

America Confronts the Post–Cold War Era

1992–2009

There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured
with what is right in America.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON, INAUGURAL, 1993

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the democratization of its client regimes in Eastern Europe ended the four-decade-old Cold War and left the United States the world's sole remaining superpower. Americans welcomed these changes but seemed unsure how to exercise their unprecedented economic and military might in this new international framework. The culture wars that had started in the 1960s fed ferociously partisan political squabbles that distracted the nation from the urgent task of clearly defining its role in the dawning age of globalization. In 2000 George W. Bush won a bitterly contested presidential election that left the nation more rancorously divided than ever, until the spectacular terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, called forth, at least temporarily, a resurgent sense of national unity. Bush responded to the 9/11 attacks by invading the terrorist haven of Afghanistan. Amidst roiling controversy over his claims that Iraq

possessed **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)** and had ties to terrorists, Bush proceeded to invade Iraq as well. After the failure to find WMD and over four thousand American battle deaths in the prolonged Iraq War, a war-weary country, nostalgic for the prosperity and peace of the 1990s, made history by electing Barack Obama.

★ **Bill Clinton: The First Baby-Boomer President**

As the last decade of the twentieth century opened, the slumbering economy, the widening gender gap, and the rising anti-incumbent spirit spelled opportunity for Democrats, frozen out of the White House for all but four years since 1968. In a bruising round of primary elections, Governor William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton



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of Arkansas weathered blistering accusations of womanizing and draft evasion to emerge as his party's standard-bearer. Breaking with the tradition of a "balanced ticket," he selected a fellow forty-something southern white male Protestant moderate, Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, as his vice-presidential running mate.

Clinton claimed to be a "new" Democrat, chastened by the party's long exile in the political wilderness. With other centrist Democrats, he had formed the **Democratic Leadership Council** to point the party away from its traditional antibusiness, dovish, champion-of-the-underdog orientation and toward progrowth, strong defense, and anticrime policies. Clinton campaigned especially vigorously on promises to stimulate the economy, reform the welfare system, and overhaul the nation's health-care apparatus, which had grown into a scandalously expensive contraption that failed to provide medical coverage to nearly 40 million Americans.

Trying to wring one more win out of the social issues that had underwritten two Reagan and one Bush presidential victories, the Republican convention in Houston in August 1992 emphasized "family values" and, as expected, nominated George Bush and Vice President J. Danforth Quayle for a second term. But Bush's listless campaign and his penchant for spaghetti sentences set him sharply apart from his youthful rival, the super-energetic and phenomenally articulate Clinton. Bush claimed credit for ending the Cold War and trumpeted his leadership role in the Persian Gulf War. But pocketbook problems as the economy dipped into recession swayed more voters than pride in past foreign policy. The purchasing power of the average worker's paycheck had actually declined during Bush's presidency.

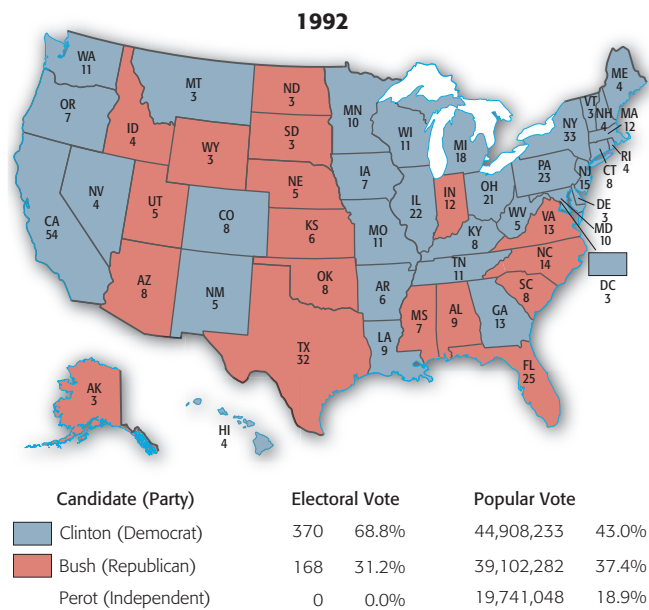
At Clinton's campaign headquarters, a simple sign reminded staffers of his principal campaign theme: "It's the economy, stupid." Reflecting pervasive economic unease and the virulence of the throw-the-bums-out national mood, nearly 20 percent of voters cast their ballots for independent presidential candidate H. Ross Perot, a bantamweight, jug-eared Texas billionaire who harped incessantly on the problem of the federal deficit and made a boast of the fact that he had never held any public office.

Perot's colorful presence probably accounted for the record turnout on election day, when some 100 million voters—55 percent of those eligible—went to the polls. The final tally gave Clinton 44,909,889 popular votes and 370 votes in the Electoral College. He was the first baby boomer to ascend to the White



Presidential Campaign Debate, 1992 George Bush, Ross Perot, and Bill Clinton squared off at the University of Richmond (Virginia) on October 16, 1992. The telegenic Clinton handily dominated the televised debates, especially in the "talk-show" format used on this occasion.

House, a distinction reflecting the electoral profile of the population, 70 percent of whom had been born after World War II. Bush polled some 39,104,545 popular votes and 168 electoral votes. Perot won no electoral votes but did gather 19,742,267 popular votes—the strongest showing for an independent or third-party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt ran on the Bull Moose ticket in 1912 (see Map 41.1). Democrats also racked up clear majorities in both houses of Congress, which seated near-record numbers of new members, including thirty-nine African Americans, nineteen Hispanic Americans, seven Asian Americans, one Native American, and forty-eight women. Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois became the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Senate, where she joined five other women in the largest female contingent in the upper chamber to that point. Clinton also seized the



Map 41.1 Presidential Election of 1992 (with electoral vote by state)

 **Interactive Map**

opportunity in 1993 to nominate Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the Supreme Court, where she joined Sandra Day O'Connor to make a pair of women justices.

★ A False Start for Reform

Badly overestimating his electoral mandate for liberal reform, the young president made a series of costly blunders upon entering the White House. In one of his first initiatives on taking office, he stirred a hornet's nest of controversy by advocating an end to the ban on gays and lesbians in the armed services. Confronted with fierce opposition, the president finally had to settle for a “don't ask, don't tell” policy that quietly accepted gay and lesbian soldiers and sailors without officially acknowledging their presence in the military.

Even more damaging to Clinton's political standing, and to his hopes for lasting liberal achievement, was the fiasco of his attempt to reform the nation's health-care system. In a dramatic but personally and politically risky move, the president appointed his wife, nationally prominent lawyer and children's advocate Hillary Rodham Clinton, as the director of a task force charged with redesigning the medical-service in-

dustry. Their stupefyingly complicated plan was dead on arrival when it was presented to Congress in October 1993. The First Lady was doused with a torrent of abuse, although she eventually rehabilitated herself sufficiently to win election as a U.S. senator from New York in 2000—the first First Lady ever to hold elective office. Her bid to win the Democratic nomination for president in 2008 proved equally as historic, if less successful. Clinton had better luck with a deficit-reduction bill in 1993, which combined with an increasingly buoyant economy by 1996 to shrink the federal deficit to its lowest level in more than a decade. By 1998 Clinton's policies seemed to have caged the ravenous deficit monster, as Congress argued over the unfamiliar question of how to manage federal budget *surpluses*.

The new president also induced Congress in 1993 to pass a gun-control law, the “Brady Bill,” named for presidential aide James Brady, who had been wounded and disabled by gunfire in the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan in 1981. In July 1994 Clinton made further progress against the national plague of firearms when he persuaded Congress to pass a \$30 billion anticrime bill, which contained a ban on several types of assault weapons that continued until the law expired in 2004.

With these measures the government struggled to hold the line against an epidemic of violence that rocked American society in the 1990s. A huge explosion destroyed a federal office building in Oklahoma City in 1995, taking 168 lives, in retribution for a 1993 standoff in Waco, Texas, between federal agents and a fundamentalist sect known as the Branch Davidians. That showdown had ended in the destruction of the sect's compound and the deaths of many Branch Davidians, including women and children. Events like the **Oklahoma City bombing** brought to light a lurid and secretive underground of paramilitary private “militias” composed of alienated citizens armed to the teeth and ultrasuspicious of all government.

Even many law-abiding citizens shared to some degree in the antigovernment attitudes that drove the militia members to murderous extremes. Thanks largely to the disillusioning agony of the Vietnam War and the naked cynicism of Richard Nixon in the Watergate scandal, the confidence in government that had come naturally to the generation that had licked the Great Depression and won the Second World War was in short supply by century's end. Reflecting that pervasive disenchantment with politics and politicians,



Bombing of Federal Building in Oklahoma City, 1995 A truck bomb killed 168 people in this federal office building in the worst act of terrorism in the United States until September 11, 2001. Convicted on eleven counts for the attack, antigovernment militant Timothy McVeigh became the first person executed by the federal government in nearly forty years in 2001.

several states passed term-limit laws for elected officials, although the Supreme Court ruled in 1995 that the restrictions did not apply to federal officeholders.

Before the decade was out, the logic of Clinton's emphasis on gun control was tragically confirmed. On an April morning in 1999, two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, killed twelve fellow students and a teacher. Debate flared over the origins of school violence. Some observers targeted the violence portrayed in movies, TV shows, and video games; others pointed to the failings of parents. But the culprit that attracted the most sustained political attention was guns—their abundance and accessibility, especially in suburban and rural communities. Clinton engaged in a pugnacious debate with the progun National Rifle Association over the need to toughen gun laws, and filmmaker Michael Moore agi-

tated for gun control in his popular 2002 documentary, *Bowling for Columbine*. The “Million Mom March” in Washington, D.C., in May 2002 and the tragic killing of thirty-two people by a disturbed student at Virginia Tech in 2007 further drove calls for new antigun measures, but reform was slow in coming.

★ The Politics of Distrust

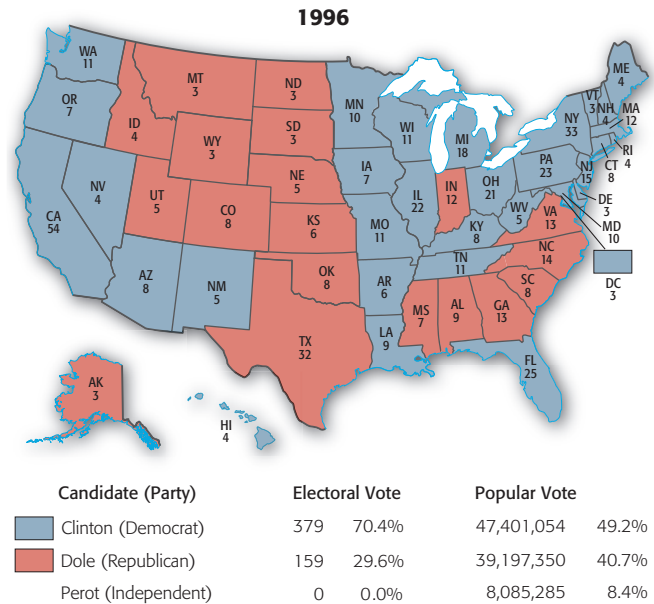
Clinton's failed initiatives and widespread antigovernment sentiment afforded Republicans a golden opportunity in 1994, and they seized it aggressively. Led by outspoken Georgia representative Newt Gingrich, Republicans offered voters a **Contract with America** that promised an all-out assault on budget deficits and radical reductions in welfare programs. Their campaign

succeeded fabulously, as a right-wing tornado roared across the land in the 1994 congressional elections. Every incumbent Republican gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional candidate was reelected. Republicans also picked up eleven new governorships, eight seats in the Senate, and fifty-three seats in the House (where Gingrich became speaker), giving them control of both chambers of the federal Congress for the first time in forty years.

But if President Clinton had overplayed his mandate for liberal reform in 1993, the congressional Republicans now proceeded to overplay their mandate for conservative retrenchment. In 1996 the new Congress achieved a major conservative victory when it compelled a reluctant Clinton to sign the **Welfare Reform Bill**, which made deep cuts in welfare grants and required able-bodied welfare recipients to find employment. The new welfare law also tightly restricted welfare benefits for legal and illegal immigrants alike, reflecting a rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment as the numbers of newcomers climbed toward an all-time high. Old-line liberal Democrats howled with pain at the president's alleged betrayal of his party's heritage, and some prominent administration members resigned in protest against his decision to sign the welfare bill. But Clinton's acceptance of the welfare reform package was part of his shrewd political strategy of accommodating the electorate's conservative mood by moving to his right.

President Clinton was at first stunned by the magnitude of the Republican congressional victory in 1994. But many Americans gradually came to feel that the Gingrich Republicans were bending their conservative bow too far, especially when the new Speaker advocated provocative ideas like sending the children of welfare families to orphanages. In a tense confrontation between the Democratic president and the Republican Congress, the federal government actually had to shut down for several days at the end of 1995 until a budget package was agreed upon. These outlandishly partisan antics bred a backlash that helped President Clinton rebound from his political near-death experience.

As the 1996 election approached, the Republicans chose Kansas senator Robert Dole as their presidential candidate. A decorated World War II veteran, Dole ran a listless campaign. Clinton, buoyed by a healthy economy and by his artful trimming to the conservative wind, breezed to an easy victory, with 47,401,898 popular votes to Dole's 39,198,482 (see Map 41.2). The Reform party's egomaniacal leader, Ross Perot, ran a sorry third, picking up less than half the votes he had



Map 41.2 Presidential Election of 1996 (with electoral vote by state) The “solid South,” once a safe Democratic stronghold, had by century’s end largely become Republican territory.

Interactive Map

garnered in 1992. Clinton won 379 electoral votes, Dole only 159. But Republicans remained in control of Congress.

★ Clinton Again

As Clinton began his second term—the first Democratic president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt to be reelected—the heady promises of far-reaching reform with which he had entered the White House four years earlier were no longer heard. Still facing Republican majorities in both houses of Congress, he proposed only modest legislative goals, even though soaring tax revenues generated by the prosperous economy produced in 1998 a balanced federal budget for the first time in three decades.

Clinton cleverly managed to put Republicans on the defensive by claiming the political middle ground. He now warmly embraced the landmark Welfare Reform Bill of 1996 that he had initially been slow to endorse. Juggling the political hot potato of affirmative action, Clinton pledged to “mend it, not end it.” When voters in California in 1996 approved Proposition 209, prohibiting affirmative-action preferences in government and higher education, the number of minority



Protesting NAFTA, 1993 These members of the Teamsters Union feared that the adoption of the North American Free Trade Agreement would mean the replacement of high-paying American jobs with low-wage, nonunion Mexican labor. More than a decade later, the treaty still rankled. Policymakers disagreed about whether NAFTA had been damaging to American workers. In the 2008 election, the Republicans endorsed it, while the Democrats attacked it.

students in the state's public universities temporarily plummeted. A federal appeals court decision, *Hopwood v. Texas*, had a similar effect in Texas. Clinton criticized these broad assaults on affirmative action but stopped short of trying to reverse them, aware that public support for affirmative action, especially among white Americans, had diminished since the 1970s.

Clinton's major political advantage continued to be the roaring economy, which by 2000 had sustained the longest period of growth in American history, driven by new Internet ("dot-com") businesses and other high-tech and media companies. While unemployment crept down to 4 percent and businesses scrambled madly for workers, inflationary pressure remained remarkably low.

Prosperity did not make Clinton immune to controversy over trade policy. During his first term, he had displayed political courage by supporting the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**, creating in 1993 a free-trade zone encompassing Mexico, Canada, and the United States. In doing so, he reversed his own stand in the 1992 election campaign and bucked the opposition of protectionists in his own party, especially labor leaders fearful of losing jobs to low-wage Mexican workers. Clinton took another step in 1994 toward a global free-trade system when he vigorously promoted the creation of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and a cherished goal of free-trade advocates since the end of the Second World War.

Simmering discontent over trade policy boiled over in 1999 when Clinton hosted the meeting of the WTO in Seattle. The city's streets filled with protesters

railing against what they viewed as the human and environmental costs of economic "globalization." Trade talks fizzled in Seattle, with Clinton taking a hefty share of the blame.

Money spurred controversy of another sort in the late 1990s. Campaign finance reform, long smoldering as a potential issue, suddenly flared up after the 1996 presidential contest. Congressional investigators revealed that the Clinton campaign had received funds from many improper sources, including contributors who paid to stay overnight in the White House and foreigners who were legally prohibited from giving to American candidates. But Republicans and Democrats alike had reason to avoid reform. Both parties had grown dependent on vast sums to finance television ads for their candidates. Clinton did little more than pay lip service to the cause of campaign finance reform. But within the ranks of both parties, a few mavericks proposed to eliminate the corrupting influence of big donors. Senator John McCain from Arizona made campaign finance reform a centerpiece of his failed 2000 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination and ultimately succeeded in passing the **McCain-Feingold Act** of 2002 that more strictly regulated how money flowed to candidates.

★ Problems Abroad

The end of the Cold War dismantled the framework within which the United States had conducted foreign policy for nearly half a century. Clinton groped for a diplomatic formula to replace anticommunism as the basic premise of American diplomacy.

Absorbed by domestic issues, President Clinton at first seemed uncertain and even amateurish in his conduct of foreign policy. He followed his predecessor's lead in dispatching American troops as part of a peacekeeping mission to Somalia and reinforced the U.S. contingent after Somali rebels killed more than a dozen Americans in late 1993. But in March 1994, the president quietly withdrew the American units, without having accomplished any clearly defined goal. Burned in Somalia, Washington stood on the sidelines in 1994 when catastrophic ethnic violence in the central African country of Rwanda resulted in the deaths of half a million people.

Clinton also struggled to define a policy with respect to China, which was rapidly emerging as an economic and political powerhouse. Candidate Clinton had denounced George Bush in 1992 for not imposing economic sanctions on China as punishment for Beijing's wretched record of human rights abuses. But

President Clinton learned what Bush had long known: China's economic importance to the United States did not permit Washington the luxury of taking the high road on human rights. Clinton soon soft-pedaled his criticism of the Beijing regime and instead began seeking improved trade relations with that robustly industrializing country and potential market bonanza. By 2000 Clinton was crusading for a controversial China trade bill. Congress passed it in May 2000, making the Asian giant a full-fledged trading partner of the United States.

Clinton's approach to the tormented Balkans in southeastern Europe showed a similar initial hesitation, followed eventually by firm leadership. In the former Yugoslavia, as vicious ethnic conflict raged through Bosnia, the Washington government dithered until finally deciding to commit American troops to a NATO peacekeeping contingent in late 1995. Deadlines for removing the troops were postponed and then fi-

Intifada Against Israeli Control, 1994 Beginning in 1987, Palestinians living in the Israeli-controlled territories of the West Bank and Gaza rose up in protest. As the stalemate dragged on, the likelihood of Middle East peace receded, despite repeated international diplomatic efforts to reach a settlement. These young Palestinians in East Jerusalem wave Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) flags outlawed by Israel.



nally abandoned altogether as it became clear that they were the only force capable of preventing new hostilities. NATO's expansion to include the new member states of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1997, and its continuing presence in Bosnia, failed to pacify the Balkans completely. When Serbian president Slobodan Milosević in 1999 unleashed a new round of "ethnic cleansing" in the region, this time against ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo, U.S.-led NATO forces launched an air war against Serbia. The bombing campaign initially failed to stop ethnic terror, as refugees flooded into neighboring countries, but it eventually forced Milosević to accept a NATO peacekeeping force on the ground in Kosovo. Milosević was arrested in 2001 and put on trial before the International Criminal Court in The Hague, where he died in 2006 before the trial was completed.

The Middle East remained a major focus of American diplomacy right up to the end of Clinton's tenure. In 1993 Clinton presided over a historic meeting at the White House between Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasir Arafat. They agreed in principle on self-rule for the Palestinians within Israel. But hopes flickered two years later when Rabin fell to an assassin's bullet. Clinton and his second-term secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, spent the rest of the 1990s struggling in vain to broker the permanent settlement that continued to elude Israelis and Palestinians. Arafat died in 2004 with his dream of creating a Palestinian state still unrealized.

In his final year as president, Clinton stepped up his efforts to leave a legacy as an international peacemaker. Along with his work in the Middle East, he sought to bring peace to Northern Ireland and the Korean peninsula, and he traveled to India and Pakistan in hopes of reducing the rivalry between the two nuclear powers of southern Asia. But the guiding principles of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era remained ill-defined and elusive

Scandal and Impeachment

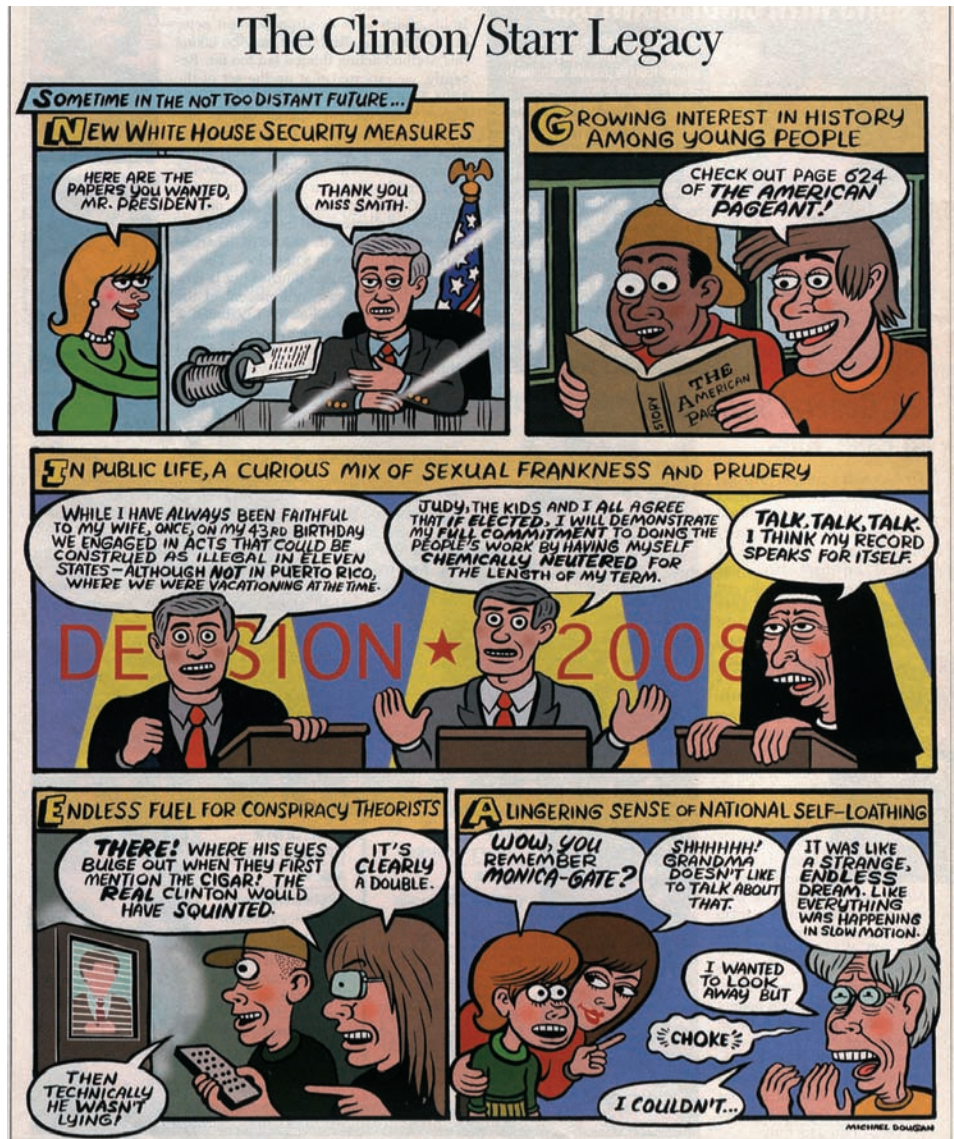
Scandal had dogged Bill Clinton from the beginning of his presidency. Critics brought charges of everything from philandering to illegal financial transactions. Allegations of corruption stemming from a real estate deal called **Whitewater** while he was governor of Arkansas triggered an investigation by a special prosecutor, but no indictment ever materialized.

All the previous scandals were overshadowed by the revelation in January 1998 that Clinton had engaged in a sexual affair with a young White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, and then blatantly lied about it when testifying under oath in another woman's civil suit accusing him of sexual harassment. Caught in his bold lie, the president made a humiliating confession, but his political opponents smelled blood in the water. In September 1998 the special prosecutor investigating Whitewater, who had broad powers to investigate *any* evidence of presidential malfeasance, presented a stinging report, including lurid sexual details, to the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. That report presented eleven possible grounds for impeachment, all related to lying about the **Lewinsky affair**.

The House quickly cranked up the rusty machinery of impeachment. As an acrid partisan atmosphere enveloped the Capitol, House Republicans in December 1998 passed two articles of impeachment against the president: perjury before a grand jury and obstruction of justice. Crying foul, the Democratic minority charged that, however deplorable Clinton's personal misconduct, sexual transgressions did not rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" prescribed in the Constitution (see Art. II, Sec. IV in the Appendix). The House Republican managers (prosecutors) of impeachment for the Senate trial replied that perjury and obstruction were grave public issues and that nothing less than the "rule of law" was at stake.

As cries of "honor the Constitution" and "sexual McCarthyism" filled the air, the nation debated whether the president's peccadilloes amounted to high crimes or low follies. Most Americans apparently leaned toward the latter view. In the 1998 midterm elections, voters reduced the House Republicans' majority, causing fiery House speaker Newt Gingrich to resign his post. Although Americans held a low opinion of Clinton's slipshod personal morals, most liked the president's political and economic policies and wanted him to stay in office.

In early 1999, for the first time in 130 years, the nation witnessed an impeachment proceeding in the U.S. Senate. Dusting off ancient precedents from Andrew Johnson's trial, the one hundred senators solemnly heard arguments and evidence in the case, with Chief Justice William Rehnquist presiding. With the facts widely known and the two parties' political positions firmly locked in, the trial's outcome was a foregone conclusion. On the key obstruction of justice charge, five northeastern Republicans joined all forty-five Democratic senators in voting not guilty. The fifty



The Legacy of Impeachment
Time magazine's cartoonist asked how future generations would judge the Clinton impeachment episode—and how it might be treated in history textbooks.

Republican votes for conviction fell far short of the constitutionally required two-thirds majority. The vote on the perjury charge was forty-five guilty, fifty-five not guilty.

★ **Clinton's Legacy and the 2000 Election**

Beyond the obvious stain of impeachment, Clinton's legacy was mixed. His sound economic policies encouraged growth and trade in a rapidly globalizing

post-Cold War world. Yet as a “New Democrat” and avowed centrist, Clinton did more to consolidate than to reverse the Reagan-Bush revolution against New Deal liberalism that had for half a century provided the compass for the Democratic party and the nation. Further, by setting such a low standard in his personal conduct, he replenished the sad reservoir of public cynicism about politics that Vietnam and Watergate had created a generation before.

Nonetheless, as the end of the Clinton term and the beginning of the new millennium approached, the Democrats stayed on their political course and non-



Counting Chads With Bush and Gore neck-and-neck in Florida's presidential vote count, election officials in Broward County examined by eye paper ballots disqualified by machine because the punched chads had not fully separated from the ballots. They hoped that close scrutiny would reveal the voters' intentions.

inated loyal vice president Albert Gore for president. Gore faced the tricky challenge of linking himself to Clinton-era peace and prosperity while at the same time distancing himself from his boss's personal foibles. He chose as his running mate Connecticut senator Joseph Lieberman, an outspoken Clinton critic and the first Jew nominated to a major national ticket. Their Republican challenger, George W. Bush, won the nomination on the strength of his father's name and his years as governor of Texas. Bush surrounded himself with Washington insiders, including vice-presidential nominee Richard Cheney, and, in a clear jab at Clinton, promised to "restore dignity to the White House."

Rosy estimates that the federal budget would produce a surplus of some \$2 trillion in the coming decade set the stage for the presidential contest. Echoing the Republican creed of smaller government, Bush argued for returning the budget surplus to "the people" through massive tax cuts and for promoting private-sector programs, such as school vouchers and a reliance on "faith-based" institutions to help the poor. Gore proposed smaller tax cuts, targeted at middle- and lower-class people, and strengthening Social Security. In an era of peace, foreign policy figured hardly at all in the campaign, although Bush struck a moderate note when he urged that America should act like "a humble nation."

Pollsters predicted a close election, but none foresaw the epochal cliffhanger that the election would become. On election day the country split nearly evenly between the two candidates, and it was soon clear that Florida's electoral votes would determine

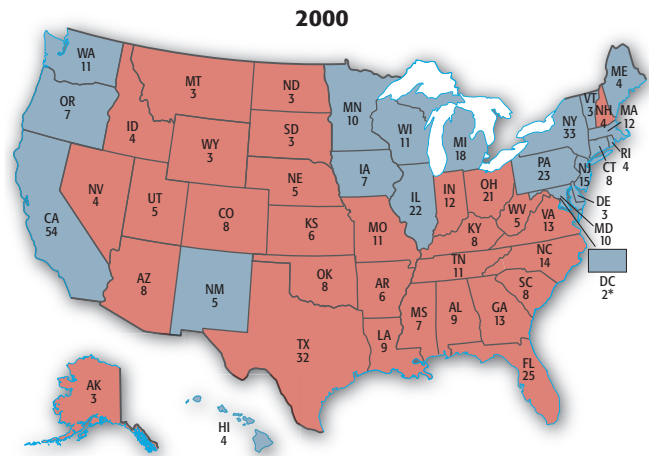
the winner. Television news programs announced that Bush had won the Sunshine State, and Al Gore called the Texas governor to concede defeat. Yet just an hour later, Gore's camp decided that Florida was too close to call, and the vice president—in perhaps the most awkward phone call in modern politics—retracted his concession.

What ensued was a five-week political standoff over how to count the votes in Florida. Democrats argued that some ballots were confusing or had been misread by machines and asked for recounts by hand in several counties. Republicans claimed that such recounts would amount to "changing the rules in the middle of the game" and thus thwart the rule of law. After weeks of legal bickering with the presidency in the balance, the Supreme Court finally intervened. By a five-to-four vote along partisan lines, the Court reasoned that since neither Florida's legislature nor its courts had established a uniform standard for evaluating disputed ballots, the hand counts amounted to an unconstitutional breach of the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause.

That ruling gave Bush the White House but cast a dark shadow of illegitimacy over his presidency. Bush officially won Florida by 537 votes out of 6 million cast, and he squeaked by in the Electoral College, 271 to 266 (see Maps 41.3 and 41.4). The national popular vote went decisively to Gore, 50,999,897 to 50,456,002. For the first time since 1888, a candidate won the White House with fewer popular votes than his opponent. Calls to abolish the Electoral College, however, were few and muted (see Art. V of the Constitution).

Map 41.3 Presidential Election of 2000 (with electoral vote by state) Although Democrat Albert Gore won the popular election by half a million votes, George W. Bush's contested 537-vote advantage in Florida gave him a slight lead in the Electoral College. The 2.7 million popular votes won by Green party candidate and consumer activist Ralph Nader almost surely deprived Gore of victory, casting Nader in the role of spoiler. Bush's failure to win the popular vote inspired critics to protest at his inauguration with placards reading "Hail to the Thief."

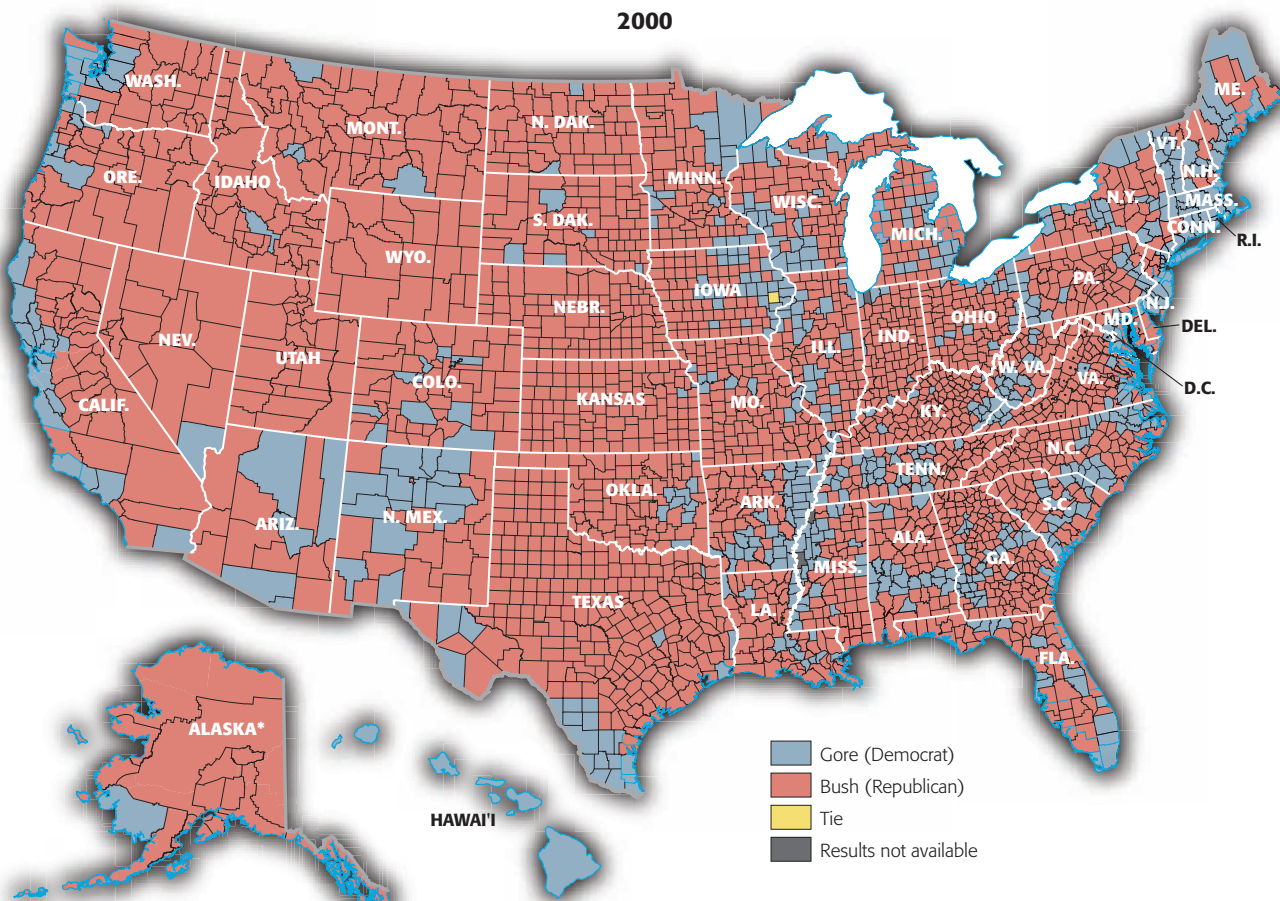
Map 41.4 America in Red and Blue This map showing the vote by county in the hotly contested 2000 presidential election vividly illustrates the geography of modern America's political divisions. Democratic candidate Albert Gore won a popular majority by carrying just 676 mostly urban counties, heavily populated by union members, minorities, and prosperous, educated white-collar workers. Republican George W. Bush won the election by taking 2,477 mostly rural counties, where feelings about "social issues" such as abortion and gun control ran high and shaped solid conservative constituencies. (Source: Adapted from VNS Graphic by Stanford Kay-Newsweek.)



Candidate (Party)	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote
Bush (Republican)	271 50.4%	50,456,169 47.88%
Gore (Democrat)	266 49.4%	50,996,116 48.39%
Nader (Green)	0 0.0%	2,783,728 2.72%

* One elector from the District of Columbia abstained.

Interactive Map



*Alaska does not have county boundaries. The boundaries shown are election areas.

Interactive Map

★ 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

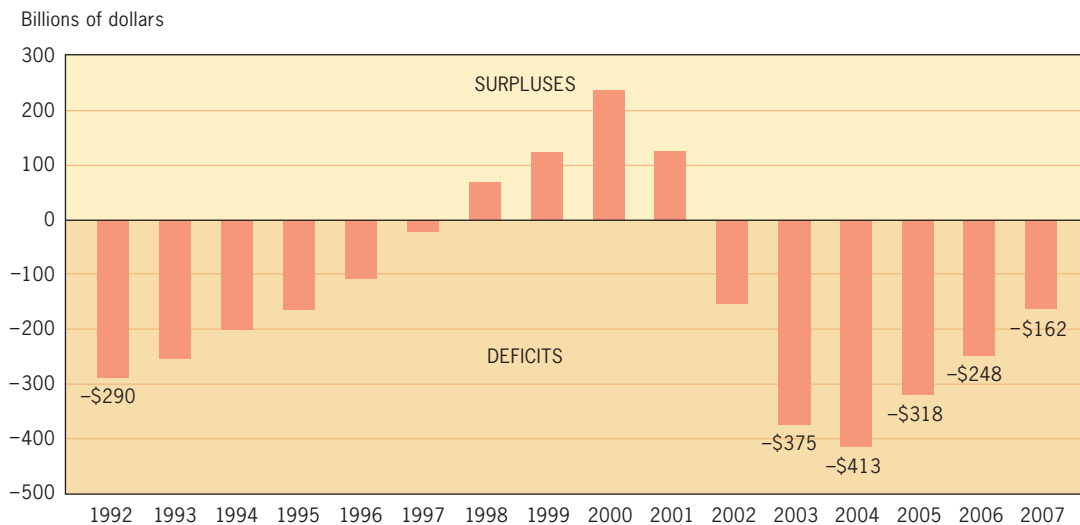


Figure 41.1 Deficits into Surpluses and Back Again In 1998 the U.S. budget deficit became a surplus for the first time in decades. But by 2002 the government was back in deficit, due to President Bush’s tax cuts, a weak economy, and mushrooming defense spending on the Iraq War. (Source: Office of Management 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**.^{*} The act

^{*}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" advisers,

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.

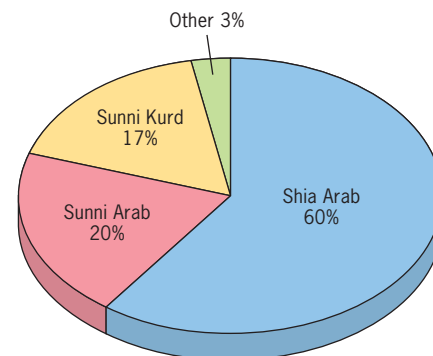
 Interactive Map



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.



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 bestride 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.

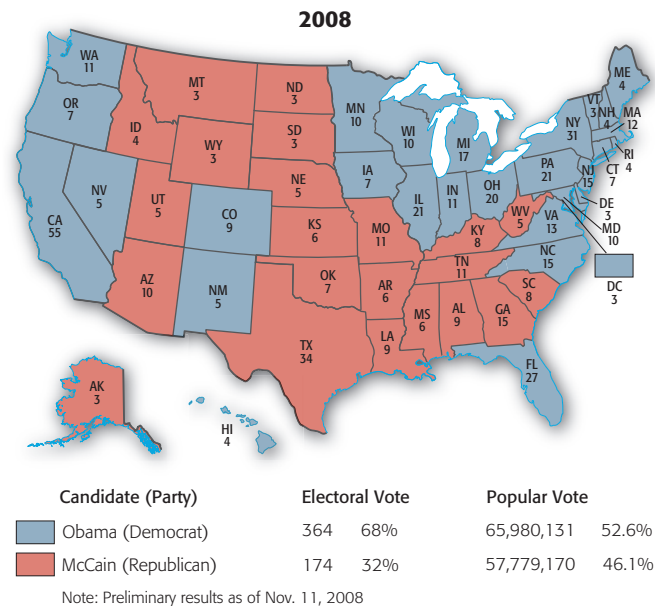
cool to his candidacy, McCain picked Sarah Palin as his running mate. The former beauty queen, small-town mayor, self-proclaimed “hockey-mom,” and staunch abortion rights opponent had served only twenty-one months as Alaska’s governor. As McCain hoped, she galvanized the right-wing Republican base. But 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 shrunk. 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

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

KEY TERMS

weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (1056)	Whitewater (1063)
Democratic Leadership Council (1057)	Lewinsky affair (1063)
Oklahoma City bombing (1058)	Kyoto Treaty (1067)
Contract with America (1059)	9/11 (1068)
Welfare Reform Bill (1060)	Al Qaeda (1068)
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (1061)	USA Patriot Act (1068)
World Trade Organization (WTO) (1061)	Department of Homeland Security (1069)
McCain-Feingold Act (1061)	Guantánamo Detention Camp (1069)
	Abu Ghraib prison (1072)
	No Child Left Behind Act (1073)
	Hurricane Katrina (1077)

PEOPLE TO KNOW

William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton	Monica Lewinsky
H. Ross Perot	George W. Bush
Hillary Rodham Clinton	Richard Cheney
Newt Gingrich	John Kerry
Robert Dole	Nancy Pelosi
John McCain	Barack Obama
Sara Palin	Joseph R. (“Joe”) Biden

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Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (2006)

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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

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?
- President Clinton revived the vigorous liberal traditions of the Democratic party.
 - President Clinton established a firm direction for American foreign policy after the Cold War.
 - President Clinton consolidated the Reagan-Bush revolution by encouraging reduced expectations of government.
 - President Clinton restored faith in elected officials, if not in big government.
 - 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?
- The Court's fear that the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives
 - The corruption and incompetence of Florida election authorities
 - A legal finding that Florida's inconsistent standards for evaluating the disputed ballots violated the equal protection clause of the Constitution
 - Clear evidence that the votes would have favored Bush even if they had all been counted
 - 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?
- Passing the No Child Left Behind education reform law
 - Sharply cutting taxes
 - Withdrawing American support from international family-planning programs that permitted abortion
 - Refusing to permit government-sponsored embryonic stem cell research
 - 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
- passage of the Patriot Act, which provided for, among other things, extensive telephone and e-mail surveillance of Americans suspected of ties to terrorism.
 - the indefinite detention and deportation of immigrants suspected of terrorism.
 - a sustained effort to try suspected terrorists before military tribunals rather than before civilian courts.
 - the creation of a cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security to protect the nation's borders and identify potential attackers.
 - 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?
- The abuse of American prisoners by the remnants of Hussein's army
 - A warm reception from the Iraqi people
 - A confident new democratic Iraq
 - An invasion of Iraq by militant Arab states
 - 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?
- The revelation that some American soldiers had humiliated and abused Iraqi captives in the Abu Ghraib prison
 - The news that Al Qaeda members captured in Iraq had begun leading a guerrilla movement
 - The revelation that American military forces in Iraq were receiving intelligence and interrogation assistance from the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency
 - The information that the new Iraqi government was relying heavily on former Sunni members of Saddam Hussein's government
 - 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
- was a strong leader in the war on terrorism, and Kerry would be a weak and indecisive commander in chief.
 - 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.
 - had started to reform and improve public education in America with the passage and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.
 - cultivated his conservative base by resisting full-scale embryonic stem cell research and calling for a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.
 - had passed enormous tax cuts to return money to individual taxpayers, while Kerry was likely to raise taxes on middle-class Americans.