

## ★ Bush Begins

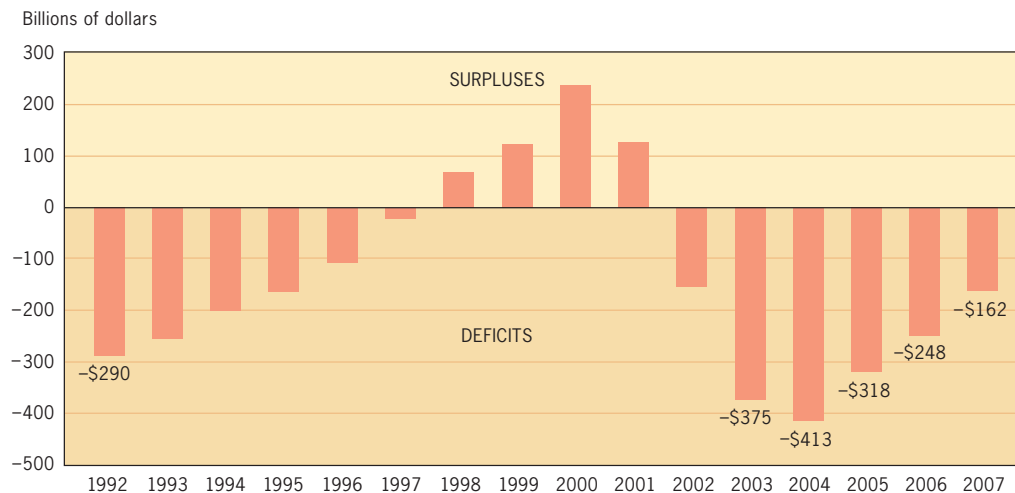
As the son of the forty-first president, George W. Bush (“43”) became the first presidential offspring since John Quincy Adams to reach the White House. Raised largely in Texas, the younger Bush publicly distanced himself from his family’s privileged New England heritage and affected the chummy manner of a self-made good ol’ boy—though he held degrees from Yale and Harvard. (His adversaries sniped that he had been born on third base and claimed to have hit a triple.) He promised to bring to Washington the conciliatory skills he had honed as the Republican governor of Texas, where he had worked well with the Democratic majority in the state’s legislature.

But as president, Bush soon proved to be more of a divider than a uniter, less a “compassionate conservative” than a crusading ideologue. Religious traditionalists cheered but liberals jeered when he withdrew American support from international health programs that sanctioned abortion, advocated federally financed faith-based social-welfare initiatives, and sharply limited government-sponsored research on embryonic stem cells, which many scientists believed held the key to conquering diseases such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s. He pleased corporate chief-

tains but angered environmentalists by challenging scientific findings on groundwater contamination and global warming, repudiating the **Kyoto Treaty** limiting greenhouse gas emissions (negotiated by the Clinton administration but never ratified by the Senate), advocating new oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Alaska’s ecologically fragile north coast, and allowing Vice President Cheney to hammer out his administration’s energy policy in behind-closed-doors meetings with representatives of several giant oil companies. Even many fiscal conservatives thought him reckless when he pressed ahead with a whopping \$1.3 trillion tax cut. Together with a softening economy and the increasing costs of war in Iraq, the tax cut turned the federal budget surpluses of the late 1990s into yawning deficits, reaching more than \$400 billion in 2004 (see Figure 41.1).

## ★ Terrorism Comes to America

On September 11, 2001, the long era of America’s impregnable national security violently ended. On a balmy late-summer morning, suicidal terrorists slammed two hijacked airliners, loaded with passengers and jet fuel, into the twin towers of New York City’s World Trade Center. They flew a third plane into the military



**Figure 41.1** Deficits into Surpluses and Back Again In 1998 the U.S. budget deficit became a surplus for the first time in decades. But by 2002 the government was back in deficit, due to President Bush’s tax cuts, a weak economy, and mushrooming defense spending on the Iraq War. (Source: Office of Management and Budget, *Historical Table: Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2008*.)



**The Toll of Terror** Grief overcame this exhausted firefighter during the search for survivors in the wreckage of New York City's World Trade Center.

nerve center of the Pentagon, near Washington, D.C., killing 189 people. Heroic passengers forced another hijacked aircraft to crash in rural Pennsylvania, killing all 44 aboard but depriving the terrorists of a fourth weapon of mass destruction. As the two giant New York skyscrapers thunderously collapsed, some three thousand innocent victims perished, including people of many races and faiths from more than sixty countries, as well as hundreds of New York's police- and fire-department rescue workers. A stunned nation blossomed with flags, as grieving and outraged Americans struggled to express their sorrow and solidarity in the face of the catastrophic terrorism of 9/11.

President Bush responded with a sober and stirring address to Congress nine days later. His solemn demeanor and the gravity of the situation helped to dissipate the cloud of illegitimacy that had shadowed his presidency since the disputed election of 2000.

While emphasizing his respect for the Islamic religion and Muslim people, he identified the principal enemy as Osama bin Laden, head of a shadowy terrorist network known as **Al Qaeda** (“the base” in Arabic). A wealthy extremist exiled from his native Saudi Arabia, bin Laden was associated with earlier attacks on American embassies in East Africa and on the USS *Cole* in Yemen. He had taken refuge in landlocked Afghanistan, ruled by Islamic fundamentalists called the Taliban. (Ironically, the United States had indirectly helped bring the Taliban to power by supporting religious rebels resisting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s.) Bin Laden was known to harbor venomous resentment toward the United States for its growing military presence in the Middle East (especially on the sacred soil of the Arabian Peninsula), and its unyielding support for Israel in the face of intensifying Palestinian nationalism. Bin Laden also fed on worldwide resentment of America's enormous economic, military, and cultural power. Ironically, America's most conspicuous strengths had made it a conspicuous target.

When the Taliban refused to hand over bin Laden, Bush ordered a massive military campaign against Afghanistan. Within three months American and Afghan rebel forces had overthrown the Taliban but failed to find bin Laden, and Americans continued to live in fear of future attacks. Confronted with this unconventional, diffuse menace, antiterrorism experts called for new tactics of “asymmetrical warfare,” employing not just traditional military muscle but also innovative intelligence gathering, economic reprisals, infiltration of suspected organizations, and even assassinations.

The terrorists' blows diabolically coincided with the onset of a recession. The already gathering economic downturn worsened as edgy Americans shunned air travel and the tourist industry withered. Then, while the rubble in New York was still smoldering, a handful of Americans died after receiving letters contaminated with the deadly respiratory disease anthrax. The perpetrators of the anthrax attacks remained unknown, but the gnawing fear spread that biological warfare might be the next threat facing the American people.

In this anxious atmosphere, Congress in October 2001 rammed through the **USA Patriot Act**.<sup>\*</sup> The act

<sup>\*</sup>The act's official name is *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism*.



**The Attacks Seen Around the World** The attacks of September 11, 2001, became events of international, not just American, significance, as revealed in the newspapers on display in Sofia, Bulgaria.

permitted extensive telephone and e-mail surveillance and authorized the detention and deportation of immigrants suspected of terrorism. Just over a year later, Congress created the new cabinet-level **Department of Homeland Security** to protect the nation's borders and ferret out potential attackers. The Justice Department meanwhile rounded up hundreds of immigrants and held them without habeas corpus (formal charges in an open court). The Bush administration further called for trying suspected terrorists before military tribunals, where the usual rules of evidence and procedure did not apply. As hundreds of Taliban fighters captured in Afghanistan languished in legal limbo and demoralizing isolation in the **Guantánamo Detention Camp** on the American military base at Guantánamo, Cuba, public-opinion polls showed Americans sharply divided on whether the terrorist threat fully warranted such drastic encroachments on America's venerable tradition of protecting civil liberties.

Catastrophic terrorism posed an unprecedented challenge to the United States. The events of that murderous September morning reanimated American patriotism, but they also brought a long chapter in American history to a dramatic climax. All but unique among modern peoples, Americans for nearly two centuries had been spared from foreign attack on their homeland. That unusual degree of virtually cost-free

**Liberty or Death** Critics of the USA Patriot Act feared the extinction of cherished civil liberties, including the right to protest against the government's policies.



national security had undergirded the values of openness and individual freedom that defined the distinctive character of American society. Now American security and American liberty alike were dangerously imperiled.

## ★ **Bush Takes the Offensive Against Iraq**

On only its second day in office, the Bush administration warned that it would not tolerate Iraq's continued defiance of United Nations weapons inspections, mandated after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had played hide-and-seek with the inspectors for years. In 1998 he had expelled both the U.N. Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), inducing President Clinton, with congressional approval, to declare that Saddam's removal ("regime change") was an official goal of U.S. policy. But no sustained military action against Iraq had followed. Now, in the context of the new terrorist threat, the Bush administration focused on Iraq with a vengeance.

In January 2002, just weeks after the September 11 attacks, Bush claimed that Iraq, along with Iran and North Korea, constituted an "axis of evil" that gravely menaced American security. Iran and North Korea were both known to be pursuing nuclear weapons programs, and Iran had long supported terrorist operations in the Middle East. But Iraqi tyrant Saddam Hussein, defeated but not destroyed by Bush's father in 1991, became the principal object of the new president's wrath. The elder Bush had carefully assembled a broad international coalition to fight the 1991 Persian Gulf War. He had also spoken so often of "prudence" that late-night television comedians had mocked him for it. In contrast, his son was brashly determined to break with long-standing American traditions and wage a preemptive war against Iraq—and to go it alone if necessary. The younger Bush thus cast off his appeal for America to be a "humble nation" and stood revealed as a plunger, a daring risk-taker willing to embrace bold, dramatic policies, foreign as well as fiscal. In that spirit Bush began laying plans for a war against Iraq, while somewhat halfheartedly pursuing diplomatic initiatives to avoid war.

Itching for a fight, and egged on by hawkish Vice President Cheney and other "neoconservative" advis-


ers, Bush accused the Iraqi regime of all manner of wrongdoing: oppressing its own people; frustrating the weapons inspectors; developing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction referred to as "WMD"; and supporting terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda. Perhaps most controversially, he also suggested that a liberated, democratized Iraq might provide a beacon of hope to the Islamic world and thereby begin to improve the political equation in the volatile Middle East. To skeptical observers, including America's usually reliable European allies, the very multiplicity of Bush's reasons for war cast doubt on his case, and his ambition to create a democracy in long-suffering Iraq seemed hopelessly utopian. Secretary of State Colin Powell urged caution, warning about the long-term consequences for the United States of invading and occupying an unstable, religiously and culturally divided nation of 25 million people. "You break it, you own it," he told the president.

*In his 2002 state of the union address, President George W. Bush (b. 1946) declared:*

“Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens—leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections—then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

“States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.”

**Map 41.5 Iraq in Transition**  
 Carved out of the old Ottoman Empire after World War I, Iraq has long been a combustible compound of rivalrous ethnic and religious groups. Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime imposed a brutal peace on the country for twenty-four years following his ascent to power in 1979, but after the American invasion in 2003, old feuds resumed, exacerbated by stinging resentment against the occupying forces.

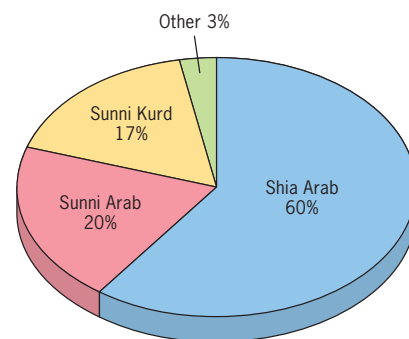
 Interactive Map



Heavy majorities in both houses of Congress nevertheless passed a resolution in October 2002 authorizing the president to employ armed force to defend against Iraqi threats to America's national security and to enforce United Nations resolutions regarding Iraq. A month later the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to give Iraq "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations." There followed a months-long cat-and-mouse game. U.N. weapons inspectors returned to Iraq. Saddam once again harassed and blocked them. No weapons of mass destruction were found. The inspectors asked for more time. The United Nations declined to authorize the use of force to compel compliance.

In this tense and confusing atmosphere, Bush, with Britain his only major ally, launched the long-anticipated invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003. Saddam Hussein's vaunted military machine collapsed almost immediately. In less than a month, Baghdad had fallen and Saddam had been driven from power and hounded into hiding. (He was found and arrested

**Ethnic and religious groups by percent of total population (c. 25,000,000)**



some nine months later and executed in 2006.) From the deck of a U.S. aircraft carrier off the California coast, speaking beneath a banner declaring "Mission Accomplished," Bush triumphantly announced on May 1, 2003, that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended" (see Map 41.5).

## ★ **Owning Iraq**

President Bush’s words quickly came back to haunt him and America’s forces in Iraq. “Neoconservative” pundits in Washington had predicted that American soldiers would be greeted as liberators and that Saddam’s ouster would lead to flowering democracy across the Middle East. In reality post-Saddam Iraq quickly devolved into a seething cauldron of violence. The country’s largest ethnic groups, Sunni and Shia Muslims, clashed violently, especially in the capital city of Baghdad. Both groups attacked American forces, who after their leaders disbanded the Iraqi army, were left to secure the country single-handedly. A locally grown insurgency quickly spread, and occupying Iraq be-

came ever more perilous for American troops. Hatred for Americans only worsened with revelations in April 2004 that Iraqi prisoners in Baghdad’s **Abu Ghraib prison** had been tortured and humiliated by their American captors. Amid this chaos, jihadist terrorists from around the region flooded into Iraq and established strong positions there, often fueling the intra-Iraqi conflicts to further their own radical Islamist vision. Although Al Qaeda had had no link to Iraq under Saddam, as Bush had falsely alleged, the organization certainly moved in afterward. These three battles—Shia-Sunni ethnic violence, counter-occupation insurgency, and jihadist terrorism—created a ceaseless cycle of bloodshed, in which American soldiers found themselves increasingly bogged down. By the end of 2006, more Americans had died in Iraq than in the at-

**On the Fiery Ground in Basra, Iraq, 2004** These British soldiers are running from a gasoline bomb detonated during a protest by Iraqi job seekers who claimed that they had been promised employment in the security services. The British, who had invaded Iraq alongside the United States, oversaw the southern Iraq city of Basra, a role that proved so unpopular with British voters that Prime Minister Tony Blair was eventually forced to resign.



*In his 1998 book, A World Transformed, former president George H. W. Bush (b. 1924) explained his rationale for not driving Saddam Hussein from power during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. His words made sobering reading in the context of his son's subsequent invasion of Iraq:*

“Trying to eliminate Saddam . . . would have incurred incalculable human and political costs. . . . The coalition would instantly have collapsed, the Arabs deserting it in anger and other allies pulling out as well. Under the circumstances, there was no viable ‘exit strategy’ we could see, violating another of our principles. Furthermore, we had been self-consciously trying to set a pattern for handling aggression in the post–Cold War world. Going in and occupying Iraq, thus unilaterally exceeding the United Nations’ mandate, would have destroyed the precedent of international response to aggression that we hoped to establish.”

tacks of September 11. (see “Thinking Globally: America Through Foreign Eyes: Hyperpower or Hapless Power?” pp. 1074–1075).

The political situation in the war-torn country took shape unevenly on shaky ground. In the summer of 2004, the American military ceded political power and limited sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government. National elections followed in early 2005, and millions of Iraqis voted for a national assembly to draft a constitution. After a referendum vote on the constitution in October 2005, another round of elections chose parliamentary representatives, a prime minister, and a president. But under the seeming stability of Iraq’s new democratic government lay deep, violent tensions. Sunni Muslims, the minority that had held power under Saddam Hussein, one of their own, feared reprisals and repressions under a majority Shia government. Sunnis largely boycotted the first election and tried unsuccessfully to block the ratification of the constitution. Unsuccessful at the ballot box, many Sunnis turned to bombings and political assassinations.

## ★ Reelecting George W. Bush

Americans had rarely been as divided as they were in the first years of the twenty-first century. Civil libertarians worried that the government was trampling on personal freedoms in the name of fighting terrorism. Revelations in 2002 about flagrant corporate fraud at energy giant Enron, telecommunications titan WorldCom, and other prominent firms fed rampant popular disillusion with the business community. Cultural tensions brewed over the rights of gay and lesbian Americans when leaders in San Francisco and Massachusetts permitted same-sex couples to marry in 2004. Affirmative action continued to spark sharp debate, as the Supreme Court permitted some preferential treatment in admitting minority undergraduate and law students to the University of Michigan in 2003.

Amid this division George W. Bush positioned himself to run for reelection. He proclaimed that his tax cuts had spurred economic growth by giving citizens more control. Targeting what he called “the soft bigotry of low expectations,” he championed the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2002, which mandated sanctions against schools that failed to meet federal performance standards. He played to cultural conservatives in opposing stem cell research (see page 1067) and called for a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. But most of all, he promoted himself as a stalwart leader in wartime, warning the country not to “change horses midstream.”

After a bruising round of primary elections, the embattled Democrats chose lanky and long-jawed Massachusetts senator John Kerry to represent their ticket. A more old-fashioned liberal than Clinton, Kerry pushed progressive visions of government and counted on his Vietnam War record to counter charges that he would be weak in the face of terrorism. But that plan backfired as Kerry fell under attack for his very public opposition to Vietnam once he had returned from battle in the early 1970s. The Republicans also had success painting the senator as a “flip-flopper,” changing his policy positions to fit opinion polls. In spite of increased public misgivings about the war in Iraq, Bush nailed down a decisive victory in November 2004. He received the first popular vote majority in more than a decade—60,639,281 to 57,355,978—and won clearly, if by only one state (this time Ohio), in the Electoral College, 286 to 252 (see Map 41.6). This time his mandate was clear, constitutional, and uncontested.



## THINKING GLOBALLY

### America Through Foreign Eyes: Hyperpower or Hapless Power?

When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, the Cold War concluded at last. So did an era in the history of American foreign policy, and in the history of the international order. For nearly half a century following World War II, the confrontation with the Soviets had deeply shaped Americans' conception of themselves—their national identity—as well as their role and reputation in the wider world. In the long twilight struggle against Soviet communism, they had accumulated unprecedented economic, military, and cultural might, and had taken virtuous pride in themselves as the global champions of democracy, justice, and human rights. Now, as the sole surviving “superpower,” they faced no counterbalancing regime and, apparently, no check on their national ambitions. The United States seemed to wield all but limitless power to mold the international environment as it wished. Not since the days of ancient Rome did any people bstride the world so unopposed.

Not everyone welcomed the emergence of this international colossus. Australians grumbled that the United States was a “tall poppy” that needed to be cut down to size. French foreign minister Hubert Védrine coined a new term when he described the United States in 1999 not merely as a superpower but as a “hyperpower,” one “that is

dominant or predominant in all categories,” including not only the traditional domains of politics, economics, and the military, but even including “attitudes, concepts, languages, and modes of life.” He called upon Europeans to create an alternative to the American “steamroller,” to “work in favor of real multilateralism against unilateralism, for balanced multipolarism against unipolarism, for cultural diversity against uniformity.” In the parlance of international relations, Védrine was promoting a “balancing” strategy to cope with U.S. power, rather than the “bandwagon” strategy of simply submitting to American hegemony and making the most of it. Notably, he was not proposing outright opposition.

As the last days of the twentieth century slipped through the hourglass, American power surely looked formidable. The United States was the world's third most populous nation (after China and India), enjoyed the world's largest economy (more than three times larger than second-ranked Japan), was the acknowledged global leader in high-tech information and biomedical innovations, and spent more on its armed forces than the rest of the world combined. Yet the realities of American power were somewhat less imposing. Uncle Sam struggled to find solid footing in the post-Cold War international arena.



#### Torture at Abu Ghraib Prison, Baghdad, 2003

Revelations that American soldiers had brutally tortured Iraqi prisoners contributed to condemnation of the nation's disregard for human rights and growing disquiet about America's unilateral policing of the world.



Washington in the 1990s badly botched a peacekeeping mission in lawless Somalia; stood by helplessly as genocidal militias murdered about a million Rwandans; dithered over how to stabilize chaotic Haiti; fumbled indecisively as nationalist and sectarian violence convulsed the former Balkan nation of Yugoslavia; found no effective response to terrorist attacks on New York City's World Trade Center, the destroyer USS *Cole*, and American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; and notoriously failed to bring any conclusion to the decades-old confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians, who erupted in a bloody intifada (rebellion) against the Jewish state in 2000.

The barbarous Al Qaeda assault that finally toppled the twin towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, momentarily brought an outpouring of sympathy from an astonished and outraged world—and also brought a dramatic shift in American foreign policy. Even *Le Monde*, France's leading newspaper, declared that in this dangerous hour “Nous sommes tous Américains” (We are all Americans). For the first time in history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invoked the treaty's Article Five, confirming that an attack on one member was an attack on all members.

But such sentiments proved short-lived. When President George W. Bush in 2002 asserted a new right of preemptive war and then proceeded to invade Iraq for what looked to many observers like the most dubious of reasons,

anti-American sentiment swelled the world over. In February 2002 some 10 million people in sixty countries demonstrated against the impending U.S. invasion of Iraq. Exacerbated by Washington's rejection of the Kyoto Treaty dealing with global warming, and by several American states' continuing embrace of the death penalty (which had largely disappeared in Europe and elsewhere), America's standing deteriorated even among its traditional allies and sank to rock-bottom lows in Islamic countries. Simmering resentment over the detention of hundreds of captured Afghans at the U.S. military base in Guantánamo, Cuba; revelations about human rights abuses inflicted by American troops on Iraqi prisoners at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison; and “rendition” by American agents of suspected terrorists to the notoriously cruel security services of other countries further drained the depleted reservoirs of America's moral and political capital.

Once a moral beacon and political inspiration to a suffering world, the United States in the early twenty-first century had come to be regarded by millions of people the world over as a moral scourge and a political and military danger (see Table 41.1). Recapturing its stature as a legitimate world leader, rebuilding its alliances, restructuring the myriad multilateral institutions it had worked so hard to build in the Cold War era, and recapturing a sense of itself as a just and humane society were tasks that urgently confronted the Republic as the century advanced.

**Table 41.1** World Public Opinion of the United States

Question: Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the United States? (percent favorable)

	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Great Britain	83%	75%	70	58%	55%	56%
France	62	63	43	37	43	39
Germany	78	61	45	38	41	37
Spain	50	—	38	—	41	23
Russia	37	61	36	47	52	43
Indonesia	75	61	15	—	38	30
Pakistan	23	10	13	21	23	27
Jordan	—	25	1	5	21	15
Turkey	52	30	15	30	23	12
Nigeria	46	—	61	—	—	62
Japan	77	72	—	—	—	63
India	—	54	—	—	71	56
China	—	—	—	—	42	47

(Source: From Pew Global Attitudes Project, “No Global Warming Alarm in the U.S., China; America's Image Slips, but Allies Share U.S. Concerns over Iran, Hamas,” 2006. Reprinted by permission of Pew Research Center.)

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## ★ Bush's Second Term

Reelection, George W. Bush announced, gave him “political capital,” which he intended to spend on an aggressive domestic agenda. The appointment of two new conservative Supreme Court justices upon the retirement of Sandra Day O'Connor and the death of Chief Justice William Rehnquist seemed to bode well for his ambitions. But Bush overplayed his hand. Attacking the core of New Deal liberalism, Bush proposed a radical program to privatize much of Social Security, providing incentives for younger Americans to fund their own retirements through personal accounts. A massive outcry led by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and other liberal groups reminded Americans how much they loved Social Security, warts and all. Bush's proposal faded away within six months of his reelection. The same fate befell a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, which had been a major “values” issue in the 2004 campaign.

The president also took aim at the contentious issue of immigration reform, where he parted company with the conservative wing of his party. Bush opposed arresting and deporting the nearly 12 million undocumented people in the United States, as some nativists proposed. At the same time, he felt that simply nor-

malizing their status would reward them for entering the country illegally. His compromise plan to establish a guest-worker program and a “path to citizenship” for the undocumented ended up pleasing no one. Congress rejected it in the summer of 2007, and the issue was dead for the rest of Bush's term (see p. 1095). very second-term president since the 1960s had seen scandal mar his later years in office. Nixon had Watergate, Reagan had Iran-contra, and Clinton had Lewinsky. The Bush White House was no exception, but this time the accusations were political, not personal. Bush's critics claimed that the president's fierce loyalty to his staff prevented him from recognizing incompetence and that he had unlawfully expanded the power of the presidency under the guise of protecting America in the “War on Terror.” In the fall of 2005, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff was convicted of perjury in an investigation into the source of a leak that had exposed the identity of an undercover CIA agent as political retaliation against her antiwar husband. In December of that year, journalists discovered that the government was conducting illegal wiretap surveillance on American citizens inside the United States in violation of federal law. In 2007 scandal engulfed the Justice Department over the firing, for political reasons, of eight U.S. attorneys. Perhaps the most tragic and avoidable of Bush's missteps came in the botched response to the deadly **Hurricane Katrina**,



### After the Levees Broke in New Orleans, August 2005

When ferocious Hurricane Katrina hammered the Gulf Coast, it overtaxed a deficient levee system and unleashed floodwaters into New Orleans, submerging 80 percent of the city and destroying more than a quarter-million of its homes. Many families unable or unwilling to flee the city sought refuge in the Superdome, where water, food, and other supplies were soon in very short supply. Experts predicted that it would be years before the city fully recovered, if ever.

**The Democrats Win Back Control of Congress, 2006** House Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina (left), Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of California (center), and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland (right) raise their hands in victory after being selected to lead the Democratic party in the House of Representatives. Their party also won a majority in the Senate in the 2006 midterm elections, the first time since 1994 that the Democrats controlled both houses.



which devastated New Orleans and much of the Gulf Coast in late August 2005, flooding 80 percent of the historic city and causing over 1,300 deaths and \$150 billion in damages.

## ★ Midterm Elections of 2006

As charges of dictatorial power-grabbing, cronyism, and incompetence mounted during Bush's second term, Democrats campaigned hard against the president and his party in the midterm elections of 2006. Republicans fell victim to the same anti-incumbency sentiment they had ridden to power twelve years earlier, as Democrats charged that a "culture of corruption" had taken hold in Washington. A series of high-profile arrests and resignations over lobbying, graft, illegal campaign financing, and sexual misconduct among Republican legislators added fuel to the Democrats' fire. Democrats narrowly regained control of both houses of Congress for the first time since the Gingrich revolution of 1994 (see p. 1059). New Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, the first woman to hold that post, promised a new era of reform, openness, and a check on the Bush administration.

The biggest factor in the Democratic sweep was the perceived mishandling of the war in Iraq. Public approval of the president's management of the war had declined steadily since early 2005 as the American death toll continued to rise. Prewar claims about

WMD and Iraq's connections to Al Qaeda and 9/11 had all proved false. By late 2005 a majority of Americans believed that the war had been a mistake. Even more felt that the Bush administration, particularly the Defense Department under Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, had badly mismanaged events on the ground. Rumsfeld resigned after the Republicans' "thumping" in the 2006 midterm elections. But the quagmire continued. The Bush administration attempted to bridge it in early 2007 by sending a "surge" of twenty thousand new troops to Iraq to battle insurgents. Though the surge appeared to bring a modest measure of stability to Iraq, as the 2008 election cycle got under way, public opinion solidified against the war. The major question was how the United States could extract itself while at the same time avoid leaving in its wake a genocidal civil war.

## ★ Election of 2008

The election of 2008 was historic from the beginning. George W. Bush had twice selected Dick Cheney as his running mate for his experience and lack of political ambition after leaving the vice presidency. In his late sixties and with a history of heart problems, Cheney never had any intention of running for president himself. With neither the sitting president nor vice president running, the 2008 election was truly "open" for the first time in 80 years.



European Disapproval of the Iraq War, 2007

## ★ The Presidential Election of 2008

With President Bush's popularity ratings dropping to historic lows, a large field of Democratic candidates dove into the primary campaign of 2008 smelling Republican blood in the electoral waters. The Democratic race soon tightened into a fiercely fought contest between the 46-year-old, first-term Illinois Senator Barack Obama and the pre-campaign favorite, former First

Lady and New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. The ensuing battle, destined to catapult either a black man or a woman into the general election as a major party nominee for the first time, split the party but drew millions of new voters into the Democratic primaries. Obama narrowly prevailed, surviving Clinton's attacks on his inexperience. Son of a black Kenyan father and a white mother from Kansas, Obama appealed to both the crusading spirit of the civil rights era of old and the newer ethos of tolerance that came more easily to the young in twentieth-first century America. He also capitalized on an army of smartly managed volunteers, a record of early opposition to the war in Iraq, and an astonishing gift for eloquence that he used to advocate a "post-partisan" politics appealing to voters weary of the divisive partisanship of the Bush years. To strengthen his national security credentials, he picked foreign-policy savvy Delaware Senator Joseph Biden as his running mate.

In keeping with the country's anti-Bush mood, Republicans nominated longtime Arizona Senator John McCain, aged 72, a self-styled "maverick" with a record of supporting bipartisan legislation on such issues as normalizing relations with North Vietnam, campaign finance, and immigration reform. He had launched his political career as a Vietnam War hero who had endured years of torture as a POW. To rally the conservative and Christian Evangelical wing of his party, quite



### And Then There Were Two, February 2008

Eight candidates competed for the Democratic nomination in primaries and caucuses beginning in January 2008. By the time of this debate at the University of Texas at Austin in February, only Illinois senator Barack Obama and New York senator Hillary Clinton remained in the race.



**Barack Obama** Riding the public’s discontent with President Bush’s Republican administration, Illinois Senator Barack Obama beat Arizona Senator John McCain in 2008 to become the first African American to reach the White House.

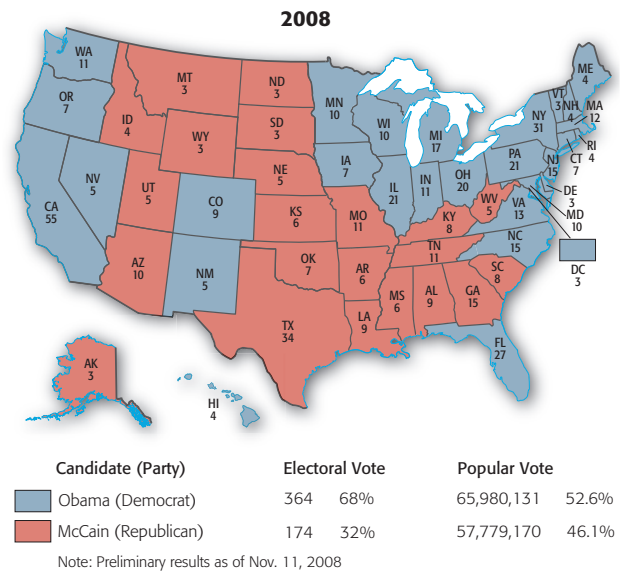
cool to his candidacy, McCain picked Sarah Palin as his running mate. The former beauty queen, small-town mayor, self-proclaimed “hockey-mom,” and staunch abortion rights opponent had served only twenty-one months as Alaska’s governor. As McCain hoped, she galvanized the right-wing Republican base. But when interview gaffes exposed her weak grasp of the issues, Palin became fodder for late-night television comedians and, polls showed, at least as much a liability as an asset to the Republican ticket.

Armed with an unprecedented war chest of nearly 700 million dollars, mostly raised from small donors via the Internet, Obama seized the advantage in both the “air war” (television) and the “ground war” (his legions of volunteers). His strong performance in televised debates also lent him an aura of gravitas some voters had doubted he had. What appeared to bolster his chances most, however, was the worldwide economic meltdown in the final six weeks of the campaign.

The American housing price bubble had begun to burst in 2006, which in turn led to a huge wave of mortgage defaults, housing foreclosures, and declines in a vast array of mortgage-backed securities held by banks around the globe. Financial institutions from Tokyo to New York to London found themselves with too much debt and too little capital to provide the everyday credit banks worldwide need to function. By early October the credit markets froze, stock values plummeted, and householders watched helplessly as their savings shrank. Economists of every stripe spoke of the gravest financial crisis, since the Great Depression.

In contrast to the 1929 crash, it took days, not years, for a terrified Bush Administration to intervene on a gi-

gantic scale. The Treasury Department and Federal Reserve System nationalized the countries’ two biggest mortgage companies, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and took over the world’s biggest insurance company, AIG.



**Map 41.7 Presidential Election of 2008** A record voter turnout, swelled by millions of young new voters, African Americans, and Latinos, gave Senator Barack Obama an Electoral College landslide and the Democratic Party solid control of both houses of Congress. Obama redrew the electoral map by taking nine states won by George W. Bush in 2004.



Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson then persuaded Congress to authorize a whopping 700 billion dollars to buy “toxic” mortgages and inject cash directly into the nation’s biggest banks. Suddenly even small-government Republicans spoke of the need to regulate the financial sector.

This crisis presented the presidential candidates with a challenge and an opportunity. Obama criticized McCain’s plan to extend, and even deepen, the Bush tax cuts, as evidence that the McCain presidency would be “a third Bush term.” McCain countered that Obama’s proposed tax hikes (on the wealthiest 5 percent of households) and plans for big public investments in alternative energy and infrastructure repair were tantamount to “socialism.”

Huge voter turnouts delivered a historic victory to Barack Obama, who won 53 percent of the national popular vote. By overtaking his rival in such traditional Republican strongholds such as Virginia, Nevada, and Colorado, Obama prevailed in the Electoral College 364 to 175 (see Map 41.7). Democrats gained seats in the House and Senate to enlarge the Congressional majority they had won in 2006. Obama’s election opened a new chapter in the history of country’s race relations. It also presented the nation’s first African American president the daunting challenge of governing a country struggling with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and entering its roughest economic waters since the 1930s.

## CHRONOLOGY

- |             |  |             |  |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| <b>1992</b> | Clinton defeats Bush and Perot for presidency  | <b>2002</b> | Congress passes No Child Left Behind Act<br>Bush labels Iraq, Iran, and North Korea “axis of evil”<br>Telecommunications giant WorldCom declares bankruptcy<br>Congress authorizes use of force against Iraq<br>U.N. Security Council demands that Iraq comply with weapons inspections<br>Republicans regain Senate |
| <b>1993</b> | NAFTA signed   | <b>2003</b> | North Korea withdraws from Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty<br>U.S. invades Iraq<br>Bush signs drug prescription bill for seniors<br>Saddam Hussein captured in Iraq<br>Supreme Court narrowly approves affirmative action   |
| <b>1994</b> | Republicans win majorities in both houses of Congress  | <b>2004</b> | Gay marriage controversy erupts<br>Iraqi interim government installed<br>Bush defeats Kerry for presidency   |
| <b>1996</b> | Welfare Reform Bill becomes law<br>Clinton defeats Dole for presidency   | <b>2005</b> | Iraq elects permanent government but quickly descends into sectarian conflict  |
| <b>1998</b> | Clinton-Lewinsky scandal<br>U.S. and Britain launch military strikes against Iraq<br>House of Representatives impeaches Clinton  | <b>2006</b> | Saddam Hussein executed  |
| <b>1999</b> | Senate acquits Clinton on impeachment charges<br>Kosovo crisis; NATO warfare with Serbia<br>Protest in Seattle against World Trade Organization  | <b>2007</b> | U.S. troop surge in Iraq   |
| <b>2000</b> | “Million Mom March” against guns in Washington, D.C.<br>U.S. normalizes trade relations with China<br>George W. Bush wins presidency in Electoral College; Albert Gore takes popular vote      | <b>2008</b> | Barack Obama elected 44th president of the United States   |
| <b>2001</b> | Terrorists attack New York City and Washington, D.C., on September 11<br>U.S. invades Afghanistan<br>Congress passes USA Patriot Act<br>Energy trader Enron collapses amid accounting scandals |             |  |

**KEY TERMS**

**weapons of mass destruction (WMD)** (1056)

**Democratic Leadership Council** (1057)

**Oklahoma City bombing** (1058)

**Contract with America** (1059)

**Welfare Reform Bill** (1060)

**North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** (1061)

**World Trade Organization (WTO)** (1061)

**McCain-Feingold Act** (1061)

**Whitewater** (1063)

**Lewinsky affair** (1063)

**Kyoto Treaty** (1067)

**9/11** (1068)

**Al Qaeda** (1068)

**USA Patriot Act** (1068)

**Department of Homeland Security** (1069)

**Guantánamo Detention Camp** (1069)

**Abu Ghraib prison** (1072)

**No Child Left Behind Act** (1073)

**Hurricane Katrina** (1077)

**PEOPLE TO KNOW**

**William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton**

**H. Ross Perot**

**Hillary Rodham Clinton**

**Newt Gingrich**

**Robert Dole**

**John McCain**

**Sara Palin**

**Monica Lewinsky**

**George W. Bush**

**Richard Cheney**

**John Kerry**

**Nancy Pelosi**

**Barack Obama**

**Joseph R. (“Joe”) Biden**

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A complete, annotated bibliography for this chapter—along with brief descriptions of the **People to Know** and additional review materials—may be found at

 [www.cengage.com/history/kennedy/ampageant14e](http://www.cengage.com/history/kennedy/ampageant14e)



## Review Questions for Chapter 41

1. What prompted the first wave of heavy criticism and verbal abuse to be hurled at First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton during the onset of the Clinton administration?
  - (A) Mrs. Clinton's decision to run for the U.S. Senate in the state of New York
  - (B) Mrs. Clinton not publicly criticizing her husband's sexual affairs
  - (C) Mrs. Clinton advocating too strongly for the role of women in the administration
  - (D) Mrs. Clinton developing an excessively complex health-care plan that was quickly dropped by Congress
  - (E) Mrs. Clinton claiming that the political problems that she and her husband encountered were the result of "a vast right-wing conspiracy"
2. Which of the following represented a significant political victory for President Clinton at the beginning of the Clinton administration?
  - (A) Congressional passage of the 1993 deficit-reduction bill
  - (B) An end to the ban on gays and lesbians in the military
  - (C) Congressional passage of health-care reform
  - (D) Congressional approval of a campaign finance reform bill
  - (E) Congressional passage of a middle-class tax cut
3. How did the federal government respond to the epidemic of violence plaguing American society in the 1990s?
  - (A) President Clinton and Congress passed a gun-control law, the Brady Bill, and a \$30 billion anticrime bill that contained a ban on several types of assault weapons.
  - (B) President Clinton and Congress attempted to ban all revolvers, shotguns, and rifles in the United States.
  - (C) President Clinton ordered the FBI to permit paramilitary private militias to continue to operate freely in the United States to restore law and order in the country.
  - (D) President Clinton and Congress supported the pro-gun policy proposals of the National Rifle Association to guarantee the abundance and availability of guns across America.
  - (E) President Clinton cooperated with a United Nations initiative to ban the worldwide possession and sale of handguns, shotguns, and rifles.
4. Which of the following political decisions by President Clinton aroused the hostility and ire of many liberals in his own party?
  - (A) President Clinton's signing of the welfare reform bill, which included work requirements and time limits for welfare benefits
  - (B) President Clinton's appointment of Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the U.S. Supreme Court
  - (C) President Clinton's signing a bill to restrict teenagers' access to abortion
  - (D) President Clinton's support of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico
  - (E) President Clinton's decision to put his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, in charge of health-care reform
5. What action during the first year of the Republican-led Congress led to an emerging public consensus that the Republicans had overreached with their conservative policies?
  - (A) The shutdown of the federal government during a dispute between the Republican congressional leadership and President Clinton over the federal budget
  - (B) The passage of the welfare reform bill
  - (C) The passage of a bill to limit unfunded mandates on state and local governments
  - (D) The impeachment of President Clinton for lying about his sexual affairs
  - (E) The resignation of Newt Gingrich as Speaker of the House of Representatives
6. Which of the following was NOT among the areas where President Clinton's foreign policy stumbled in the first years of his presidency?
  - (A) Human rights and trade with China
  - (B) American troops in Somalia
  - (C) Bringing democracy to Haiti
  - (D) Ending ethnic conflict in the Balkans
  - (E) Developing strong relations with America's allies Germany and France
7. President Clinton attempted to promote peace negotiations and better relations between all of the following EXCEPT
  - (A) Israelis and Palestinians.
  - (B) Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland.
  - (C) North and South Korea.
  - (D) China and Taiwan.
  - (E) India and Pakistan.

8. What was the primary political legacy of President Clinton, according to some historians?
  - (A) President Clinton revived the vigorous liberal traditions of the Democratic party.
  - (B) President Clinton established a firm direction for American foreign policy after the Cold War.
  - (C) President Clinton consolidated the Reagan-Bush revolution by encouraging reduced expectations of government.
  - (D) President Clinton restored faith in elected officials, if not in big government.
  - (E) President Clinton turned the Democratic party away from the historic commitments to racial and social justice.
9. What did the U.S. Supreme Court cite as its reasoning for taking the unprecedented action of prohibiting further recounting of Florida's popular vote and awarding the 2000 election to George W. Bush?
  - (A) The Court's fear that the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives
  - (B) The corruption and incompetence of Florida election authorities
  - (C) A legal finding that Florida's inconsistent standards for evaluating the disputed ballots violated the equal protection clause of the Constitution
  - (D) Clear evidence that the votes would have favored Bush even if they had all been counted
  - (E) Political pressure from the American military, which feared a foreign attack if no president had been named
10. Which of the following was NOT among the polarizing conservative policies pursued by President George W. Bush when he assumed the presidency?
  - (A) Passing the No Child Left Behind education reform law
  - (B) Sharply cutting taxes
  - (C) Withdrawing American support from international family-planning programs that permitted abortion
  - (D) Refusing to permit government-sponsored embryonic stem cell research
  - (E) Repudiating the Kyoto Treaty on greenhouse gases and advocating the opening of Alaska to more oil exploration
11. All of the following constituted U.S. government responses to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, EXCEPT
  - (A) passage of the Patriot Act, which provided for, among other things, extensive telephone and e-mail surveillance of Americans suspected of ties to terrorism.
  - (B) the indefinite detention and deportation of immigrants suspected of terrorism.
  - (C) a sustained effort to try suspected terrorists before military tribunals rather than before civilian courts.
  - (D) the creation of a cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security to protect the nation's borders and identify potential attackers.
  - (E) suspension of Americans' First Amendment right to protest against government policies.
12. What did the U.S. military encounter in Iraq after ousting Saddam Hussein from power?
  - (A) The abuse of American prisoners by the remnants of Hussein's army
  - (B) A warm reception from the Iraqi people
  - (C) A confident new democratic Iraq
  - (D) An invasion of Iraq by militant Arab states
  - (E) Violent resistance from Iraqi insurgents and foreign militants who had been drawn to the country
13. What revelation in 2004 concerning the Iraq War prompted a deep escalation of anti-American sentiment in Iraq and throughout the Arab world?
  - (A) The revelation that some American soldiers had humiliated and abused Iraqi captives in the Abu Ghraib prison
  - (B) The news that Al Qaeda members captured in Iraq had begun leading a guerrilla movement
  - (C) The revelation that American military forces in Iraq were receiving intelligence and interrogation assistance from the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency
  - (D) The information that the new Iraqi government was relying heavily on former Sunni members of Saddam Hussein's government
  - (E) The revelation that the United States had bombed substantial civilian districts in Baghdad
14. George Bush successfully won reelection in 2004 over Senator John Kerry by claiming all of the following EXCEPT that he
  - (A) was a strong leader in the war on terrorism, and Kerry would be a weak and indecisive commander in chief.
  - (B) enjoyed nearly universal support among foreign leaders, including the political leadership of our allies in Germany and France, while Kerry could not win the confidence of these foreign leaders.
  - (C) had started to reform and improve public education in America with the passage and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.
  - (D) cultivated his conservative base by resisting full-scale embryonic stem cell research and calling for a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.
  - (E) had passed enormous tax cuts to return money to individual taxpayers, while Kerry was likely to raise taxes on middle-class Americans.