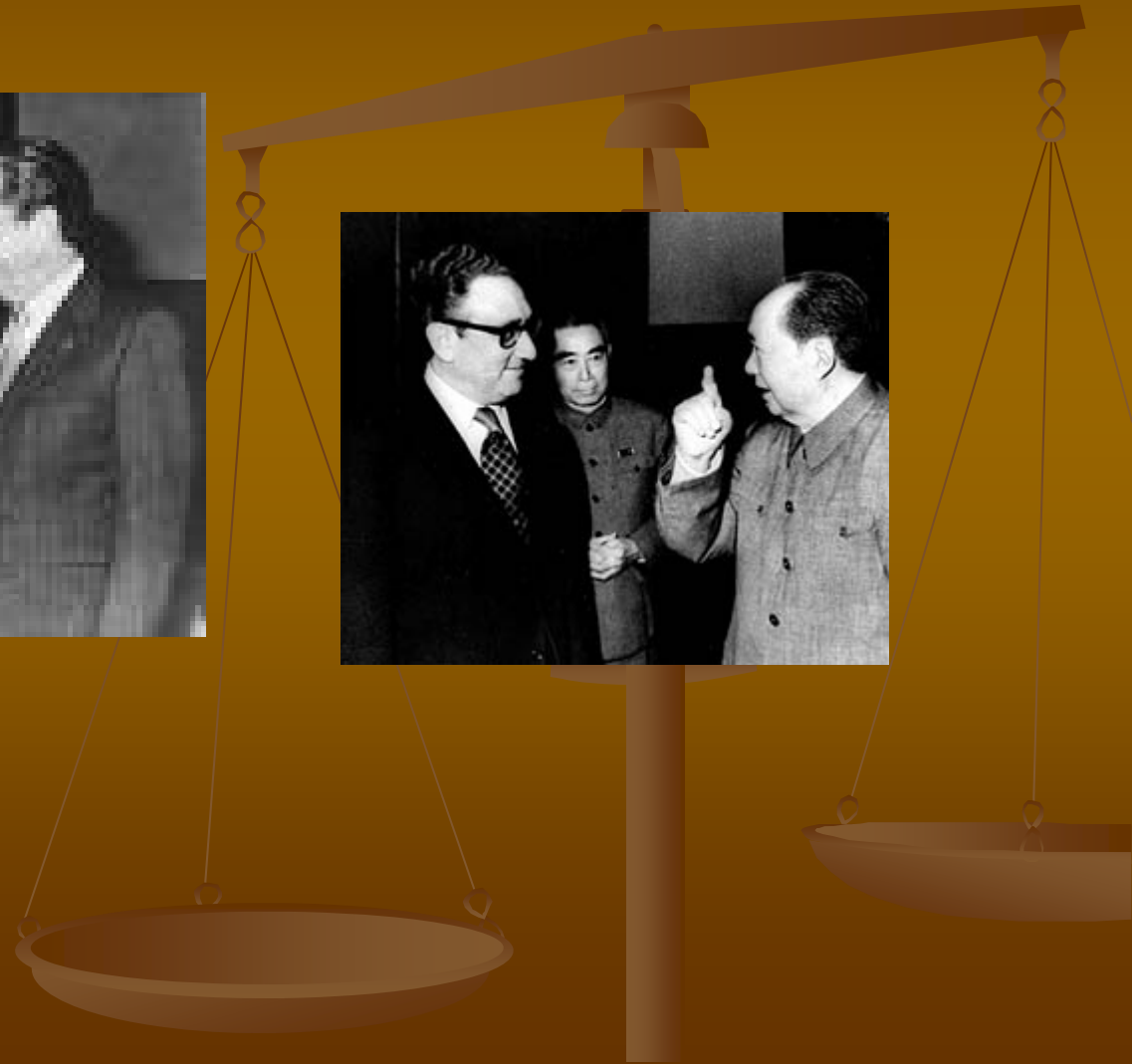
- [http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/1971\\_0917\\_nixon\\_lbj/](http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/1971_0917_nixon_lbj/)



# The Trifecta – Nixon's Successes in 1972 – Determination to be the Peace Candidate

- 1.) Opening to China – July 1971 – Trip February 1972
  - 2.) Summit with Soviets – SALT I Agreement – May 1972
  - 3.) Vietnam Peace Accords – announced October 1972, signed January 1973
  - Result: Overwhelming Re-election, November 1972
- 

# Nixon and Kissinger in China – February 1972



# Easter Offensive – March-April 1972



# Nixon vs. Kissinger on the Summit

- Nixon:...Then I suppose we can go to the summit.
- Kissinger: Well if you bomb enough, they'll break off the summit. There's no question about it.
- Nixon: Well, then, that perhaps is the mess we're in because we can't bomb unless we bomb now. We can't bomb and then have –you can't bomb and then have them kicking us around while we're in Moscow. You see that's point Thieu made which is tremendously compelling. I cannot be in Moscow at a time when the North Vietnamese are rampaging through the streets of Hue or for that matter through the streets of Kontum

# US Response

- 1.) B 52 bombings in the South and North
- 2.) Mining Haiphong Harbor
- 3.) Announced in May 8 speech – only two weeks before scheduled summit with USSR
- 4.) Nixon believed it was key to his election victory
- [http://web1.millercenter.org/dci/1972\\_1016\\_linebacker.html](http://web1.millercenter.org/dci/1972_1016_linebacker.html)

# Nixon and Brezhnev in Moscow, May 1972





# The War Remains an Issue

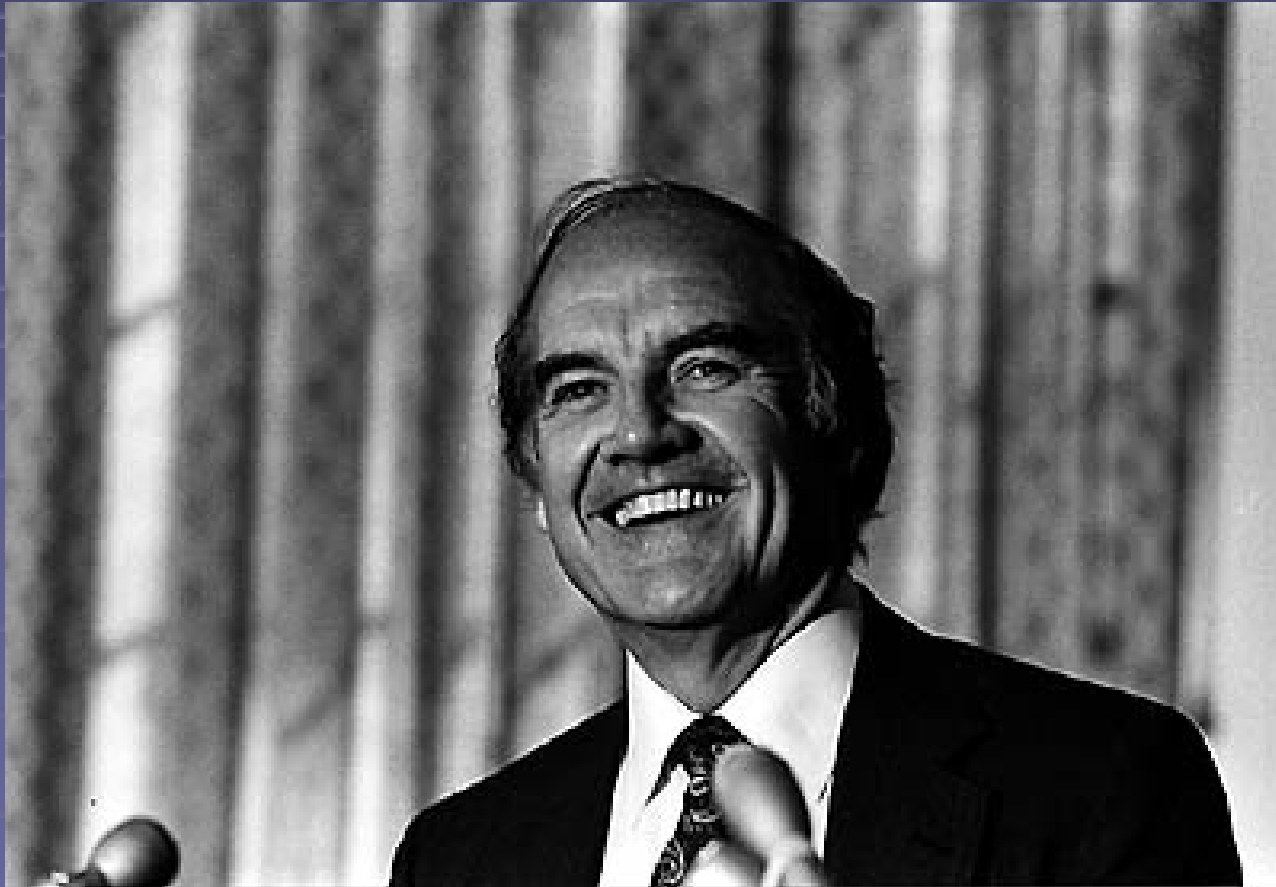
- Jane Fonda in North Vietnam



# The Decent Interval

- [http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/1972\\_0803\\_vietnam/](http://tapes.millercenter.virginia.edu/clips/1972_0803_vietnam/)
- [http://web1.millercenter.org/dci/1972\\_1006\\_t\\_hieu.html](http://web1.millercenter.org/dci/1972_1006_t_hieu.html)

# McGovern's Campaign – Come Home, America



# October Surprise – “Peace is at Hand” (Kissinger and Le Duc Tho)



# Impact on the election

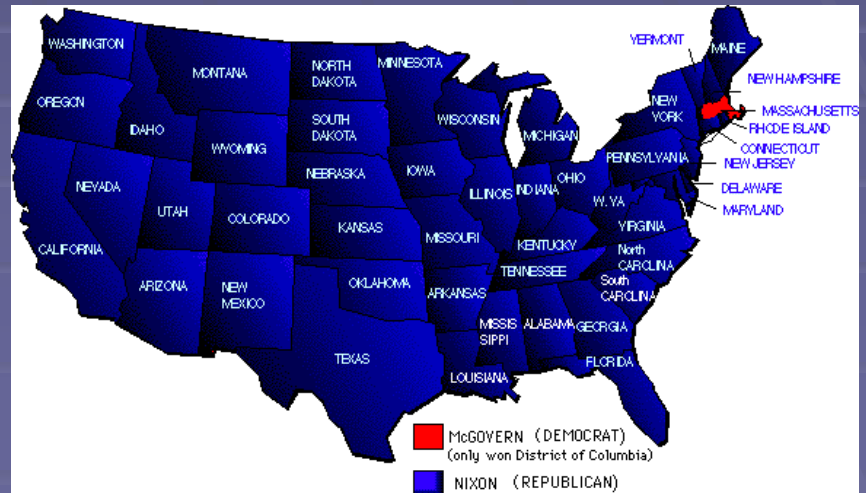
- Chapter II - Memoirs V. Tapes: President Nixon & the December Bombings
- “wiped McGovern out now”

# South Vietnamese refusal - Thieu





# Nixon Landslide – 1968 vs. 1972



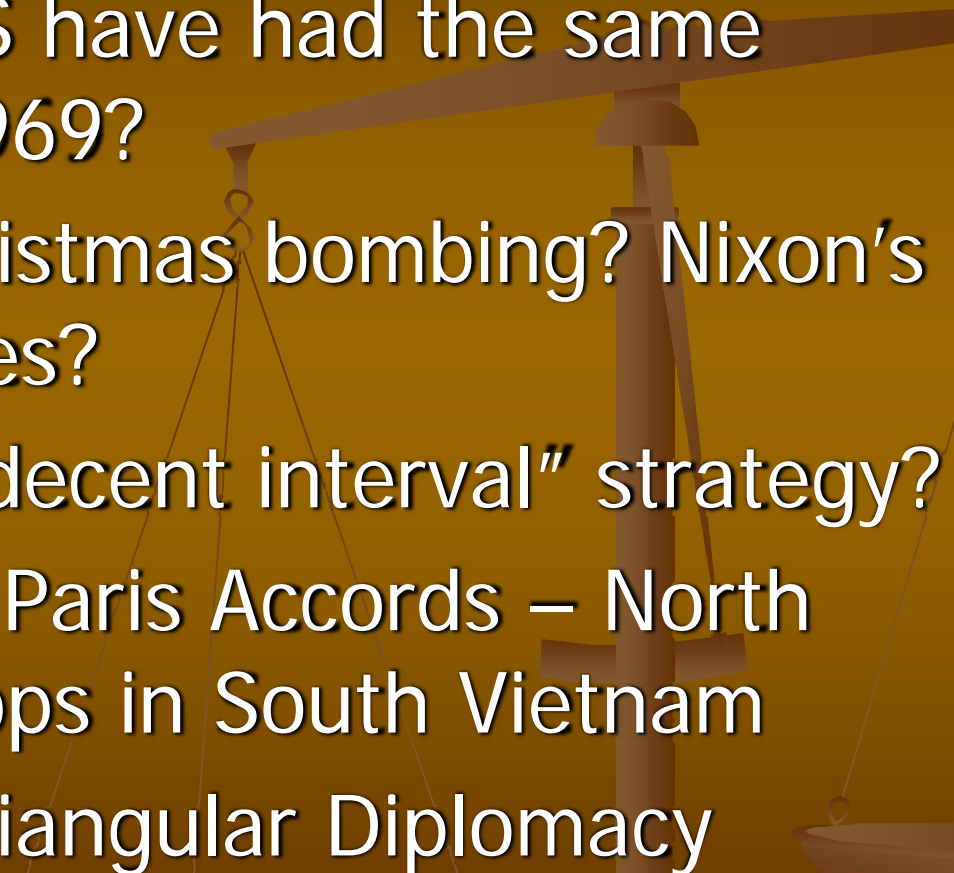
# Christmas Bombing of 1972



# Paris Peace Accords of January 1973

- 1.) North Vietnamese troops allowed to remain in the South
- 2.) US troops withdrawn
- 3.) US POWs returned
- 4.) Thieu remains in power
- (Nixon's secret/public assurances)

# Assessing Nixon on Vietnam

- 1.) Could the US have had the same agreement in 1969?
  - 2.) Why the Christmas bombing? Nixon's secret assurances?
  - 3.) Was this a "decent interval" strategy?
  - 4.) Flaws in the Paris Accords – North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam
  - 5.) Impact of Triangular Diplomacy
- 



# Watergate



# War Powers Act – November 1973

- 1.) President must obtain Congressional approval within 60 days of deployment



# Nixon's Resignation – August 1974

"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

## The New York Times

**LATE CITY EDITION**  
North: Partly cloudy, mild with fair and cool tonight. Temp. range 53-74. South: Mild, chance of a few showers today and tonight. Temperature 67-80. Details on Page 26.

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# NIXON RESIGNS

## HE URGES A TIME OF 'HEALING'; FORD WILL TAKE OFFICE TODAY

### 'Sacrifice' Is Praised; Kissinger to Remain

**By STEPHEN MURPHY**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9—I will judge you tomorrow Vice President Ford called and in the future, my hope is President Nixon might be the best in cooperation, leadership and dedication to what's good for the country and for America and good for the rest of the world," he said.

The Vice President, who later urged the nation's leaders after and declared any intention of seeking it after the nation's best, will be sworn in a private ceremony at the White House.

That will be before the first time to serve as President without being elected by the nation's people in an election. Tomorrow night he will address the nation on radio and television. It is expected that he will speak on TV.

At the same time the sign of the Nixon change was in the air, caused by the speech throughout, using historical examples of the White House's political scene sharply altered.

Over the White House's political scene sharply altered from the speech when Mr. Ford appeared.

**By CHRISTOPHER LYONS**




### The 37th President Is First to Quit Post

**By JOHN HENNING**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9—Richard Milhous Nixon, 56th President of the United States, announced tonight that he had given up his long and arduous fight to remain in office and would resign effective at noon tomorrow.

Gerald R. Ford, Vice President, announced he would take office at the same hour as the 18th President, to serve out the 100 days remaining in Mr. Nixon's second term.

Less than two years after the landmark re-election victory, Mr. Nixon, in a conciliatory address on national television, said that he was looking out with a sense of optimism for the future of the United States.

The 82-year-old Mr. Nixon, appearing calm and composed, said that he was looking out with a sense of optimism for the future of the United States.

He spoke of his fight for the office of the President and the honor of the office. He said that he was looking out with a sense of optimism for the future of the United States.

The 82-year-old Mr. Nixon, appearing calm and composed, said that he was looking out with a sense of optimism for the future of the United States.

#### Speculation Rife On Vice President

Some Ford Associates Say Selecting a Successor Could Fall Heavily

By CHRISTOPHER LYONS

#### Political Scene Sharply Altered

Appraisal of Nixon Career

By ROBERT S. DEMPSEY, Jr.

#### Jaworski Asserts No Deal Was Made

Some Nixon Did Not Get It

By ROBERT S. DEMPSEY, Jr.

# Gerald Ford, 38<sup>th</sup> President



# Ford, Rockefeller, Kissinger

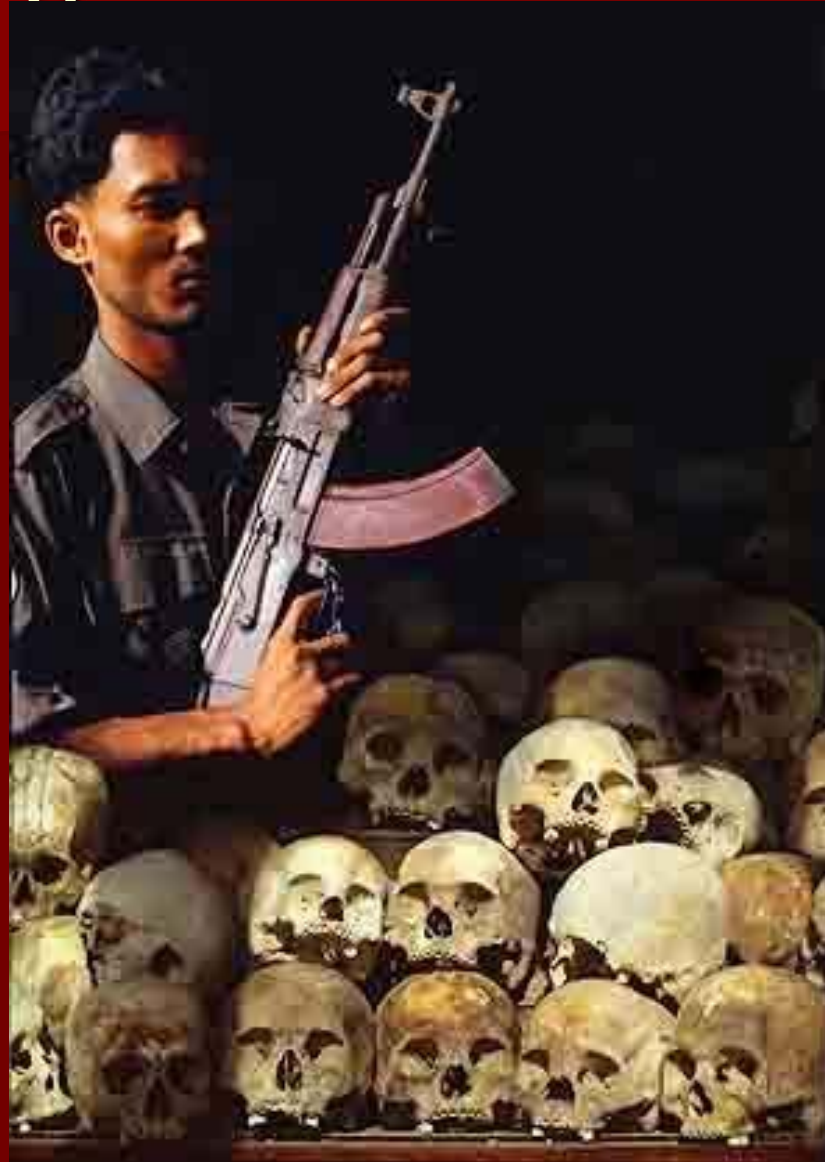


# Fall of Saigon – April 1975



Hubert Van Es / Bettman-Corbis

# Killing Fields of Cambodia





# Kissinger's Lessons of Vietnam

- "Today we find that -like most other nations in history - we can neither escape from the world nor dominate it. Today we must conduct diplomacy with subtlety, flexibility, maneuver, and imagination in the pursuit of our interests. We must be thoughtful in defining our interests. We must prepare against the worst contingency and not only plan for the best. We must pursue limited objectives and many objectives simultaneously."

# The Limits of Power

- "For Americans, then, the question is not whether our values should affect our foreign policy but how. The issue is whether we have the courage to face complexity and the inner conviction to deal with ambiguity, whether we look behind easy slogans and recognize that great goals can only be reached by patience and in imperfect stages."