

Module 10: How Will Historians Treat Richard Nixon?

Evidence

The Issues Domestic Policy The Cold War Vietnam Watergate

The materials presented below, all taken from the public speeches of President Richard Nixon, provide a basis upon which to evaluate the historians' interpretations outlined in the conclusion to this module. In five sections, you'll find portions of several speeches in spoken format (as audio files) and full excerpts as transcriptions. Although the documents included are edited versions of longer speeches, they all reproduce the actual words spoken by Nixon. The accompanying photographs provide visual indications of the kinds of issues that shaped Nixon's presidency.

Defining the Issues

This speech, delivered by Nixon to the Republican National Convention in August 1968, defined the objectives of his candidacy and laid out the standards by which Nixon himself wished the American people and historians to evaluate his future presidency.



1. Nomination Acceptance Speech

August 8, 1968



2. Photo: Nixon in Motorcade

1968 campaign



3. Photo: Nixon in Crowd

1968 campaign



4. Photo: Presidential Inauguration

January 20, 1969

Domestic Policy

Nixon placed a high priority on certain aspects of his domestic policy. Four social problems drew his particular attention: welfare, race relations, energy, and the environment. The excerpts in this section outline Nixon's new federal approach to such problems in the everyday lives of Americans.



5. Welfare: Address to the Nation on Domestic Programs

August 8, 1969



6. Race: Statement About Desegregation of Schools

March 24, 1970



7. Energy: Annual Message on the State



8. Environment: Annual Message on

of Union

January 30, 1974

the State of Union

January 30, 1974

The Cold War


Foreign policy was always a high priority for President Nixon, particularly in relation to the other superpower, the Soviet Union, and the emerging communist power, China. The materials in this section illustrate how Nixon's presidency transformed United States policies and attitudes regarding the Cold War. Starting with the striking change in rhetoric articulated in Nixon's inaugural address in 1969, the speeches illustrate how Nixon's statements on China and the Soviet Union defined the emerging policy of détente, or coexistence, between the superpowers. The photographs from Nixon's trip to China in 1972 provide the most visible evidence of the dramatic change in United States foreign policy toward the communist world.


A [9. Title of Peacemaker: Inaugural Address](#)
January 20, 1969


A [10. China: Toast of the President at a Banquet Honoring in Peking](#)
February 21, 1972


A [11. Soviet Union: Toast of the President to Brezhnev of the U.S.S.R.](#)
June 18, 1973

A [12. Permanent Peace: Address to the People of the Soviet Union](#)
July 2, 1974

 [13. Photo: Nixon Reviewing Troops in China](#)
February 21, 1972

 [14. Photo: Nixon Observing the Great Wall of China](#)
February 24, 1972

 [15. Photo: Nixon at the Great Wall](#)
February 24, 1972

 [16. Photo: Nixon With Premier Chou En-Lai](#)
February 27, 1972

 [17. Photo: Nixon Greets a Young Chinese Girl in Hangchow](#)
February 27, 1972

Vietnam

The speeches in this section trace the evolution of Nixon's strategy regarding the Vietnam War, starting with his promise of "an honorable end to the war" at the time of his nomination in 1968 to the declaration of a cease-fire with an American

withdrawal of troops in early 1973. The interview with television correspondents in mid-1970 provided a clear statement of how the "domino theory" continued to shape United States policies in Southeast Asia, while Nixon's address on the invasion of Cambodia defined the reasons for escalating United States involvement beyond the borders of Vietnam. Yet the speeches of November 1969 and January 1973 also illustrate how persistently the Nixon administration sought an end to the war, even while trying to determine an outcome that would be most satisfactory in domestic and world political terms.



[18. Statement on Vietnam: Nomination Acceptance Speech](#)

August 8, 1968



[20. Withdrawal Plan: Address to the Nation on Vietnam](#)

November 3, 1969



[22. Agreement on Peace: Address to the Nation](#)

January 23, 1973



[24. Photo: Nixon Points to Cambodian Map During Speech to American People](#)

April 30, 1970



[19. Domino Theory: A Conversation With the President on Foreign Policy](#)

July 1, 1970



[21. Cambodia Invasion: Address to the Nation](#)

April 30, 1970



[23. Photo: Nixon Shaking Hands With Armed Forces in Vietnam](#)

Watergate

In his first recorded statement on the Watergate break-in on June 22, thirteen days after the event, Nixon set the tone for the following two years, during which he pursued various strategies designed to keep the scandal from destroying his presidency. As illustrated in the speeches to the nation in April 1973 and April 1974, however, his strategies were clearly failing. Pressure on the president increased in the media, the judicial system, Congress, and certainly in public opinion. The Watergate crisis ended in August 1974 with Nixon's resignation.



[25. First Statement on Watergate: President's News Conference](#)

June 22, 1972



[27. Address to the Nation About the Release of Tapes](#)

April 29, 1974



[29. Photo: Nixon, With Edited](#)



[26. Address to the Nation About Watergate Investigations](#)

April 30, 1973



[28. Address to the Nation About Resignation](#)

August 8, 1974



[30. Photo: Address to Cabinet and Staff](#)

Transcripts of Taped
Conversations,
During Speech
April 29, 1974

Prior to Departure
August 8