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Chapter 39 - The Stalelated Seventies

I. Sources of Stagnation

1. After the flurry of economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. economy grew stagnant in the 1970s. No year during that decade had a growth rate that matched any year of the preceding two decades.
 - Part of the slowdown was caused by more women and teens in the work force who typically had less skill and made less money than males, while deteriorating machinery and U.S. regulations also limited growth.
 - A large reason for the 1970s economic woes was the upward spiral of inflation.
2. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson's spending on the Vietnam War and on his Great Society program also depleted the U.S. treasury, and this caused too much money in people's hands and too little products to buy.
3. Also, since the U.S. did not continue advancing, Americans were caught by the Japanese and the Germans in industries that the U.S. had once dominated: steel, automobiles, consumer electronics.

II. Nixon "Vietnamizes" the War

1. Upon taking office, President Richard Nixon urged American's to stop tearing each other apart and to cooperate.
 - He was very skilled in foreign affairs, and to cope with the Vietnam dilemma, he used a policy called "Vietnamization" in which 540,000 American troops would be pulled out of the Southeast Asian nation and the war would be turned back over to the Vietnamese.
 - The South Vietnamese would slowly fight their own war, and the U.S. would only supply arms and money but not American troops; this was called the "Nixon Doctrine."
2. While outwardly seeming to appease, Nixon divided America into his supporters and opponents.
3. Nixon appealed to the "Silent Majority," Americans who supported the war, but without noise.
4. The war was fought generally by the lesser-privileged Americans, since college students and critically skilled civilians were exempt, and there were also reports of dissension in the army.
 - Soldiers slogged through grimy mud and jungle, trusting nothing and were paranoid and bitter toward a government that "handcuffed" them and a war against a frustrating enemy.
5. The My Lai Massacre of 1968, in which American troops brutally massacred innocent women and children in the village of My Lai, illustrated the frustration and led to more opposition to the war.
6. In 1970, Nixon ordered an attack on Cambodia, Vietnam's neighbor.

III. Cambodianizing the Vietnam War

1. North Vietnamese had been using Cambodia as a springboard for funneling troops and arms along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and on April 29, 1970, Nixon suddenly ordered U.S. troops to invade Cambodia to stop this.
2. Much uproar was caused, as riots occurred at Kent State University (where the National Guard

opened fire and killed 4 people) and at Jackson State College.

- Two months later, Nixon withdrew U.S. troops from Cambodia.

3. The Cambodian incident split even wider the gap between the “hawks” and the “doves.”
4. The U.S. Senate repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, and in 1971, the 26th Amendment, lowering the voting age to eighteen, was also passed.
5. In June 1971, The New York Times published a top-secret Pentagon study of America’s involvement of the Vietnam War—papers that had been leaked by Daniel Ellsberg, a former Pentagon official—these “Pentagon Papers” exposed the deceit used by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations regarding Vietnam and people spoke of a “credibility gap” between what the government said and the reality.

IV. Nixon’s Détente with Beijing (Peking) and Moscow

1. Meanwhile, China and the Soviet Union were clashing over their own interpretations of Marxism, and Nixon seized this as a chance for the U.S. to relax tensions and establish “détente.”
2. He sent national security adviser Dr. Henry A. Kissinger to China to encourage better relations, a mission in which he succeeded, even though he used to be a big anti-Communist.
3. Nixon then traveled to Moscow in May 1972, and the Soviets, wanting foodstuffs and alarmed over the possibility of a U.S.—China alliance against the U.S.S.R., made deals with America in which the U.S. would sell the Soviets at least \$750 million worth of wheat, corn, and other cereals, thus ushering in an era of détente, or relaxed tensions.
 - The ABM Treaty (anti-ballistic missile treaty) and the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) also lessened tension, but the U.S. also went ahead with its new MIRV (Multiple Independently-targeted Reentry Vehicles) missiles, which could overcome any defense by overwhelming it with a plethora of missiles; therefore, the U.S.S.R. did the same.
4. However, Nixon’s détente policy did work, at least in part, to relax U.S.—Soviet tensions.

V. A New Team on the Supreme Bench

1. When Earl Warren was appointed as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he headed many controversial but important decisions:
 - *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) struck down a state law that banned the use of contraceptives, even by married couples, but creating a “right to privacy.”
 - *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) said that all criminals were entitled to legal counsel, even if they were too poor to afford it.
 - *Escobedo* (1964) and *Miranda* (1966) were two cases in which the Supreme Court ruled that the accused could remain silent.
 - *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *School District of Abington Township vs. Schempp* (1963) were two cases that led to the Court ruling against required prayers and having the Bible in public schools, basing the judgment on the First Amendment, which was argued separated church and state.
2. Following its ruling against segregation in the case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court backed up its ruling with other rulings:
 - *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964) ruled that the state legislatures, both upper and lower houses, would have to be reapportioned according to the human population. This was to ensure each person’s vote was weighed evenly.
3. Trying to end this liberalism, Nixon chose Warren E. Burger to replace the retiring Earl Warren in 1969, and this succeeded—by the end of 1971, the Supreme Court had four new members that Nixon had appointed.
 - Strangely though, this “conservative” court made the controversial *Roe v. Wade* decision allowing abortion.

VI. Nixon on the Home Front

1. Nixon also expanded Great Society programs by increasing appropriations for Medicare and Medicaid, as well as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and created the Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which gave benefits to the indigent, aged, blind, and

disabled, and he raised Social Security.

2. Nixon's so-called "Philadelphia Plan" of 1969 required construction-trade unions working on the federal payroll to establish "goals and timetables" for Black employees.
 - This plan changed "affirmative action" to mean preferable treatment on groups (minorities), not individuals, and the Supreme Court's decision on *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (1971) supported this.
 - However, whites protested to "reverse discrimination" (hiring of minorities for fear of repercussions if too many whites were hired).
3. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was also created to protect nature, as well as OSHA, or the Occupational Health and Safety Administration.
4. In 1962, Rachel Carson boosted the environmental movement with her book *Silent Spring*, which exposed the disastrous effects of pesticides (namely, DDT), and in 1950, Los Angeles already had an Air Pollution Control Office.
5. The Clean Air Act of 1970 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 both aimed to protect and preserve the environment and animals.
6. Worried about inflation, Nixon also imposed a 90-day wage freeze and then took the nation off the gold standard, thus ending the "Bretton Woods" system of international currency stabilization, which had functioned for more than a quarter of a century after WWII.

VII. The Nixon Landslide of 1972

1. In 1972, the North Vietnamese attacked again, surprisingly, and Nixon ordered massive retaliatory air attacks, which ground the Vietnamese offense to a stop when neither China nor Russia stepped in to help, thanks to Nixon's shrewd diplomacy.
2. Nixon was opposed by George McGovern in 1972, who promised to end the war within 90 days after the election and also appealed to teens and women, but his running mate, Thomas Eagleton was found to have undergone psychiatric care before, and Nixon won in a landslide.
3. Nixon also sought to "bomb Vietnam to the peace table."
 - Despite Kissinger's promise of peace being near, Nixon went on a bombing rampage that eventually drove the North Vietnamese to the bargaining table to agree to a cease-fire, which occurred on January 23, 1973
 - This peace was little more than a barely-disguised American retreat.
 - In the terms of the peace, the U.S. would withdraw its remaining 27,000 troops and get back 560 prisoners of war.

VIII. The Secret Bombing of Cambodia and the War Powers Act

1. It was then discovered that there had been secret bombing raids of North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia that had occurred since March of 1969, despite federal assurances to the U.S. public that Cambodia's neutrality was being respected.
 - The public now wondered what kind of a government the U.S. had if it couldn't be trusted and the credibility gap widened.
2. Finally, Nixon ended this bombing in June of 1973.
3. However, soon Cambodia was taken over by the cruel Pol Pot, who tried to commit genocide by killing over 2 million people over a span of a few years.
4. The War Powers Act of November 1973 (1) required the president to report all commitments of U.S. troops to Congress within 48 hours and (2) setting a 60 day limit on those activities.
5. There was also a "New Isolationism" that discouraged the use of U.S. troops in other countries, but Nixon fended off all efforts at this.

IX. The Arab Oil Embargo and the Energy Crisis

1. After the U.S. backed Israel in its war against Syria and Egypt which had been trying to regain territory lost in the Six-Day War, the Arab nations imposed an oil embargo, which strictly limited oil in the U.S. and caused a fuel crisis.
 - A speed limit of 55 MPH was imposed, and the oil pipeline in Alaska was approved in 1974 despite environmentalists' cries, and other types of energy were pursued.

- Since 1948, the U.S. had been importing more oil than it exported, and oil production had gone down since 1970; thus, this marked the end of the era of cheap energy.
- 2. OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) lifted the embargo in 1974, and then quadrupled the price of oil by decade's end.

X. Watergate and the Unmaking of a President

1. On June 17, 1972, five men working for the Republican Committee for the Re-election of the President (CREEP) were caught breaking into the Watergate Hotel and planting some bugs in the room.
 - What followed was a huge scandal in which many prominent administrators resigned.
 - It also provoked the improper or illegal use of the FBI and the CIA.
 - Lengthy hearings proceeded, headed by Senator Sam Erving, and John Dean III testified about all the corruption, illegal activities, and scandal that took place.
2. Then, it was discovered that there were tapes that had recorded conversations that could solve all the mysteries in this case. But Nixon, who had explicitly denied participation in this Watergate Scandal earlier to the American people, refused to hand over the tapes to Congress.
 - Also, Vice President Spiro Agnew was forced to resign in 1973 due to tax evasion.
 - Thus, in accordance with the new 25th Amendment, Nixon submitted a name to Congress to approve as the new vice president—Gerald Ford.
 - Then came the “Saturday Night Massacre” (Oct. 20, 1973), in which Archibald Cox, special prosecutor of the case who had issued a subpoena of the tapes, was fired and the attorney general and deputy general resigned because they didn't want to fire Cox.
3. Nixon's presidency was coming unraveled.
 - On July 24, 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that Nixon had to give all of his tapes to Congress.
 - The tapes that had already been handed over showed Nixon cursing and swearing—poor behavior for our president.
 - Late in July 1974, the House approved its first article of impeachment for obstruction of the administration of justice.
 - On August 5, 1974, Nixon finally released the three tapes that held the most damaging information—the same three tapes that had been “missing.” The tapes showed Nixon had indeed ordered a cover-up of the Watergate situation.
 - On August 8 of the same year, he resigned, realizing that he would be convicted if impeached, and with resignation, at least he could still keep the privileges of a former president.
4. Through it all, the lesson learned was that the Constitution indeed works.

XI. The First Unelected President

1. Gerald Ford was the first unelected president ever, since his name had been submitted by Nixon as a V.P. candidate when Spiro Agnew resigned due to a bribery scandal while he was Maryland governor. All the other V.P.'s that had ascended to the presidency had at least been supported as running mates of the president that had been elected.
2. He was also seen as a dumb jock of a president (he was a former Univ. of Michigan football player), and his popularity and respect further sank when he issued a full pardon of Nixon, thus setting off accusations of a “buddy deal.”
3. His popularity also declined when he granted amnesty to “draft dodgers” thus allowing them to return to the U.S. from wherever they'd run to (usually Canada or Europe).
4. In July 1975, Ford signed the Helsinki accords, which recognized Soviet boundaries, guaranteed human rights, and eased the U.S.—Soviet situation.
 - Critics charged that détente was making the U.S. lose grain and technology while gaining nothing from the Soviets.

XII. Defeat in Vietnam

1. Disastrously for Ford, South Vietnam fell to the communist North in 1975, and American troops

- had to be evacuated, the last on April 29, 1975, thus ending the U.S. role in Vietnam War.
2. America seemed to have lost the war, and it had also lost a lot of respect.

XIII. Feminist Victories and Defeats

1. During the 1970s, the feminist movement became energized and took a decidedly aggressive tone.
2. Title IX prohibited sex discrimination in any federally funded education program.
 - It's largest impact was seen in the emergence of girls' sports.
3. The Supreme Court entered the fray in the feminist movement.
 - The Court's decisions challenged sex discrimination in legislation and employment.
 - The super-hot Roe v. Wade case legalized abortion, arguing that ending a pregnancy was protected under a right to privacy.
4. Even more ambitious was the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) to the Constitution.
 - ERA sought to guarantee gender equality through words.
 - Phyllis Schlafly led other women against ERA. Schlafly said ERA advocates were, "bitter women seeking a constitutional cure for their personal problems." She used the following arguments against the ERA amendment:
 - It would deprive a woman's right to be a wife.
 - It would require women to serve in combat.
 - It would legalize homosexual marriage.
 - 38 state legislatures adopted the amendment, 41 were necessary, and the ERA ended.

XIV. The Seventies in Black and White

1. Race was a burning issue, and in the 1974 Milliken v. Bradley case, the Supreme Court ruled that desegregation plans could not require students to move across school-district lines.
 - This reinforced the "white flight" to the suburbs that pitted the poorest whites and blacks against each other, often with explosively violent results.
2. Affirmative action, where minorities were given preference in jobs or school admittance, was another burning issue, but some whites used this to argue "reverse discrimination."
 - In the Bakke case of 1978, the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 that Allan Bakke (a white applicant claiming reverse discrimination) should be admitted to U.C.—Davis med school. The decision was ambiguous saying (1) admission preference based on any race was not allowed, but conversely that (2) race could be factored into the admission policy.
3. The Supreme Court's only black justice, Thurgood Marshall, warned that the denial of racial preferences might sweep away the progress gained by the civil rights movement.

XV. The Bicentennial Campaign and the Carter Victory

1. In 1976, Jimmy Carter barely squeezed by Gerald Ford (297 to 240) for president, promising to never lie to the American public. He also had Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress.
2. He capitalized on being a "Washington outsider," and therefore untainted by the supposed corruption of D.C. (He'd previously been governor of Georgia.)
3. In 1978, Carter got an \$18 billion tax cut for America, but the economy soon continued sinking.
4. Despite an early spurt of popularity, Carter soon lost it.

XVI. Carter's Humanitarian Diplomacy

1. Carter was a champion for human rights, and in Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) and South Africa, he championed for black rights and privileges.
2. On September 17, 1978, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel signed peace accords at Camp David.
 - Mediated by Carter after relations had strained, this was Carter's greatest foreign policy success.
 - Israel agreed to withdraw from territory gained in the 1967 war, while Egypt would respect Israel's territories.

3. In Africa, though, several Communist revolutions took place—not all successful, but disheartening and threatening still.
4. Carter also pledged to return the Panama Canal to Panama by the year 2000, and resumed full diplomatic relations with China in 1979.

XVII. Economic and Energy Woes

1. Inflation had been steadily rising, and by 1979, it was at a huge 13%. Americans would learn that they could no longer hide behind their ocean moats and live happily insulated from foreign affairs.
2. Carter diagnosed America's problems as stemming primarily from the nation's costly dependence on foreign oil, which was true.
3. He called for legislation to improve energy conservation, but the gas-guzzling American people, who had already forgotten about the long gas lines of 1973, didn't like these ideas.
4. Energy problems escalated under Carter.
 - In 1979, Iran's shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, who had been installed by America in 1953 and had ruled his land as a dictator, was overthrown and succeeded by the Ayatollah Khomeini.
 - Iranian fundamentalists were very much against Western/U.S. customs, and Iran stopped exporting oil; OPEC also hiked up oil prices, thus causing another oil crisis.
 - In July 1979, Carter retreated to Camp David and met with hundreds of leaders of various things to advise and counsel him, then he came back on July 15, 1979 and chastised the American people for their obsession of material woes ("If it's cold, turn down the thermostat and put on a sweater.") This tough talking stunned the nation.
 - Then, a few days later, he fired four cabinet secretaries and tightened the circle around his Georgian advisors even more tightly.

XVIII. Foreign Affairs and the Iranian Imbroglio

1. Carter signed the SALT II agreements with Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev, but the U.S. Senate wouldn't ratify it.
2. Then, on November 4, 1979, a bunch of anti-American Muslim militants stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took the people inside hostage, demanding that the U.S. return the exiled shah who had arrived in the U.S. two weeks earlier for cancer treatments.
3. Then, in December 27, 1979, the U.S.S.R. invaded Afghanistan, which later turned into their version of Vietnam.
 - However, at the moment, their action threatened precious oil supplies.
4. Carter put an embargo on the Soviet Union and boycotted the Olympic games in Moscow.
 - He also proposed a "Rapid Deployment Force" that could respond to crises anywhere in the world in a quick manner.
5. President Carter and America fell into an Iran hostage mess.
 - The American hostages languished in cruel captivity while night TV news reports showed Iranian mobs burning the American flag and spitting on effigies of Uncle Sam.
 - At first Carter tried economic sanctions, but that didn't work.
 - Later, he tried a daring commando rescue mission, but that had to be aborted, and when two military aircraft collided, eight of the would-be rescuers were killed.
 - It was a humiliating failure for the U.S. and for Carter especially.
 - The stalemated hostage situation dragged on for most of Carter's term, and was never released until January 20, 1981—the inauguration day of Ronald Reagan.

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