

The political career of richard nixon assignment

[History](#)



September 1942 he was commissioned a lieutenant, Junior grade. During much of the war he served as an operations officer with the South Pacific Combat Air Transport Command, rising to the rank of lieutenant commander. After the war Nixon returned to the United States, where he was assigned to work on Navy contracts while awaiting discharge. He was working in Baltimore, Maryland, when he received a telephone call that changed his life. A Republican citizen's committee in Whittier was considering Nixon as a candidate for Congress in the 12th Congressional District.

In December 1945 Nixon accepted the candidacy with the remises that he would "wage a fighting, rocking, socking campaign." Jerry Ivories, a Democrat who had represented the 12th District since 1936, was running for reelection. Earlier in his career Ivories had been an active Socialist. He had become more conservative over the years and was now an outspoken anti-Communist. Despite Ivories' anti-Communist stand the Los Angeles chapter of the left-wing Political Action Committee (PACE) endorsed him, apparently without his knowledge or approval.

The theme of Nixon's campaign was "a vote for Nixon is a vote against the Communist-dominated PACE." The approach was successful. On November, 5 1946, Richard Nixon won his first political election. The Nixon' daughter Patricia (called Patric) was born during the campaign, on February 21, 1946. Their second daughter, Julie, was born July 5, 1948. As a freshman congressman, Nixon was assigned to the Un-American Activities Committee. It was in this capacity that in August 1948 he heard the testimony of Whittaker Chambers, a self-confessed former Communist espionage agent.

Chambers named Alger Hiss, a foreign policy advisor during the Roosevelt years, as an accomplice while in government service. Hiss, a former State Department aide, eked for and obtained a hearing before the committee. He made a favorable impression, and the case would then have been dropped had not Nixon urged investigation into Hiss's testimony on his relationship with Chambers. The committee let Nixon pursue the case behind closed doors. He brought Chambers and Hiss face to face. Chambers produced evidence proving that Hiss had passed State Department secrets to him.

Among the exhibits were rolls of microfilm which Chambers had hidden in a pumpkin on his farm near Westminster, Md. , as a precaution against theft. On December 15, 1948, a New York federal grand jury indicted Hiss for perjury. After two trials he was convicted, on Jan. 21, 1950, and sentenced to five years in prison. The Hiss case made Nixon nationally famous. While the case was still in the courts, Nixon decided to run for the Senate. In his senatorial campaign he attacked the Harry S. Truman Administration and his opponent, Helen Ghana Douglas, for being " soft" toward the Communists. Nixon won the election, held on Nov. , 1950, by 680, 000 votes, and at 38 he became the youngest member of the Senate. His Senate career was uneventful, and he was able to concentrate all his efforts on the upcoming 1952 presidential election. The " Secret Fund" Nixon did his work well. He hammered hard at three main issues- the war in Korea, Communism in government, and the high cost of the Democratic party's programs. At their 1952 national convention the Republicans chose him as Eisenhower running mate, to balance the ticket with a West coast conservative. Only a few days after the young senator's triumph his political career seemed doomed.

The New York Post printed a story headed " Secret Rich Men's Trust Fund Keeps Nixon in Style Far Beyond His Salary. " The public was shocked. The Republicans were panic-stricken. Prominent members of the party urged Eisenhower to dump Nixon before it was too late. There was really nothing secret about the fund. Nixon was a man of limited means, and when he won his Senate seat a group of businessmen had publicly solicited funds to enable him to keep in touch with the voters in his home state while he served in the Senate. Nixon took his case directly to the people in a nationwide television hookup.

He invited investigation of his finances and explained that no donor had asked for or received any favors. The best-remembered part of his speech was his admission that an admirer had once sent the Nixon a small cocker spaniel named Checkers. The kids love that dog, and I want to say right now that regardless of what they say, we're going to keep it," he declared. The speech was a political triumph. Eisenhower asked Nixon to come to Wheeling, W. Va. , where he was campaigning. The president-to-be met his running mate at the airport with the words " Dick, you're my boy. The Republicans won by a landslide. The only duties listed for the vice-president in the Constitution are to preside over the Senate and to vote if there is a tie. Eisenhower, however, groomed his vice- president for active duty. Nixon regularly attended Cabinet meetings and meetings of the National Security Council. In the absence of the president he presided over these sessions. Thus Nixon was able to assume the president's duties when Eisenhower was incapacitated by illness—after a major heart attack in 1955, abdominal surgery in 1956, and a mild stroke in 1957.

During his eight years as vice-president Nixon made a series of goodwill tours that took him to every continent. In 1958 he faced rioting, rock-throwing mobs in Peru and Venezuela. In 1959 he engaged the Soviet Union's premier, Nikkei Khrushchev, in an impromptu debate in Moscow. In 1960 the Republican party chose its seasoned vice-president to run for the action's highest office. His running mate was Henry Cabot Lodge, Jar. , a veteran of eight years as ambassador to the United Nations. Voters turned out in record numbers. When the 68 million votes were counted John F.

Kennedy had become the nation's first Roman Catholic president, and Richard Nixon had lost the presidential race by the narrow margin of about 100, 000 votes. Nixon got 49. 55 percent of the vote; Kennedy, 49. 71 percent. Nixon carried 26 states for a total of 219 electoral votes. Kennedy carried 22 states and received 303 electoral votes. Although defeated in 1960, Nixon reemerged as the Republican presidential candidate in 1968. For his running mate Nixon chose Spiro T. Agene, the governor of Maryland, a man little known outside his own state. The choice was a surprise to political forecasters and a disappointment to some Republicans.

Nixon realized, however, that a conservative Southern candidate would have lost him badly needed big-city and liberal votes in the North and that a liberal Northern Republican would have alienated the South, which backed him solidly at the convention. Agene was a compromise choice acceptable to both the North and the South. Throughout the election campaign Nixon directed his attacks against the failures of the Democratic Administration. He deplored the growing rate of crime in the streets, called attention to the high

cost and the limitations of the Democrats' welfare programs, and denounced their inaction against inflation.

Early in the campaign the Republican candidates announced that they would refrain from comments on the settlement of the Vietnamese conflict. The policy was adopted to prevent interference with peace negotiations begun in May between government representatives from the United States and from North Vietnam in Paris, France. Nixon emphasized his determination to curb violence in the cities. At the same time he proposed a program of increased black capitalism" and of tax incentives for private investors locating in the cities.

On November 5, 1968, Nixon's long and loyal support of his party was repaid, and he was elected the 37th president of the United States. About a month before his inauguration on Jan. 20, 1969, his younger daughter, Julie, was married to David Eisenhower, the grandson of former President Eisenhower. In his inaugural address President Nixon emphasized his determination to seek peace abroad, especially in Vietnam, and to bring about a reconciliation of the differences that divided the United States. All the men nominated by the president or Cabinet posts were approved by the Senate. William P.

Rogers was Nixon's choice as secretary of state. David M. Kennedy became secretary of the treasury; Melvin R. Laird, the secretary of defense. Clifford M. Hardin was named the new secretary of agriculture; Walter J. Hickey, secretary of the interior; Maurice H. Stan, secretary of commerce; George P. Schultz, secretary of labor; John A. People, secretary of transportation.

Robert H. Finch was designated to head the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; George Rooney, Housing and Urban Development. John N. Mitchell was appointed attorney general; Winston M. Blunt, postmaster general.

The first changes in the original Cabinet were made in mid-1970. Elliot L. Richardson replaced Finch. James D. Hodge son succeeded Schultz, who became head of the Office of Management and Budget, a new agency created to replace the Bureau of the Budget. Later in 1970 Nixon dismissed Hickey, with whom he had differences, and appointed former Republican national chairman Rogers C. B. Morton in his stead. Early in 1971 John B. Connolly, Jar. , a former governor of Texas, replaced Kennedy as secretary of the treasury. When the Post Office Department was reorganized in 1971, Blunt lost his Cabinet status. Also in 1971, Earl L.

Butt succeeded Hardin. Early in 1972 Mitchell resigned to head Onion's reelection campaign; Deputy Attorney General Richard G. Slinkiest replaced him. Mitchell left the campaign in early July. Peter G. Peterson replaced Stan, who also resigned to work for the campaign. Schultz succeeded Connolly. Onion's most important selection, perhaps, was that of a successor to retiring Chief Justice of the United States Earl Warren. The Senate approved his nominee, Warren E. Burger, a district Judge in the federal court system. He had difficulty, however, in getting Senate approval of an associate justice to fill a later vacancy on the Supreme Court.

After rejecting Onion's first two nominees--both Southerners--the Senate accepted Harry A. Blackman of Minnesota, a United States court of appeals

Judge. Two more Nixon nominees, William H. Rehnquist and Lewis F. Powell, were accepted as associate Justices to replace Hugo L. Black and John M. Harlan, who retired in 1971. Upon becoming president, Nixon turned his attention primarily to foreign affairs. In February 1969 he visited Belgium, England, West Germany, Italy, and France in an effort to strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). To assure non-

Communist Asian nations of continued United States support, Nixon embarked in late July on a tour of the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Pakistan, and South Vietnam. Nixon then visited Romania. He was the first American president to enter a Soviet-bloc nation since World War II. In the fall of 1970, to underscore United States determination to maintain peace in the Mediterranean area, Nixon traveled to Italy, Spain, and Yugoslavia, and visited the United States Sixth Fleet, stationed in the area. The tour included meetings with NATO commanders, an audience with Pope Paul VI, and visits to England and Ireland.

The change in administrations had little initial effect on the Vietnam peace talks being conducted in Paris. However, in June 1969 President Nixon announced that he would begin a phased withdrawal of American forces. The first contingent of some 25, 000 men returned to the United States in July. In April 1970 Nixon announced that United States troops had been sent into Cambodia to seek out and destroy North Vietnamese and Viet Congo supply bases. This extension of the war effort in Indochina aroused strong opposition. On June 29 the last United States ground troops were withdrawn from Cambodia.

In 1971 and 1972 Nixon continued his efforts to “Vietnamize” the war. By autumn 1972, United States troop strength in Vietnam— which in April 1969 had reached a peak of 543, 000 men—was 32, 200 men. Early in 1972 the North Vietnamese mounted an offensive against the South, which had uneven success in defending itself. In a move to cut off military supplies to Hanoi, Nixon ordered the mining of North Vietnamese ports and the bombing of overland supply routes from China. In October 1972 an accord for ending the war was reached with North Vietnam, but South Vietnamese government opposed it.

Despite the continuing conflict in Vietnam, Nixon remained determined to inaugurate an era of negotiation with the Communist countries that were supporting North Vietnam. He attended summit meetings in the People’s Republic of China in February 1972 and in the Soviet Union in May. Tensions were lessened between mainland China and the United States. With United States flags waving over the Kremlin, Nixon and his Soviet hosts signed accords that had long been in preparation. The most important agreement limited the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

Plans were made also for pooling resources in space exploration and in medical and environmental research. A Joint Commission was established to effect trade agreements. From the Kremlin, Nixon made a televised speech to the Soviet people. He visited Iran and Poland before returning home. In the summer of 1969 Nixon requested legislation to improve urban transportation, raise social security benefits, combat crime, and reorganize the postal service. He also urged the establishment of national minimum

standards for welfare payments and the sharing of federal revenue with the states.

Onion's request for a multimillion-dollar naturalistic-missile defense system met with strong Congressional opposition. The 91st Congress, controlled by the Democrats, enacted a modified version of his recommendations by a narrow margin. In the fall 1970 elections the Democrats retained control of both houses of Congress. In June 1970 Nixon signed into law a bill lowering the voting age in federal elections from 21 to 18. In mid-1971 the 26th Amendment to the Constitution, extending the franchise to citizens 18 years of age in all elections, was ratified.

In his January 1971 State of the Union message to Congress, Nixon outlined six sweeping proposals. He again called for the sharing of federal revenues with state and local governments. Nixon also sought a deficit federal budget designed to spur the lagging economy; the reform of welfare programs; a federal guarantee of adequate health care for all citizens; new measures to preserve natural resources; and revision of the structure of the federal government. In August 1971 Nixon imposed mandatory wage and price controls and a 10 percent import surcharge to strengthen the economy.

The Nixon Administration applied pressure to encourage foreign governments to help resolve the international monetary crisis by realigning their currencies. Foreign governments, in turn, urged Nixon to devalue the dollar. This he did in December 1971, by ending the long-standing convertibility of the dollar into gold. Shortly afterward he rescinded the import surcharge. Under a Supreme Court decision of 1969, communities

had been required to start busing students from one school district to another to achieve racial balance as soon as so ordered by a federal district court.

Congressional approval was given in June 1972 to legislation that would delay for up to 18 months the implementation of those court orders. The bill also contained Union's program to contribute 2 billion dollars over a two-year period to communities in the process of desegregating their schools. Nixon conducted his campaign for a second term by surrogate. While he seldom left his White House office, the vice-president and other associates campaigned for him. Supporters interpreted his landslide vote as a mandate for his programs.

Soon after reelection, Nixon requested the resignations of some 2, 000 presidential appointees in a reorganization designed to streamline the federal bureaucracy. Nevertheless, Nixon had broken all records for presidential Cabinet appointments by mid-1974. Slinkiest resigned his Cabinet post in April 1973. He was replaced by Richardson, who was succeeded as secretary of defense by James R. Schlesinger, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency and of the Atomic Energy Commission. In August Rogers resigned as secretary of state and was replaced by Henry A. Kissinger, Union's top national security adviser. By mid-1974 Nixon had made 30 Cabinet appointments, breaking Call records for an American president. On October 10, 1973, Vice-President Agene resigned from office and was convicted in federal court on a felony charge of income tax evasion. Nixon chose Representative Gerald R. Ford of Michigan as Sinew's successor, and

Congress confirmed him. On January 27, 1973, a Vietnam cease-fire agreement was signed by negotiators in Paris. In March Nixon welcomed home the last American ground troops and prisoners of war from Vietnam.

American military involvement continued with bombing raids over Cambodia until mid-August. In June 1973 Nixon hosted a visit from Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Soviet Communist party. The two leaders signed a friendship agreement. They also instituted accords for the expansion of scientific, technical, educational, and cultural exchanges, and for accelerated negotiations to limit nuclear arsenals. In February 1973 it was revealed that the United States and the People's Republic of China would set up government liaison offices in Washington, D. C. , and in Beijing.

In May Nixon met French President Georges Pompidou in Iceland to discuss military, political, and economic relations between the United States and its Western European allies. War erupted in the Middle East in October 1973 when Syria and Egypt attacked Israel simultaneously. United States mediation led to the disengagement of Egyptian and Israeli troops in January 1974 and of Syrian and Israeli troops in May. On a goodwill trip to the Middle East in June, Nixon visited Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel, and Jordan. To Egypt and Israel, Nixon offered aid in developing nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

Later in June Nixon flew to the Soviet Union for summit talks. In his budget message and in a series of State of the Union messages to Congress early in 1973, Nixon announced the reduction of federal spending for social welfare. He asked that cities and states be granted funds in a revenue-sharing plan

to take over federal programs in urban development, education, manpower, and law enforcement. In February 1973 Nixon announced his second devaluation of the dollar. Faced with rising inflation Nixon in June ordered a 60-day freeze on all retail and wholesale prices except for raw agricultural commodities.

Price controls in some form were in effect until Congress let them expire on April 30, 1974. Inflation persisted. In December 1973 Nixon had asked for Congressional review of some of his financial transactions. (Reports had been circulating about his low tax payments in proportion to his income.) In 1974 the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation and the Internal Revenue Service found that Nixon owed more than 400, 000 dollars in back taxes. A major issue at the beginning of Nixon's second term became known as the Watergate scandal.

In June 1972, agents hired by the Committee for the Reelection of the President had been arrested while breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate apartment-office complex in Washington, D. C. Early in 1973 they were convicted of burglary and political espionage. The Senate held hearings to probe allegations of attempts by high White House officials to cover up administration involvement in the case. Several of Nixon's top aides resigned as they became implicated. Meanwhile, the House Judiciary Committee began an inquiry into whether he had committed impeachable offenses.

On April 30, 1974, Nixon released edited transcripts of White House conversations that he felt would reassure the public of his innocence

regarding the Watergate break-in and cover-up. Instead, he lost many of his supporters. The Supreme Court ordered Nixon to surrender additional White House tapes sought by the special Watergate prosecutor as evidence in criminal proceedings. Three of these recordings documented Nixon's personal order to cover up the Watergate break-in. The House Judiciary Committee had already voted in late July to recommend Nixon's impeachment. With Congressional support destroyed, Nixon chose to resign.