

Gerald Ford

Presidency: 1974-1977



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Background

- Extremely intelligent- graduated top third of his class from Yale in the Law program
- Ford was a member of the Navy-went off to war
 - In 10 major battles-changed his perception of the world and America's place in it
- Ford- expert on military funding and military programs including the program in the U.S for nuclear weapons
- Calls himself a moderate- conservative republican
 - strongly believed the U.S had to have an internationalist foreign policy
- Inherited Richard Nixon's foreign policies and foreign policy advisors
 - Generally supported Nixon's goals: detente with the Soviet Union, improved relations with China, and American support for the government of South Vietnam



Yale University

Nixon administration and the Watergate Scandal

- Ford- target for criticism due to Nixon
- Watergate scandal-reached its peak
 - America is filled with anxiety
- Ford-no transition period into presidency “desk was piled high with problems”
 - economic crisis, uncertainty with allies and adversaries, lack of public trust in the government
- Rumor that Ford made a deal with Nixon in order to be president
 - Inaccurate, Ford had to go up to Capitol Hill and testify under oath that there was no deal between the two presidents
 - Decision was made strictly on what was best for the American people
- Ford has to deal with all of this chaos
 - pardons Nixon- Nixon cannot be tried in a civil court





Sept 18, 1974: Speech to the United Nations

- **International cooperation**- course the U.S has chosen for itself
- Strengthen partnerships with allies in Europe, Asia, and Latin America- search for peace
- New relationship with the People's Republic of China- serves purposes of each nation
- **Cooperative efforts with other nations**
- Local crisis must be quickly contained and resolved
- “The challenge before the United States [Nations] is very clear. This organization can place the weight of the world community on the side of **world peace**. And this organization can provide impartial forces to **maintain the peace**”
- “We need new approaches to international cooperation to respond effectively to the problems that we face. Developing and developed countries, market and nonmarket countries-we are all a part of one interdependent economic system”

April 10, 1975: Address on U.S Foreign Policy

- Granted South Vietnam \$700 million in military and humanitarian assistance
 - Ford ordered evacuation of all U.S personnel and South Vietnamese citizens with connections to the U.S
- Televised- U.S helicopters escorting people
 - Scenes stood as humiliating ending to America's disastrous involvement in Indochina
- Ford Administration- oversaw admission to the U.S of tens of thousands Vietnamese refugees



Principles of Global Approach

1. All nations must substantially increase production—production will have to expand at a significantly faster rate than population growth
2. All nations must seek to achieve a level of prices which not only provides an incentive to producers but which consumers can afford
3. All nations must avoid the abuse of man's fundamental needs for the sake of narrow national or bloc advantage (barriers to trade are reduced or eliminated)
 - a. attempt by any nation to use one's own resource for political purposes will inevitably tempt other countries to use their own resources for their own purposes
4. The world must assure that the poorest among us are not overwhelmed by rising prices of the imports necessary for their survival



Aug 1, 1975: Remarks on the Helsinki Accord Agreement

- Primarily an effort to reduce tension between the Soviet Union
- Addressed a range of prominent global issues
 - had a far-reaching effect on the Cold War and the United States Soviet relations
- **Tried to get communist leaders to believe that human rights was a right for all people on a worldwide basis**
 - cooperate in economic, scientific, and humanitarian aspects
- Under the Helsinki Accords the nations of the East and West agreed to bring the USA and the USSR closer together
 - Helsinki Accord- final blow to communism behind the iron curtain
 - Ford administration- major impact on the collapse of the soviet union and their allies



Aug 1, 1975: Remarks on the Helsinki Accord Agreement

- It was agreed that the parties would recognize the borders of Eastern Europe that were established at the end of WWII
 - In return, the USSR would allow people in the Eastern Bloc the right to move across borders
 - **The USSR went on to ignore its promises about human rights, tarnishing the spirit of the Helsinki Accords**
- Points made by President Ford in his speech
 - Sought to ease potential conflicts
 - Control of military competition
 - Restraint of political competition
 - Negotiation with other countries
 - Conference is part of process toward peace
 - Real progress will be achieved by dealing with issues with careful preparation and maintaining forward movement





Détente



- **Détente:** effort to lessen tensions between the Soviet Union and the U.S. that had existed since WWII
 - Period where the two nations began to explore ways in which they could work together for national security and economic goals
- Discussions among the American and Soviet negotiators about the exact details of the new successor to the SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) failed
- Critics attacked détente - believed that Nixon and Ford underestimated the Soviet threat and had proven too willing to deal with the Soviets rather than confront them with strength
 - Morally bankrupt policy and a strategic failure
- **Failure because the two superpowers never came to any agreement on the fundamental meaning of détente**

Ford Hoped that by befriending the Soviet Union and China he could play one against the other and and strike a better deal over Vietnam at the ongoing peace talks in Paris

Ford's Legacy

- July 4, 1976- America celebrates happiness that democracy under constitutional government had worked
- In 2 and a half years...
 - Ford healed a divided nation
 - restored the presidency to the people of the U.S
 - gave back our government and restored faith in leaders and the nation
- **Gave the country someone the people could trust**
 - Nation was in need of someone to restore order

