New Federalism

1969--When he took office, Richard Nixon promised to end to US involvement in Vietnam

Nixon also believed that Johnson’s Great Society programs were wrong-headed

The Great Society had promoted a bigger federal role in social problems, while giving the feds too much responsibility

Nixon’s plan-The New Federalism—was to give back a portion of that power to state & local governments
Federal Money Sent to States

The Great Society sent federal money to state & local governments—& the feds told them how to spend that money.

Nixon’s plan—give more financial freedom to local governments—called revenue sharing.

1972—Under revenue sharing, state & local governments could spend their federal dollars as they saw fit—with certain restrictions.
Welfare Reform

Nixon & many conservatives believed the Great Society’s welfare system was inefficient.

1969-The president sent the Family Assistance Plan to Congress.

Every poor family of 4 would receive $1600 a year, & $4000 more in supplemental income.

The unemployed (excluding mothers of pre-schoolers) had to take job training & accept any reasonable work offered to them.
The Conservative View of Welfare

Nixon chafed at the transfer of funds from the rich to the poor.
Nixon said his welfare reform plan would reduce government involvement, and make recipients more responsible for their own lives.
Liberal Democrats said the minimum payments were too low, the work requirements too high.
Conservatives objected to a guaranteed income at taxpayers expense—so Welfare Reform was defeated in 1970.

Throughout Nixon’s administration, support for welfare programs by the American public was low.
New Federalism Wears Two Faces

Nixon needed to win backing for his New Federalism from a Democrat-controlled Congress.

To keep them happy, he increased Social Security, Medicare, M& Medicaid payments, & made food stamps more accessible.

Meanwhile, he was trying to dismantle the social programs set up during Johnson’s term.
Dismantling the Great Society

Nixon tried but failed to eliminate the Job Corps program that gave job training to the jobless.

1970- He vetoed giving more money for Housing & Urban Development, abolished the office of Economic Opportunity, Johnson’s pet antipoverty program.

Nixon turned to a little-used tactic--he impounded, or withheld, almost $15-billion from health, education, & welfare programs by 1973.

Federal courts then ruled that impounding was unconstitutional-only Congress could decide how federal funds should be spent.

This cartoon is trying to make Nixon look like a mafia Kidnapping Congress.
Nixon had been elected in 1968 on the dual promise of ending the Vietnam War & healing the divisions created by the war. He de-escalated US involvement in Vietnam, & oversaw peace negotiations with the North. At the same time, he promised to restore law & order for his middle-class “silent majority.” That would mean clamping down on urban riots & antiwar demonstrations.
Using the Full Power of the Presidency

Nixon used any means necessary to stop the disorder—including sometimes illegal means.

He and his staff authorized wiretaps of many left-wing individuals & the Democratic Party offices at the Watergate office building.

The CIA also investigated & compiled documents on thousands of dissidents.

Nixon even used the IRS to audit the returns of antiwar & civil rights activists.
Nixon vs. the Antiwar Crowd

Nixon began building an “enemies list” of prominent Americans whom the administration would harass.

He also enlisted the help of his Vice President, Spiro Agnew, who turned his scorn on those who controlled the news media.

Agnew considered the media as liberal cheerleaders for the antiwar movement.

His favorite terms for the media—“an effete corps of impudent snobs” and “nattering nabobs of negativism.”
Nixon’s Plan for Re-election

Nixon had won the presidency by a slim margin in 1968, but embarked on a new approach called the Southern Strategy for 1972. It consisted of attracting Southern conservative Democrats by appealing to their concerns. Nixon played to their unhappiness over federal desegregation policies & a liberal supreme court. He even promised to name a Southerner to the Supreme Court.
A New South

Since the end of the Civil War, the South had been a stronghold for Democrats

By 1968, many southern Democrats had grown disillusioned with the Great Society, civil rights, & liberalism

This conservative backlash was first felt in 1968, when former Alabama Gov. George Wallace won the electoral votes of 5 southern states

Nixon wanted those discontented voters in 1972
Nixon Slows Integration

To attract white southern voters, Pres. Nixon worked to reverse several civil rights policies.

1969-He ordered a delay in school desegregation plans for South Carolina & Mississippi.

The NAACP saw this as violating the 1954 Brown vs. Board decision, & filed a lawsuit, forcing Nixon to abide by the Brown ruling.

By 1972, 90% of students in the South attended desegregated schools-up from 20% in 1969.

Over Nixon’s objections, Congress okayed an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which added nearly 1-million African Americans to the voting rolls.
1971-In Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Ed., the Supreme Court ruled on busing—a key civil rights initiative. School districts could now bus kids to other schools to end patterns of all-black or all-white schools. White students & parents in Boston & Detroit angrily protested busing. Nixon went on nationwide TV to urge Congress to halt the practice. While busing continued, Nixon had made his position clear to the South.
A Battle Over the Supreme Court

During the 1968 campaign, Nixon had criticized the Supreme Court for being too liberal.

During Nixon’s 1st term, 4 justices retired, including Chief Justice Earl Warren.

Nixon moved quickly to put a more conservative face on the Court.

1969-The Senate approved Nixon’s chief justice appointee Warren Burger.

He also selected 3 other conservative judges, who they didn’t always make conservative rulings (for instance, the school busing ruling).

President Nixon (on right) watches as the newly appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Warren E. Burger, makes a few remarks. May 21, 1969.
The Causes of Economic Troubles

1967-1973—The US suffered from high inflation & high unemployment-called stagflation

High inflation was caused by the Johnson administration’s policy to fund the war & expand social programs by borrowing money

Increased competition in international trade, & a flood of new women & baby boomer workers hiked the jobless rate
The Oil Crisis

During the 60s, the US became dependent on petroleum from the Middle East. These nations belonged to an oil cartel called OPEC—the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. OPEC gradually raised oil prices in the 60s. 1973-Egypt & Syria attacked Israel, & when the US sent aid to Israel, Arab oil-producing nations cut off oil sales to the US. OPEC resumed selling oil in 1974, but the cost of gasoline had quadrupled—adding to inflation.
Nixon Battles Stagflation

To reverse deficit spending, Nixon tried to raise taxes & cut the budget, but Congress refused to go along.

Nixon tried to slow inflation by reducing the amount of money in circulation—which meant the Federal Reserve must raise interest rates.

This measure only drove the economy into a mild recession.

Aug. 1971-The president ordered price & wage controls to stop inflation—workers wages were frozen for 90 days, but the recession continued.

The Hays, Kansas daily newspaper announces Pres. Nixon ordering all wages & prices in the country were frozen for 90 days beginning Aug. 15, 1971.
Better Luck With Foreign Policy

Richard Nixon admittedly preferred world affairs to handling the nation’s domestic policies.

Throughout his presidency, Nixon’s priority was to gain an honorable peace in Vietnam.

He relied on his national security adviser Henry Kissinger to deal with world problems.

Kissinger later became Secretary of State and promoted a philosophy called “realpolitik.”

Foreign policy, according to Kissinger, should be based on consideration of power, not ideals or moral principles.
Realpolitik in Action

Kissinger believed the US should look at a nation’s power, not its philosophy or beliefs, in deciding whether to be a friend or foe.

Unlike the containment policy of the Cold War, if a country was weak—even if it were communist—it was more practical to ignore that country.

Kissinger recognized the power of the USSR & Communist China, who needed to be confronted thru negotiation & military engagement.
Nixon Plays the China Card

While the US was still engaged in Vietnam, Kissinger arranged a daring move for Nixon.

The US & USSR were still engaged in the Cold War, but the US & China were enemies, too.

China had often criticized the Soviets for being too soft on the West.

Nixon & Kissinger thought this might be an opportunity to widen the gap between the 2 communist nations.
Since the 1949 takeover of China by the communists, the US had never formally recognized the Chinese government.

In late 1971, Nixon reversed that policy, announcing he would visit China to seek normalization of relations.

This more flexible approach in dealing with communist nations-known as détente-eased Cold War tensions.

Nixon also announced he would be the first US president to visit China.
The China Trip

Upon his arrival at the Beijing airport, Nixon was met by Chinese premier Zhou En-lai. Nixon instantly grasped Zhou’s hand to shake it—which made a friendly impression on the Chinese. The trip was a huge success, opening up diplomatic & economic agreements between the 2 countries. They agreed neither nation would try to dominate the Pacific, & would settle disputes peacefully. They also agreed to cultural & scientific exchanges—the Nationalist government on Taiwan would eventually be reunited with mainland China.
Nixon Travels to Moscow

May, 1972-Three months after visiting China, Nixon headed to Moscow

Like his China trip, Nixon’s visit to the USSR received wide acclaim

After meeting with Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev, Nixon signed the SALT I Treaty

This 5-year agreement limited the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles to 1972 levels
Triumphs Lead to Re-election

While some of Nixon’s domestic policies were not working, his foreign policy triumphs made him look good.

In addition, US drawdowns in Vietnam meant fewer soldiers killed there.

Kissinger’s announcement that “peace is at hand” in 1972 added up to an overwhelming Nixon victory at the polls that year.

While the battle for Vietnam was nearly over, another battle would soon bring Nixon down.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things Nixon Did That Promoted Change</th>
<th>Things Nixon Did That Slowed Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue sharing program</td>
<td>Impounded federal funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Assistance Plan</td>
<td>Opposed school busing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China visit</td>
<td>Office of Economic Opportunity abolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union visit</td>
<td>Appointed conservatives to the US Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt I Treaty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things Nixon Did That Promoted Change</td>
<td>Things Nixon Did That Slowed Change</td>
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