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## PAPERS OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION: THE PRESIDENT'S CONFIDENTIAL AND SUBJECT SPECIAL FILES, 1969-1974

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This publication consists of documents of an administratively-sensitive nature, arranged according to subject from President Nixon's Special Files collection, comprising the Confidential and Subject Files. These documents provide an in-depth look into the activities of the President, his closest advisors, and the administration. These records support the behind-the-scenes historical inquiry into an administration that may well be the most significant one since World War II and one of the most important in the 20th century.

**Date Range:** 1969-1974

**Content:** 66,921 images

**Source Library:** Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library

### **Detailed Description:**

Papers of the Nixon Administration, 1969-1974, The White House Special Files consists of documents of an administratively sensitive nature, arranged according to subject matter. These documents provide an in-depth look into the machinations of the President, his closest advisors, and the administration. The records will support the behind-the-scenes historical inquiry into an administration that may well be the most significant one since World War II and one of the most important in the 20th century.

In September 1972, the White House Special Files Unit was created within the White House complex to provide a secure storage location for administratively and politically sensitive material, personal material, and material with the President's handwriting. Sensitive materials created prior to 1972 were removed from selected White House Central Files: Subject Files and from selected White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files, and transferred to the Special Files. Any potentially sensitive materials created after 1972 were placed directly into the Special Files.

### *Domestic situation*

The Nixon administration marked the end of America's long period of post-World War II prosperity and the onset of a period of high inflation and unemployment—"stagflation." With

unemployment unusually low, but inflation was rising, Nixon adopted a policy of monetary restraint to cool what his advisers saw as an overheating economy. "Gradualism," as it was called, placed its hopes in restricting the growth of the money supply to rein in the economic boom that occurred during Lyndon Johnson's last year in office. But gradualism, as its name implied, did not produce quick results. The economy continued to deteriorate. In 1971 Nixon came up with a smash hit. He announced a wage-and-price freeze, tax cuts, and a temporary closure of the "gold window," preventing other nations from demanding American gold in exchange for American dollars. Public approval was overwhelming and Nixon rode the wave of popularity to reelection in November 1972.

The stable economic situation was short-lived. Expansive fiscal and monetary policies combined with the skyrocketing oil crisis in 1973. Ultimately, inflation would climb to 12.1 percent in 1974 and help push the economy into recession. When Nixon left office, the economy was in the tank, with rising unemployment and inflation, lengthening gas lines, and a crashing stock market.

### *Foreign Affairs*

President Nixon was far more interested in foreign policy than in domestic affairs. It was in this arena that Nixon intended to make his mark. Although his base of support was within the conservative wing of the Republican Party, and although he had made his own career as a militant opponent of Communism, Nixon saw opportunities to improve relations with the Soviet Union and establish relations with the People's Republic of China. Politically, he hoped to gain credit for easing Cold War tensions; geopolitically, he hoped to use the strengthened relations with Moscow and Beijing as leverage to pressure North Vietnam to end the war with a settlement. Nixon took office intending to secure control over foreign policy in the White House. He kept Secretary of State William Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird out of the loop on key matters of foreign policy. The instrument of his control over what he called "the bureaucracy" was his assistant for national security affairs, Henry Kissinger. Together, they used the National Security Council staff to concentrate power in the White House.

### *Watergate*

Watergate was so much more than a single crime and cover-up that it is impossible to summarize the tangle of abuses of presidential power that today are grouped under the name of the hotel where the Democratic National Committee had its offices. The arrest of five men in those offices on June 17, 1972, was the first step toward unearthing a host of administration misdeeds. It was to hide those other crimes that Nixon and his men launched the cover-up, the investigation of which helped to unravel that string of illegal conduct.

The Special Files published in this collection comprises the Subject Files, the largest segment of the Special Files; and consists of the following file segments:

- Subject Files
- Confidential Files

The Confidential Files consists of sensitive subject matter transferred from the White House Central Files subject categories.

These file segments of the Subject Files have not been included:

- Alpha Name Files (letter file system used to track how outside correspondence was routed)
- Top Secret Files (includes a substantial number of withdrawal sheets)
- Oversized Attachments
- Confidential Box Lists