

CHAPTER
18
SECTION 1

Section Summary

NIXON AND THE WATERGATE SCANDAL

In 1968, Richard Nixon won the presidency. During his campaign, Nixon said he represented the **silent majority**. This term referred to the working men and women who made up Middle America. Nixon said that they were tired of “big” government. However, he also said that they wanted the government to address social ills like crime and pollution. He proposed **revenue sharing**. Under this system, the federal government gave money to the states to run social programs. Nixon’s presidency was bothered by a combination of recession and inflation that came to be known as **stagflation**. The **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** placed an oil embargo on Israel’s allies, which caused oil prices to skyrocket.

In Nixon’s **southern strategy**, he tried to get more white southerners, who had traditionally voted for Democrats, to support him. He appointed conservative southern judges and criticized busing school children to achieve desegregation. However, he supported **affirmative action** plans in employment and education. Nixon won the 1972 election easily. He was the first Republican presidential candidate to sweep the entire South.

In June 1972, burglars broke into the Democratic Party headquarters. After their conviction, one of them charged that administration officials had been involved. Nixon denied any wrongdoing. The scandal came to be known as **Watergate**, after the building where the burglary occurred. Nixon refused to turn over secret tapes he had made of Oval Office conversations. He claimed **executive privilege**. This principle claims that the President can keep certain information private. The Supreme Court ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes. The tapes proved that Nixon was involved in the coverup. Facing impeachment and conviction, Nixon resigned in August 1974. Gerald Ford became President. Ford had been appointed Vice President after Spiro Agnew’s 1973 resignation.

Review Questions

1. What was Richard Nixon’s attitude toward “big” government?

2. Why did Richard Nixon resign the presidency?

READING CHECK

What was Nixon’s southern strategy?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

Find the word *pollution* in the underlined sentence. What do you think it means? You have probably heard about air *pollution*, or smog. Which of the following words or phrases do you think means the same thing as *pollution*?

- contamination
- purification

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas In what areas did Nixon expand the federal government’s role?
