

The Presidency of Richard Nixon

● Essential Questions:

- Do the negative effects of the Watergate scandal truly deserve to overshadow the positive foreign policy accomplishments of Richard Nixon?
- What was the Watergate scandal about?
How did it change American society?

The Chaos of 1968



- **LBJ disgraced**

- Tet offensive
- Refuses to run for Presidency in 1968

- **Democratic Party collapses**

- Eugene McCarthy vs. Robert Kennedy for control of party
 - Both gain anti-war support
 - Kennedy assassinated----Sirhan, Sirhan
- Democratic National Convention in Chicago
 - mass protests against war
 - Americans witness the radical “anti-war and counter culture” on TV
- VP Hubert Humphrey wins Democratic nomination



The Chaos of 1968



● Civil Rights

- Black Panther Party opposes MLK
- Cities burn with Black riots
- MLK assassinated
- Robert Kennedy assassinated
- George Wallace: Third Party appeal = White Back Lash



● Republican Richard Nixon is elected

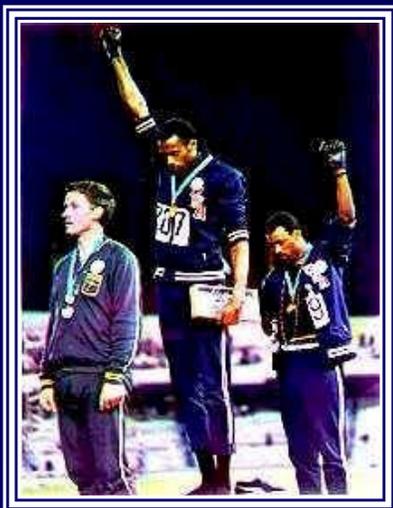
● My Lai Massacre in Vietnam

● Cold War

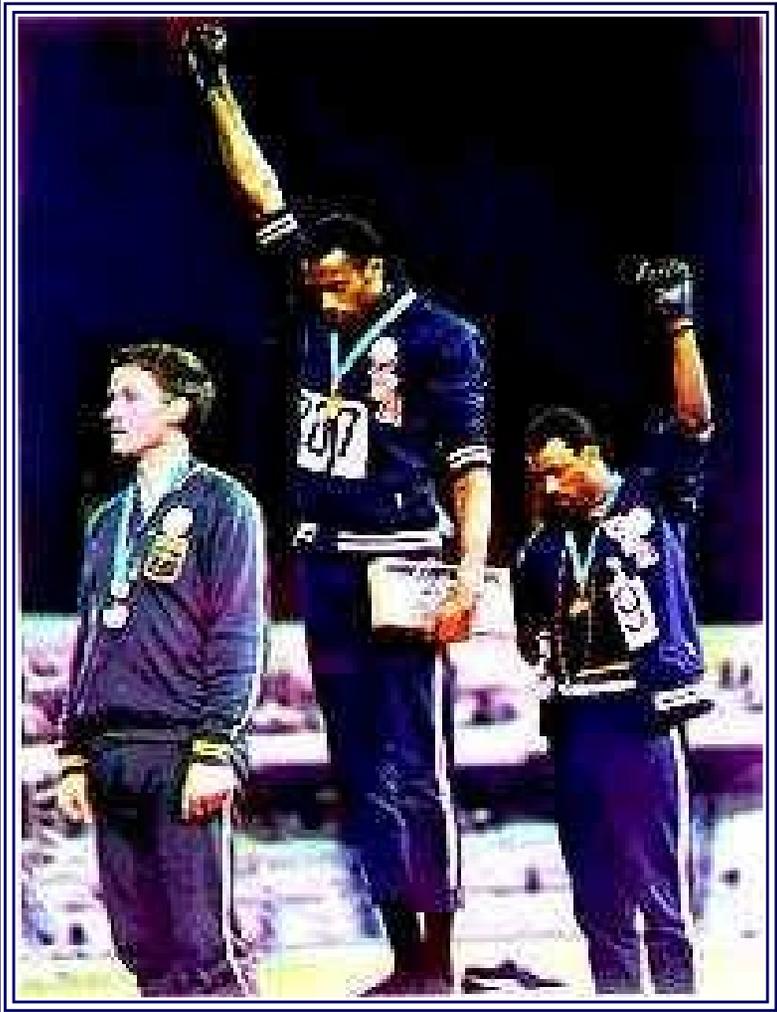
- Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia
- USS PUEBLO attacked by North Korean

● Organizations form to end the war.

- National Mobilization Committee
- Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).
- Youth International Party (YIPPIES). Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin

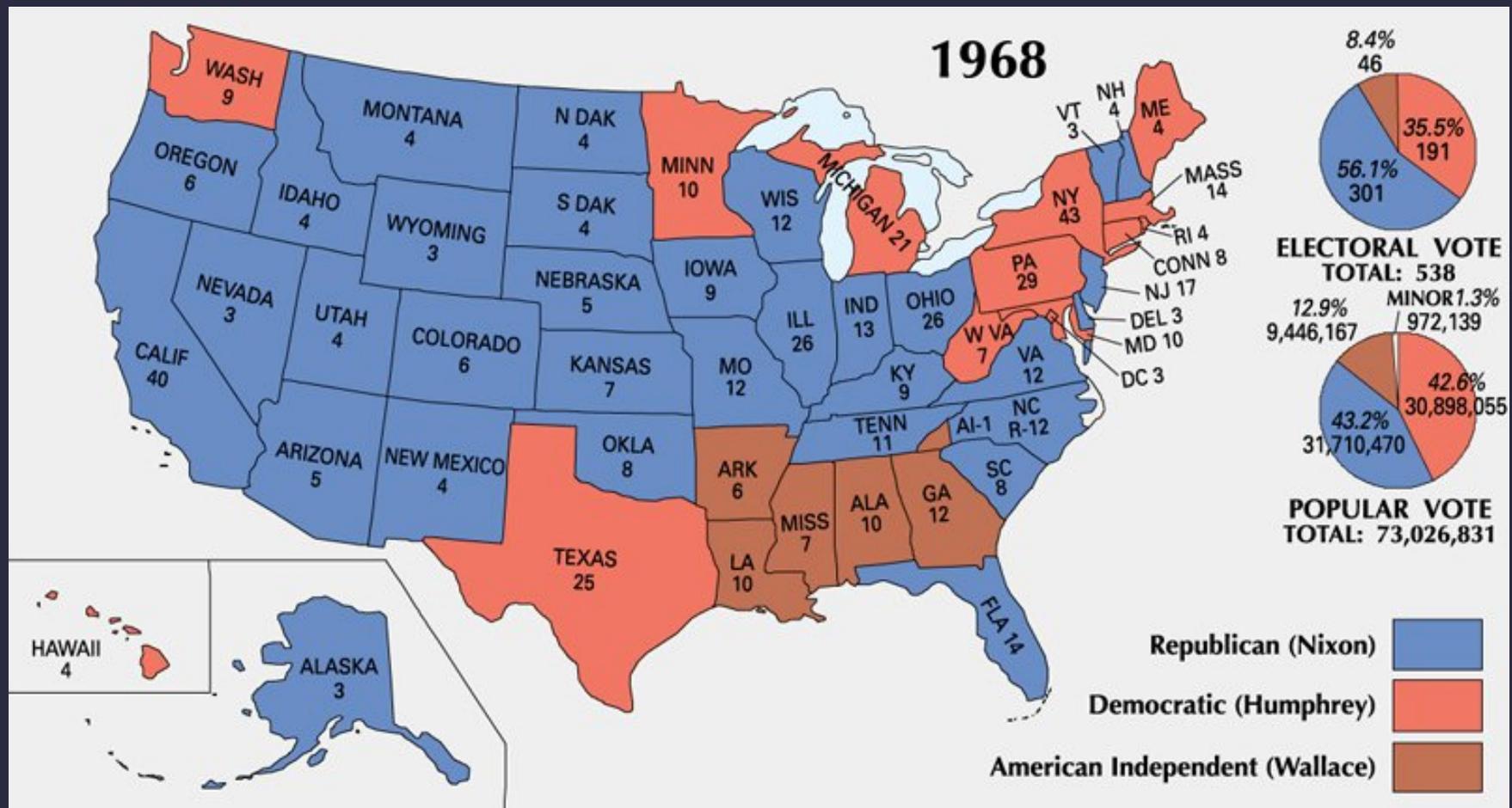


1968, The Turning Point



- National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.
- Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).
- Youth International Party (YIPPIES). Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin
- Bobby Seale was a founder of the Black Panthers.
 - charged under provisions of the 1968 Civil Rights Act, which made it a federal crime to cross state lines to incite a riot.

The Election of 1968



- Richard Nixon only narrowly won the 1968 election, but the combined total of popular votes for Nixon and Wallace indicated a shift to the right in American politics.
- The Vietnam war and a series of assassinations and crises eroded public trust in government and produced a backlash against liberal movements and the Democratic party.

Nixon in Person

- Although he had a reserved and remote personality, many Americans respected Nixon for his experience and service.
- Nixon was willing to say or do anything to defeat his enemies, who included political opponents, the government bureaucracy, the press corps, and leaders of the antiwar movement.
- Believing that the executive branch needed to be strong, Nixon gathered a close circle of trusted advisors around him.

Nixon's Staff

Nixon's Close Advisors

- *H. R. Haldeman* — After campaigning tirelessly for Nixon, advertising executive H. R. Haldeman became Nixon's chief of staff.
- *John Ehrlichman* — Lawyer John Ehrlichman served as Nixon's personal lawyer and rose to the post of chief domestic advisor.
- *John Mitchell* — Asked to be Attorney General after working with Nixon's campaign in New York, Mitchell often spoke with Nixon several times a day.
- *Henry Kissinger* — Although he had no previous ties to Nixon, Harvard government professor Henry Kissinger first became Nixon's national security advisor and later his Secretary of State.

Nixon's Domestic & Economic Policies



• **Stagflation**: described as a period of high inflation combined with economic stagnation, unemployment, or economic recession that occurred during the 1970s.

• **Stagflation** is thought to occur when there is an adverse shock (a sudden increase, say in the price of oil)

Stagflation Response

- Taxed imports to help balance of trade
- Helpless to stop OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) from oil embargo in retaliation for Israeli support
- Issues wage and price controls to reduce inflation and spur job growth
- Goes off gold standard to lessen dollar and bolster US products overseas

Domestic Policy—Oil and Inflation

- During Nixon's first few years in office, unemployment and inflation rose, and federal spending proved difficult to control.
- In response, Nixon turned to the practice of **deficit spending**, or spending more money in a year than the government receives in revenues. He also imposed two price freezes lasting several months each.
- When the United States supported its ally Israel in a war against Egypt and Syria in 1973, the Arab members of the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** imposed an embargo, or ban, on shipping oil to the United States.
- The resulting shortage resulted in high oil prices, which in turn drove inflation even higher.

Domestic Policy—Social Programs

- Although Nixon himself supported cutting back or eliminating federal social programs, he did not want to alienate those voters who favored them.
- Under Nixon's **New Federalism**, states were asked to assume greater responsibility for the well-being of their citizens, taking some of this responsibility away from the federal government.

The “Southern Strategy”

Nixon's Views on Civil Rights

- Nixon did not support advances in civil rights, believing that to do so would cost him the support of many white southern voters.
- Hoping to win over white southern Democrats, Nixon sought a “southern strategy” which would keep his supporters happy.

Results of Nixon's Views

- Nixon's views resulted in a slowdown of desegregation.
- Although Nixon tried to prevent the extension of certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Congress went ahead with the extension.
- Busing to end segregation in schools was slowed, but not halted entirely, by Nixon's opposition to it.

Nixon's Supreme Court

- During Nixon's first term in office, four of the nine Supreme Court justices either died, resigned, or retired. This gave him the opportunity to name four new justices and, thus, reshape the court.
- Warren Burger, Nixon's choice for Chief Justice, was a moderate. However, Nixon's later appointees reflected his conservative views.
- The Senate rejected two of Nixon's nominees from the South, charging that they showed racial bias.

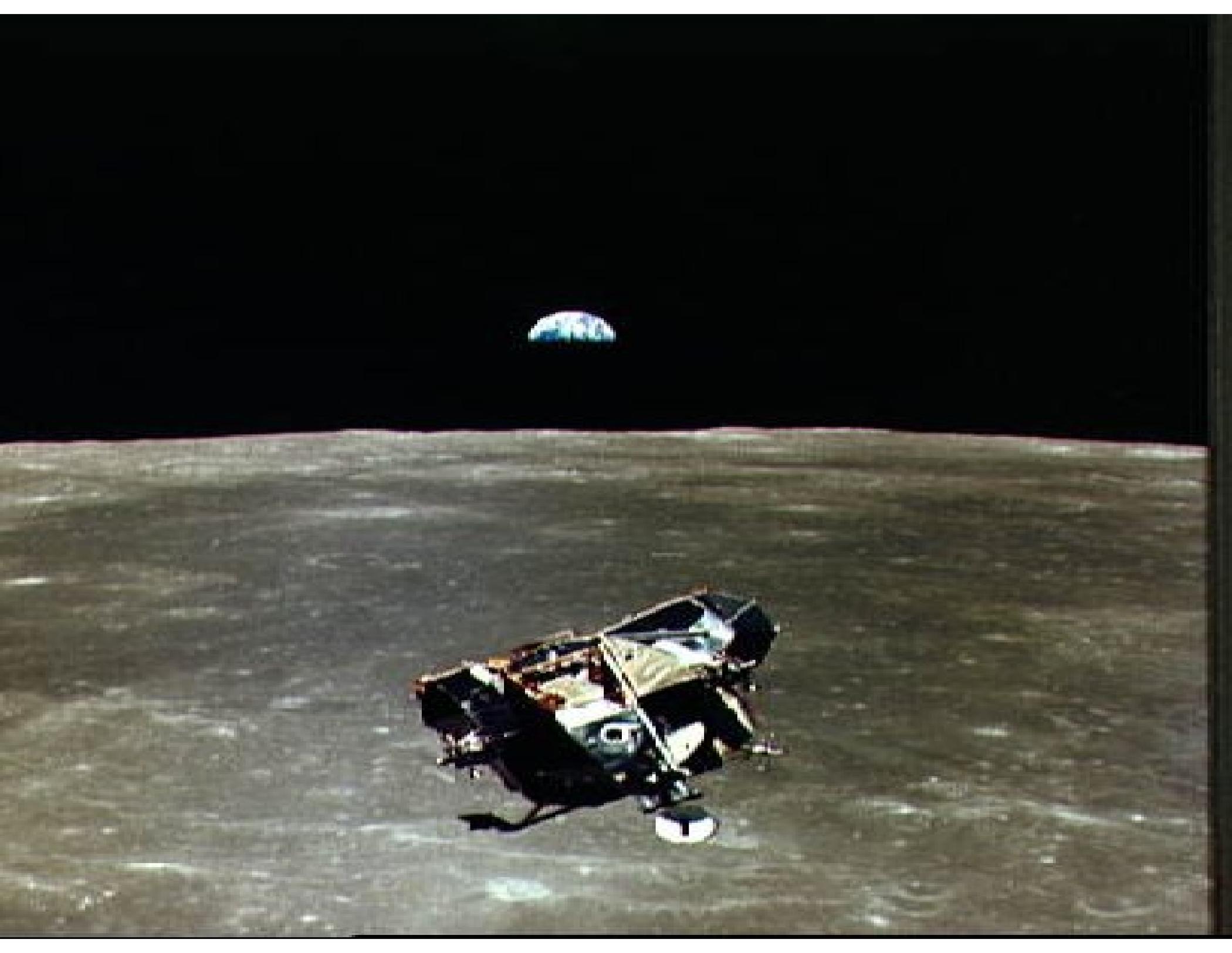
The First Moon Landing

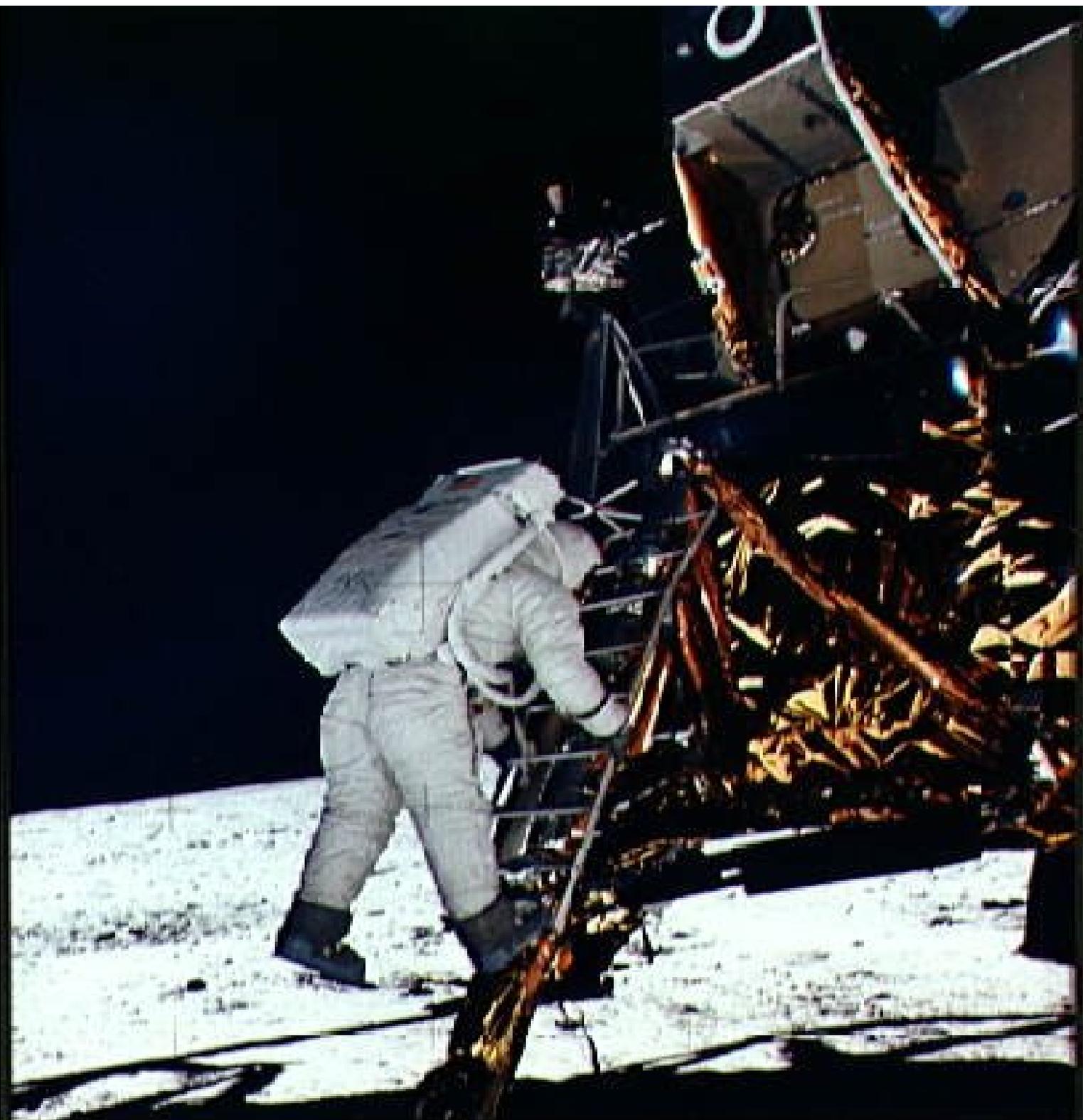
- During Nixon's presidency, the United States achieved its goal of a successful moon landing.
- On July 20, 1969, Neil A. Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon. He was joined by Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., a fellow crewman on the *Apollo 11* spacecraft.
- Television viewers around the world watched the moon landing, and *Apollo 11*'s crew were treated as heroes when they returned.



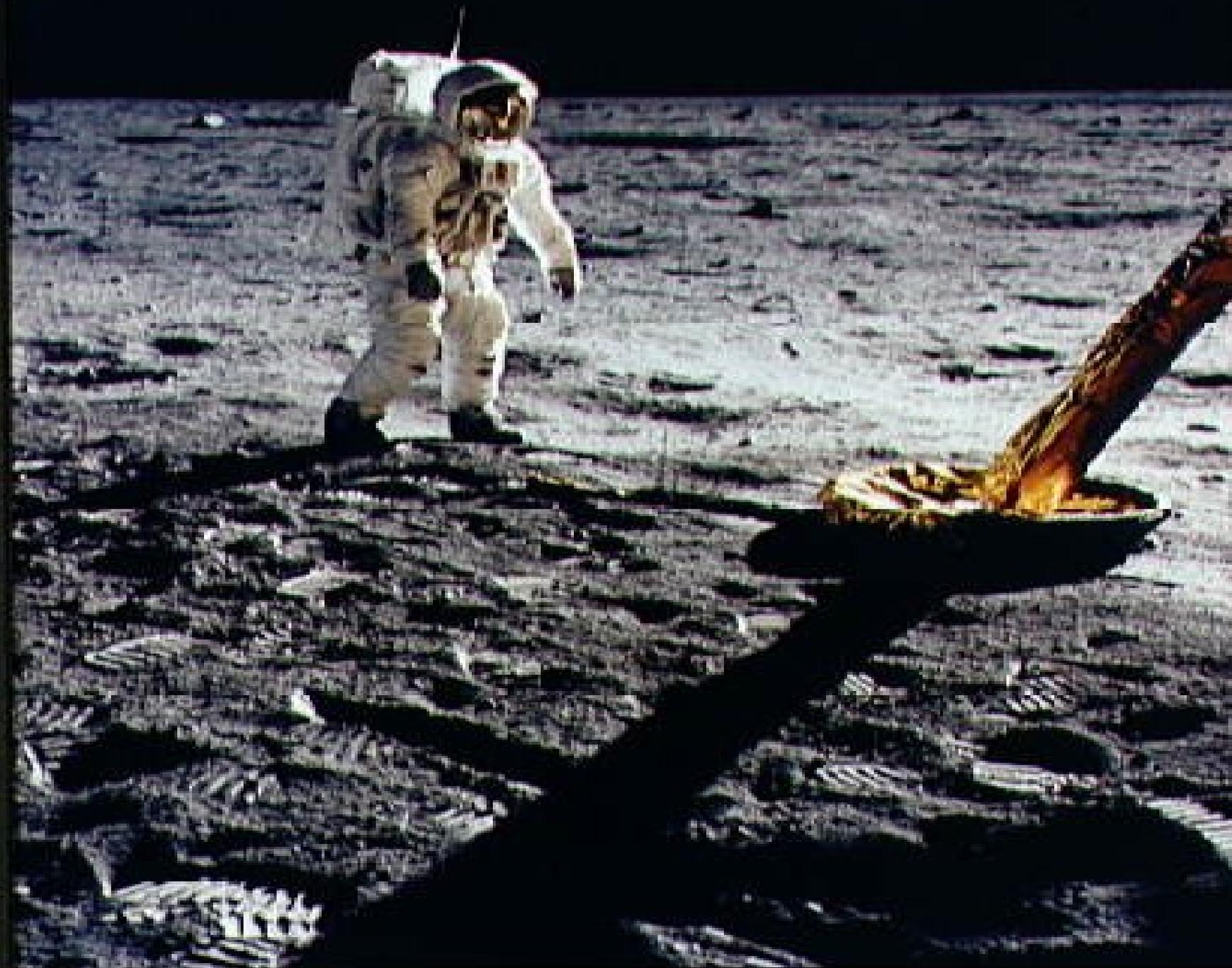


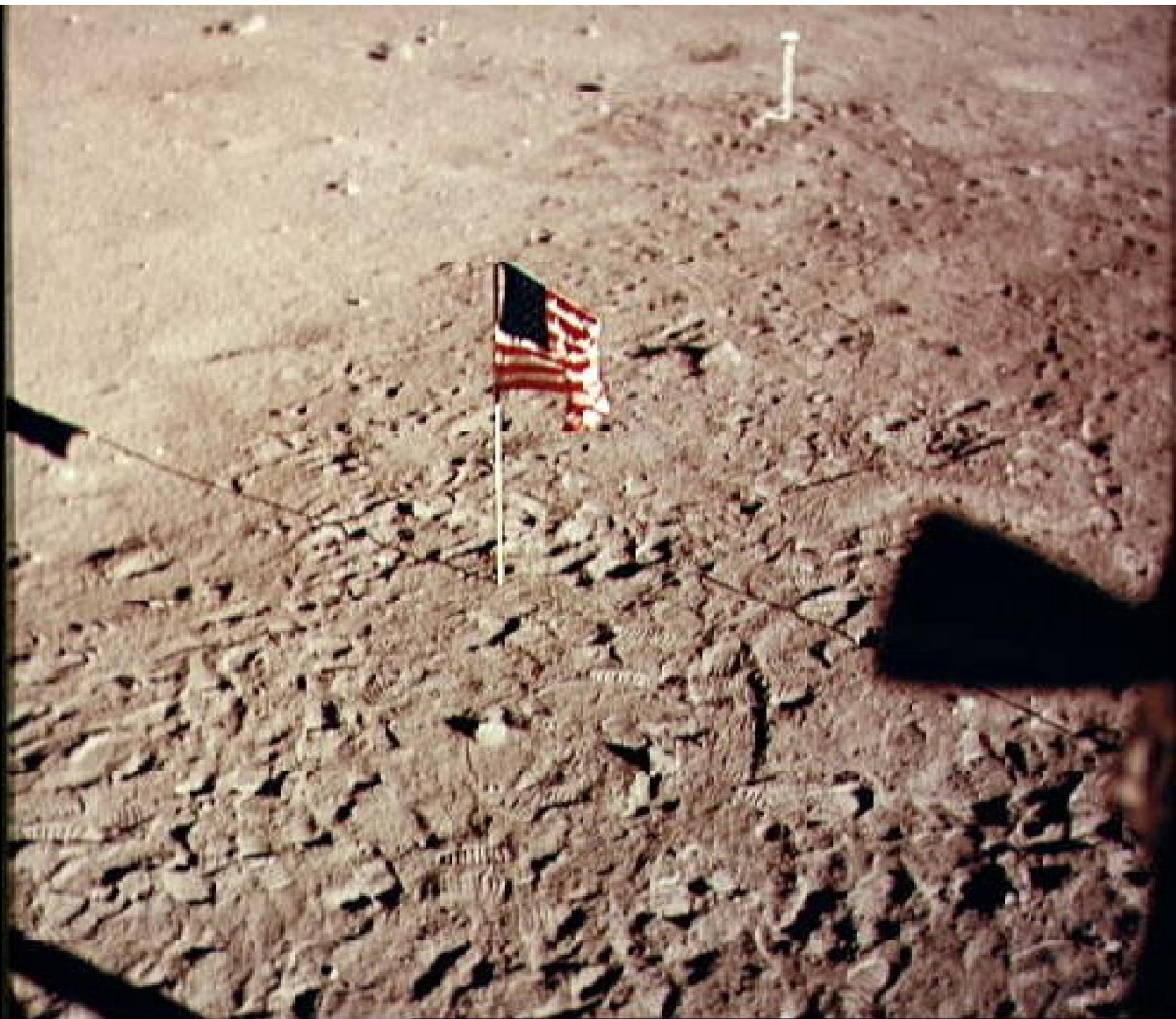


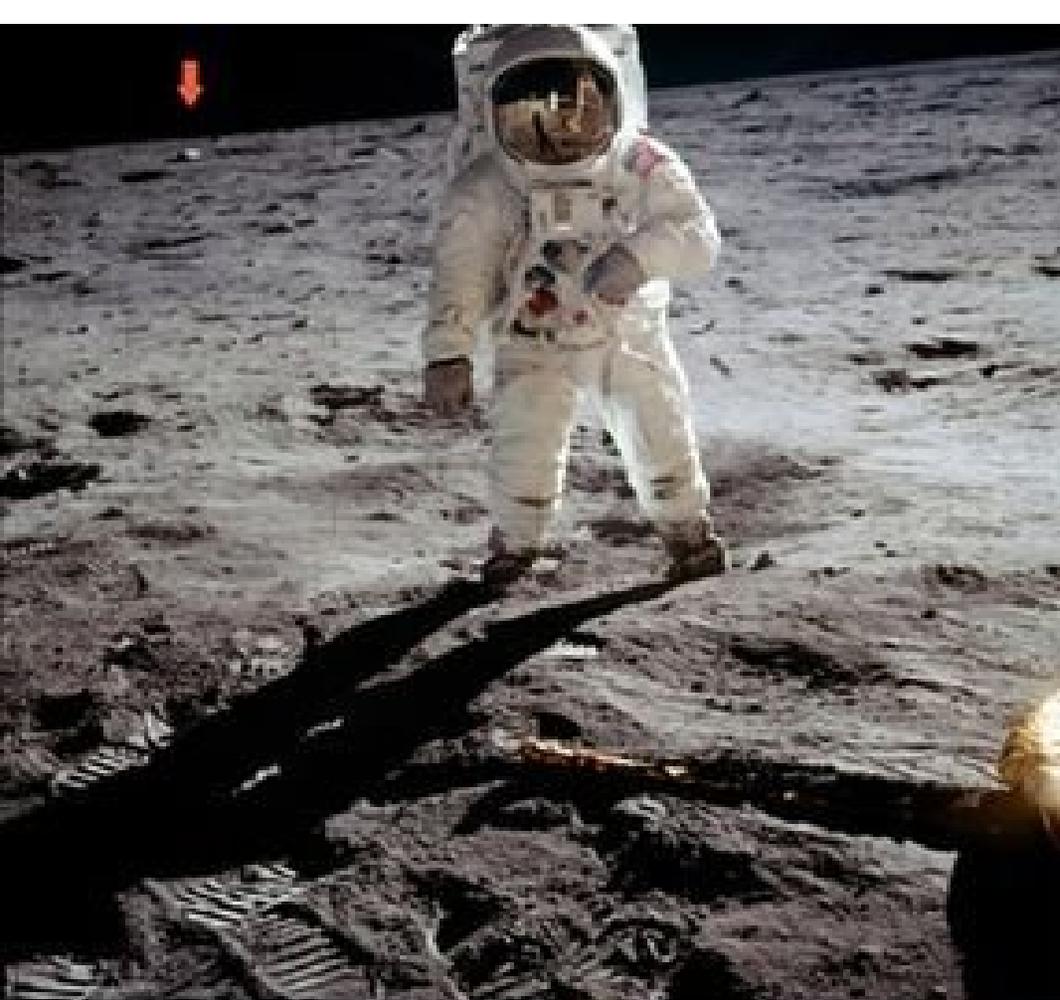












APOLLO 11

FAMOUS SHOT OF ALDRIN "WALKING ON THE MOON" - SIGNS OF FAKERY

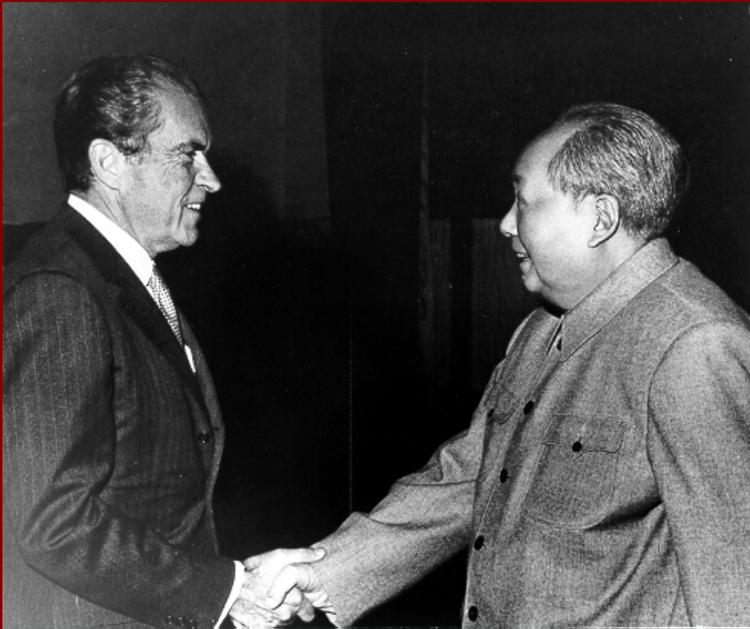
(1) The face shield (right) shows inconsistent ground lighting, left side spotlight (2) Ground hotspot around astronaut, (top left) but dark horizon, unlike sunshine. (3) Rock in the distance (left) front lit, while astronaut is back lit. Rock shadow should be parallel to astronaut's (4) Dark side of astronaut fully lit, but no flashbulb, while his shadow is solid black

NOTE: Later Apollo mission photos look very authentic, so either there was an actual moon landing, or techniques of fakery greatly improved.

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Nixon's Foreign Policy



- **Détente = easing of tensions between US, Soviet Union and China. Nixon visits**
 - **China**
 - **Soviet Union**
- **SALT I**
- **Vietnam War**
 - **Vietnamization**
 - **Peace With Honor**
 - **Cambodian bombing raids**
 - **Paris Peace Accords of 1973**

Henry Kissinger

Practical Politics

- Kissinger admired the European political philosophy of realpolitik, or practical politics.
- Under this policy, nations make decisions based on maintaining their strength rather than on moral principles.
- Kissinger applied a realpolitik approach to his dealings with China and the Soviet Union, which led to better diplomatic relations with both nations.

Public Opinion

- Kissinger understood the power of the media and was able to use it to shape public opinion.
- Kissinger's efforts in ending the Vietnam War and easing Cold War tensions made him a celebrity.
- He topped a list of most-admired Americans, was often featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, and in 1973 shared the Nobel peace prize.

Relaxing Tensions

Détente

- Although Nixon had built a reputation as a strong anti-Communist, he and Kissinger reversed the direction of postwar American foreign policy by holding talks with China and the Soviet Union.
- Nixon and Kissinger's greatest accomplishment was in bringing about détente, or a relaxation in tensions, between the United States and these Communist nations.
- Nixon visits China, meets with Chou En Lai and Chairman Mao.

Complex Foreign Affairs

- Kissinger understood that foreign affairs were more complicated than just a standoff between the United States and communism.
- The Soviet Union and China, once allies, had become bitter enemies.
- This development had the potential to reshape global politics.

Nixon's Foreign Policy

- Advisor Henry Kissinger creates détente, warming Cold War relationships
- Goes to both the USSR and China in 1972 becoming first President to visit those nations
- SALT agreement with the Soviets



A New Approach to China

Easing Relations Between the United States and China

- Historical Background — After its Communist takeover in 1949, the United States refused to recognize the People's Republic of China, viewing the government of Taiwan as the legitimate Chinese rulers.
- Steps to Ease Relations — During the early 1970s, relations eased between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Nixon referred to the nation by name, travel and trade restrictions were lifted.
- Nixon's Visit to China — In February 1972, Nixon became the first American President to visit China. Touring Chinese sites in front of television cameras, Nixon established the basis for future diplomatic ties during his visit.
- Recognizing the Chinese Government — The United States decided to join other nations in recognizing the Chinese government.

Limiting Nuclear Arms

- Uses new relations with China to get USSR to talk, wants to limit Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs), leads to Strategic Arms Limitations Talks—helped reduce tensions
- In 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the first **Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty**, known as **SALT I**.
- **SALT I** froze the number of strategic ballistic missile launchers at existing levels, and provided for the addition of new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers only after the same number of older intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and SLBM launchers had been dismantled.
- **SALT I** demonstrated that arms control agreements between the superpowers were possible.
- However, it did not reduce the number of weapons that either nation possessed, nor did it halt the development of conventional weapon technologies.

Nixon's Foreign Policy in Vietnam

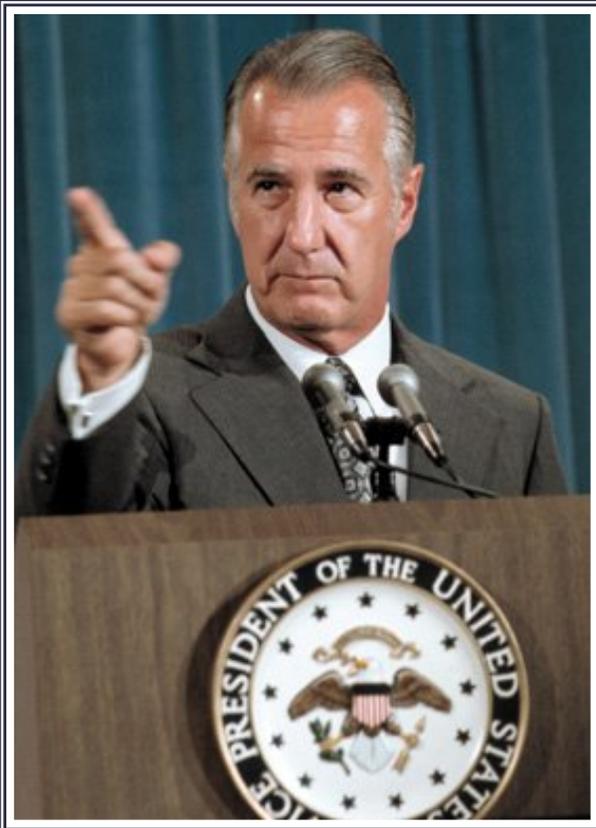
- **Peace With Honor**

Nixon's idea of "peace with honor" in Vietnam was designed to contrast his plan with that of the Democrats, who just wanted to dump US allies in South Vietnam and allow them to be taken over by the Communists.

- **Vietnamization**

Nixon had hoped to slowly remove US from the war while helping South Vietnam to defend itself. He tried to force North Vietnam into accepting a peace plan by increasing bombing on North Vietnam and by attacking North Vietnamese strongholds in Cambodia.

Spiro Agnew



- Nixon's belligerent Vice-President who took on opponents much like Nixon did for Ike
- Alliteratively referred to "hopeless, hysterical hypochondriacs of history"
- Pleaded 'no contest' to bribe charges, resigns from office in late 1973
- Gerald Ford replaces



Watergate & Other Scandals

- Watergate Scandal
 - Pentagon Papers = New York Times vs. US Govt.
 - **CREEP**, the “plumbers”, and the enemies list
 - **Committee to Re-elect the President**
 - Senate Investigation = Impeachment charges
 - Resignation on August 9, 1974
 - Aftermath
- Succeeded by Gerald R. Ford

WATERGATE

Is synonymous with the abuse of Presidential power by President Nixon

- ❖ political burglary
 - ❖ bribery
 - ❖ extortion
 - ❖ wiretapping
 - ❖ conspiracy
- ❖ obstruction of justice
- ❖ destruction of evidence
- ❖ tax fraud
- ❖ illegal use of government agencies/CIA and FBI
 - ❖ illegal campaign contributions
 - ❖ use of public money for private purposes.

Battling Political Enemies

- Nixon's suspicious and secretive nature caused the White House to operate as if it were surrounded by **political enemies**.
- One result of this mind-set was the creation of an "**enemies list**," a list of prominent people seen as unsympathetic to the administration.
- When someone in the National Security Council appeared to have leaked secret government information to the **New York Times**, Nixon ordered that **wiretaps**, or listening devices, be installed on the telephones of some news reporters and members of his staff.
- Leaks to the press continued, including former Defense Department official Daniel Ellsberg's leak of the **Pentagon Papers**, a government study that revealed widespread deception about the situation in Vietnam.
- In response, Nixon organized a special White House unit, nicknamed the **Plumbers**, to stop government leaks. In September 1971, the **Plumbers** broke into the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist, hoping to punish Ellsberg by disclosing damaging personal information about him.

Nixon's Enemies List

- Jane Fonda
- Paul Newman
- Edward Kennedy
- Joe Namath
- Daniel Schorr
- Bill Cosby
- Several hundred more U.S. citizens

PENTAGON PAPERS

- ❖ In June 1971, Daniel Ellsberg leaked the *Pentagon Papers* to the *NY Times*
- ❖ These are a detailed study of US policy in Vietnam commissioned in 1967
- ❖ Because they showed that US leaders had planned all along to expand the war even while promising not to, Nixon and Kissinger felt threatened
- ❖ They tried to stop publication and even burgled Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office looking for evidence to discredit him

PENTAGON PAPERS



- Ellsberg was charged with 12 felony counts under the *Espionage Act*.
 - Carried a maximum sentence of 115 years.
 - The charges against Ellsberg and Anthony Russo (who helped him photocopy the papers)
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- Charges were dismissed in the fifth month of the trial.
 - On grounds of governmental misconduct due to illegal wiretapping and evidence tampering.

Nixon's Reelection Campaign

Campaign Funding

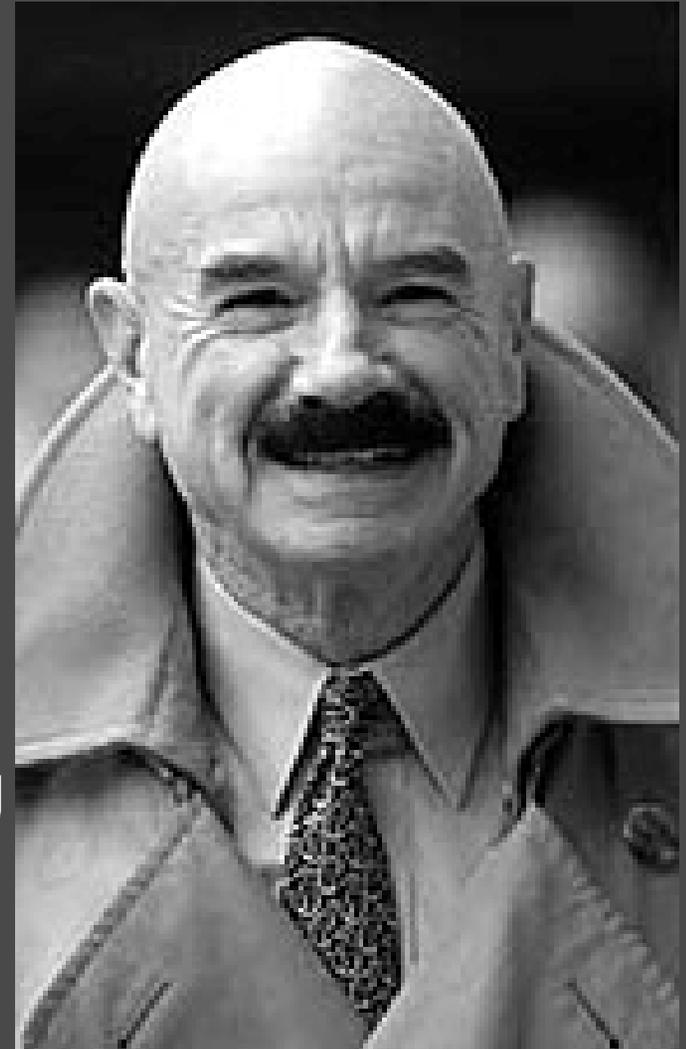
- The Committee to Reelect the President, led by John Mitchell, aimed to collect as much campaign money as possible before a new law required such contributions to be reported.
- The money that the Committee collected was intended to fund both routine campaign activities and secret unethical actions.

"Dirty Tricks"

- Attempts to sabotage Nixon's political opponents came to be known as "dirty tricks." These efforts included sending hecklers to disrupt Democratic campaign meetings and assigning spies to join the campaigns of opposing candidates.
- One particularly damaging "dirty trick" involved a faked letter that seriously hurt the candidacy of Edmund Muskie, a leading Democratic presidential contender.

PLUMBERS

- ❖ Nixon established a secret group known as the plumbers to plug leaks
- ❖ Started campaign of dirty tricks that included IRS harassment and derailing of Democratic frontrunner Edmund Muskie.
- ❖ Used methods as calling New Hampshire voters in the middle of the night and claiming to be from Harlem for Muskie or putting signs around Florida stating “Help Muskie in busing more children now”
- ❖ Funded by Committee to Re-Elect the President (**CREEP**) which used highly questionable fund raising tactics and raised over \$20 million



The Watergate Break-In

- In March 1972, a group within the Committee to Reelect the President made plans to wiretap the phones at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters at the Watergate apartment complex in Washington, D.C.
- This group was led by E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy. The group's first attempt failed. During their second attempt on June 17, 1972, five men were arrested.
- The money they carried was traced directly to Nixon's reelection campaign, linking the break-in to the campaign.
- The break-in and the cover-up which resulted became known as the Watergate scandal.

WATERGATE BREAK IN

- ❖ Some of the money raised by CREEP went to pay for the break in at the Democratic Headquarters located in the Watergate Hotel in Washington
- ❖ 5 burglars caught June 17, 1972, carrying cameras, wiretapping equipment and large amounts of cash
- ❖ Nixon administration denied any knowledge
- ❖ Burglars were convicted in January 1973 and, despite offers of \$400K in hush money from White House Counsel John Dean, one of the burglars started to talk
- ❖ At same time, reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward began to expose cover-up



The Watergate Cover-up

- Although Nixon had not been involved in the break-in, he became involved in its cover-up.
- He illegally authorized the CIA to try to persuade the FBI to stop its investigation of the break-in, on the grounds that the matter involved “national security.”
- Nixon advisors launched a scheme to bribe the Watergate defendants into silence, as well as coaching them on how to lie in court.
- During the months following the break-in, the incident was barely noticed by the public. Nixon won the 1972 election by a landslide.

The Scandal Unfolds

The Watergate Trial

- At the trial of the Watergate burglars in early 1973, all the defendants either pleaded guilty or were found guilty.
- Judge John J. Sirica, presiding over the trial, was not convinced that the full story had been told.
- He sentenced the burglars to long prison terms, suggesting that their terms could be reduced if they cooperated with upcoming Senate hearings on Watergate.

Woodward and Bernstein

- Two young Washington Post reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, were influential in tracking down information to uncover the Watergate story.
- Woodward and Bernstein believed that the White House would prove to be involved in the Watergate scandal.



W. Mark Felt, the number-two official of the FBI at the time of the Watergate break-in, has been identified as "Deep Throat," the secretive source of information that helped unravel the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s.

The Scandal Unfolds

The Senate Investigates

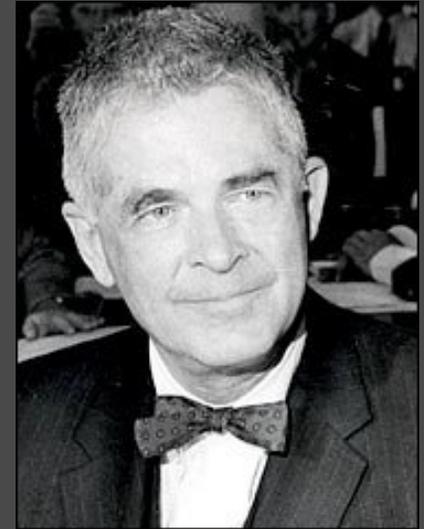
- Aided by Woodward and Bernstein and by the testimony of one of the Watergate burglars, a Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities began to investigate the Watergate affair.
- Millions of Americans watched the Senate hearings unfold on national television.
- Nixon attempted to protect himself by forcing two top aides to resign and by proclaiming that he would take final responsibility for the mistakes of others.

A Secret Taping System

- During the Senate hearings, Alexander Butterfield, a former presidential assistant, revealed the existence of a secret taping system in the President's office.
- The taping system had been set up to provide a historical record of Nixon's presidency. Now it could be used to show whether or not Nixon had been involved in the Watergate cover-up.

SATURDAY NIGHT MASSACRE

- ❖ Nixon stonewalled turning over tapes citing executive privilege and national security
- ❖ Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox successfully petitioned a lower court to force Nixon to hand over tapes
- ❖ Nixon refused and ordered Attorney General Elliott Richardson to fire Cox
- ❖ Richardson refused and resigned as did Asst. AG William Ruckelshaus
- ❖ Third in line, Solicitor General Robert Bork complied
- ❖ Became known as Saturday Night Massacre and sparked outrage and new demands for tapes
- ❖ Finally after new round of subpoenas, Nixon released heavily edited transcripts in spring of 1974 included a suspicious 18 minute gap in one of the tapes



An Administration in Jeopardy

Problems in the Nixon Administration, 1973–1974

- Nixon's public approval rating plummeted after his firing of Cox.
- When Cox's replacement, Leon Jaworski, also requested that Nixon turn over the tapes, Nixon turned over edited transcripts instead. Feelings of anger and disillusionment arose among many who read them.
- Vice President Spiro Agnew, accused of evading income taxes and taking bribes, resigned in early October 1973. His successor, Gerald Ford, was not confirmed until two months later.

IMPEACHMENT

- ❖ In summer of 1974, a committee of the House convened to consider impeachment
- ❖ On July 30, 7 Republicans joined Democratic majority to vote three articles of impeachment
 - obstruction of justice
 - abuse of power
 - subverting the Constitution
- ❖ 2 days later, Supreme Court ruled that Nixon had no right to claim executive privilege as justification for turning over additional tapes
- ❖ On August 5 Nixon released the unexpurgated tapes which contained shocking evidence that he had ordered the cover up as early as 6 days after the break in

RESIGNATION

- ❖ A delegation of the most senior members of Congress, led by Barry Goldwater, informed the President that no more than 15 Senators still supported him
- ❖ On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned
- ❖ Vice President Gerald Ford became President and a month later pardoned Nixon





THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 9, 1974

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I hereby resign the Office of President of the
United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard Nixon", is written below the word "Sincerely,".

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
The Secretary of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

11.35 AM

Handwritten initials "HK" are written in the bottom right corner of the letter.

AFTERMATH

- ❖ 26th Amendment gave 18 year olds the right to vote. If 18 year olds young men could fight and die this country, than they should have the right to vote.
- ❖ In middle of crisis, Congress, over Nixon's veto had passed the War Powers Resolution that limited presidential commitment of troops overseas to 60 days, after that required to get congressional approval
- ❖ 1974 strengthened Freedom of Information Act gave citizens greater access to files that federal government agencies had on them
 - ❖ Fair Campaign Practices Act of 1974 limited campaign contributions and provided for stricter accountability and public financing of presidential campaigns
- ❖ Independent Counsel Act of 1978 required Attorney General, in cases of suspected criminal activity in the executive branch, to call on three federal judges to appoint a special prosecutor
 - ❖ American distrust of its government = "credibility gap"