Chapter Outline

8.1 The 1980’s
8.2 The Ronald Reagan Administration
8.3 The George H. W. Bush Administration
8.4 Population Movements and Demographic Changes of the Late 20th Century
8.5 The Bill Clinton Administration
8.6 United States Foreign Policy of the Late 20th Century
8.7 Bush v. Gore
8.8 September 11, 2001
8.9 Social Changes in American Society and Politics

Students describe important events and trends since 1980. Students analyze the important foreign policies of and events that took place during the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

US.104 Evaluate technological and scientific advances, including the work of significant innovators and entrepreneurs, in the fields of medicine, transportation, communication, food services, and geographic information systems. (C, E, G)

US.105 ... Analyze the significant events and achievements of the Reagan administration, including revitalization of national pride, Reaganomics, War on Drugs, response to the Challenger disaster, Strategic Defense Initiative, the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, the response to the Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon, and the invasion of Grenada. (C, E, H, P)

US.106 ... Describe the significant events in the foreign policy of the George H.W. Bush administration, including the invasion of Panama and the Gulf War. (G, H, P)

US.107 ... Using census data and population pyramids, identify and describe the demographic changes in the United States since 1980 and the increased movement of people from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt. (C, E, G, H, P)

US.108 ... Summarize the significant events and achievements of the Clinton administration, including Welfare-to-Work, Brady Bill, reduction of the federal debt, NAFTA, and the scandals and subsequent impeachment proceedings. (C, E, H, P)

US.109 ... Analyze the late 20th century foreign policy of intervention by the United States in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and particular attempts to keep peace in the Middle East. (G, P)

US.110 ... Explain the reasons for and the outcome of the Supreme Court case Bush v. Gore. (H, P)

US.111 ... Describe the impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon,
including the response of President George W. Bush, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and continuing efforts to combat terrorism globally. (E, G, H, P)

US.112 ... Describe the increasing role of women and minorities in American society, politics, and economy, including the achievements of Sandra Day O’Connor, Sally Ride, Geraldine Ferraro, Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Pelosi, and the election of President Barack Obama. (C, H, P)

**Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Read:** “Speech at Brandenburg Gate,” Ronald Reagan; “Address to the Nation, September 11, 2001, George W. Bush; excerpts from “Acceptance Speech at the 2008 Democratic Convention,” President Barack Obama

**Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Consider:** excerpts from “First Inaugural Address,” Ronald Reagan; “First Inaugural Address,” Bill Clinton; excerpts from The World is Flat, Thomas Friedman
THE 1980s

"I want my MTV." Americans enjoyed many fundamental changes in their standard of living in the 1980s. One major transformation was the new, expanded role of television. Cable television, although available in the 1970s, became standard for most American households. This change ushered in a whole host of new programming.

Sports-minded Americans could watch the ESPN network 24 hours a day. Nickelodeon catered to the children of the baby boomers with youth-centered daily programming, and to the boomers themselves by broadcasting reruns of classic sitcoms at night. Americans could catch up with the news at any time by watching CNN.

MTV, or Music Television, brought a revolution to the recording industry. MTV broadcast music video interpretations of popular songs. Beginning in 1981 with the prophetic Buggles tune "Video Killed the Radio Star," MTV redefined popular music. Stars like Madonna and Michael Jackson were much more able to convey an image as well as music. Madonna’s "Material Girl" message typified the values of an increasingly materialistic decade.

The videocassette recorder (VCR) allowed Americans to record television shows and watch them according to their own schedule and view feature films in the privacy of their own homes.

Perhaps the product that introduced the greatest change in American lifestyles of the 1980s was the personal computer. Introduced by Apple in 1977, the personal computer allowed management of personal finances, quick word-processing, and desktop publishing from the home. Businesses could manage payroll, mailing lists, and inventories from one small machine. Gone were the ledgers of the past. The Silicon Valley of California, which was the home to many of the firms that produced the processors that made these computers run, became the symbolic heart of the American technological economy.

"Greed is good," declared the lead character of the movie Wall Street. With the growing economy, many middle-class Americans rushed to invest in the bullish stock market and to flaunt their newly acquired wealth. Young Urban Professionals, or yuppies, replaced the socially conscious hippie of the previous generation of youth. Yuppies sought executive track jobs in large corporations and spent their money on upscale consumer products like Ray-Ban sunglasses, Polo apparel, and Mercedes and BMW automobiles. The health and fitness industry exploded as many yuppies engaged in regular fitness routines.

FIGURE 8.1
The computing revolution of the 1980s began with the introduction of the Apple II series. Sometimes referred to as the "Model-T" of computers, the Apple II allowed businesses to streamline operations and brought the wonders of digital data management into the home.

THE INFORMATION AGE

Some have begun to call it the Information Revolution. Technological changes brought dramatic new options to Americans living in the 1990s. From the beginning of the decade until the end, new forms of entertainment,
commerce, research, work, and communication became commonplace in the United States. The driving force behind much of this change was an innovation popularly known as the Internet.

Personal computers had become widespread by the end of the 1980s. Also available was the ability to connect these computers over local or even national networks. Through a device called a modem, individual users could link their computer to a wealth of information using conventional phone lines. What lay beyond the individual computer was a vast domain of information known as cyberspace.

The Internet was developed during the 1970s by the Department of Defense. In the case of an attack, military advisers suggested the advantage of being able to operate one computer from another terminal. In the early days, the Internet was used mainly by scientists to communicate with other scientists. The Internet remained under government control until 1984.

One early problem faced by Internet users was speed. Phone lines could only transmit information at a limited rate. The development of fiber-optic cables allowed for billions of bits of information to be received every minute. Companies like Intel developed faster microprocessors, so personal computers could process the incoming signals at a more rapid rate.

In the early 1990s, the World Wide Web was developed, in large part, for commercial purposes. Corporations created home pages where they could place text and graphics to sell products. Soon airline tickets, hotel reservations, books, and even cars and homes could be purchased online. Colleges and universities posted research data on the Internet, so students could find valuable information without leaving their dormitories. Companies soon discovered that work could be done at home and submitted online, so a whole new class of telecommuters began to earn a living from home offices unshaven and wearing pajamas.

New forms of communication were introduced. Electronic mail, or email, was a convenient way to send a message to associates or friends. Messages could be sent and received at the convenience of the individual. A letter that took several days to arrive could be read in minutes. Internet service providers like America Online and CompuServe set up electronic chat rooms. These were open areas of cyberspace where interested parties could join in a conversation with perfect strangers.
Advocates of the Internet cited its many advantages. The commercial possibilities were limitless. Convenience was greatly improved. Chat rooms and email allowed individuals to converse who may never have had the opportunity in the past. Educational opportunities were greatly enhanced because of the wealth of knowledge now placed at the fingertips of any wired individual. "Surfing the 'net" became a pastime in and of itself.

Critics charged that the Internet created a technological divide that increased the gap between the haves and have-nots. Those who could not afford a computer or a monthly access fee were denied these possibilities. Many decried the impersonal nature of electronic communication compared to a telephone call or a handwritten letter. Hate groups were using the Internet to expand their bases and recruit new members. The unregulated nature of the Internet allowed pornography to be broadcast to millions of homes. Protecting children from these influences, or even from meeting violent predators would prove to be difficult. Regardless of its drawbacks, by the end of the 1990s, the world was fast becoming wired.

ADVANCES IN THE FIELD OF MEDICINE

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) was increasingly used to create cross section images of any part of the body. This became a valuable diagnostic tool. DNA evidence increasingly came into use to establish a defendant’s guilt or innocence in legal cases.

The Human Genome Project - a map of the 3 billion “letters” in the human genetic code was completed in about a decade during the 90s, and holds great potential for the tracking and combating of hereditary disease and congenital disorders.

Genetic Engineering (changing the biology of an organism’s cells) was used with greater frequency especially with regard to foods which drew mixed public reaction. Gene therapy and genetically engineered antibodies were used with success to combat cancer.

The fight against AIDS made huge leaps forward as drug therapies were successful at extending the average lifespan of patients diagnosed with HIV. Work on seeking a vaccine to prevent AIDS continues.

TRANSPORTATION

- America on the Move | Transportation technology

FOOD SERVICES

- Microwave Oven
- Microwave

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

- GIS (geographic information system)
- brief history of geographical information systems
Americans were fed up.

In 1980, confidence in the American economy and government hit rock bottom. Looking for a change and the promise of a better future, voters turned to Ronald Reagan for answers.

His message was clear. Government has become too big and needs to be trimmed down to size. Taxes are insanely high and need to be cut to stimulate growth and investment. Military spending should be increased to fix the degenerating state of the American war machine. Morality and character need to be reemphasized in American life. The United States is still the largest superpower in the world with the best system of government. It’s time to feel good about being an American again.

Reagan’s election brought a dramatic change to the federal government. No president, Republican or Democrat, had attempted to reduce the size of the federal government since Franklin Roosevelt initiated his New Deal. The tax cut that was handed to the American people benefited wealthy Americans most, with the hope that their increased income would trickle down to poorer Americans — the so-called trickle-down theory. The economic stagnation of the 1970s did come to an end, but at the cost of huge federal deficits and the increasing poverty rate.

The 1980s were a decade of scandals. The Iran-Contra Scandal proved that White House officials were willing to break the law to carry out their political agenda. Religious leaders like Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart became mired in dirty sex scandals. Moral turpitude ended the political career of Colorado Democrat Gary Hart, who might well have been president one day. A savings and loan scam fleeced American taxpayers for billions and billions of bailout dollars.

American lifestyles changed dramatically during the 1980s. Cable television introduced a whole palette of new programming for the discriminating viewer. Compact discs replaced records as the most popular medium for recorded music. Banking became more convenient with the proliferation of automatic teller machines. Businesses and individuals rushed to purchase personal computers that held the promise of radically simplifying difficult tasks.

As the decade came to a close, it became clear that the malaise of the 1970s was over. The United States received a boost of confidence when the Cold War came to an end in 1991. The menace of a threatening Soviet Union now
8.2. The Ronald Reagan Administration

belonged to history, and the United States claimed the status of the only remaining superpower in the world.

"MORNING IN AMERICA"

The long national nightmare was over.

The United States was filled with hard-working, God-fearing citizens who cared about their fellow Americans. Inflation and unemployment were problems of government, not the national character. Vietnam was over; America was the most powerful nation in the world. The Soviet Union was an evil empire. Old-fashioned initiative and ingenuity would maintain America’s competitive edge in commerce.

These themes soothed a nation sick with the malaise of the 1970s. When all had seemed lost, a grandfatherly figure stepped forth and optimistically reassured Americans that the age-old beliefs they held about the grandeur of the United States were not myths.

This man, Ronald Wilson Reagan, understood the spirit of the times, and his message, personality, and politics dominated the 1980s.

Traditionally, working-class Americans, Southerners, Catholics, and urban dwellers had strong ties to the Democratic Party. The Republicans relied heavily on support from the rural Midwest, Protestant leaders, and wealthier voters. Ronald Reagan built a new coalition for the Republican Party in his quest for the Presidency in 1980.

Working Americans were shocked to see unemployment rates nearing double digits. Inflation was pushing the middle class into tax brackets previously reserved for the affluent classes. Reagan promised to reduce their level of
misery with sound fiscal policy. Southerners disgruntled by affirmative action and busing found friendly ears in the Reagan campaign. The endorsement of Reagan by the Protestant establishment did not deter devout Catholics from voting Republican, since Reagan promised to oppose abortion rights and promote family values.

Crime-plagued city denizens looked to Reagan for comfort as he portrayed himself as the law and order candidate. Americans across demographic lines were warmed by his promises for a stronger America domestically and overseas. Very quickly, these "REAGAN DEMOCRATS" crumbled the old alignment. Jimmy Carter, his opponent in the 1980 election, never stood a chance.

Reagan’s victory over the incumbent Carter was an electoral vote landslide. He tallied 489 votes to Carter’s 49. The Republicans also captured a majority of the Senate for the first time since 1954. Analysts point out that this perceived mandate might have been overstated. Voter turnout was the lowest in the history of Presidential elections. Liberals argued that people were not voting for Reagan’s conservative agenda as much as they were voting against Jimmy Carter. During his re-election campaign, Carter endured an approval rating of 23 percent — lower than Richard Nixon’s in the darkest days of Watergate!

The new President seemed to be in the right place at the right time. Within hours of his inauguration, Iran released the American hostages that had been held for 444 days. Dubbed "THE GREAT COMMUNICATOR," Reagan had a smile and a confidence that comforted many. At the age of 69, he was the oldest President ever to take office, but he exuded a youthful vitality that obscured his years.

Even an assassination attempt worked in his favor. When JOHN HINCKLEY put a .22 caliber bullet in Reagan’s chest within two months of his inauguration, he took it all in stride. "I hope you’re all Republicans," he quipped to the physicians that greeted him at the hospital. His popularity soared.

Charges that he had little control over his staff and a less than functional understanding of many matters of policy fell mostly on deaf ears. He earned a reputation as the "TEFLON PRESIDENT" — no scandal could stick to him.

In 1984, Reagan won a smashing re-election campaign over WALTER MONDALE. Democrat Mondale, running with the first woman nominee for Vice-President, Geraldine Ferraro, won only his home state of Minnesota and the District of Columbia. A 1984 Reagan campaign as declared proudly, "It’s morning in America." Whether the claim
was fact or fiction, American voters accepted Reagan’s assurances and enthusiastically cried for a second term.

**REAGANOMICS**

The media called it Reaganomics. During the campaign of 1980, Ronald Reagan announced a recipe to fix the nation’s economic mess. He claimed an undue tax burden, excessive government regulation, and massive social spending programs hampered growth. Reagan proposed a phased 30% tax cut for the first three years of his Presidency. The bulk of the cut would be concentrated at the upper income levels. The economic theory behind the wisdom of such a plan was called supply-side or trickle-down economics.

Tax relief for the rich would enable them to spend and invest more. This new spending would stimulate the economy and create new jobs. Reagan believed that a tax cut of this nature would ultimately generate even more revenue for the federal government. The Congress was not as sure as Reagan, but they did approve a 25% cut during Reagan’s first term.

The results of this plan were mixed. Initially, the Federal Reserve Board believed the tax cut would re-ignite inflation and raise interest rates. This sparked a deep recession in 1981 and 1982. The high interest rates caused the value of the dollar to rise on the international exchange market, making American goods more expensive abroad. As a result, exports decreased while imports increased. Eventually, the economy stabilized in 1983, and the remaining years of Reagan’s administration showed national growth.

The defense industry boomed as well. Reagan insisted that the United States was open to a "window of vulnerability" to the Soviet Union regarding nuclear defense. Massive government contracts were awarded to defense firms to upgrade the nation’s military. Reagan even proposed a space-based missile defense system called the Strategic Defense Initiative. Scientists were dubious about the feasibility of a laser-guided system that could shoot down enemy missiles. Critics labeled the plan "Star Wars."

Economists disagreed over the achievements of Reaganomics. Tax cuts plus increased military spending would cost the federal government trillions of dollars. Reagan advocated paying for these expenses by slashing government programs. In the end, the Congress approved his tax and defense plans, but refused to make any deep cuts to
the welfare state. Even Reagan himself was squeamish about attacking popular programs like Social Security and Medicare, which consume the largest percentages of taxpayer dollars. The results were skyrocketing deficits.

**FIGURE 8.11**
Ronald Reagan's increased spending and accompanying tax cuts resulted in dramatic budget deficits during the 1980s. A deficit occurs when spending exceeds revenues in any year. The drop you see at the end of this chart represents recent attempts to achieve a "balanced budget" — a spending plan where the funds available for use equal the funds spent by the federal government.

The national debt tripled from one to three trillion dollars during the Reagan Years. The President and conservatives in Congress cried for a balanced budget amendment, but neither branch had the discipline to propose or enact a balanced budget. The growth that Americans enjoyed during the 1980s came at a huge price for the generations to follow.

**FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ENTANGLEMENTS**

**FIGURE 8.12**
U.S. planes attacked Libya in 1986 after evidence surfaced that Libyan terrorists were responsible for a discotheque bombing in West Berlin. Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi (above) survived the attack, although his home was targeted.

Ronald Reagan, Cold Warrior. Before he became President, he set the tone for relations with the Soviet Union by labeling the USSR an "evil empire." Around the world, communism seemed to be spreading. Soviet troops were in Afghanistan. Nicaragua was led by a Soviet-backed Sandinista government. Communist guerillas threatened to take over in neighboring El Salvador. Cuban-backed troops waged a successful insurgency in Angola. The age of détente was over.

Reagan hoped to negotiate with the Soviet Union, but believed he could only achieve concessions if dealing from a position of superiority. His increase in military spending would force a similar increase on the part of the Soviet rivals. In addition to upgrading all three branches of the American strategic defense, he proposed a bold new scheme to defend the United States mainland from any incoming ballistic missiles. This Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) drew criticism from liberal Democrats who deemed it too costly and from scientists who questioned its feasibility.

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed leadership of the USSR in 1985, proclaiming a new policy of openness, Reagan believed it was time to act. The two leaders agreed in principle to an Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty in 1987,
which for the first time eliminated an entire class of existing nuclear weapons.

FIGURE 8.13
The Iran-Contra Committee convened in 1987 in an attempt to learn more about the secret funding of the Nicaraguan contras. No link could be made to President Reagan, who replied, "I don't remember" to most questions about his involvement.

Around the globe, Reagan was determined to vanquish the specter of Vietnam. He believed the United States could ill afford to sit passively while communism expanded aggressively. He announced the Reagan Doctrine, which pledged American support to "freedom fighters" opposing Communism anywhere on the globe. Funds and CIA training were awarded to the government of El Salvador to help defeat communist guerrillas. After left-leaning revolutionaries took over the island of Grenada in 1983, Reagan dispatched the Marines to install a US-friendly regime. The United States gave support to the mujahedeen rebels who fought against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Another international menace was state-sponsored terrorism. In October 1983, 239 Marines were killed in Lebanon by a suicide bomber. Governments such as Syria, Libya, and Iran were suspected of training terrorist groups on their own soil. Reagan warned the nations of the world that if the United States could ever prove a link between an act of terrorism and a foreign government, there would be serious consequences. When the CIA linked the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque to the government of Libya, Reagan sprung into action. U.S. planes retaliated in April 1986 by bombing Libya, including the home of its leader, Muammar el-Qaddafi.

FIGURE 8.14
The "glasnost" (openness) and "perestroika" (reform) of Mikhail Gorbachev's term as Soviet Premier led to lessened tensions and a better dialogue between the U.S. and USSR.

Terrorism and anti-Communism combined to confront Reagan with his worst domestic scandal. In November 1986, the press reported that American military supplies had been secretly sold to archenemy Iran in exchange for their support for the release of American hostages held in Lebanon. As the story unraveled, it was revealed that a National Security Council aide named Oliver North diverted proceeds from the Iran deal to support the Nicaraguan contras, who fought against the Sandinista government.

The Congress had expressly forbidden such aid, but high-level Reagan Administration officials had proceeded nonetheless. Documents were shredded to mask the paper trail in the White House. No connection to between the scandal and President Reagan was ever proven. When asked about his knowledge of the Iran-Contra affair, Reagan repeatedly replied: "I don’t remember." Although no charges were ever raised, the "Teflon President" was somewhat smeared by the ugly mess in the White House.
THE COLD WAR ENDS

The fall of the Berlin Wall. The shredding of the Iron Curtain. The end of the Cold War.

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the reins of power in the Soviet Union in 1985, no one predicted the revolution he would bring. A dedicated reformer, Gorbachev introduced the policies of glasnost and perestroika to the USSR.

GLASNOST, or openness, meant a greater willingness on the part of Soviet officials to allow western ideas and goods into the USSR. PERESTROIKA was an initiative that allowed limited market incentives to Soviet citizens. Gorbachev hoped these changes would be enough to spark the sluggish Soviet economy. Freedom, however, is addictive.

The unraveling of the SOVIET BLOC began in Poland in June 1989. Despite previous Soviet military interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland itself, Polish voters elected a non communist opposition government to their legislature. The world watched with anxious eyes, expecting Soviet tanks to roll into Poland preventing the new government from taking power.

FIGURE 8.15
Here, crews of German troops tear down the Berlin Wall. While many had taken axes and picks to the Wall upon the collapse of Communism in Germany in 1989, the official destruction of the Berlin Wall did not begin until June, 1990.

Gorbachev, however, refused to act. Like dominoes, Eastern European communist dictatorships fell one by one. By the fall of 1989, East and West Germans were tearing down the BERLIN WALL with pickaxes. Communist regimes were ousted in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. On Christmas Day, the brutal Romanian dictator NICOLAE CEAUSESCU and his wife were summarily executed on live television. Yugoslavia threw off the yoke of communism only to dissolve quickly into a violent civil war.

Demands for freedom soon spread to the Soviet Union. The BALTIC STATES of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania declared independence. Talks of similar sentiments were heard in UKRAINE, the CAUCASUS, and the CENTRAL ASIAN states. Here Gorbachev wished to draw the line. Self-determination for Eastern Europe was one thing, but he intended to maintain the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union. In 1991, he proposed a Union Treaty, giving greater autonomy to the Soviet republics, while keeping them under central control.

That summer, a coup by conservative hardliners took place. Gorbachev was placed under house arrest. Meanwhile, BORIS YELTSIN, the leader of the RUSSIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC, demanded the arrest of the hardliners. The army and the public sided with Yeltsin, and the coup failed. Though Gorbachev was freed, he was left with little legitimacy.

Nationalist leaders like Yeltsin were far more popular than he could hope to become. In December 1991, Ukraine, BYE LO RUSSIA, and RUSSIA itself declared independence and the Soviet Union was dissolved. Gorbachev was a president without a country.

Americans were pleasantly shocked, but shocked nonetheless at the turn of events in the Soviet bloc. No serious discourse on any diplomatic levels in the USSR addressed the likelihood of a Soviet collapse. Republicans were quick to claim credit for winning the Cold War. They believed the military spending policies of the Reagan-Bush years forced the Soviets to the brink of economic collapse. Democrats argued that containment of communism was a bipartisan policy for 45 years begun by the Democrat Harry Truman.

Others pointed out that no one really won the Cold War. The United States spent trillions of dollars arming themselves for a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union that fortunately never came. Regardless, thousands
FIGURE 8.16

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power of the Soviet Union in 1985, he instituted the policies of glasnost and perestroika in hopes of sparking the sluggish economy. What resulted from this taste of freedom was the revolution that ended the Cold War.

of American lives were lost waging proxy wars in Korea and Vietnam. Most Americans found it difficult to get used to the idea of no Cold War. Since 1945, Americans were born into a Cold War culture that featured McCarthyist witch hunts, backyard bomb shelters, a space race, a missile crisis, détente, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Star Wars defense proposal. Now the enemy was beaten, but the world remained unsafe. In many ways, facing one superpower was simpler than challenging dozens of rogue states and renegade groups sponsoring global terrorism. Americans hoped against hope that the new world order of the 1990s would be marked with the security and prosperity to which they had become accustomed.

REAGAN AND THE CHALLENGER DISASTER

MEDIA

Click image to the left or use the URL below.
URL: http://www.ck12.org/flix/render/embeddedobject/136543

• Speech on the Challenger Disaster
• Challenger, Reagan and a Powerful, Unplanned Speech
• Challenger Disaster
8.3 The George H. W. Bush Administration

THE PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH

President Reagan enjoyed unusually high popularity at the end of his second term in office, but under the terms of the U.S. Constitution he could not run again in 1988. The Republican nomination went to Vice President George Herbert Walker Bush, who was elected the 41st president of the United States.

Bush campaigned by promising voters a continuation of the prosperity Reagan had brought. In addition, he argued that he would support a strong defense for the United States more reliably than the Democratic candidate, Michael Dukakis. He also promised to work for “a kinder, gentler America.” Dukakis, the governor of Massachusetts, claimed that less fortunate Americans were hurting economically and that the government had to help them while simultaneously bringing the federal debt and defense spending under control. The public was much more engaged, however, by Bush’s economic message: No new taxes. In the balloting, Bush had a 54-to-46-percent popular vote margin.

During his first year in office, Bush followed a conservative fiscal program, pursuing policies on taxes, spending, and debt that were faithful to the Reagan administration’s economic program. But the new president soon found himself squeezed between a large budget deficit and a deficit-reduction law. Spending cuts seemed necessary, and Bush possessed little leeway to introduce new budget items.

The Bush administration advanced new policy initiatives in areas not requiring major new federal expenditures. Thus, in November 1990, Bush signed sweeping legislation imposing new federal standards on urban smog, automobile exhaust, toxic air pollution, and acid rain, but with industrial polluters bearing most of the costs. He accepted legislation requiring physical access for the disabled, but with no federal assumption of the expense of modifying buildings to accommodate wheelchairs and the like. The president also launched a campaign to encourage volunteerism, which he called, in a memorable phrase, “a thousand points of light.”

Budgets and deficits

Bush administration efforts to gain control over the federal budget deficit, however, were more problematic. One source of the difficulty was the savings and loan crisis. Savings banks – formerly tightly regulated, low-interest safe havens for ordinary people – had been deregulated, allowing these institutions to compete more aggressively by
paying higher interest rates and by making riskier loans. Increases in the government’s deposit insurance guaranteed reduced consumer incentive to shun less-sound institutions. Fraud, mismanagement, and the choppy economy produced widespread insolvencies among these thrifts (the umbrella term for consumer-oriented institutions like savings and loan associations and savings banks). By 1993, the total cost of selling and shuttering failed thrifts was staggering, nearly $525,000-million.

In January 1990, President Bush presented his budget proposal to Congress. Democrats argued that administration budget projections were far too optimistic, and that meeting the deficit-reduction law would require tax increases and sharper cuts in defense spending. That June, after protracted negotiations, the president agreed to a tax increase. All the same, the combination of economic recession, losses from the savings and loan industry rescue operation, and escalating health care costs for Medicare and Medicaid offset all the deficit-reduction measures and produced a shortfall in 1991 at least as large as the previous year’s.

End to the Cold War

When Bush became president, the Soviet empire was on the verge of collapse. Gorbachev’s efforts to open up the USSR’s economy appeared to be floundering. In 1989, the Communist governments in one Eastern European country after another simply collapsed, after it became clear that Russian troops would not be sent to prop them up. In mid-1991, hard-liners attempted a coup d’etat, only to be foiled by Gorbachev rival Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian republic. At the end of that year, Yeltsin, now dominant, forced the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The Bush administration adeptly brokered the end of the Cold War, working closely with Gorbachev and Yeltsin. It led the negotiations that brought the unification of East and West Germany (September 1990), agreement on large arms reductions in Europe (November 1990), and large cuts in nuclear arsenals (July 1991). After the liquidation of the Soviet Union, the United States and the new Russian Federation agreed to phase out all multiple-warhead missiles over a 10-year period.

The disposal of nuclear materials and the ever-present concerns of nuclear proliferation now superseded the threat of nuclear conflict between Washington and Moscow.

The Gulf War

During the Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush rides in an armored jeep with General Norman Schwarzkopf in Saudi Arabia.
The euphoria caused by the drawing down of the Cold War was dramatically overshadowed by the August 2, 1990, invasion of the small nation of Kuwait by Iraq. Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, and Iran, under its Islamic fundamentalist regime, had emerged as the two major military powers in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area. The two countries had fought a long, inconclusive war in the 1980s. Less hostile to the United States than Iran, Iraq had won some support from the Reagan and Bush administrations. The occupation of Kuwait, posing a threat to Saudi Arabia, changed the diplomatic calculation overnight.

President Bush strongly condemned the Iraqi action, called for Iraq’s unconditional withdrawal, and sent a major deployment of U.S. troops to the Middle East. He assembled one of the most extraordinary military and political coalitions of modern times, with military forces from Asia, Europe, and Africa, as well as the Middle East.

In the days and weeks following the invasion, the U.N. Security Council passed 12 resolutions condemning the Iraqi invasion and imposing wide-ranging economic sanctions on Iraq. On November 29, it approved the use of force if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, once Iraq’s major arms supplier, made no effort to protect its former client.

Bush also confronted a major constitutional issue. The U.S. Constitution gives the legislative branch the power to declare war. Yet in the second half of the 20th century, the United States had become involved in Korea and Vietnam without an official declaration of war and with only murky legislative authorization. On January 12, 1991, three days before the U.N. deadline, Congress granted President Bush the authority he sought in the most explicit and sweeping war-making power given a president in nearly half a century.

The United States, in coalition with Great Britain, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other countries, succeeded in liberating Kuwait with a devastating, U.S.-led air campaign that lasted slightly more than a month. It was followed by a massive invasion of Kuwait and Iraq by armored and airborne infantry forces. With their superior speed, mobility, and firepower, the allied forces overwhelmed the Iraqi forces in a land campaign lasting only 100 hours.

The victory, however, was incomplete and unsatisfying. The U.N. resolution, which Bush enforced to the letter, called only for the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait. Saddam Hussein remained in power, savagely repressing the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south, both of whom the United States had encouraged to rebel. Hundreds of oil-well fires, deliberately set in Kuwait by the Iraqis, took until November 1991 to extinguish. Saddam’s regime also apparently thwarted U.N. inspectors who, operating in accordance with Security Council resolutions, worked to locate and destroy Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear facilities more advanced than had previously been suspected and huge stocks of chemical weapons.

The Gulf War enabled the United States to persuade the Arab states, Israel, and a Palestinian delegation to begin direct negotiations aimed at resolving the complex and interlocked issues that could eventually lead to a lasting peace in the region. The talks began in Madrid, Spain, on October 30, 1991. In turn, they set the stage for the secret negotiations in Norway that led to what at the time seemed a historic agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, signed at the White House on September 13, 1993.

Panama and NAFTA

The president also received broad bipartisan congressional backing for the brief U.S. invasion of Panama on December 20, 1989, that deposed dictator General Manuel Antonio Noriega. In the 1980s, addiction to crack cocaine reached epidemic proportions, and President Bush put the “War on Drugs” at the center of his domestic agenda. Moreover, Noriega, an especially brutal dictator, had attempted to maintain himself in power with rather crude displays of anti-Americanism. After seeking refuge in the Vatican embassy, Noriega turned himself over to U.S. authorities. He was later tried and convicted in U.S. federal court in Miami, Florida, of drug trafficking and racketeering.

On the economic front, the Bush administration negotiated the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada. It would be ratified after an intense debate in the first year of the Clinton administration.
Shifts in the structure of American society, begun years or even decades earlier, had become apparent by the time the 1980s arrived. The composition of the population and the most important jobs and skills in American society had undergone major changes.

The dominance of service jobs in the economy became undeniable. By the mid-1980s, nearly three-fourths of all employees worked in the service sector, for instance, as retail clerks, office workers, teachers, physicians, and government employees.

Service-sector activity benefited from the availability and increased use of the computer. The information age arrived, with hardware and software that could aggregate previously unimagined amounts of data about economic and social trends. The federal government had made significant investments in computer technology in the 1950s and 1960s for its military and space programs.

In 1976, two young California entrepreneurs, working out of a garage, assembled the first widely marketed computer for home use, named it the Apple, and ignited a revolution. By the early 1980s, millions of microcomputers had found their way into U.S. businesses and homes, and in 1982, Time magazine dubbed the computer its “Machine of the Year.”

Meanwhile, America’s “smokestack industries” were in decline. The U.S. automobile industry reeled under competition from highly efficient Japanese carmakers. By 1980 Japanese companies already manufactured a fifth of the vehicles sold in the United States. American manufacturers struggled with some success to match the cost efficiencies and engineering standards of their Japanese rivals, but their former dominance of the domestic car market was gone forever. The giant old-line steel companies shrank to relative insignificance as foreign steel makers adopted new technologies more readily.

Consumers were the beneficiaries of this ferocious competition in the manufacturing industries, but the painful struggle to cut costs meant the permanent loss of hundreds of thousands of blue-collar jobs. Those who could made the switch to the service sector; others became unfortunate statistics.

Population patterns shifted as well. After the end of the postwar “baby boom” (1946 to 1964), the overall rate of population growth declined and the population grew older. Household composition also changed. In 1980 the percentage of family households dropped; a quarter of all groups were now classified as “nonfamily households,” in which two or more unrelated persons lived together.

New immigrants changed the character of American society in other ways. The 1965 reform in immigration policy shifted the focus away from Western Europe, facilitating a dramatic increase in new arrivals from Asia and Latin
America. In 1980, 808,000 immigrants arrived, the highest number in 60 years, as the country once more became a haven for people from around the world.

CITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

Many Americans viewed recent world events, especially America’s military defeat in Vietnam and its growing dependency on foreign oil, as a symptom of the economic decline that affected their daily lives. Thousands of factories closed each year and the relative wages of industrial workers declined throughout the 1970s. So many Americans migrated in search of work between 1970 and 1990 that the majority of the nation’s population growth occurred in the South and the Southwest. By 1980, more Americans lived in these Sunbelt regions than the rest of the nation combined.

Portions of the Northeast and the Midwest soon became known as the “Rust Belt,” a name reflecting the thousands of factories that closed from St. Louis to Milwaukee and across the Great Lakes from Detroit back down to Pittsburgh and the Ohio River valley. The deindustrialization that caused the Rust Belt stretched beyond these borders and affected East Coast cities such as Baltimore and Philadelphia as well as other industrial communities throughout the nation. The demise of these Rust Belt factories that had once employed millions of blue-collar workers was complex. In many cases, employers found it was cheaper to start new factories in areas such as the South where labor unions were weak. Many other companies decided to open factories in other countries where wages were lower and safety and environmental laws did not apply.

With the loss of factory jobs came the decline of union membership and the rise of part-time and contract laborers who were not eligible for benefits and could be fired at any time. Unemployment increased to around 9 percent by 1975, while union membership dropped below 25 percent of nonfarm labor. An unprecedented number of married women entered the workforce in hopes of bolstering family income, mostly accepting low-paying service sector jobs. Cities likewise struggled with the simultaneous loss of middle-class workers and factories.

Downtowns areas responded by launching “urban renewal” projects that sought to remove the blight of empty factories and build public works projects. In other cases, urban renewal was simply a euphemism for slum clearance. Minority neighborhoods were demolished to make room for interstate overpasses and other projects designed to connect the suburbs with downtown office buildings. Most urban renewal projects were conducted with little regard for the dispossessed. Although political support for public housing remained low in the 1970s, urban renewal soon
required that a growing number of housing projects be built. Seeking to create low-cost units, most cities erected high-rise apartments on cheap land as far away from the middle class as possible. Those who supported the creation of housing projects, simply known as “projects” by many Americans, envisioned these low-cost units as a path toward upward mobility, a sort of halfway house for the working poor. However, these projects concentrated poverty in ways that quickly turned working-class neighborhoods into ghettos that were walled in by interstates and isolated from jobs and public services.

**FIGURE 8.22**
Change in total number of manufacturing jobs in metropolitan areas, 1954/1958-2002. Data from the 1958 Census of Manufactures had to be used for New England, due to changes in counting methods. (All other figures are from 1954.) Boundaries reflect 2002 metropolitan areas; numbers have been adjusted accordingly, and new metropolitan areas left out. The national average over this period was —8.65%. KEY: Green=greater than 60% growth in manufacturing jobs Light green=54.4% growth to 7.5% decrease Yellow=8.7% to 29.1% decrease Pink=31.2% to 43.2% decrease Red=43.6% to 56.2% decrease Maroon=58% to 88.6% decrease Sources: 1958 Census of Manufactures and 2002 Economic Census.

**FIGURE 8.23**
The Sun Belt region of the United States
RACE AND THE 1980s

The late twentieth century saw a slight increase in the number of black Americans joining the ranks of the middle class—a positive legacy of the civil rights movement and policies such as affirmative action. However, the 1980s was also host to a retreat in terms of support for affirmative action. The decade also saw an organized assault on urban black communities through ghettoization, drastic reductions in federal grants for community programs, the loss of jobs, and the introduction of crack cocaine.

The expansion of chain stores into primarily black neighborhoods—a sign of the recognition of black consumer power made possible by the civil rights movement—also displaced thousands of black-owned businesses. Prior to integration, black-owned business received nearly a quarter of all money spent by black consumers. During the 1970s, the proportion of money spent by black consumers at black-owned businesses declined by 50 percent. By the mid-1990s, only 3 percent of African American purchases were from black-owned enterprises. Thousands of independent black hotels, movie theaters, restaurants, and merchandisers that had served black customers with dignity during the era of segregation had closed their doors by this time. Although the decline of independent black business was part of a national trend that saw family-owned businesses displaced by retail chain stores, the effect on the black community was particularly damaging because black entrepreneurs had reinvested in the community and provided jobs. Even black-owned beauty companies, a multimillion-dollar industry that had created tens of thousands of jobs, imploded during the 1970s. Prior to this time, cosmetic makers ignored the black consumer. By the 1980s, three-fourths of black expenditures on health and beauty products went to publicly traded or white-owned businesses.

**FIGURE 8.24**

Despite the triumph over Jim Crow, integration also coincided with a decline in the number of black-owned businesses. Florida’s Frank Butler owned a number of establishments such as this bathhouse near St. Augustine. Ironically, this photo was also taken at a time when this was the only beach between Jacksonville and Daytona that African Americans could use.

The deindustrialization of America was even more distressing as unions and factories were opening their doors to black men and women in significant numbers. As factories closed, fewer and fewer black men could find jobs that paid a family wage. Marriage rates declined but birth rates continued much as they had in the past. The result was that 47 percent of black families were headed by single mothers by the end of the 1980s. Without factory labor in America’s cities and with the decline of black-owned businesses, most of the jobs available near black communities were in the service sector. Job training programs and college offered one escape from the cycle of poverty, but federal and state agencies eliminated job training and inner-city high schools had fewer resources to produce students that were prepared for college. In addition, community reinvestment programs and federal aid for urban areas were also reduced or eliminated. For those inside America’s inner cities, the only major federal programs that were not reduced were prisons and highway funding, both of which added to the impoverishment of urban communities.

Reagan began his campaign for president with an appearance in Philadelphia, Mississippi. This was no ordinary small town in America. Philadelphia, Mississippi, was the sight of the infamous murder of three civil rights workers in 1964. Reagan was not there to remember the courage of these young people or pay tribute to the cause for which they gave their lives. Instead, Reagan stood next to archsegregationist Strom Thurmond and repeatedly used the phrase “state’s rights”—a phrase that had been a code word for white supremacy for over a century. Reagan’s white supporters in the 1980s and beyond maintain that Reagan was simply expressing his support for the devolution of government authority from the federal level to the states. African Americans interpreted Reagan’s message differently and pointed out that Reagan spent the majority of his presidency expanding the power of the federal...
As president, Reagan was frequently criticized for marginalizing the perspectives of African Americans. He frequently projected images of black women as “welfare queens” while mistaking the only black appointee to his cabinet as a White House guest. Reagan also fired prominent black leaders such as civil rights veteran Eleanor Holmes Norton from the EEOC. Reagan attempted to fire Civil Rights Commissioner Mary Frances Berry until she challenged the president’s decision in federal court and was restored to her post. Although Reagan signed the bill creating a national holiday to honor Martin Luther King Jr., the president did little to support the bill and expressed his belief that observation of the holiday should not be required. He also agreed to speak at a Southern evangelical college that banned black students from its dances during his tenure in office without any acknowledgment of the college’s ongoing racial discrimination.

Although the Reagan administration made few efforts to address the subject of South African apartheid, Norton, Barry, and other black leaders joined with the tens of thousands of college students in demanding an end to the racial caste system. These women and thousands of college students waged sit-ins and were voluntarily arrested at the South African embassy in Washington, DC, as part of the antiapartheid movement. By 1986, black and white students and activists held dozens of protests that culminated in the introduction of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which demanded an end to apartheid and required federal divestment from the South Africa until such an objective was met. The bill passed Congress but was vetoed by Reagan. The coalition of black leaders like Coretta Scott King, black community members, and college students of all backgrounds rallied once again and even convinced a number of conservative Republicans to reverse their votes and override Reagan’s veto.

One of the most significant cultural movements of the 1980s was the emergence and spread of hip-hop or “rap” music from inner cities to small towns. Hip hop arose from self-taught street musicians that combined elements of 1970s funk with beats and lyrics. Artists such as the Last Poets and Gil Scott Heron spoke to the experience of inner-city life in a way that appealed to many outside of the ghettos because of their honesty and intensity. Others used the medium for self-promotion, composing rhymes and beats paired with brash lyrics and posturing bravado. Others such as Chuck D of Public Enemy demonstrated the power of the medium with songs such as “Fight the Power” that counseled listeners to aggressively confront racism.

Other black artists such as filmmaker Spike Lee combined rap lyrics throughout his 1989 cinematic masterpiece Do the Right Thing, a two-hour tour de force that deconstructed the anatomy of a race riot and started a national dialogue about racial prejudice. Many white politicians tried to seize that dialogue, criticizing Public Enemy and other artists instead of the white-owned record companies that hijacked the medium by signing only those rappers willing to glorify violence and demean women. It was these images of black “thugs and pimps,” combined with the buffoonery of previous decades, that typified the media image of black America during the 1980s. “The image of Black people on the tube has not drastically changed over the decades,” Chuck D explained in a recent book. “We’re either singing, dancing, telling jokes, telling one-liners in a sitcom, talking about a triple-double, touchdown, or stolen base, or getting locked up in a squad car on Cops…there’s only a few serious Black roles on TV.”

**IMMIGRATION AND HISPANIC RIGHTS**

In 1980, Jimmy Carter signed the 1980 Refugee Act. The statute reformed US laws regarding immigration in a way that allowed quotas to be adjusted annually to provide more flexibility regarding refugees. The 1980 law also adopted the United Nation’s definition of the term refugee as anyone with a “well-founded fear of persecution” based on politics, religion, race or nationality. The 1980 law added an important stipulation. It barred any individual who had participated in the persecution of others from being considered a refugee themselves.

In the past, individuals applying for asylum in the US were evaluated based on Cold War politics rather than the individual circumstances they faced. For example, a person seeking to leave the right-wing dictatorship of El Salvador in the 1980s would be denied entry into the US because the US maintained formal relations with the Salvadoran government. If a person wished to leave Nicaragua, a neighboring leftist government the US was covertly seeking to topple during the 1980s, they would likely be welcomed. Because their desire to flee from Communist oppression could be used as political capital, people in Communist nations were almost automatically...
granted asylum. In October 1980, more than 100,000 refugees arrived in the US from Cuba. These individuals were among the estimated 1 million Cuban refugees who were resettled in the United States during the 1980s. Meanwhile, an estimated 10,000 refugees fleeing the militaristic regime of El Salvador were able to enter the US only by walking hundreds of miles and illegally crossing the Rio Grande. Many Salvadorans liken the northbound path of these refugees to that of escaped slaves who illegally crossed the Ohio River and followed the Underground Railroad a century before.

These Salvadorans were among the several million illegal immigrants who arrived in the US during the 1980s. Another 8 million immigrants legally entered the nation between 1975 and 1990. The issue of both legal and illegal immigration continued to spark controversy among Americans. It also revealed division among Hispanics, a term used to describe Americans whose ancestral home was one of the many Spanish-speaking nations in Latin America. Researchers at the University of Texas-Pan American determined that Mexican Americans who had lived in the United States for a number of years generally favored stricter immigration laws. They also found that middle-class Hispanics were more likely to believe that illegal immigration was harmful to US communities than other Hispanics. Some members of these groups joined the growing chorus of predominantly white Americans that called for tougher immigration laws. Employers typically opposed these restrictions, recognizing that the majority of the nation’s new immigrants had been skilled workers in their countries of origin.

In the past, undocumented immigrants had been tolerated and even welcomed by many Americans due to the tremendous demand for agricultural and industrial laborers. However, the devaluation of the Mexican currency in the 1980s led to a tremendous surge in the number of undocumented immigrants. Congress responded with the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. The new law required employers to take steps to verify and record the identity of all employees and make sure that each employee was legally entitled to reside and work in the United States. In addition to introducing the I-9 form that all employees must presently complete, the law also introduced fines for employers that knowingly hired undocumented aliens.

The 1986 law also created a guest-worker program and provided amnesty for those who could prove that they had resided in the country for at least five years and were willing to attend federally funded courses in English and US history. The law represented a compromise between numerous interests. As a result, it was criticized by groups representing multiple perspectives on the immigration debate. Hispanic leaders documented the way that the new law was unequally applied to nonwhite immigrants. These groups also believed that the US Border Patrol was beginning to act more like a paramilitary force. Others thought the law did not do enough, citing the ability of the agribusiness lobby to provide an exception for field workers. They were also angered that corporate interests had lobbied for the removal of a provision that would have required employers to determine the validity of a potential employee’s identification documents. Without this provision, critics argued, employers could legally hire individuals who provided documents that were obvious counterfeits. Proponents of the law had hoped that it would deter illegal immigration by barring employment for undocumented aliens. Absent stricter regulations for employers, illegal immigration continued to be one of the leading issues of the 1980s and beyond.

The Hispanic population of the United States increased to 7 percent of the US population in the 1980s. The total number of Hispanics increased from about 14 million to nearly 20 million and the collective buying power of these individuals represented over $170 billion by the end of the decade. As a result, Hispanic consumer power and the Hispanic vote became increasingly important. For example, a decade-long boycott of Coors resulted in an agreement to hire a certain minimum number of Hispanic workers among Colorado’s growing Hispanic population. Hispanic voters represented 8 percent of registered voters in Texas in 1986, a number that was steadily increasing and would reach 20 percent by 2011. In the mid-1980s, almost half of the nation’s 3,000 elected officials of Hispanic origins were from Texas. These political victories were the result of voter registration drives that were made possible by dozens of court challenges in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In these years, the Hispanic vote was often diluted by at-large electoral schemes and gerrymandered districts that prevented Hispanic candidates from winning elections, even in communities with large Hispanic populations. Organizations such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) in the Southwest and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund in Florida and New York demonstrated that these schemes were intended to assure that Anglo candidates continued to win elections and therefore violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
A number of Hispanic candidates that were elected as a consequence of court-ordered electoral redistricting would later win the support of Anglos and other groups and win citywide offices. For example, San Antonio elected its first Hispanic mayor since the 1840s when former University of Texas at San Antonio professor Henry Cisneros took office in 1981. Denver also elected a Latino mayor in the 1980s, and New Mexico and Florida voters selected Hispanic governors during these years as well.

Fourteen percent of all public school children dropped out of school in the 1980s. The rate was extremely high among minority students, with 19 percent of black students and over a third of Hispanic students dropping out of school during these same years. Numerous studies suggested that the trend of academic underachievement among non-English speakers could be mitigated through the introduction of bilingual education programs. This was especially true in the lower grades and had been shown to ease the transition into American public schools for children in non-English-speaking homes. However, bilingual education programs were also expensive, and many districts that might benefit from such programs were in low-income areas that relied on a dwindling supply of grants. The limited federal funds for these programs were sharply curtailed during the Reagan administration to the point that only 3 percent of Hispanic children had access to bilingual programs.

One of the justifications for these cuts was the perception that bilingual education might spread from the elementary schools to society at large, discouraging immigrants from learning English and causing the “Quebecization” of the United States. Fears that English and Spanish might become ubiquitous throughout America just as French and English coexist in eastern Canada led to several failed attempts to prohibit languages other than English. It also inspired a failed Constitutional amendment that would have recognized English as the official language of the United States. Over a dozen states passed symbolic legislation to this effect in the following decade. Residents of New Mexico countered this trend in 1989 by passing their own symbolic resolution: “supporting language rights in the United States.” Due to a much stronger appreciation for its Spanish heritage, the voters of New Mexico approved a statement recommending all citizens learn English and another language. The nonbinding resolution included a phrase celebrating proficiency in multiple languages as providing both cultural and economic benefits to citizens and the state.

- U.S. Census Maps
- Demographic Trends in the 20th Century
- US Economic and Social Trends Since 2000
- The Changing Demographic Profile of the United States
- Population Growth in Metro America since 1980
- "Rust Belt" to the "Sun Belt"
- The Decline of the Rust Belt: A Macroeconomic Analysis
• US and Migration
A BABY BOOMER IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Despite allegations of smoking marijuana, having extramarital affairs, and dodging the draft, Bill Clinton came out of his 1992 Presidential campaign victorious.

Popularity is fleeting.

President Bush enjoyed an approval rating in March 1991 of 91 percent for his handling of Operation Desert Storm. As the Presidential race for 1992 began to unfold, many potential candidates were scared to challenge him and look to 1996 as a better opportunity. But the recession that battered the American economy would not go away. As growth remained low and unemployment persisted, some of the shine began to wear off the President. Not since James Monroe’s second term in 1820 had a sitting President been re-elected during an economic slump.

Enter Bill Clinton. The two candidates could hardly have been more different. Bush was a hero of World War II and had extensive Washington experience, including heading the CIA, Ambassador to the United Nations, and eight years as Vice-President.

In the October, 1992 Presidential debate at Michigan State University, Ross Perot charmed America with his no-nonsense wit: "I love the fact that people will listen to a guy with a bad accent and a poor presentation manner talking about flip charts for 30 minutes, because they want the details. See, all the folks up there at the top said the attention span of the American people is no more than five minutes, they won’t watch it. They’re thirsty for it."

Clinton was born after World War II and did not fight in Vietnam, so he faced constant charges of dodging the draft. He had no experience on the federal level of government; he simply was the popular governor of Arkansas. Throughout the campaign, scandal after scandal hit Clinton. Charges of adultery were addressed on television. When accused of smoking marijuana in the 1960s, Clinton confessed — but added that he did not inhale. Rumors of a real estate scandal called Whitewater surfaced from time to time. Clinton was no “Teflon” candidate. Everything stuck to him, but none of it mattered in the end.
His campaign adviser posted a sign over his desk that read simply: "It’s the economy, stupid." With a charismatic smile and a gentle, sincere voice, Clinton hammered away at the recession, and promised new ideas and a break with twelve years of Republicans in the White House.

**FIGURE 8.28**
Bill Clinton was the first President since Richard Nixon to win the White House with less than 50% of the popular vote.

Additional problems beset President Bush in 1992. In April, the city of Los Angeles erupted into a five day looting and burning rampage that killed more than 50 people and claimed damages nearing $1 billion. The riot was touched off by the acquittal of five Los Angeles police officers for the beating of Rodney King during his arrest in 1991. A hidden camera showed the officers repeatedly beating King with nightsticks while he lay on the ground. Despite the video evidence, the jury found the police officers not guilty of using excessive force. The announcement of the verdict released years of pent-up rage many African Americans felt about the ongoing problem of police brutality.

Bush faced a challenge for his own party’s nomination by Patrick Buchanan, a journalist and former Nixon aide. Buchanan voiced concern about immigration, free trade, abortion, and appealed to the social conservatives in the Republican Party. Although the President defeated Buchanan handily in the primaries, he was forced to spend resources in the effort.

**FIGURE 8.29**
President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush on their last day at the White House.

The most successful third party candidate since 1912 emerged in the form of Ross Perot, a Texas billionaire. Perot brought the problem of the nation’s growing national debt to the campaign. Millions watched his self-funded 30-minute primetime campaign commercials that attacked both Republicans and Democrats for reckless spending and immense deficits.

Election Day belonged to Bill Clinton. Although he garnered only 43% of the popular vote, he beat President Bush handily in the electoral tally. Bush earned 38% of the vote, and Perot reached an impressive 19% of American voters. Much of Clinton’s support came from baby boomers. Clinton’s victory marked an end to the domination of politics by the World War II generation. Americans who had come of age during the turbulent sixties and seventies now had a representative in the White House.
It seemed like Bill Clinton had everything going for him. He defeated an incumbent President and became the first Democrat to win the White House since Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford. He had a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate to work with him.

One of the first major initiatives he began was health care reform. Many Americans were concerned about spiraling medical costs. Medicare did not cover prescription drugs and only paid a portion of health care costs. Over 20 million Americans had no health insurance whatsoever. Clinton assembled a task force to study the problem and assigned his wife Hillary to head the committee. She became the most politically active first lady since Eleanor Roosevelt.

Eventually Clinton presented a plan to limit costs and insure each American citizen to the Congress. Powerful interest groups representing doctors and insurance companies opposed Clinton. Many in the Congress thought the program too costly. Conservatives compared the plan to socialized medicine. Despite a “friendly” Democratic Congress, the Clintons’ proposal was defeated.

When the midterm Congressional elections took place in 1994, the Republicans thought they had a chance to capture at least one house. Led by Representative Newt Gingrich, Republicans in the Congress signed a Contract with America. The contract was simply a list of ten promises each signatory pledged to pursue if the Republicans won. The stratagem worked brilliantly. The Senate votes narrowly awarded a Republican majority. More astonishing were the results in the House.

The Democrats had controlled the House of Representatives since 1954. Many Republicans had gotten used to acting like an opposition party. When the votes were counted, Republicans outscored Democrats in House seats 230-205. Gingrich was rewarded for his efforts by being named Speaker of the House.

But Bill Clinton was a political survivor. Even though voter turnout was low, Clinton accepted the Republican victory and pledged to work with the House leadership. Gingrich and his cohorts took a tough stand with the President. Unless Clinton agreed to accept deep cuts in social spending programs in 1995, they threatened to shut down the government and appropriate no funds. It was a classic standoff — Clinton versus Gingrich.

When neither party would blink, a partial shutdown of government services took place. The American public often decides the victors of such battles. Polls showed strong support for the President. Many Americans saw the Gingrich
Republicans as mean-spirited zealots who wanted to end funds for school lunches. Clinton slowly saw his approval ratings rise. By the time he ran for a second term in 1996, the economy was booming and the huge budget deficit had been controlled. Voters rewarded Clinton by re-electing him over the Republican candidate Robert Dole.

In January 1998, a scandal that nearly ended Clinton’s Presidency unfolded in the press. It was reported that Clinton engaged in a sexual relationship with a White House intern named Monica Lewinsky during his first term. Although Clinton originally denied the charges, overwhelming evidence was presented that Clinton and Lewinsky engaged in repeated sexual contact, even in the Oval Office.

Republicans were outraged. An independent counsel named Kenneth Starr was appointed to gather evidence against Clinton. As the summer ended, Clinton admitted that many of the reports were true and that he was ashamed of his behavior. The House Judiciary Committee drew up articles of impeachment on four counts including abuse of power and obstruction of justice. Across the nation, Americans debated whether or not Clinton’s misbehavior constituted an impeachable offense.

The House decided that two articles of impeachment were in order, and in December 1998, Clinton joined Andrew Johnson as the only Presidents to be impeached. In such proceedings, the Senate has the final word and acts as a judge and jury. Two-thirds of the Senators must vote guilty to remove a President from office. Clinton survived this final vote to impeach which unfolded along party lines.

As the year 2000 approached, partisan politics were as toxic as ever. Republicans claimed that they fixed the economy and Clinton got the credit. Regardless of who gets the credit or blame, the 1990s were a decade of very steady economic growth. The crippling budget deficits of the 1980s were finally brought under control, and
Americans enjoyed low inflation, low unemployment, low interest rates and a booming stock market. Even the bad blood between the two parties could not change that.

WELFARE-TO-WORK

Welfare reform provides one of many examples of Clinton’s efforts to steer a middle course between both liberals and conservatives. As a candidate, Clinton had tapped into the suspicion raised by conservative politicians regarding “welfare mothers.” Placing stricter limits on direct payments to welfare recipients, the Clinton administration promised to transform welfare into a program that assisted only those who were striving for independence. Toward this goal, Clinton supported stricter regulations on direct payments. He also approved a significant increase of the Earned Income Credit, which offered an annual payment to those who worked at low-paying jobs rather than application for welfare. The amount of the credit was based on income and the number of dependents for which a low-income worker was responsible.

Clinton defended the plan as a means to reward those who worked. He pointed out that most individuals on welfare would make only slightly less than a full-time worker at a minimum-wage job unless some adjustment was made. While Clinton also supported a modest increase to the minimum wage, he believed that tax credits for the working poor were necessary to provide incentives for people to get off of welfare. Critics of the plan were angered that those who qualified for the Earned Income Credit paid no federal tax yet would still receive a tax refund under the new plan. This new policy seemed even more unfair to some individuals in the wake of increased tax rates for some families. At the same time, Clinton’s support for curtailing direct welfare payments also angered some on the left.

- Bill Clinton on Welfare & Poverty
- Clinton Signs Welfare Bill Amid Division

BRADY BILL

The previous president, George Bush, had negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to establish fully open trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Key Democratic constituencies opposed the agreement. Labor unions believed it would encourage the export of jobs and undermine American labor standards. Environmentalists asserted that it would lead American industries to relocate to countries with weak pollution controls. These were the first indications of a growing movement on the left wing of American politics against the vision of an integrated world economic system.

President Clinton nonetheless accepted the argument that open trade was ultimately beneficial to all parties because it would lead to a greater flow of more efficiently produced goods and services. His administration not only submitted
NAFTA to the Senate, it also backed the establishment of a greatly liberalized international trading system to be administered by the World Trade Organization (WTO). After a vigorous debate, Congress approved NAFTA in 1993. It would approve membership in the WTO a year later.

- NAFTA signed into law
- American President
- Bill Clinton on Free Trade
AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING THE CLINTON YEARS

Bill Clinton did not expect to be a president who emphasized foreign policy. However, like his immediate predecessors, he quickly discovered that all international crises seemed to take a road that led through Washington.

He had to deal with the messy aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. Having failed to depose Saddam Hussein, the United States, backed by Britain, attempted to contain him. A United Nations-administered economic sanctions regime, designed to allow Iraq to sell enough oil to meet humanitarian needs, proved relatively ineffective. Saddam funneled much of the proceeds to himself, leaving large masses of his people in misery. Military “no-fly zones,” imposed to prevent the Iraqi government from deploying its air power against rebellious Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south, required constant U.S. and British air patrols, which regularly fended off anti-aircraft missiles.

The United States also provided the main backing for U.N. weapons inspection teams, whose mission was to ferret out Iraq’s chemical, biological, and nuclear programs, verify the destruction of existing weapons of mass destruction, and suppress ongoing programs to manufacture them. Increasingly obstructed, the U.N. inspectors were finally expelled in 1998. On this, as well as earlier occasions of provocation, the United States responded with limited missile strikes. Saddam, Secretary of State Madeline Albright declared, was still “in his box.”

The seemingly endless Israeli-Palestinian dispute inevitably engaged the administration, although neither President Clinton nor former President Bush had much to do with the Oslo agreement of 1993, which established a Palestinian “authority” to govern the Palestinian population within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and obtained Palestinian recognition of Israel’s right to exist.

As with so many past Middle Eastern agreements in principle, however, Oslo eventually fell apart when details were discussed. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat rejected final offers from peace-minded Israeli leader Ehud Barak in 2000 and January 2001. A full-scale Palestinian insurgency, marked by the use of suicide bombers, erupted. Barak fell from power, to be replaced by the far tougher Ariel Sharon. U.S. identification with Israel was considered by some a major problem in dealing with other issues in the region, but American diplomats could do little more than hope to contain the violence. After Arafat’s death in late 2004, new Palestinian leadership appeared more receptive to a peace agreement, and American policy makers resumed efforts to promote a settlement.

President Clinton also became closely engaged with “the troubles” in Northern Ireland. On one side was the violent Irish Republican Army, supported primarily by those Catholic Irish who wanted to incorporate these British counties into the Republic of Ireland. On the other side were Unionists, with equally violent paramilitary forces, supported by most of the Protestant Scots-Irish population, who wanted to remain in the United Kingdom.

Clinton gave the separatists greater recognition than they ever had obtained in the United States, but also worked...
closely with the British governments of John Major and Tony Blair. The ultimate result, the Good Friday peace accords of 1998, established a political process but left many details to be worked out. Over the next several years, peace and order held better in Northern Ireland than in the Middle East, but remained precarious. The final accord continued to elude negotiators.

The post-Cold War disintegration of Yugoslavia – a state ethnically and religiously divided among Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosnian Muslims, and Albanian Kosovars – also made its way to Washington after European governments failed to impose order. The Bush administration had refused to get involved in the initial violence; the Clinton administration finally did so with great reluctance after being urged to do so by the European allies. In 1995, it negotiated an accord in Dayton, Ohio, to establish a semblance of peace in Bosnia. In 1999, faced with Serbian massacres of Kosovars, it led a three-month NATO bombing campaign against Serbia, which finally forced a settlement.

In 1994, the administration restored ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti, where he would rule for nine years before being ousted again. The intervention was largely a result of Aristide’s carefully cultivated support in the United States and American fears of waves of Haitian illegal immigrants.

In sum, the Clinton administration remained primarily inward looking, willing to tackle international problems that could not be avoided and, in other instances, forced by the rest of the world to do so.

- Bill Clinton on Foreign Policy
- The Clinton Presidency: A Foreign Policy for the Global Age

SOMALIA, 1992-1993

The United States has long had to face the challenge of determining to what degree it wants to participate in global peacekeeping efforts and whether or not U.S. lives should be put at risk for peacekeeping. Events in Somalia between 1992 and 1994 threw that debate into sharp relief.

Somalia achieved its independence in 1960 with the union of Somalia, which had been under Italian administration as a United Nations trust territory, and Somaliland, which had been a British protectorate. The United States immediately established diplomatic relations with the new country. In 1969, the Somali army launched a coup which brought Mohamed Siad Barre to power. Barre adopted socialism and became allied with the Soviet Union. The United States was thus wary of Somalia in the period immediately after the coup.

Barre’s government became increasingly radical in foreign affairs, and in 1977 launched a war against Ethiopia in hopes of claiming their territory. Ethiopia received help from the Soviet Union during the war, and so Somalia began to accept assistance from the United States, giving a new level of stability to the U.S.-Somalia relationship.

Barre’s dictatorship favored members of his own clan. In the 1980s, Somalis in less favored clans began to chafe under the government’s rule. Barre’s ruthlessness could not suppress the opposition, which in 1990 began to unify against him. After joining forces, the combined group of rebels drove Barre from Mogadishu in January 1991. No central government reemerged to take the place of the overthrown government, and the United States closed its embassy that same year, although the two countries never broke off diplomatic relations. The country descended
into chaos, and a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions began to unfold.

The United Nations attempted to address the crisis with United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) to provide humanitarian assistance, created by the United Nations Security Council via Resolution 751 in April 1992. The United States sent food aid via Operation Provide Comfort starting in August 1992. Intense fighting between the warlords impeded the delivery of aid to those who needed it most, and so the United Nations contemplated stronger action. In December 1992, the United States began Operation Restore Hope. President George H.W. Bush authorized the dispatch of U.S. troops to Somalia to assist with famine relief as part of the larger United Nations effort. The United Nations’ United Task Force (UNITAF) operated under the authority of Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. Chapter VII allowed for the use of force to maintain peace and did not require the consent of the states involved. UNITAF transitioned to UNOSOM II in March 1993. UNOSOM II’s efforts to protect aid deliveries were directly challenged by warlord Muhammad Farah Aideed.

The most significant of these challenges came on October 3, 1993. Aideed’s forces shot down two Black Hawk helicopters in a battle which lead to the deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers and hundreds of Somalis. The deaths turned the tide of public opinion in the United States. President Bill Clinton pulled U.S. troops out of combat four days later, and all U.S. troops left the country in March 1994. The United Nations withdrew from Somalia in March 1995. Fighting continued in the country.

At the same time the Somalia crisis was unfolding, President Clinton ordered the national security bureaucracy to consider how and when the United States should become involved in peacekeeping operations. The resulting document was Presidential Decision Directive 25, issued on May 3, 1994. The Directive outlined a series of factors which the national security bureaucracy must consider before involving the United States in peacekeeping: eight factors which must be weighed before deciding in favor of peacekeeping in the United Nations, and nine additional factors before becoming involved in a Chapter VII action.

Although the United Nations’ involvement in Somalia was unable to provide a solution to the country’s political crisis, the United States remained engaged in responding to the humanitarian needs of the Somali people, and continued to be a significant source of bilateral aid.

- Address to the Nation on Somalia
- What A Downed Black Hawk In Somalia Taught America
- Chronology | Ambush in Mogadishu

THE WAR IN BOSNIA, 1992-1995

In 1991 and 1992, Yugoslavia disintegrated under the pressures of ethnic conflict, economic issues, and the demagoguery of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. The secessions of Slovenia and Croatia triggered warfare in both new nations, with the United Nations inserting a peacekeeping force, the U.N. Protective Force (UNPROFOR), in mid-1992 to stabilize the situation. The U.N. further imposed an arms embargo on the region, seeking to dry up the flow of arms to the combatants. Serbian forces executed widespread “ethnic cleansing” in occupied areas, creating horrific scenes of refugees and concentration camps that seemed unthinkable in modern Europe.

Bosnia’s declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1992 raised the violence to a new level, triggering a war that lasted over three years and exemplified the complexities of the “post-Cold War” strategic environment. The population of Bosnia-Herzegovina was comprised of three ethnic groups: Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim. Initially, Croats and Serbs expanded their territorial control at the expense of the Bosnian state, with the Serbs, supported by Serbia and the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), eventually controlling about 70% of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Shifts in territorial control were accompanied by widespread ethnic cleansing.

While the situation in Yugoslavia was a constant subject of discussion at the highest levels of the Bush Administration, President George H. W. Bush and his advisors considered the situation in the Balkans to be primarily a European issue, to be addressed by the European Union. The lack of U.S. response became an issue in the 1992 presidential campaign, as candidate Bill Clinton advocated a “lift and strike” policy—lifting the arms embargo,
which was operating at the disadvantage of the Bosnian Muslims and Croats, and conducting airstrikes against Bosnian Serb forces.

Following Clinton’s electoral victory, the new administration set to work quickly with Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright to shape a more active U.N. role in the conflict. In early January 1993, during the final days of the Bush Administration, the United Nations and the European Union had agreed upon the Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP) for Bosnia. A month later, the U.N. Security Council established a war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the United States initiated night airdrops of food to the Muslim enclaves. By March the U.N. authorized enforcement of a no-fly zone in Bosnia, implemented by the United States Air Force in Operation Deny Flight, the first armed engagement of U.S. forces in the former Yugoslavia. Following the Bosnian Serbs’ rejection of VOPP, the U.N. declared the Muslim enclaves of Sarajevo, Bihac, Tuzla, Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde to be “safe areas.” The Security Council did not, however, provide for the defense of these areas.

On May 1 President Clinton sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher to consult with the major NATO allies and with Russia in order to gain support for the “lift and strike” strategy. This effort failed, exposing issues that would hamstring NATO’s actions in the conflict for another two years. Alliance members participating in UNPROFOR were concerned that their troops, lightly armed and widely dispersed, were likely to be taken as hostages and did not share Washington’s enthusiasm for an air campaign. Wide divergence between the alliance’s national perspectives on the conflict and very little European domestic support for armed intervention added to the Administration’s problems. NATO’s inability to reach consensus on an effective response to the atrocities called into question the future of the alliance in post-Cold War Europe.

Gridlock in the alliance was mirrored by gridlock in the U.S. interagency policy process. The Department of Defense was very reluctant to commit to a role in the Balkans, concerned as it was about a protracted occupation or guerrilla
8.6. United States Foreign Policy of the Late 20th Century

Ambassador Albright was active in promoting a western response but she had little influence on the overall administration policy. There was also little domestic support in the United States for intervention in the Balkans, though the violence, documented by cable television news, kept the issue in the public eye.

In June 1993, Serb attacks on the Srebrenica “safe area” led the U.N. Security Council to authorize the use of air power “to support UNPROFOR in the performance of its mandate.” The resolution established a “dual key” arrangement between the U.N. and NATO in control of tactical air power responding to Serbian attacks. This arrangement proved difficult for Washington, as the U.N. was extremely reluctant to authorize any effective combat action on the part of NATO.

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In early April, Bosnian Serb forces launched an offensive against Gorazde. Following the killing of a UNPROFOR soldier by Serbian artillery, NATO launched an air strike. In turn, Bosnian Serbs surrounded a contingent of UNPROFOR soldiers, and their commander, Ratko Mladic, threatened that none would survive if NATO repeated the air attacks. In the immediate aftermath, the United States led the formation of a Contact Group to spearhead policy toward the conflict. The group agreed on a set of principles for any peace settlement: Bosnia would remain a single state, comprised of the Muslim-Croat federation and a Serb entity, and these entities would be linked by constitutionally-agreed principles. The group further agreed to a map of Bosnia-Herzegovina where the Muslim-Croat federation controlled 51 percent of the territory and the Serbian entity controlled 49 percent. While the Bosnian Croats and Muslim groups signed a cease fire between their forces under the terms of the 1994 Washington Agreement, the Bosnian Serbs rejected the plan. The military balance also began to equalize, as Serbia cut off support to Bosnian-Serb forces while Croatia and Bosnian-Muslim forces built up via an increasingly porous arms embargo. The year closed with a four-month truce negotiated by former President Jimmy Carter.

The spring of 1995 brought renewed combat, with Muslim and Croatian forces now on the offensive in western Bosnia-Herzegovina. Without logistical support from Serbia, Bosnian Serb forces retook U.N.-secured weapons, brushing aside UNPROFOR guards. When NATO responded with air strikes, the Serbs took UNPROFOR troops hostage, using them as human shields. NATO deployed a combat-ready Rapid Reaction Force to Bosnia to reduce the vulnerability of the widely scattered UNPROFOR units.

In July, the Bosnian Serb commanders launched an offensive against the eastern enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa; they massacred over 7,000 men in Srebrenica. The mass killing served as a tipping point to western resolve to bring a decisive end to the conflict. Convening in London on July 21, NATO agreed on the effective end of the “dual key” policy for controlling air strikes, with authority for strikes delegated to UNPROFOR and NATO commanders in the field. The alliance further agreed that any future attacks on safe areas would result in a sustained air offensive.

On August 1, Croatian and Bosnian forces launched a powerful offensive, Operation Storm, against Bosnian Serb-held territory in western Bosnia. The offensive rolled eastward, displacing many thousands of Serb refugees and steadily moving the territorial balance toward the 51/49 balance called for by the Contact Group. The new Assistant Secretary of State for Western Europe, Richard Holbrooke, had seized a major role in policy toward the Balkans, and sought to orchestrate a cease-fire and negotiated settlement. When a mortar shell exploded in the Markala marketplace in Sarajevo on August 25, NATO executed Operation Deliberate Force, an intense two-week series of attacks on Serb military positions.

The combination of the ground offensive, NATO’s air campaign, and Holbrooke’s tireless diplomacy yielded a cease-fire by the end of September. On November 1, negotiations among the three parties opened at Dayton AFB, OH. The parties reached a hard-fought agreement on November 21 and the Dayton Accords, formally the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were signed in Paris on December 14. The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) deployed into Bosnia-Herzegovina on December 20.

- Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended
- the War in Bosnia
The Democratic Party nominated Vice President Al Gore to head their ticket in 2000. To oppose him the Republicans chose George W. Bush, the governor of Texas and son of former President George H. W. Bush.

Gore ran as a dedicated liberal, intensely concerned with damage to the environment and determined to seek more assistance for the less privileged sectors of American society. He seemed to place himself somewhat to the left of President Clinton.

Bush established a position closer to the heritage of Ronald Reagan than to that of his father. He displayed a special interest in education and called himself a “compassionate conservative.” His embrace of evangelical Christianity, which he declared had changed his life after a misspent youth, was of particular note. It underscored an attachment to traditional cultural values that contrasted sharply with Gore’s technocratic modernism. The old corporate gadfly Ralph Nader ran well to Gore’s left as the candidate of the Green Party. Conservative Republican Patrick Buchanan mounted an independent candidacy.

The final vote was nearly evenly divided nationally; so were the electoral votes. The pivotal state was Florida; there, only a razor-thin margin separated the candidates and thousands of ballots were disputed. After a series of state and federal court challenges over the laws and procedures governing recounts, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a narrow decision that effectively gave the election to Bush. The Republicans maintained control of both houses of Congress by a small margin.

The final totals underscored the tightness of the election: Bush won 271 electoral votes to Gore’s 266, but Gore led him in the national popular vote 48.4 percent to 47.9 percent. Nader polled 2.7 percent and Buchanan .4 percent. Gore, his states colored blue in media graphics, swept the Northeast and the West Coast; he also ran well in the Midwestern industrial heartland. Bush, whose states were colored red, rolled over his opponent in the South, the rest of the Midwest, and the mountain states. Commentators everywhere dwelled on the vast gap between “red” and “blue” America, a divide they characterized by cultural and social rather than economic differences, and all the more emotional for that reason. George Bush took office in a climate of extreme partisan bitterness.

Bush expected to be a president primarily concerned with domestic policy. He wanted to reform education. He had
talked during his campaign about an overhaul of the social security system. He wanted to follow Reagan’s example as a tax cutter.

The president quickly discovered that he had to deal with an economy that was beginning to slip back from its lofty peak of the late 1990s. This helped him secure passage of a tax cut in May 2001. At the end of the year, he also obtained the “No Child Left Behind” Act, which required public schools to test reading and mathematical proficiency on an annual basis; it prescribed penalties for those institutions unable to achieve a specified standard. Projected deficits in the social security trust fund remained unaddressed.

- The 2000 Presidential Election Dispute
- American Rhetoric: Bush v. Gore
Near the close of his administration, George H. W. Bush sent American troops to the chaotic East African nation of Somalia. Their mission was to spearhead a U.N. force that would allow the regular movement of food to a starving population.

Somalia became yet another legacy for the Clinton administration. Efforts to establish a representative government there became a “nation-building” enterprise. In October 1993, American troops sent to arrest a recalcitrant warlord ran into unexpectedly strong resistance, losing an attack helicopter and suffering 18 deaths. The warlord was never arrested. Over the next several months, all American combat units were withdrawn.

From the standpoint of the administration, it seemed prudent enough simply to end a marginal, ill-advised commitment and concentrate on other priorities. It only became clear later that the Somalian warlord had been aided by a shadowy and emerging organization that would become known as al-Qaida, headed by a fundamentalist Muslim named Osama bin Laden. A fanatical enemy of Western civilization, bin Laden reportedly felt confirmed in his belief that Americans would not fight when attacked.

By then the United States had already experienced an attack by Muslim extremists. In February 1993, a huge car bomb was exploded in an underground parking garage beneath one of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. The blast killed seven people and injured nearly a thousand, but it failed to bring down the huge building with its thousands of workers. New York and federal authorities treated it as a criminal act, apprehended four of the plotters, and obtained life prison sentences for them. Subsequent plots to blow up traffic tunnels, public buildings, and even the United Nations were all discovered and dealt with in a similar fashion.

Possible foreign terrorism was nonetheless overshadowed by domestic terrorism, primarily the Oklahoma City bombing. The work of right-wing extremists Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, it killed 166 and injured hundreds, a far greater toll than the 1993 Trade Center attack. But on June 25, 1996, another huge bomb exploded at the Khobar Towers U.S. military housing complex in Saudi Arabia, killing 19 and wounding 515. A federal grand jury indicted 13 Saudis and one Lebanese man for the attack, but Saudi Arabia ruled out any extraditions.

Two years later, on August 7, 1998, powerful bombs exploding simultaneously destroyed U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 301 people and injuring more than 5,000. In retaliation Clinton ordered missile attacks on terrorist training camps run by bin Laden in Afghanistan, but they appear to have been deserted. He also ordered a missile strike to destroy a suspect chemical factory in Sudan, a country which earlier had given sanctuary to bin Laden.

On October 12, 2000, suicide bombers ramed a speedboat into the U.S. Navy destroyer Cole, on a courtesy visit
to Yemen. Heroic action by the crew kept the ship afloat, but 17 sailors were killed. Bin Laden had pretty clearly been behind the attacks in Saudi Arabia, Africa, and Yemen, but he was beyond reach unless the administration was prepared to invade Afghanistan to search for him.

The Clinton administration was never willing to take such a step. It even shrank from the possibility of assassinating him if others might be killed in the process. The attacks had been remote and widely separated. It was easy to accept them as unwelcome but inevitable costs associated with superpower status. Bin Laden remained a serious nuisance, but not a top priority for an administration that was nearing its end.

9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS

The Bush presidency changed irrevocably on September 11, 2001, when the United States suffered the most devastating foreign attack ever against its mainland. That morning, Middle Eastern terrorists simultaneously hijacked four passenger airplanes and used two of them as suicide vehicles to destroy the twin towers of the World Trade Center. A third crashed into the Pentagon building, the Defense Department headquarters just outside of Washington, D.C. The fourth, probably meant for the U.S. Capitol, crashed into the Pennsylvania countryside as passengers fought the hijackers.

The death toll, most of it consisting of civilians at the World Trade Center, was approximately 3,000, exceeding that of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The economic costs were also heavy. The destruction of the trade center took several other buildings with it and shut down the financial markets for several days. The effect was to prolong the already developing recession.

Like most life-changing events, September 11 brought out the best and worst in the American people and their
government. When the Bush administration identified Al Qaeda as the organization responsible for the attack, many Americans responded with rage directed at anyone they suspected might be Muslim or from the Middle East. However, most Americans responded with displays of patriotism and rejected populist anger, choosing instead to donate money to relief efforts and provide for the families of victims. Millions flooded local blood banks, gave generously to the American Red Cross and other relief agencies, and found extra time to volunteer with community organizations or reach out to estranged friends and family members. Military officials feared that volunteer enlistments would end, given the likelihood of mandatory deployments in the future. Instead, they found recruiting offices filled with young people willing to risk everything for an opportunity to serve their country.

September 11 was more than a life-changing moment for most Americans; it also defined an era and drove the history of the early twenty-first century more than any other event. Americans of various political persuasions united, at least temporarily, behind their president and his administration’s declaration of war against terrorism. An undeclared war in Afghanistan also received popular support, at least initially, as military leaders attempted to find Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and those who had supported his terrorist network. Bin Laden was one of over fifty children born to a billionaire in Yemen whose fortune had been made in construction fields related to the oil industry. Bin Laden inherited much of his father’s wealth but turned from his family’s secular orientation. Although he had technically fought on the same side as the US-backed Mujahideen who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, bin Laden had a deep hatred of the West. Although the West and its financial system was the source of his family’s wealth, he believed the West was also responsible for the decline of his version of Islam in the Middle East.

As the nation began to recover from the 9/11 attack, an unknown person or group sent out letters containing small amounts of anthrax bacteria. Some went to members of Congress and administration officials, others to obscure individuals. No notable person was infected. Five victims died, however, and several others suffered serious illness. The mailings touched off a wave of national hysteria, then stopped as suddenly as they had begun, and remained a mystery.

It was in this setting that the administration obtained passage of the USA Patriot Act on October 26, 2001. Designed to fight domestic terrorism, the new law considerably broadened the search, seizure, and detention powers of the federal government. Its opponents argued that it amounted to a serious violation of constitutionally protected individual rights. Its backers responded that a country at war needed to protect itself.

After initial hesitation, the Bush administration also decided to support the establishment of a gigantic new Department of Homeland Security. Authorized in November 2002, and designed to coordinate the fight against domestic terrorist attack, the new department consolidated 22 federal agencies.

Overseas, the administration retaliated quickly against the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. Determining
that the attack had been an al-Qaida operation, it launched a military offensive against Osama bin Laden and the fundamentalist Muslim Taliban government of Afghanistan. The United States secured the passive cooperation of the Russian Federation, established relationships with the former Soviet republics that bordered Afghanistan, and, above all, resumed a long-neglected alliance with Pakistan, which provided political support and access to air bases. Utilizing U.S. Army special forces and Central Intelligence Agency paramilitary operatives, the administration allied with long-marginalized Afghan rebels. Given effective air support, the coalition ousted the Afghan government in two months. Bin Laden, Taliban leaders, and many of their fighters were believed to have escaped into remote, semi-autonomous areas of northeastern Pakistan. From there they would try to regroup and attack the shaky new Afghan government.

In the meantime, the Bush administration identified other sources of enemy terrorism. In his 2002 State of the Union address, the president named an “axis of evil” that he thought threatened the nation: Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Of these three, Iraq seemed to him and his advisers the most immediately troublesome. Saddam Hussein had successfully ejected U.N. weapons inspectors. The economic sanctions against Iraq were breaking down, and, although the regime was not believed to be involved in the 9/11 attacks, it had engaged in some contacts with al-Qaida. It was widely believed, not just in the United States but throughout the world, that Iraq had large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and might be working to acquire a nuclear capability. Why else throw out the inspection teams and endure continuing sanctions?

Throughout the year, the administration pressed for a U.N. resolution demanding resumption of weapons inspection with full and free access. In October 2002, Bush secured congressional authorization for the use of military force by a vote of 296-133 in the House and 77-23 in the Senate. The U.S. military began a buildup of personnel and materiel in Kuwait.

In November 2002, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1441 requiring Iraq to afford U.N. inspectors the unconditional right to search anywhere in Iraq for banned weapons. Five days later, Iraq declared it would comply. Nonetheless, the new inspections teams complained of bad faith. In January 2003, chief inspector Hans Blix presented a report to the United Nations declaring that Iraq had failed to account for its weapons of mass destruction, although he recommended more efforts before withdrawing.

Despite Saddam’s unsatisfactory cooperation with the weapons inspectors, the American plans to remove him from power encountered unusually strong opposition in much of Europe. France, Russia, and Germany all opposed the use of force, making impossible the passage of a new Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. Even in those nations whose governments supported the United States, there was strong popular hostility to cooperation. Britain became the major U.S. ally in the war that followed; Australia and most of the newly independent Eastern European nations contributed assistance. The governments of Italy and Spain also lent their backing. Turkey, long a reliable American ally, declined to do so.

On March 19, 2003, American and British troops, supported by small contingents from several other countries, began an invasion of Iraq from the south. Small groups airlifted into the north coordinated with Kurdish militia. On both fronts, resistance was occasionally fierce but usually melted away. Baghdad fell on April 9. On April 14, Pentagon officials announced that the military campaign was over.
Taking Iraq turned out to be far easier than administering it. In the first days after the end of major combat, the country experienced pervasive looting. Hit-and-run attacks on allied troops followed and became increasingly organized, despite the capture of Saddam Hussein and the deaths of his two sons and heirs. Different Iraqi factions at times seemed on the verge of war with each other.

New weapons inspection teams were unable to find the expected stockpiles of chemical and biological weaponry. Although neither explanation made much sense, it increasingly seemed that Saddam Hussein had either engaged in a gigantic and puzzling bluff, or possibly that the weapons had been moved to another country.

After the fall of Baghdad, the United States and Britain, with increasing cooperation from the United Nations, moved ahead with establishment of a provisional government that would assume sovereignty over Iraq. The effort occurred amidst increasing violence that included attacks not simply on allied troops but also Iraqis connected in any way with the new government. Most of the insurgents appeared to be Saddam loyalists; some were indigenous Muslim sectarians; a fair number likely were foreign fighters. It was not clear whether a liberal democratic nation could be created out of such chaos, but certain that the United States could not impose one if Iraqis did not want it.

The 2004 presidential election

By mid-2004, with the United States facing a violent insurgency in Iraq and considerable foreign opposition to the war there, the country appeared as sharply divided as it had been four years earlier. To challenge President Bush, the Democrats nominated Senator John F. Kerry of Massachusetts. Kerry’s record as a decorated Vietnam veteran, his long experience in Washington, his dignified demeanor, and his skills as a speaker all appeared to make him the ideal candidate to unite his party. His initial campaign strategy was to avoid deep Democratic divisions over the war by emphasizing his personal record as a Vietnam combatant who presumably could manage the Iraq conflict better than Bush. The Republicans, however, highlighted his apparently contradictory votes of first authorizing the president to invade Iraq, then voting against an important appropriation for the war. A group of Vietnam veterans, moreover, attacked Kerry’s military record and subsequent anti-war activism.

Bush, by contrast, portrayed himself as frank and consistent in speech and deed, a man of action willing to take all necessary steps to protect the country. He stressed his record of tax cuts and education reform and appealed strongly to supporters of traditional values and morality. Public opinion polls suggested that Kerry gained some ground following the first of three debates, but the challenger failed to erode the incumbent’s core support. As in 2000, Bush registered strong majorities among Americans who attended religious services at least once a week and increased from 2000 his majority among Christian evangelical voters.

The organizational tempo of the campaign was as frenetic as its rhetorical pace. Both sides excelled at getting out their supporters; the total popular vote was approximately 20 percent higher than it had been in 2000. Bush won by 51 percent to 48 percent, with the remaining 1 percent going to Ralph Nader and a number of other independent candidates. Kerry seems to have been unsuccessful in convincing a majority that he possessed a satisfactory strategy to end the war. The Republicans also scored small, but important gains in Congress.

As George W. Bush began his second term, the United States faced challenges aplenty: the situation in Iraq, stresses within the Atlantic alliance, in part over Iraq, increasing budget deficits, the escalating cost of social entitlements,
and a shaky currency. The electorate remained deeply divided. The United States in the past had thrived on such crises. Whether it would in the future remained to be seen.

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8.9 Social Changes in American Society and Politics

THE DECADE OF WOMEN

On election Tuesday 1992, American voters sent as many new women to Congress as were elected in any previous decade, beginning a decade of unparalleled gains for women in Congress. In November 2002, women attained another historic milestone when the House Democratic Caucus elected 15-year veteran Nancy Pelosi of California as Democratic Leader—making her the highest ranking woman in congressional history.

Expectations for a “breakthrough” year for women had been high since the late 1970s; in fact, 1984 had been hopefully, but prematurely, advertised as the “Year of the Woman.” Political observers discussed the rise of a “gender gap,” predicting that 6 million more women than men would vote in the 1984 elections. When Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro of New York was chosen as the Democratic candidate for Vice President that year—the first woman to appear on a major party ticket—expectations soared for a strong turnout by women at the polls. Jan Meyers of Kansas, one of a group of women running for national office in 1984, credited Ferraro’s high profile with having “a very positive impact” on her campaign in suburban Kansas City for a House seat. Ferraro put women in the headlines, increased their credibility, and forced the Republican Party to focus on women voters, Meyers said shortly after winning a seat in Congress. Some expected women to vote as a bloc on the hot-button issues that were important to them—reproductive rights, economic equality, and health care; the emergence of a women’s voting bloc had been predicted since the passage of the 19th Amendment. But this bloc failed to materialize in 1984, and Ferraro and Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale of Minnesota lost in a landslide to the incumbent President Reagan.

In 1992, women went to the polls, energized by a record-breaking number of women on the federal ticket. The results were unprecedented; the 24 women who won election to the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time that November comprised the largest number elected to the House in any single election, and the women elected to the Senate tripled the number of women in that chamber. Dubbed the “Year of the Woman,” 1992 also marked the beginning of a decade of remarkable gains for minority women. Twenty-three of the 34 African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-Pacific-American women who have served in Congress were elected between 1992 and 2005.

California’s 1992 congressional races were a microcosm of the changes beginning to take place nationally. During the 102nd Congress, from 1991 to 1993, women held three seats on the California congressional delegation—roughly 6 percent. In 1992, a record 71 California women were nominated to run in the fall elections for federal and state offices; nationally 11 women won major party nominations for Senate races, while 106 women contended for House seats in the general election. “The days of cold lonely fights of the ’60s and ’70s, when women were often laughed at as we tried to push for new opportunities, are over,” said Lynn Schenk, a congressional candidate from San Diego. “No one’s laughing now. If people truly want someone to be an agent of change, I’m that person. And being a woman is part of that.” Six new women Members from California, including Schenk, were elected to the House in the fall of 1992 alone. Two others, Representative Barbara Boxer and former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein, won election as U.S. Senators, making California the first state with two women in the Senate. By the 109th Congress in 2005, 21 members of the California congressional delegation were women—38 percent of the state’s total representation in Congress.

Women’s impressive gains in 1992 were not the product of any one galvanizing event, but rather the confluence of several long-term trends and short-term election year issues. Demographics, global politics, scandal, and the ripple
effect of the women’s liberation movement all played a part in the results of that historic election.

In 1992, the incumbent candidates faced a tougher-than-usual contest for re-election. An economic downturn that had begun in 1991 was predicted to be the leading edge of a long-term recession. American business mired as the country transitioned to a peace-time economy after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The national focus shifted from the Soviet–American conflict and national security to areas where women’s influence was more established—education, health care, welfare reform, and the economy. While Americans worried about their jobs, they watched apprehensively the resurgent Japanese economy and the reunification of Germany. The check-writing scandal in the House “bank” (operated by the Sergeant at Arms), where a large number of Representatives had overdrawn their accounts—in some cases on hundreds of occasions—also contributed to the anti-incumbent sentiment within the electorate that disdained business-as-usual politics in Washington. Moreover, the debate over the abortion issue had reached a divisive point, with a pro-life President in the White House and the Supreme Court considering a ruling that could have reversed Roe v. Wade.

The issue of whom President George H. W. Bush’s administration would appoint to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall became a galvanizing one for women candidates. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas, a conservative he had earlier appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals. Thomas’s antiabortion stance, as well as his opposition to affirmative action, made him a lightning rod for liberal groups and Democratic Senators. But his confirmation hearings became a public forum on sexual harassment in the workplace when Thomas’s former aide Anita Hill accused him in televised hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee of making unwanted advances. Beamed into millions of homes, the spectacle of the all-male Judiciary Committee offering Hill little sympathy and at moments treating her with outright hostility reinforced the perception that women’s perspectives received short shrift on Capitol Hill. Seven Democratic women from the House marched in protest to address the caucus of their Democratic Senate colleagues, but they were rebuffed.

While controversy stirred by the Thomas–Hill episode provided good campaign rhetoric and a convenient media explanation for the “Year of the Woman,” other contributing factors included the availability of funding, the growing pool of women candidates with elective experience, and the presence of a Democratic presidential candidate, who shared their beliefs on many of the issues (24 of the 27 women elected that fall were Democrats). Also significant were the effects of redistricting after the 1990 Census, the large number of retiring Members, and the casualties of the House banking scandal; the combination of these effects created 93 open seats in the U.S. House during the 1992 elections. Candidates of both genders embraced the popular theme of change in government by stressing their credentials as Washington outsiders, but women benefited more from this perception, because they had long been marginalized in the Washington political process. As Elizabeth Furse, a successful candidate for an Oregon House seat, pointed out during her campaign: “People see women as agents of change. Women are seen as outsiders, outside the good old boy network which people are perceiving has caused so many of the economic problems we see today.”

For all the media attention paid to the “Year of the Woman,” it was but a part of the larger trend of women’s movement into elective office. A number of women expressed exasperation with the media focus that hyped the sensational news story but largely ignored more enduring trends and influences. “The year of the woman in retrospect was a small gain, but it was the start of what was a big gain,” Senator Barbara Boxer observed a decade later. “I don’t even think it was the year of the woman then, but it started the trend of electing more women.” Others felt the label diminished women’s achievement and reinforced perceptions that their impact on Congress was temporary. As Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland said: “Calling 1992 the Year of the Woman makes it sound like the Year of the Caribou or the Year of the Asparagus. We’re not a fad, a fancy, or a year.”

The trend that culminated in the 1990s had begun decades earlier in the state legislatures, where women began to accumulate political experience that prepared them to be legislators. The first Congresswoman with elective experience in a state legislature was Kathryn O’Loughlin McCarthy of Kansas. For decades McCarthy proved the exception to the rule; between her election to Congress in 1932 and 1970, when great numbers of women began
to serve in state capitols, hardly more than a dozen Congresswomen had held a seat in the state legislature or a statewide elective office. It was only in the last 30 years of the 20th century that women made significant gains in state legislatures and, subsequently, the U.S. Congress. For example, in 1970 women held about four percent (301 seats) of all the seats in state legislatures nationwide. In 1997 that figure plateaued at around 1,600, and for the next five years women made up about 22 percent of state legislators nationally. In 2003, 1,648 (22.3 percent) of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States were women.

Ultimately, however, the “Year of the Woman” spawned expectations that women candidates in subsequent elections could not realistically meet. Contrary to widely held beliefs, women were not about to change the political culture overnight—especially not on seniority-based Capitol Hill. Later political battles over issues such as reproductive rights, welfare reform, and the federal deficit dashed hopes that women would unite across party lines, subordinate ideology to pragmatism, and increase their power.

Moreover, the belief that sexism would be eradicated proved overly optimistic, as old stereotypes persisted. Along with Representatives Barbara Boxer and Marcy Kaptur of Ohio, Mary Rose Oakar of Ohio led a 1985 protest of House women demanding equal access to the House gym and fitness facilities. Unhappy that the women’s gym lacked the modern exercise equipment, swimming pool, and basketball court accessible to the male Members, the three lawmakers made their pitch in a song belted out to the tune of “Has Anyone Seen My Gal?” before a meeting of the House Democratic Whips. However, women still contended with unequal access to gym facilities and other indications of sexism. Once when fellow freshman Leslie Byrne of Virginia entered an elevator full of Members, a Congressman remarked, “It sure is nice to have you ladies here. It spiffs up the place.” Exasperated, Byrne quipped, “Yup, chicks in Congress.” Another Member of the class of ‘92 observed that Congress had failed to keep pace with changes in American society. “Out in the real world, we took care of a lot of these basic issues between men and women years ago,” said Lynn Schenk. “But this place has been so insulated, the shock waves of the ’70s and ’80s haven’t quite made it through the walls.”

After the 1992 elections, women Members were still in a distinct minority, although for the first time in congressional history they accounted for more than 10 percent of the total membership. Subsequent growth was slower, though steady. On average since 1992, 10 new women have been elected to Congress each election cycle, while incumbency rates have remained well above 90 percent. In August 2005, women made up 15.5 percent of Congress—an all-time high. Some women noted that although they had failed to achieve numerical parity in Congress, they had dramatically altered the political culture within the electorate. “In previous years, when I have run for office, I always had to overcome being a woman,” said Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. “All I’ve ever wanted was an equal chance to make my case, and I think we’re getting to that point—and that’s the victory.”

COMMITTEE AND PARTY LEADERSHIP

The women who entered office in record numbers in the 1990s soon accrued seniority in committees and catapulted into top leadership posts. This trend ran counter to historical precedent, although arguably the most powerful and influential woman to head a committee was one of the first: Mary T. Norton chaired four House committees during the 1930s and 1940s—Labor, House Administration, District of Columbia, and Memorials. However, Norton’s experience was unusual and, tellingly, she never held a top leadership job in the Democratic Party during her 25 years in the House. As late as the spring of 1992, the iconic feminist Congresswoman Pat Schroeder observed that the wheels of sexual equality on Capitol Hill turned slowly. “It’s not revolutionary, it’s evolutionary,” Schroeder said. “We get some appointments, we get some this, we get some that. But to think that women get any power positions, that we’ve become the bull elephants, that we’re the kahunas or whatever, well, we’re not.”

Unlike the third generation of women in Congress, the fourth generation often chose to confront the institution less directly. Whereas Bella Abzug’s generation worked against the congressional establishment to breach gender barriers, many women in the fourth generation worked for change from within the power structure. Women in the 1980s and early 1990s who moved into leadership posts did so largely by working within traditional boundaries—a
time-honored approach that extended back to Mary Norton and Edith Nourse Rogers in the first generation of Congresswomen. The careers of Lynn Martin and Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut illustrate this tendency: Martin served as Vice Chair of the GOP Conference; Kennelly served as the Democratic Party’s Chief Deputy Whip (a position created for her) and eventually became Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus. Congresswoman Gilda Ferraro also possessed an ability to work with the House leadership, particularly Speaker Tip O’Neill of Massachusetts, in a way her male colleagues perceived as “nonthreatening.” As Ferraro’s colleague Marge Roukema observed, Ferraro “takes a feminist stand but works only within the art of the possible.” The Congresswoman’s pragmatism struck a balance that was pleasing to both Capitol Hill insiders and feminists. Betty Friedan, founder of NOW, judged that Ferraro was “no cream puff; she’s a tough dame.” Other women who were influential in their parties followed a similarly pragmatic approach. “I worry about marginalizing women in the institution,” said freshman Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut in 1992. “It’s a very competitive place, and what you need to do is build coalitions, and since there are 29 women who don’t think alike, you build coalitions among women, and you build coalitions among men. If you sit there and say, ‘I’m a woman, we’re in the minority here,’ then you’re never going to get anywhere in this body.”

Nevertheless, until 1992, women had been on the margins of institutional leadership. Fewer than 10 women had chaired full congressional committees, and just eight House and Senate women had held positions in the party leadership. The two highest-ranking women in House were still at considerable remove from the levers of power: Mary Rose Oakar was Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus and Lynn Martin was Vice Chair of the Republican Conference in the 99th and the 100th Congresses (1985–1989). The highest-ranking woman in Senate history was Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, whom GOP peers elected Chair of the Republican Conference in the 90th through the 92nd Congresses (1967–1973).

Three women led committees in the 104th Congress (1995–1997): Jan Meyers chaired the House Small Business Committee, Nancy Johnson chaired the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, and Nancy Landon Kassebaum chaired the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. Kassebaum’s post was particularly noteworthy, as she was the first woman in Senate history to head a major standing committee. However, by the end of the 104th Congress, Meyers, Johnson, and Kassebaum had either left their posts or retired from Congress. The only other women to chair congressional committees during this period were Senators Olympia Snowe (Small Business) and Susan Collins (Governmental Affairs) in the 108th and 109th Congresses (2003–2007).

But gradual changes in the 1990s had begun to alter the leadership makeup in ways that portended greater involvement for women. From the 103rd through the 108th Congresses (1993–2005), 12 more women moved into the leadership ranks. Representatives Susan Molinari, Jennifer Dunn of Washington, Tillie Fowler of Florida, and Deborah Pryce of Ohio served as the Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference from the 104th through the 107th Congresses, respectively. In the 108th Congress, Pryce, who first won election to Congress in the “Year of the Woman,” became the highest-ranking woman in House GOP history when she was elected Chair of the Republican Conference. Her accomplishment was exceeded only by that of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi of California, who had succeeded Representative Sala Burton of California in the House after her death in 1987. In 2001, Pelosi won the Democratic Caucus contest for Whip. Little more than a year later, when Representative Dick Gephardt of Missouri left the Democratic Party’s top post, Pelosi overwhelmingly won her colleagues’ support in her bid to become House Democratic Leader. This event garnered national and international attention.

Meanwhile, many of the women elected in the 1990s accrued seniority and, as a result, more important committee assignments. Though not yet apparent in the chairmanships of full committees, this power shift was evident in the chairmanships of subcommittees—a key prerequisite for chairing a full committee. Since the 80th Congress (1947–1949)—the first Congress for which such records are readily accessible—54 women have chaired House or Senate subcommittees. Three women—Margaret Chase Smith, Barbara Mikulski and Barbara Boxer—chaired subcommittees in both the House and the Senate. While just two women—Representatives Smith and Bolton—chaired House subcommittees in the 80th Congress (there were no women chairing Senate subcommittees at the time), by the 109th Congress in 2005, 10 women chaired subcommittees in the House and the Senate. More telling, roughly
half the women in congressional history who chaired subcommittees attained these posts after 1992.

Representatives Pelosi and Pryce were on the leading edge of the spike in women elected to Congress. Pryce was elected to Congress at age 41 and attained her leadership post at 51. Pelosi arrived in the House at age 47 and was elected House Democratic Leader at 62. Behind these two leaders are a host of women who were elected in the latter 1990s. When elected, some of these women were 10 years younger than Pelosi and Pryce upon their arrival in Congress, giving them additional tenure to accrue seniority and power. If present trends continue and more and younger women are elected to Congress, women will likely become better represented in high committee posts and the leadership.

**AFRICAN AMERICANS IN CONGRESS**

The modern era of African Americans’ nearly 140-year history in Congress began in 1971. Black Members enjoyed a tremendous surge in numbers, at least in the House, reflecting a larger historical process, as minority groups and women exercised their new freedom to participate in American society. Fully 71 percent of all African Americans who have served in Congress entered the House or Senate after 1970. These startling gains derived from the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent extensions, as well as from Supreme Court decisions requiring legislative redistricting so that black voters could be represented more equitably. View Larger

Greater numbers of African-American Members provided renewed momentum for convening a formal group and, in 1971, 13 individuals created the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). The CBC became a focal point for addressing issues important to blacks nationally by acting as an advocacy group for African Americans within the institution.
and forming a potent bloc for pushing legislative items. A growing influence, more focused and forceful than in previous generations, accompanied the organizational trend. The electoral longevity of African-American Members (boosted by districts that were drawn with black majorities), coupled with the CBC’s lobbying of House leaders and progressive institutional reforms in the 1970s, placed many black Members in key committee and party leadership positions. Over time, black advancement within the institution changed Members’ legislative strategies. “Many of the [early] Black Caucus members came out of the heat of the civil rights struggle,” William (Bill) Gray III of Pennsylvania observed. “We have a group of new members whose strategies were shaped in the post-civil rights movement—who use leverage within the system. We see ourselves not as civil rights leaders, but as legislators...the pioneers had made it possible for us to be technicians.”

The post-1970 generation of black Americans in Congress marked a watershed in American history—a transition from a period of prolonged protest to full political participation. Similar to other minority groups on Capitol Hill entering a stage of institutional maturity, African Americans faced new and sometimes unanticipated challenges resulting from their numerical, organizational, and leadership successes. Redistricting that dramatically boosted the numbers of African-American Members in the early 1990s evoked opposition that sought to roll back or dilute black voting strength. Moreover, by the end of the decade, redistricting had largely run its course in areas where black votes could be concentrated with a goal of electing more African Americans to Congress. The net result was that the number of African Americans in Congress leveled off by the early 1990s and hovered in the high 30s and low 40s for eight election cycles from 1992 through 2006. Although organizational trends provided African-American Members a forum to discuss their legislative agendas and strategies, black Members disagreed about many issues, partially because each Member represented the interests of a unique constituency. Finally, while African-American Members enjoyed unprecedented leadership strength for most of this era, greater power often placed black leaders in a quandary when the imperatives of promoting the leadership or party agenda conflicted with perceived “black interests.”

### Hispanic Americans in Congress

The first Cuban American to serve in the U.S. Senate, Martinez immigrated to the United States in the 1960s. Part of a generation of Hispanic Americans that changed U.S. society and Congress’s legislative focus, Martinez and many of his Hispanic colleagues during this period were immigrants or the children of immigrants, and their congressional ambitions were shaped by their stories and their families’ stories. Martinez’s policy preferences were informed by...
his childhood and by the experiences and observations of other Hispanic Members.

Since their constituents frequently struggled with English and with discrimination, these issues became central to Hispanic Members’ agendas. Other issues included the United States’ relationship with Cuba and the federal government’s relationship with its territories. But perhaps the most important topic of debate during the latter part of the 20th century was immigration. “There are those in the country who feel the country is ‘full,’” Martinez observed in 2006. “Had that been the prevailing view in the 1960s, I would not be here.”

The Hispanic Americans who entered Congress between 1977 and 2012 represent the greatest increase in their ethnic group in congressional history. Of the 91 Hispanic Americans who served in Congress through August 2012, 37 were elected or appointed between 1822 and 1976, meaning that nearly 60 percent of the Hispanic Americans in congressional history (54 individuals) were elected in 1976 or later.

This increase was prompted by demographic changes and political reforms. Between the 1980 Census and 2010 Census, the number of Latinos in the United States nearly tripled, to 16 percent of the total population, making Hispanics the second largest ethnic group in the country. Hispanic representation in Congress has also increased because of two major reforms to America’s electoral system: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its extensions, and a series of Supreme Court decisions on redistricting that began in 1962.

Hispanics’ substantial presence in U.S. society did not translate immediately into a degree of comparative congressional representation. Hispanic-American representation in Congress did not change proportionally from 1977 to 2012, despite the burgeoning ratio of Latinos in the U.S. population. In 1981 there were nine Hispanic Americans in Congress while Latinos constituted slightly more than 6 percent of the U.S. population. Thus, there was one Hispanic American in Congress for every 1.62 million Hispanics. Thirty years later that ratio remained unchanged—there were 31 Hispanic Americans in Congress, while Hispanic Americans made up 16 percent of the U.S. population.

Nevertheless, Hispanics’ rapid population growth has transformed their profile in a number of states. For most of the 19th century and early 20th century, Latinos were from the Southwest. But recent census data indicate that Hispanic Americans are settling in all the major urban areas in the country. After reapportionment based on the 2010 Census, eight states gained House seats. The proportion of Hispanics in these growing states ranged from 37.6 percent (Texas) to 5.1 percent (South Carolina), with Hispanic growth rates ranging from 147.9 percent (South Carolina) to 41.8 percent (Texas). The 2010 Census also identified 10 states that lost House seats. In these states, the Hispanic population ranges from 17.7 percent (New Jersey) to 3.1 percent (Ohio) with growth rates ranging from 83.7 percent (Iowa) to 19.2 percent (New York). In each one of these states, whether its population is growing or declining, the growth rate for Hispanics outstrips the growth rate for the general population, increasing the proportion of Hispanics in the total U.S. population. This demographic trend has attracted the attention of both major political parties, which seek to win the loyalty of Hispanic voters.

As their numbers grew, particularly in the U.S. House of Representatives, Hispanic Americans in Congress were
better positioned to influence the legislative process, both as individuals and as a bloc. After the 1976 elections, for instance, five Members established the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, a legislative service organization that followed and influenced policy affecting America’s Hispanic community. Unlike in other congressional caucuses, however, the diversity of the Hispanic Caucus limited its effectiveness. The caucus was open to both Republicans and Democrats, and its roster included Members from across the country. Competing regional interests often made the caucus an information clearinghouse and a communications network more than a vehicle for moving legislation through Congress.

Hispanic Members during this period benefited from the privileges that were won by their predecessors. In congressional committees, these Members gained enough seniority to chair 11 committees and 16 subcommittees. A handful of Hispanic Members won spots in the leadership, where they helped make committee assignments, and track votes. Experience and exposure at many levels of American politics has made recent Hispanic-American Members attractive candidates for Cabinet-level posts and leadership positions at federal agencies. Senator Martinez’s work as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the George W. Bush administration prior to his Senate service and his role as head of the Republican National Committee during his Senate tenure, exemplified Latinos’ increasing participation in American politics by the early 21st century.

**SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR**

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Ronald Reagan, and served from 1981 until 2006. Following her retirement from the Court on January 31, 2006, Justice O’Connor has continued her judicial service by hearing cases in the United States Courts of Appeals. In recognition of her lifetime accomplishments, President Barack Obama awarded Justice O’Connor with the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, on August 12, 2009.

![Sandra Day O’Connor being sworn in as Supreme Court Justice by Chief Justice Warren Burger. Her husband John O’Connor looks on. 9/25/81. U.S. Supreme Court.](image)

- Sandra Day O’Connor Biography - Facts, Birthday, Life Story
- Sandra Day O’Connor
- Reagan’s Nomination of O’Connor
- Sandra Day O’Connor

**SALLY RIDE**

- Sally Ride Biography - Facts, Birthday, Life Story
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- Who Was Sally Ride?
- Sally Ride: First American Woman in Space
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GERALDINE FERRARO

- Geraldine A. Ferraro Biography - Facts, Birthday, Life Story
- FERRARO, Geraldine Anne
- Ferraro
- Ferraro Broke A Barrier For Women, But Roadblocks Remain
- Geraldine Ferraro, First Woman VP Candidate, Dies at 75

HILLARY CLINTON

On January 21, 2009, Hillary Rodham Clinton was sworn in as the 67th Secretary of State of the United States. Secretary Clinton joined the State Department after nearly four decades in public service as an advocate, attorney, First Lady, and Senator.

Secretary Clinton was born in Chicago, Illinois on October 26, 1947 to Dorothy Rodham and the late Hugh Rodham. She attended local public schools before graduating from Wellesley College and Yale Law School, where she met Bill Clinton. In 1974, Secretary Clinton moved to Arkansas, a year later then married Bill Clinton and became a successful attorney while also raising their daughter, Chelsea. She was an assistant professor at the University of Arkansas School of Law, and after working to strengthen the local legal aid office, she was appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1977 to serve on the board of the Legal Services Corporation, which she later chaired.

During her 12 years as First Lady of the State of Arkansas, she was Chairwoman of the Arkansas Education
Standards Committee, co-founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and served on the boards of the Arkansas Children’s Hospital, and the Children’s Defense Fund.

In 1992, Governor Clinton was elected President of the United States, and as First Lady, Hillary Clinton became an advocate of health care reform and worked on many issues relating to children and families. She led successful bipartisan efforts to improve the adoption and foster care systems, reduce teen pregnancy, and provide healthcare to millions of children through the Children’s Health Insurance Program. She also traveled to more than 80 countries as a representative of our country, winning respect as a champion of human rights, democracy and civil society. Her famous speech in Beijing in 1995 – when she declared that "human rights are women’s rights, and women’s rights are human rights" – inspired women worldwide and helped galvanize a global movement for women’s rights.

With Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, Secretary Clinton worked to launch the government’s Vital Voices Democracy Initiative. Today, Vital Voices is a non-governmental organization that continues to train and organize women leaders across the globe.

In 2000, Hillary Clinton made history as the first First Lady elected to the United States Senate, and the first woman elected statewide in New York. In the Senate, she served on the Armed Services Committee, the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee, the Budget Committee and the Select Committee on Aging. She was also a Commissioner on the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

As a Senator, Clinton worked across party lines to build support for causes important to her constituents and the country, including the expansion of economic opportunity and access to quality, affordable health care. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, she was a strong advocate for funding the rebuilding of New York and the health concerns of the first responders who risked their lives working at Ground Zero. She also championed the cause of our nation’s military and fought for better health care and benefits for wounded service members, veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves. She was also the only Senate member of the Transformation Advisory Group to the Department of Defense’s Joint Forces Command.

In 2006, Senator Clinton won reelection to the Senate, and in 2007 she began her historic campaign for President. In 2008, she campaigned for the election of Barack Obama and Joe Biden, and in November, she was nominated by President-elect Obama to be Secretary of State.

Secretary Clinton is the author of best-selling books, including her memoir, Living History, and her groundbreaking book on children, It Takes A Village. She and President Clinton reside in New York.
Condoleezza Rice was nominated for Secretary of State by George W. Bush on November 14, 2004, and assumed office on January 26, 2005. She served for four years, leaving the position on January 20, 2009. She was the first African-American woman to serve as Secretary of State.

Rise to Prominence

Rice was born on November 14, 1954, in Birmingham, Alabama. She earned her bachelor of arts in political science in 1974 from the University of Denver, her master’s degree in political science from the University of Notre Dame in 1975, and her doctorate in political science from the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver in 1981.

After her graduation, Rice accepted a position at Stanford University as a professor of political science. In 1987 she served as an advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and in 1989 was appointed director of Soviet and East European Affairs on the National Security Council. Rice returned to Stanford in 1991 and from 1993 until 1999 she served as Stanford’s Provost.

In 2001 she was appointed National Security Advisor by President George W. Bush, and succeeded Colin Powell as Secretary of State in 2005.

Influence on U.S. Diplomacy

As Secretary of State, Rice supported the expansion of democratic governments, and championed the idea of "Transformational Diplomacy," which sought to redistribute U.S. diplomats to areas of severe social and political trouble, address such issues as disease, drug smuggling and human trafficking, and reemphasize aid through the creation of the position of Director of Foreign Assistance.

Rice helped successfully negotiate several agreements in the Middle East, including Israeli withdrawal from and the opening of the Gaza border crossings in 2005 and the August 14, 2006 ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. Rice organized the Annapolis Conference of November 27, 2007, which focused on finding a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

Rice also worked actively to improve human rights issues in Iran and supported the passage of a United Nations Security Council Resolution for sanctions against the country unless its uranium enrichment program was curtailed.

Another major concern for Rice was North Korea’s nuclear program, and its subsequent testing of a nuclear weapon. Rice was firmly against holding bilateral talks with North Korea, although she welcomed their participation in the Six Party Talks between China, Japan, Russia, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States.
In October 2008, one of Rice’s most successful negotiations came to fruition, with the signing of the U.S.-India Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (123 Agreement), which would allow civil nuclear trade between the two countries.

Shortly after her term as Secretary of State ended in January 2009, she announced plans to write a book about her diplomatic career. Rice was succeeded as Secretary of State by former First Lady and New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton.

• Condoleezza Rice Biography - Facts, Birthday, Life Story
• Condoleezza Rice
• Condoleezza Rice

NANCY PELOSI

• Nancy Pelosi Biography - Facts, Birthday, Life Story
• Full Biography
• Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi
• Nancy Pelosi

THE POLITICS OF HOPE

“The strongest democracies flourish from frequent and lively debate, but they endure when people of every background and belief find a way to set aside smaller differences in service of a greater purpose.”

– President Barack Obama, 2009

ELECTION OF 2008 AND EMERGENCE OF BARACK OBAMA

Having served two terms, President George W. Bush was constitutionally prohibited from being elected again to the presidency. After a spirited preconvention campaign, the Republicans chose as their candidate Senator John McCain of Arizona. A Vietnam veteran respected for his heroic resistance as a prisoner of war, McCain possessed strong foreign policy credentials and was a relatively moderate conservative on domestic issues. He chose as his running mate Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska. Much admired by Christian evangelicals and cultural conservatives, she drew almost as much attention as McCain himself.

In late 2007, it seemed nearly certain that the Democratic nomination would go to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York. The wife of former president Bill Clinton, she had quickly established herself as a leading member of Congress and possessed a strong national constituency among women and liberal Democrats. However, she faced a phenomenon not unusual in democratic societies — a relatively unknown, but charismatic, challenger whose appeal rested not on ideological or programmatic differences but on style and personal background.

Barack Hussein Obama was only in his second year as a U.S. senator from Illinois, but his comparative youth and freshness were assets in a year when the electorate was weary of politics as usual. So was his multicultural background. He was born in Honolulu on August 4, 1961, to a Kenyan father studying at the University of Hawaii and a white mother originally from a small town in Kansas. In 1963, the senior Obama left his new family to pursue graduate study at Harvard and later to return to Kenya. When Obama was six his mother remarried and relocated to Indonesia, where Obama briefly attended a Muslim school. He eventually returned to Hawaii, living with his maternal grandparents while he attended a private U.S. high school. He went on to study at two of the best universities in the United States — Columbia and Harvard. His personal style mixed a rare speaking talent with a hip informality that had great appeal to younger voters. Americans of all ages could consider him an emblematic representative of their society’s tradition of providing opportunity for all.

After a close, hard-fought six months of party caucuses and primary elections, Obama eked out a narrow victory over Clinton. He made Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware his vice-presidential selection. Most measures of popular sentiment indicated that the public wanted a change. The two candidates began the fall campaign season as strong favorites.

Any chance that McCain and Palin could pull ahead was ended by the sharp financial crisis that began in the last half of September and sent the economy crashing. Caused by excessive speculation in risky mortgage-backed securities and other unstable investments, the crash led to the bankruptcy of the venerable Lehman Brothers investment house and momentarily imperiled the entire financial superstructure of the nation. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), created during the New Deal, shut down numerous banks without loss to depositors, but had no jurisdiction over the giant financial investment companies that did not engage in commercial banking. Moreover, it had only limited capabilities to deal with those corporations that did both.

Fearing a general financial meltdown reminiscent of the darkest days of the Great Depression, the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Reserve engineered a Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) that was funded by a $700 billion congressional appropriation. The TARP program kept the endangered investment banks afloat. What it could not do was stave off a sharp economic collapse in which millions of U.S. workers lost their jobs.

That November, the voters elected Obama president of the United States, with approximately 53 percent of the vote.
OBAMA: THE FIRST YEAR

Obama was inaugurated president of the United States on January 20, 2009, in an atmosphere of hope and high expectations. In his inaugural address, he declared: “The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.” He proclaimed an agenda of “remaking America” by reviving and transforming the economy in ways that would provide better and less-expensive health care for all, foster environmentally friendly energy, and develop an educational system better suited to the needs of a new century.

Speaking to the international community, he pledged U.S. cooperation in facing the problem of global warming. He also delivered a general message of international engagement based on compassion for poorer, developing countries and respect for other cultures. To Muslims around the world he said, “We seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect.”

The speech revealed the wide scope of Obama’s aspirations. His rhetoric and his strong personal presence won wide approval — so much so that in October, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his goals. But, as always in the complex system of American representative government, it was easier to state large ambitions than to realize them.

At home, the administration addressed the mounting economic crisis with a $787 billion stimulus act designed to bring growing unemployment down to manageable levels. The legislation doubtless saved or created many jobs, but it failed to prevent unemployment — officially estimated at 7.7 percent of the labor force when Obama took office — from increasing to a high of 10.1 percent, then receding just a bit. The loans to large investment and commercial banks begun during the Bush administration with the objective of restoring a stable financial system were mostly repaid with a profit to the government, but a few remained outstanding as the president began his second year in office. In addition, the government invested heavily in two giant auto makers — General Motors and Chrysler — shepherding them through bankruptcy and attempting to reestablish them as major manufacturers.

Obama’s other major objective — the establishment of a national health care system — had long been a goal of American liberalism. With large Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress, it seemed achievable. However, developing a plan that had to meet the medical needs of more than 300 million Americans proved extraordinarily difficult. The concerns of numerous interests had to be dealt with — insurance companies, hospitals, physicians, pharmaceutical companies, and the large majority of Americans who were already covered and reasonably satisfied. In addition, a comprehensive national plan had to find some way to control skyrocketing costs. In the spring of 2010, the president signed complex legislation that mandated health insurance for every American, with implementation to take place over several years.

In foreign policy, Obama sought to reach out to the non-Western world, and especially to Muslims who might interpret the American military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of a general war on Islam. “America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition,” he told an audience at Cairo University. In Tokyo, he reassured Asians that America would remain engaged with the world’s fastest-growing region. While hoping to distinguish itself in tone from the Bush administration, the Obama government found itself following the broad outlines of Bush’s War on Terror. It affirmed the existing agreement to withdraw American troops from Iraq in 2011 and reluctantly accepted military plans for a surge in Afghanistan. In his Nobel acceptance speech, President Obama quoted the celebrated American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr to the effect that evil existed in the world and could be defeated only by force.

At the conclusion of his first year in office, Obama remained, for many Americans, a compelling personification of their country’s ideals of liberty and equal opportunity.

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