THE FOREIGN POLICY OF RICHARD NIXON

“Publicly, we say one thing....Actually, we do another.” -Richard Nixon

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Essential Question: Was the administration of Richard Nixon successful in achieving the goals he envisioned in the realm of foreign affairs?
Richard Nixon

∇ President of the U.S. from 1969-1974.
∇ Vice President under Eisenhower from 1953-1961.
∇ Served in the Congress from 1946-1952.
∇ Only President to resign from office (after Watergate Scandal).
∇ Strict Republican and Anti-Communist.
Henry Kissinger

- Key contributor to the foreign policy decisions of the Nixon Administration.
- Created the concept of “Shuttle Diplomacy.” This involved travel between conflicting nations to settle disputes. It was best applied in the Arab-Israeli conflict.
FOREIGN POLICY GOALS:
1969-1974

"After a period of confrontation, we are entering an era of negotiation." - Richard Nixon's 1st Inaugural Address
The Nixon Doctrine (1969)

"It is not my belief that the way to peace is by giving up our friends or letting down our allies. On the contrary, our aim is to place America's international commitments on a sustainable, long-term basis, to encourage local and regional initiatives, to foster national independence and self-sufficiency, and by so doing to strengthen the total fabric of peace."
The Nixon Doctrine (1969)

- America will honor its treaties and provide aid to its allies, including protection against nuclear powers.

- However, in other cases of aggression, such as insurrections or non-nuclear threats, America’s allies are expected to use their own manpower for their own defense.

- America will still provide economic and limited military aid in such cases.

- Most direct application: “Vietnamization”
First-Term Foreign Policy Goals

- Strategic arms limitation
- Peaceful negotiation with foreign powers
  - “Rapprochement” with China
  - “Détente” with the Soviet Union
- Reduced commitments of manpower to foreign nations (Nixon Doctrine)
- “Peace with honor” in Vietnam
  - Minimal public support for the war
  - Major reason for Nixon’s election
Second-Term Foreign Policy Goals

- Continue efforts for the limitation of nuclear arms
- Enter major world conflicts selectively and let countries manage their own
  - Best shown through the complete withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, and placing the war in control of the South Vietnamese government.
  - “Abroad and at home, the time has come to turn away from the condescending policies of paternalism—of ‘Washington knows best.’” - Richard Nixon’s 2nd Inaugural Address
- Promote peace and prevent imposition of power by hostile countries on others
Two Chinas

Before Nixon’s administration, the ROC had held China’s seat on the UN General Assembly, and the United States had cut off diplomatic relations with the PRC.

After the Chinese Civil War of 1949, the Communists under Chairman Mao Zedong had created the People’s Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland.

The Nationalists under Chiang Kai-Shek had fled to Taiwan (Formosa) and established the non-Communist Republic of China (ROC).
Nixon began to consider a reopening of relations, or “rapprochement,” with the PRC.

Reasons for rapprochement:
- Trade with China— huge market
- Main reason: increase Sino-Soviet tension
  - "Growing dissidence between the U.S.S.R. and China has limited both countries in the pursuit of policies basically antagonistic to U.S. interests."
  - "Beyond this, the dispute has, in a positive sense, heightened Soviet interest in developing a less abrasive relationship with the U.S. and it may at some point lead China in the same direction."
The American ping-pong team received a surprise invitation to visit the PRC in April, 1971.

Their acceptance made them the first Americans to be allowed into communist mainland China since the Chinese Civil War of 1949.

Ten journalists accompanied them; Americans eagerly followed the team’s progress in the news media.

The trip was a diplomatic success!

- The American public became more willing to open up relations with the PRC.
- America lifted its 20-year trade embargo on mainland China.
Kissinger had secretly visited the People’s Republic of China in July, 1971 to discuss a possible Presidential visit.

On November 29, 1971, he announced Nixon’s intention to visit the mainland next February.

- For a Democrat, negotiating with the Communist nation could have been a fatal political mistake.
- But the Republican Nixon was known as a hard-liner anti-Communist, and thus could get away with it.
Goals:

- “Our essential requirement is to demonstrate that we are serious enough to understand the basic forces at work in the world and reliable enough to deliver on the commitments we make. If in our formal and informal talks we can impress the Chinese with these intangibles, we will have truly made your visit an historic success.”

- Attempt to pave the way for a formal opening of diplomatic relations with the mainland (rapprochement).

- Also want to impress the Chinese and make them a potential trade partner and possibly ally vs. the U.S.S.R.
NIXON GOES TO CHINA

- Nixon and Kissinger met with Chairman Mao and Prime Minister Chou En-Lai several times from February 21-28.

- Results:
  - The leaders discussed policy and philosophy, and made a favorable impression on each other.
  - Immediately after the trip, Kissinger moved to establish regular contact with the PRC.
  - However, formal diplomatic relations were not established until January 1, 1979, under the Carter administration.
Did Nixon Succeed in China?

He was successful in negotiating a rapprochement with the PRC, even though the countries did not open up formal relations during his term.

He also made mainland China a tacit ally of the United States, thus causing the Soviets to worry about the potential nuclear enemy on their borders and increasing Sino-Soviet tension.
“The issue of war and peace cannot be solved unless we in the United States and the Soviet Union demonstrate both the will and the capacity to put our relationship on a basis consistent with the aspirations of mankind.”

-Richard Nixon’s Address to the U.N. General Assembly, October 23, 1970
Detente

After years of hostility and tension between the U.S.S.R and the U.S., Nixon instituted a policy of détente.

- Détente focused on peaceful negotiations and weapon limitations between the two nations.

- Unlike previous administrations, Nixon and Kissinger hoped to negotiate for the mutual benefit of both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. as opposed to demanding that the U.S.S.R. give into U.S. demands.
One of the major components of détente was the creation of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I).

  - These talks in Helsinki, which lasted about a month, helped each nation understand the other nation’s desires for limitations of weaponry.
  - After Helsinki, talks moved to Vienna for serious negotiations.

- During this time two treaties were produced.
  - One treaty limited anti-ballistic defensive missiles while the other restricted the nations’ most critical offensive missiles.

- Nixon used his strategy of “linkage” to help these talks succeed.
  - Linkage was a foreign policy concept of negotiations in one area dependent on those in another was best for achieving a nation’s goals.
After minor disagreements, the US and USSR agreed to focus on a permanent limit on anti-ballistic missiles with temporary restrictions on offensive missiles.

On May 26, 1972 at the Moscow Summit Meeting, Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev signed the SALT I treaty.

- The Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty had permanent restrictions on ABMs, but allowed for a country to pull out within the first 6 months if they deemed it too detrimental to their national security.
- The treaty on offensive missiles covered major issues with offensive missiles for a five year period.

The treaty was not as important for its missile limitations as it was for the opening up of successful negotiations between the two world superpowers.
NIXON GOES TO THE U.S.S.R.


This was the first ever meeting of these countries' leaders not outside of U.S.S.R. or U.S. borders, showing the steps that détente had taken to ease tensions.

Gerald Ford continued this policy by visiting Brezhnev in 1975.
Triangular Diplomacy

➢ The U.S. exploited growing Sino-Soviet tensions.
  ➢ Russia hoped to protect itself from the growing Chinese threat in the East.
  ➢ Used successes in foreign policy with China and Russia to gain from the other country, thanks to additional leverage.

➢ After Nixon announced a visit to China, the Soviets expressed interest in a meeting with Nixon to ease tension as well.

➢ “Right now, we need the Chinese to correct the Russians, and to discipline the Russians.” - Kissinger
Did Nixon Succeed in the U.S.S.R.?

Nixon successfully was able to limit production of missiles through a treaty for the first time with the U.S.S.R.

He was able to open up foreign relations with a country that had been a tremendous enemy since 1945.

He set a precedent for his successor, Gerald Ford who maintained amiable relationships with the U.S.S.R.

Was able to ease tensions between the two superpowers and subsequently greatly lower global tensions through détente.
VIETNAM
U.S. History in Vietnam

- The U.S. had begun direct military involvement in 1964 after the Gulf of Tonkin incident.
- Lyndon Johnson received a “blank check” from Congress called the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.
  - Allowed the President to use whatever supplies and forces needed to defeat the Communist Vietnamese forces.
- Troop involvement drastically increased by hundreds of thousands until Nixon took office in 1969.
  - Numbers were above 500,000 troops in 1969.
Throughout the late 1960s, North Vietnamese soldiers found sanctuaries in Cambodia.

In 1969 Nixon ordered the bombings of Cambodia in an attempt to weaken supply routes for the North Vietnamese army.

In 1970 Nixon ordered a ground operation in an effort to destroy enemy sanctuaries.

- Successfully captured large amounts of food and arms.
Vietnamization

Nixon’s main policy in Vietnam was the process of “Vietnamization.”

- It began right after he took office in 1969.
- The process sought to save American lives and expenses through gradual withdrawal of forces and support from the Vietnam war.
  - It was the first troop withdrawal since President Johnson escalated troop presence. Withdrew 70,000 in 1972.
- It also attempted to transfer military assumption to South Vietnam.
  - Vietnam advisors insisted that South Vietnam could successfully defend against the North Vietnamese.
Vietnamization

❖ Successes:
   ➢ Brought home all the troops by end of 1973.
   ➢ The South Vietnamese successfully defended themselves from 1973-1975 without any U.S. support.

❖ Failures:
   ➢ Saigon fell to Communist forces on April 30, 1975.
     ▪ America refused to respond to calls for help from the South Vietnamese leader.
   ➢ Vietnam established a Socialist government, rendering U.S. involvement in the war futile.
Troop numbers shrunk from 500,000 in 1969 to 30,000 in 1972.
Negotiations for Peace

1969 -> Paris Peace talks fail after one year
- After this failure, Nixon authorized Kissinger to have “off-the-record” talks with North Vietnamese diplomat Le Duc Tho.
  - This restricted the ability of Vietnam to use propaganda against the U.S.
  - These talks ultimately brought about peace.

Spring, 1972 -> North Vietnam launches a surprise attack which further stalls talks
- These attacks prompted Nixon to bomb the major North Vietnamese cities of Hanoi and Haiphong.

1972 -> Kissinger and Le Duc Tho reach a fire agreement in principle.
- Kissinger announces that “peace is at hand.”
Negotiations for Peace

December, 1972 -> Soon after Kissinger announced peace, talks broke down due to North Vietnamese disagreements to new demands from South Vietnam and Nixon.

- Nixon, in response, ordered the “Christmas Bombings” of Hanoi.
  - These were ordered in an attempt to pressure the North Vietnamese into meeting Nixon’s promise of peace by January, 1973.


- These ended battling temporarily until North Vietnam captured Saigon in 1975.
Did Nixon Succeed in Vietnam?

Through Nixon’s policy of Vietnamization, the U.S. was able to end all involvement in the war.

The “Nixon Doctrine” was successfully applied as America withdrew from the war and demanded that South Vietnam support itself.

Since Vietnam was a non-nuclear threat, Nixon followed his policy of transmitting power of the conflict to the nation directly involved.

Nixon continued to promote the idea of peace against aggressors, but drastically lessened U.S. military and economic support for South Vietnam.

Nixon refused to re-enter the war when South Vietnam was about to fall in 1975, in order to keep America away from a paternalistic policy.
ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS
Ever since Israel’s declaration of independence in 1948, Arab nations had engaged in wars with the Jewish state, and none had opened up diplomatic relations with Israel by the 1970s.

- The Arabs, especially Palestinians, considered Israeli territory rightfully theirs.
- Also, the Muslim (and Jewish) holy city of Jerusalem was located within Israel’s borders.
- From the beginning, the United States had been Israel’s steadfast ally.
Israel had won a crushing victory against the Arabs in the Six-Day War of 1967, which expanded the nation’s borders to include the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula.

Therefore, they assumed that the Arabs would not dare to attack them again so soon.

But the Arabs were as determined as ever to reclaim their territory and eliminate the Jewish state.
The pale blue indicates Israeli territory before the Six-Day War.

The slightly darker blue indicates Israeli territorial gains.

Clearly, the war resulted in massive border expansions, especially on the Sinai Peninsula.
On October 6, 1973, the Arab nations of Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel. The Arabs chose the date with a very specific reason in mind: it coincided with Yom Kippur, Judaism’s holiest holiday. The Arabs correctly assumed that Israel would be most vulnerable on this day. Indeed, for the first two days of the war, the Israelis could not stop their enemies’ advance. The war lasted a mere 20 days, but the fighting was intense; thousands were slain.
America actively supported Israel, both politically and militarily, from the beginning of the war. Nixon personally ordered that American arms be airlifted to Israel.

The conflict also had the feel of a proxy war, since it pitted America-friendly Israel vs. Egypt and Syria, long under Soviet influence.
The Oil Crisis

As a response to highly effective American involvement in the war, Arab nations declared on October 19 that they would not sell oil to the U.S., because of its expressed support for Israel.

- They later cut exports to the Netherlands and other nations backing Israel.

Within a few months, the price of a barrel of oil quadrupled!

- This marked the first time Arab nations would use oil as a political and economic weapon.
Effects of the War

忱 No territorial concessions were made; each side claimed victory for itself.
忱 Egypt drifted away from the Soviet Union and towards America, largely because of Kissinger’s developing relationship with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.
  ➢ Israel remained America’s close ally; likewise, Syria retained its alignment with the U.S.S.R.
  ➢ As a result of the diplomatic shift, Egypt became more willing to negotiate with Israel.
    ▪ In 1978, the Camp David Accords would make Egypt the first Arab nation to formally recognize the Jewish state.
忱 The oil embargo had a devastating impact on the U.S. economy.
Did Nixon Succeed in the Middle East?

- In keeping with the Nixon Doctrine, he stood by an American ally, providing aid and supplies, but not manpower, for a successful defense.
- With Kissinger’s aid, he also reduced the Soviet sphere of influence, of which Egypt was no longer a part by war’s end.
INDO-PAKISTAN CONFLICT
In March, the President of Pakistan, Yahya Khan, indefinitely postponed the meeting of the National Assembly.

- A large number of East Pakistanis had been elected, and were expected to demand virtual autonomy for their half of the nation.

This caused the East Pakistanis, or Bengalis, to demand independence.

- The Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, expressed her support for the Bengali cause.

Eventually, Bangladesh declared its independence from Pakistan, with Indian support.

- This soon led to war between Pakistan and India.
Pakistan was a close longtime ally of the United States. Furthermore, India had recently signed a treaty of “peace, friendship, and cooperation” with the Soviet Union, America’s #1 enemy. Finally, Nixon and Kissinger worried that a successful Indian offensive against Pakistan would lead to Indian—and by proxy, Soviet—domination of the subcontinent.
However, the United States could not provide direct military aid to Pakistan. The risk of war with India and possibly even the U.S.S.R was too great.

Also, Nixon wanted to maintain decent relations with India.

Therefore, the President chose only to “tilt” American favor towards Pakistan, preferably without losing too much face with India.
There were three main prongs of the tilt:

- America routed military supplies to Pakistan through Jordan and Iran.

- The aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, with an attendant naval task force, was moved from Southeast Asia into the Bay of Bengal.
  - Allegedly, this was to evacuate U.S. citizens in the area of conflict.
  - However, the implied intent was to put military pressure on India to pull out of East Pakistan.

- Nixon promised to back up China if it aided Pakistan and was then attacked by the U.S.S.R while its army was occupied.
Outcome of the Crisis

- Bangladesh gained its independence.
- Pakistan lost military and diplomatic clout.
  - Soviet-allied India thus became the premier power on the subcontinent.
- Nevertheless, Nixon and Kissinger were satisfied with the situation.
  - West Pakistan was still intact.
  - Pakistan, China, and the U.S.S.R remained on peaceful terms with each other and America.
  - Kissinger (to Nixon): "We have come out of this amazingly well and we scared the pants off the Russians."
Did Nixon Succeed In South Asia?

- As per the Nixon Doctrine, America stood by its ally and sent supplies, but not manpower, to Pakistan.
- The United States also managed to support one side while maintaining peaceful relations with both.
- However, India’s success made it the dominant force on the subcontinent, thus expanding the Soviet sphere of influence.
“I don’t see why we need to stand idly by and watch a country go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people.”

-Henry Kissinger
Western Goals

❖ Balance Western interests against other domestic and foreign policy concerns
  ➢ Pushed for Office for Western Hemisphere Affairs under the Secretary of State.
  ➢ Modify trade policies to favor Western interests.

❖ Promote industrial development in all regional countries

❖ Call for unity of Western Hemisphere
  ➢ The United States could not remain isolated and had to play a role in issues concern nationalism and unity.
    ▪ Intended to play the role of arbiter in bilateral conflicts.
Above: August Pinochet (left) and Salvador Allende.

Left: Jorge Alessandri.
In 1970, Salvador Allende won a majority in the three-way Chilean election. However he did not receive enough percent and had to be chosen by the Chilean congress.

- Allende was a supporter of the far left and of America’s major enemy, Cuba.

Nixon was furious that Allende could become President and called a meeting.

- He instructed Kissinger and Attorney General John Mitchell to save Chile, no matter the risk.

The CIA devised a plan to have the congress choose right-wing candidate Jorge Alessandri. Alessandri would then resign days after winning, allowing for a new two-way election which the U.S. hoped Allende would lose.

These new elections would allow the third candidate, the popular Eduardo Frei, to defeat Allende “fairly.”
Chile

Frei however did not agree to his role.

The CIA then developed a plot called “Track II.”

- This planned to have a general overthrow the Chilean government and dissolve the Congress.
  - Frei would be forced into temporary exile, allowing for another set of elections where Frei could be chosen.
- The first attempt at a coup under Chilean General Viaux however, was a miserable failure. Kissinger called it off.

Salvador Allende took office later in 1970.

- Allende was inaugurated with a feeling euphoria.
- He attempted to ease tensions between parties and expressed a desire to form more unity in Chile.
CIA Involvement

The Central Intelligence Agency had spent $2 million training anticommunists in rural regions of Chile.

They organized covert actions to remove Allende from office, none of which were successful.

The 40 Committee oversaw the CIA.

- They established the two track strategy.
  - Track I was political manipulation in the Chilean government.
  - Track II was social disturbances such as economic withdrawal and military actions.
- The 40 Committee contributed thousands of dollars in support of manipulating the Chilean government, but failed.

The ordeal in Chile was detrimental to the viability of the CIA.
What factors led to the coup?

- Despite Allende’s desire, his supporters divided Chile even further.
  - Members of the Christian Democratic Party were attacked and arrested.
  - The Christian Democratic Party merged with the Conservative Party and united in their efforts to regain power.
- Allende harassed small businesses and began to print un-backed currency.
- Allende also used the military to keep power.
- After the Christian Democratic-Conservative party regain power and after attacks by the public, Allende was forced into exile in Argentina.
On September 11, 1973, a coup began against the Allende government. General Augusto Pinochet led the attack on the Presidential Palace in Santiago. The United States re-opened economic aid to the coup, that had been closed to Allende. Allende was successfully overthrown, and Pinochet rose to power. The American government continued to support Pinochet’s conservative militaristic ways despite the atrocities of the Chilean people.
Did Nixon succeed in Chile?

- Nixon’s dealings in Chile did not have to do as much with his economic goals for the West but rather with a fear of Communism.
- Nixon reverted back to policies of Eisenhower and Kennedy and attacked socialist governments using military tactics.
- Nixon did not follow his policy of moving away from paternalism here. His administration felt it best to inject themselves into this conflict despite it not having any direct impact on the U.S.
DID NIXON SUCCEED IN ATTAINING HIS FOREIGN POLICY GOALS?
Many of Nixon's failures dealt with specific objectives as opposed to general ones.

- He failed to prevent Soviet-allied India's rise to dominance on the Asian subcontinent.
  - He also witnessed the secession of Bangladesh from longtime U.S. ally Pakistan.
- In his attempt to destroy the Communist Chilean government, he supported the rise of the brutal dictator Augusto Pinochet.
  - Nixon's support of Pinochet, despite the dictator's atrocities towards the Chilean people, went against his policy of the promotion of peace.
CHIEF SUCCESSES

- Nixon consistently honored diplomatic treaties and defended American allies.
- He also limited U.S. troop involvement in foreign wars and conflicts.
- Furthermore, he lessened tension with the Soviets and successfully opened contact with mainland China.
  
  ➢ Through these policies of détente and rapprochement he temporarily eased global tensions and promoted a greater peace and camaraderie between nations.
- Finally, he negotiated agreements on strategic arms limitation.
THE END