

US History The Nixon, Ford, & Carter Years

Learning Target:

I can examine how Nixon's domestic policies attempted to reform the nation's welfare system and attempted to solve the national energy crisis.

1. Richard Nixon's Domestic Policy

The Silent Majority –

- The middle-class voters who supported Nixon in the 1968 election and were weary of the social unrest of the 1960s
- Won their support by pledging to restore law & order and cut back on Democratic social programs
- Nixon wanted to move the country in a more conservative direction

Government & Welfare Reform –

Reducing The Great Society –

- New Federalism –
 - Nixon's plan to distribute more financial freedom to state & local government
 - Wanted to decrease the size and influence of the federal government
- Nixon wanted to drastically cut LBJ's Great Society programs
- He felt they created a complex, inefficient system that made people dependent on the federal government and failed to reduce poverty

Family Assistance Plan (FAP) –

- The welfare system had grown from 5.9 million recipients (1960) to 12.8 million recipients (1970)
- Existing welfare system offered numerous services such as Medicaid
- Nixon wanted to replace them with the Family Assistance Plan
 - FAP would guarantee families a minimum income
 - Able-bodied adults would have to accept job training & work assignments to qualify for assistance
 - Critics argued that FAP would actually make poor families more dependent on the federal gov't
 - The Senate voted down the Family Assistance Plan in the end

The Energy Crisis –

Supply vs. Demand –

- Since WWII the US became increasingly dependent on oil
- By 1973 Americans consumed twice as much oil as they produced
- Rising oil costs led to inflation and worry throughout the nation

The Warning –

- June 1973, Nixon warned the nation that the available domestic energy supply was not keeping up with demand
- This warning would become reality in the near future

The Embargo –

- October 1973 several Arab nations cut off all oil shipments to the United States
- They did so to punish the US for supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur War against Egypt & Syria

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) –

- Formed in 1960 by five oil-producing nations in the Middle East & Africa
- Wanted to increase the global price of crude oil
- December 1973 OPEC announced a price hike on oil
- A barrel of oil that cost \$3.00 in the summer of 1973 would now cost \$11.65
- This represented a 400% price increase in oil

The Crisis –

- The embargo and price hike triggered an energy crisis in the winter of 1973-74
- Costs of electricity, gasoline, heating oil soared out of control
- People struggled to fill their tanks and heat their homes
- Lines at gas stations sometimes stretched for four miles as a nationwide panic developed
- The Arab nations lifted their oil embargo in March 1974 but prices stayed high

New Energy Policies –

- In response to the crisis Nixon called for energy conservation
- Lowered the highway speed limit to 55 mph to save fuel
- Authorized construction of the Alaskan pipeline to transport oil south
- Supported the construction of numerous nuclear power plants to help reduce the nation's dependence on fossil fuels