

18: FAILURES ESSENTIAL TERMS



KEY CONCEPTS

Rich man's war and a poor man's fight: Phrase the exemplified the idea that wealthy politicians were making choices about the conduct of the war but that poor Americans, especially African Americans, had to do the fighting.

Vietnam Syndrome: A fear on the part of American leaders to send the military into action due to the loss in Vietnam.

Impeachment: The Constitutional process of removing an elected official or judge. In the case of a president, the House of Representatives serves as the prosecutors and the Senate as the jury.

Obstruction of Justice: Charge that an official uses his or her authority to prevent investigation of a crime.

Gold Standard: When a currency is backed by the government in gold. The currency is always worth a certain amount of gold.

Inflation: The slow rise in prices over time.

Stagflation: A situation in which there is high inflation, high unemployment, and low economic growth.

Globalization: The process of increasing connections around the world of communication and trade.

Outsource: When a company attempts to save money by moving a factory to another location where labor is cheaper, or by firing workers and hiring an outside company to do the work for less. Ford building cars in Mexico, or a store hiring a cleaning company instead of their own janitors are examples.



SPEECHES

"I'm not a crook": Famous claim by Nixon to the press during the Watergate Scandal.

Malaise Speech: Speech by President Carter on July 15, 1979 in which he discussed the energy crisis and blamed the problem on a loss of spirit. He was criticized for being overly negative.



DOCUMENTS

The Pentagon Papers: Nickname for a secret report about the Vietnam War. It was released to the public and showed that the government and military had deceived the public about the progress of the war.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Ho Chi Minh: Communist leader of North Vietnam who fought the French, Japanese and then Americans in an effort to realize independence for Vietnam.

Viet Minh: The North Vietnamese army.

Ngo Dinh Diem: Dictator of South Vietnam. He was widely hated due to his corrupt government, policies that favored the Catholic minority and was eventually killed in a coup that was tacitly supported by the US.

Robert McNamara: Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam War. He is often blamed for the failure.

Viet Cong: Guerilla fighters in South Vietnam who supported the North.

William Westmoreland: American commander in Vietnam.

Students for a Democratic Society: Group of college students who organized protests, most notably large rallies in Washington, DC.

The Plumbers: A group of criminals that worked for the Nixon reelection team. They tried to prevent leaks of secret information that might hurt the president, but their ineptitude ultimately led to Nixon's resignation.

Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP): Group that worked to fundraise for Nixon's reelection campaign and used underhanded and illegal methods to hurt his opponents.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein: Young reporters working for the Washington Post who uncovered much of the Watergate cover-up.

Deep Throat: Pseudonym for Mark Felt, Associate FBI Director who met secretly with Woodward and Bernstein and gave them information about the Watergate cover-up.

Gerald Ford: Vice President who became president after Nixon Resigned in 1974. He lost the 1976 presidential election to Jimmy Carter.

Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini: Religious leader who led the Iranian Revolution and became the first leader of the theocracy.

Jimmy Carter: Democratic governor of Georgia who was elected president in 1976. He served only one term and was defeated by Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Ronald Reagan: Republican former governor of California who won the presidency in 1980, defeating Jimmy Carter. Reagan was seen as a confident, optimist who could turn around the nation's struggling economy.



LOCATIONS

Ho Chi Minh Trail: Route taken by North Vietnamese to supply the Viet Cong in the South. The route went through Laos and Cambodia.

Rust Belt: The region of the country across the Northeast and Midwest that includes the industrial centers of Detroit, Pittsburg, Cleveland, etc. They thrived during the Industrial Revolution of the late 1800s and early 1900s, but have struggled as manufacturing moved overseas.



TREATIES, LAWS & POLICIES

Geneva Accords: International agreement after World War II to unify Vietnam and hold nationwide elections. Diem in the South ignored the accords knowing he would lose an election.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: Resolution passed by Congress in 1964 that granted President Johnson wide authority to use armed force in Vietnam. It was used by presidents Johnson and Nixon to go to war without an actual declaration of war.

Vietnamization: Nixon's policy of withdrawing American troops and turning responsibility for fighting over to the South Vietnamese Army. It was a way of ending the war without surrendering.

26th Amendment: Constitutional amendment ratified in 1971 granting the right to vote to anyone age 18 and older. Previously citizens had to be 21 to vote.

25th Amendment: Constitutional amendment providing a method for replacing the Vice President.



COURT CASES

New York Times Co. v. United States: 1971 Supreme Court case that granted the press wide latitude in publishing classified documents with the purpose of informing the public about government activities.

United States v. Nixon: 1974 Supreme Court case in which the court decided that the president could not claim executive privilege to hide evidence such as the recordings of his conversations.

Citizens United v. FCC: Supreme court case in 2010 in which the Court decided that corporations have the right to free speech and that laws cannot be passed that restrict corporations from political advertising.



EVENTS

Tet Offensive: Major operation undertaken by the North Vietnamese to attack cities in the South during the new year's celebration (Tet) of 1968. It ultimately failed but did demonstrate that the North was not about to surrender.

1968 Democratic Primary: In 1968 senator Eugene McCarthy challenged sitting president Lyndon Johnson. McCarthy ran as an anti-war candidate. When McCarthy did surprisingly well in the first primary election Johnson withdrew from the race. Robert Kennedy joined as another anti-war candidate and vice president Hubert Humphry joined as a pro-war candidate. Humphry eventually won the nomination but lost the general election to Richard Nixon.

My Lai Massacre: Attack by American troops on the village of My Lai in 1968. The American commander ordered his soldiers to kill everyone in the village, including women and children. The massacre caused many in the around the world to doubt the good intentions of the United States.

Kent State Shooting: Clash between students and the Ohio National Guard at Kent State University in 1970. The guardsmen opened fire on unarmed students resulting in nine deaths. The massacre shocked the nation as it seemed the war was coming home.

Surrender of South Vietnam: April 30, 1975. North Vietnamese troops entered Saigon and the South Vietnamese government fell. Vietnam was united under communist leadership.

Watergate Scandal: The name for all of the crimes, investigations and ultimate resignation of President Nixon associated with the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up.

Nixon's Resignation: Nixon resigned the presidency on August 9, 1974. He was replaced by Vice President Gerald Ford.

Iranian Hostage Crisis: The 444-day holding of 52 Americans by the new revolutionary government of Iran.

1973 Oil Embargo: OPEC agreed to limit oil shipments to the United States in 1973. This caused a crisis as fuel prices increased dramatically.



TECHNOLOGY

Agent Orange: Chemical sprayed from aircraft that caused the leaves to fall off of trees, thus making it easier to find enemy fighters. It is widely believed to have caused serious health problems for the soldiers who were exposed.



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

World Trade Organization (WTO): International organization developed to promote free trade agreements and to serve as a judge for trade disputes between nations.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): A super-bank for the governments of the developing world to help them access funds when private banks were too weak, thus ensuring stability in global markets.

World Bank: A bank that governments in the Third World can use to finance development projects such as constructions of airports, irrigation systems or programs to fight hunger and disease.

Group of Seven (G7): The United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. With the exception of China, they are the eight largest economies in the world.

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): A cartel of the major oil producing nations. They attempt to work together to set production rates and the price of oil on the world market.

Whip Inflation Now (WIN): President Ford's campaign to encourage Americans to voluntarily control spending, wage demands and price increases in order to end the stagflation of the 1970s.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): An agreement signed in 1994 between the United States, Canada and Mexico to eliminate tariffs.