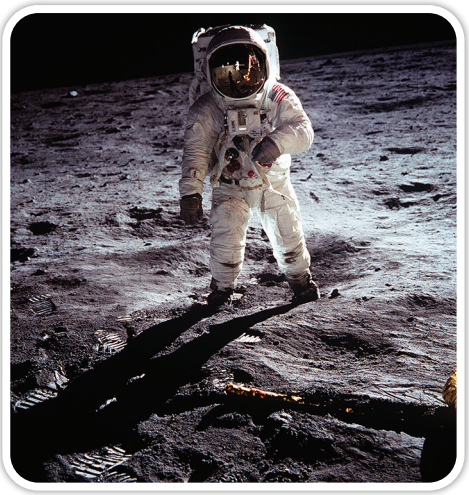
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Land of Liberty

Student Volume 2



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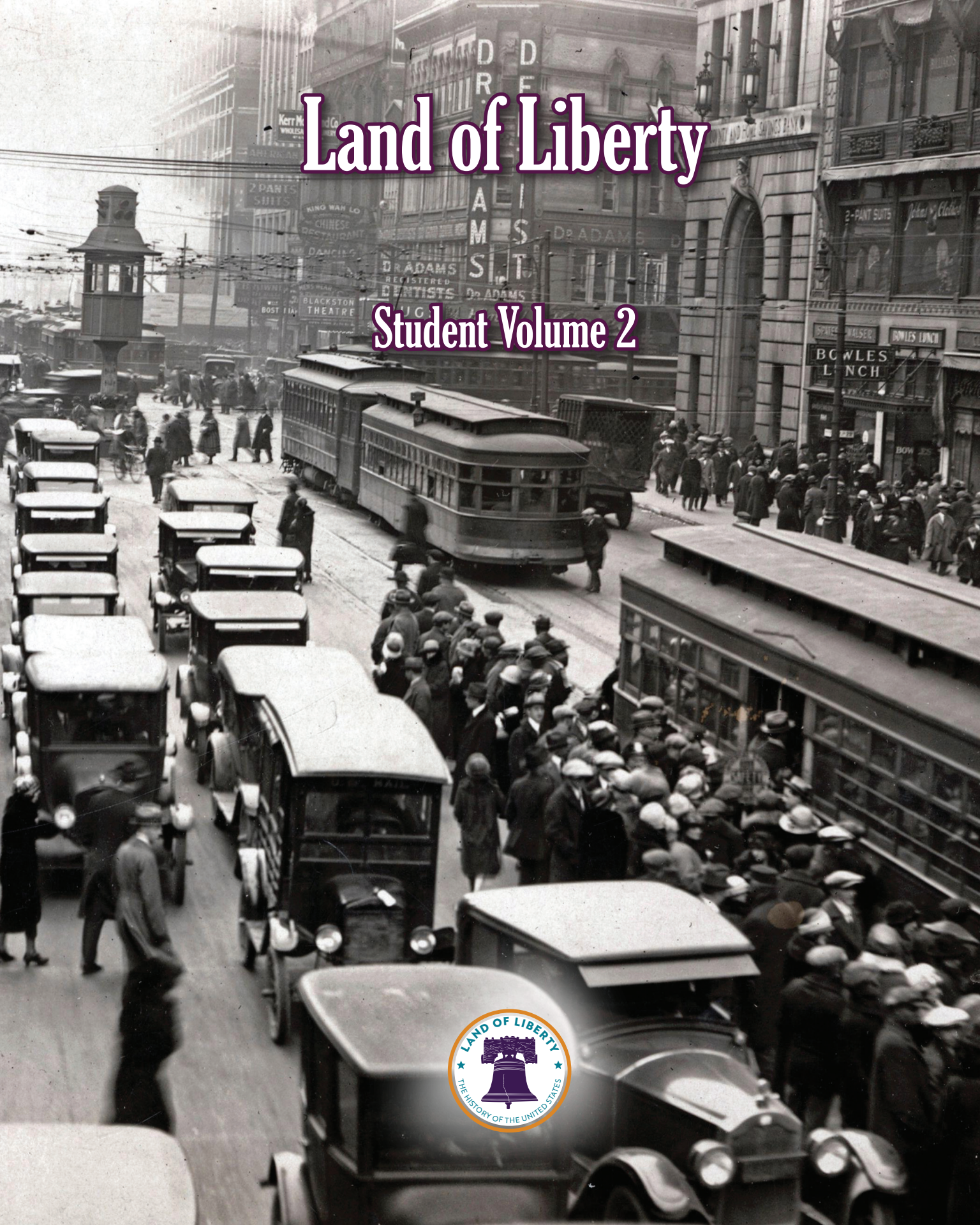
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Land of Liberty
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LAND OF LIBERTY
THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

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Land of Liberty

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Topic 1
Postwar United States and the 1920s

Framing Question

Was the decade of the 1920s a decade of change or conservatism?



Charles "Lucky Lindy" Lindbergh's transatlantic flight was one of many moments of renewed hope during a decade that would become known as the Roaring Twenties.

The Atlantic, by Air

Setting the Scene

On the morning of May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh climbs aboard The Spirit of St. Louis, *a custom-built single-engine plane designed specifically to carry extra fuel for what will be a long flight. After performing the necessary safety checks, Lindbergh takes off from Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York. The twenty-five-year-old is about to take the journey of his lifetime.*

For the next thirty-three hours, Lindbergh steers his small plane across the Atlantic Ocean, his final destination in France constantly on his mind. He has only five years of flying experience; since learning to fly at age twenty, he has worked as a stunt pilot, a military pilot, and an airmail pilot. Yet none of those aviation experiences were similar to flying solo across the vast Atlantic with no radio assistance. As he flies all day and night, Lindbergh uses a navigational technique known as dead reckoning to attempt to stay on course: He uses the speed, direction, and time of earlier moments of the flight to gauge his current position. Unsurprisingly, Lindbergh, battling cold



temperatures and nerves, is worried his calculations will be far, far off.

Yet at 10:24 p.m. on May 21, Lindbergh lands safely at Le Bourget Aerodrome in Paris, a series of car headlights guiding him to the landing strip. "Lucky Lindy" has become the first person to complete a solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

Stepping off his plane, Lindbergh likely does not yet appreciate the immense fame waiting for him. As a crowd of more than one hundred thousand cheering spectators greets him, a "Lindbergh boom" in commercial aviation is born. People around the world, thrilled that the young, dashing pilot survived a transatlantic flight, are suddenly hungry to know more about—and experience—air travel. New aircraft designs and air travel routes will soon appear.

The grim determination of World War I has given way to the exuberance and optimism of the Roaring Twenties, an era that will be partially marked by innovation and cultural change. Technologies developed or improved upon during the war—including the airplane—will now be repurposed to bring people together via new forms of entertainment, swifter communication, and faster transportation.



1920s Society

Shortly after the conclusion of World War I, the United States entered the 1920s, the first "modern" decade of the twentieth century. In American cities, relief that the war was over combined with an open-mindedness to new social and cultural ideas. But while city dwellers embraced change, be it new hairstyles or new kinds of music, many rural Americans viewed these shifts as dangerous and indicative of immoral behavior. This struggle between embracing and rejecting change became an underlying tension of the Roaring Twenties.

Fundamentalism

Christian fundamentalism had begun to take hold in parts of the United States during the late 1800s. A movement within Christianity that supported a literal interpretation of the Bible as essential, or fundamental, to a person's beliefs and faith, it was part of everyday life in many rural parts of the country by the 1920s. Rising hemlines, louder music, and women voting led fundamentalists to believe the country was moving further and further away from how they understood their faith.

Of particular concern to fundamentalists was Charles Darwin's scientific theory of evolution, or the idea that humans gradually developed from preexisting species—a concept that many believed contradicted the story of creation in the Bible. Fundamentalists were determined to prevent the teaching of evolution in schools, and between 1921 and 1929, more than thirty-seven pieces of anti-evolution legislation were introduced across twenty states.

In Tennessee, the first state to pass such a law, a 1925 trial involving a high school teacher who continued to teach evolution captured the nation's attention. *The State of Tennessee v. John T. Scopes*, which came to be known as the "trial of the century," pitted fundamentalist lawyer and former presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan against well-known criminal defense lawyer Clarence Darrow. Over the course of almost two weeks, the media informed the nation of the fiery back-and-forth between Bryan and Darrow. Teacher John Scopes was eventually found guilty and fined $100, yet the larger story was the degree to which the "Scopes Monkey Trial" opened many Americans' eyes to the deep religious and social divisions among them.

Prohibition

A unique social and political feature of the 1920s was Prohibition, the thirteen-year constitutional ban on the manufacture, sale, and distribution of alcohol. Recall that the Eighteenth Amendment, which was ratified in January 1919 and took effect in January 1920, formally established the nationwide ban. Also in 1919, Congress enacted the Volstead

Act to create a system of enforcement. It was soon supported by numerous similar state laws. From the start, however, enforcement proved difficult. City police forces frequently turned a blind eye to the illegal liquor trade due to bribery or a desire to avoid violent confrontations. Local politicians often did likewise. On the rare occasion that a person was brought to trial for an alcohol-related crime, it was unusual for a jury to convict them.

Though initially hailed as an achievement by the temperance movement you read about in Unit 2, Prohibition largely succeeded in replacing a legal, regulated industry with an illegal, unregulated one. Although the Eighteenth Amendment was ratified with strong support in Congress and among state legislatures, Prohibition itself was extremely unpopular with many Americans, who often chose to ignore it. It passed largely through the efforts of the vocal and well-organized temperance movement, which framed drinking as a moral evil and a hazard to both health and society.



Prohibition-era speakeasies often used concealed entrances with peepholes, disguising their true purpose behind fronts like soda shops or dry-goods stores.

Many who wanted to drink alcohol made it at home. Others frequented speakeasies, illegal drinking establishments that provided alcoholic beverages smuggled in from abroad or produced in secret. During Prohibition, producers, sellers, and consumers of alcohol, who were all participating illegally, paid no taxes on liquor sales or purchases. Not only did this deprive local, state, and federal governments of hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, but it also provided a strong incentive for criminal exploitation.

With the market closed to law-abiding citizens, smuggling and selling spirits also provided an enormous opportunity for organized crime. Some "rumrunners," or illegal importers, brought boatloads of rum north from the Caribbean, while others ferried secret shipments of whiskey south from Canada. Gangsters such as Chicago crime boss Al Capone and New Orleans's Carlos Marcello made fortunes through **bootlegging**. The criminal networks that emerged and developed throughout the 1920s often had public support—the criminals were meeting consumer demand. In the end, the wealth and violence associated with organized crime would help lead to the

constitutional repeal of Prohibition via the Twenty-First Amendment in 1933.

Think Twice

What unintended effects did Prohibition have on the culture and economy of the United States?

The Flapper

The role of women in 1920s society was another source of division between rural and urban Americans. Women were now experiencing new political and social independence.

The Nineteenth Amendment, ratified in 1920, made women's suffrage the law of the land nationwide and helped bring women into political life. At the same time, women increasingly entered the workforce, bringing them more fully into the country's economic life. By the end of the decade, one in four American women held jobs, up from one in five in 1920; for single women, the figure was one in two. As these numbers suggest, most women left the workforce upon marriage, and economic inequality between men and women persisted. Jobs for women were mainly limited to low-level clerical, domestic, or retail jobs; they were largely excluded from more lucrative managerial or professional careers. Still, with greater financial freedom and a constitutional right to vote, women were making inroads in what had long been considered "a man's world." This departure from a woman's traditional roles as wife, mother, and homemaker frustrated fundamentalists, who continued to push back against changing social norms.

Amid these developments, a new fashion icon emerged: the flapper. With their hair cut short and crowned with a cloche—a round, close-fitting hat—or a feathered headband, flappers were young women who enjoyed jazz music, frequented speakeasies, and



Flapper style included shorter hair and skirts, both of which shocked Americans determined to preserve traditional behaviors.

often took part in dance crazes such as the Charleston. Rebelling against traditional values, the flappers disdained chaperones and freely indulged in smoking and drinking, habits that until then had been seen as risqué and unladylike. At the time, flappers were celebrated in popular media even as they were viewed with distrust or even ridicule by fundamentalists and traditionalists. Their fondness for heavy makeup and shorter skirts scandalized those who remembered an era of corsets, puff sleeves, and floor-length gowns. Flappers faced an uphill battle to be recognized not just as trend chasers but as seekers of greater personal freedom.

Think Twice

Why were some people frustrated by the flapper lifestyle?

1920s Politics

The years following World War I were a time of both relief and anxiety. Exhausted by the war and the flu pandemic of 1918–19, many Americans hoped for better, more peaceful times. After a brief postwar recession, the country entered a period of economic prosperity. The ratification of women's suffrage in 1920 expanded democratic participation and helped redefine gender roles in American society. At the same time, fears of communism grew, and Americans still recovering from the devastation of a world war came to favor isolationism in politics and protection of domestic producers in trade.

The Influenza Pandemic



In 1918 and 1919, an influenza virus swept across the world, sickening people in almost every country and eventually killing an estimated twenty-five million. In the United States, young adults were those most typically infected, though the pandemic affected all age groups. Around 550,000 people in the United States died as a result of the virus, and the average life expectancy of U.S. residents dropped by an astounding twelve years. Makeshift hospitals were set up across the country to treat the overwhelming number of patients, including the one shown here in a gymnasium at Iowa State University.

The Harding Presidency

Warren G. Harding took office in 1921 on the promise of a "return to normalcy"—that is, to the way things had been before the disruptions of the First World War. In other words, Harding believed that it was time for the United States to once again take an isolationist stance, with a focus on domestic issues rather than the problems plaguing the rest of the world. In most ways, the country would maintain this position for twenty years.

A former newspaper owner and U.S. senator, the Republican Harding enjoyed great popularity during his short time in office. Outgoing and good-natured, Harding's affable personality put him in stark contrast to his predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, a reserved and scholarly man who disliked compromise and insisted on the United States' moral imperative to lead the postwar world order. Additionally, Wilson had suffered a series of progressively disabling strokes during his second term, raising serious concerns about his capacity to govern and making a third term impossible.

Although Harding was well-liked, many of the friends and allies he appointed to high office became known for corruption or incompetence, and he did little to restrain them. He is often regarded as an ineffectual president whose lax oversight of the federal government allowed for extensive **graft**. This included the Teapot Dome scandal, through which it was revealed that Harding's secretary of the interior had accepted massive bribes while secretly granting generous leases of federal oil reserves to private companies—without the standard competitive bidding process that ensures the government receives a fair price.

However, Harding made good on his promise to reduce U.S. involvement in global affairs. In particular, he refused to join the League of Nations, pointing again to his focus on "normalcy," and supported continued restrictions on immigration. He also relaxed somewhat the government's hostility toward certain activists, pardoning or commuting the sentences of many who had been jailed for protesting the war. Perhaps the most famous figure granted clemency at this time was the



Warren G. Harding, the country's twenty-ninth president, took office after a landslide victory. He capitalized on outgoing Democratic president Woodrow Wilson's increasing unpopularity, securing more than 60 percent of the popular vote and 76 percent of electoral votes.

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE RETURN TO NORMALCY, WARREN G. HARDING, 1920

During the election of 1920, candidate Warren G. Harding proposed a "return to normalcy" after World War I. He suggested the country turn its attention inward, away from foreign entanglements, and emphasized stability, peace, and a focus on domestic issues.

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums [reforms], but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise [equilibrium]; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment of triumphant nationality.

It is one thing to battle successfully against world domination by a military autocracy, because the infinite God never intended such a program, but it is quite another thing to revise human nature and suspend the fundamental laws of life and all of life's acquirements. . . .

This republic has its ample tasks. If we put an end to false economics which lure humanity to utter chaos, ours will be the commanding example of world leadership today. If we can prove a representative popular government under which a citizenship seeks what it may do for the government rather than what the government may do for individuals, we shall do more to make democracy safe for the world than all armed conflict ever recorded. The world needs to be reminded that all human ills are not curable by legislation, and that quantity of statutory enactment and excess of government offer no substitute for quality of citizenship. The problems of maintained civilization are not to be solved by a transfer of responsibility from citizenship to government, and no eminent page in history was ever drafted by the standards of mediocrity. More, no government is worthy of the name which is directed by influence on the one hand, or moved by intimidation on the other. . . .

My best judgment of America's needs is to steady down, to get squarely on our feet, to make sure of the right path. Let's get out of the fevered delirium of war, with the hallucination that all the money in the world is to be made in the madness of war and the wildness of its aftermath. Let us stop to consider that tranquility at home is more precious than peace abroad, and that both our good fortune and our eminence are dependent on the normal forward stride of all the American people.

Source: Harding, Warren G. "National Ideals and Policies." *The Protectionist*, June 1920, pp. 74–76.

labor leader Eugene V. Debs, whom Harding welcomed at the White House after his release.

Harding embraced the pro-business policies that helped define the Republican Party during the early twentieth century. He supported looser regulations on industry and lower taxes on businesses. During his administration, agencies tasked with regulating business—such as the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Justice, and the Interstate Commerce Commission—were discouraged from challenging monopolies or prosecuting large corporations.

Along with these measures came **protectionism** in the form of tariffs. Harding had campaigned on the idea that high tariffs would protect American manufacturers from foreign competition; the tariffs would eventually make the prices of foreign goods higher than those of domestically produced goods. This promise appealed to the large portion of the American workforce that was then employed in manufacturing. By the time Harding took office, there was also substantial support for a trade-based solution to the woes of American farmers, who were struggling to pay back the generous wartime loans they had taken out to boost production. Soon after becoming president, he signed into law the Emergency Tariff of 1921. The measure aimed to protect American farmers, but in practice, it significantly reduced American agricultural exports to Europe. This left a surplus for the domestic market, leading to aggressive price competition among American farmers to sell off the excess goods. A wider set of tariffs, the Fordney–McCumber Tariff Act, received Harding's signature in September 1922. These tariffs ultimately raised the cost of living throughout the country.

Think Twice



In what ways did Warren G. Harding show himself to be a "pro-business" president?

The Coolidge Years

Harding was halfway through his term when he died unexpectedly from natural causes in August 1923. Vice President Calvin Coolidge assumed the presidency upon Harding's death and was then elected himself in 1924, serving until 1929.

Coolidge's decisive victory reflected continued public support for Republican economic policies. He aimed to distance himself from the misdeeds of Harding's officials and to build a reputation as an anti-corruption president. Although Coolidge remained popular during his presidency, his laissez-faire economic policies and limited regulatory oversight are often cited as contributing factors to the onset of the Great Depression.

Coolidge continued the economic programs of his predecessor that benefited businesses and the wealthy. He promoted and signed two tax laws that significantly reduced income,

The Bonus Bills

As you read earlier, World War I brought significant progress for American workers across industries. Many civilians experienced rising wages because of the heightened demand for manufactured goods and the increased competition for workers during the war. The soldiers serving overseas, however, received a fixed rate of pay that did not rise to reflect the growth in civilian wartime wages.

Returning home to a brief postwar recession, many veterans struggled to find jobs as the economy slowed. Many believed the government owed them additional compensation to reflect the wages they might have earned as civilian workers during the war. The first bill proposing a federal bonus for World War I veterans passed Congress in 1922, but President Harding vetoed it, claiming it was an irresponsible use of government funds. A second attempt in 1924 succeeded, despite the veto of President Coolidge. Coolidge opposed the bill on principled grounds, stating, "Patriotism which is bought and paid for is not patriotism."

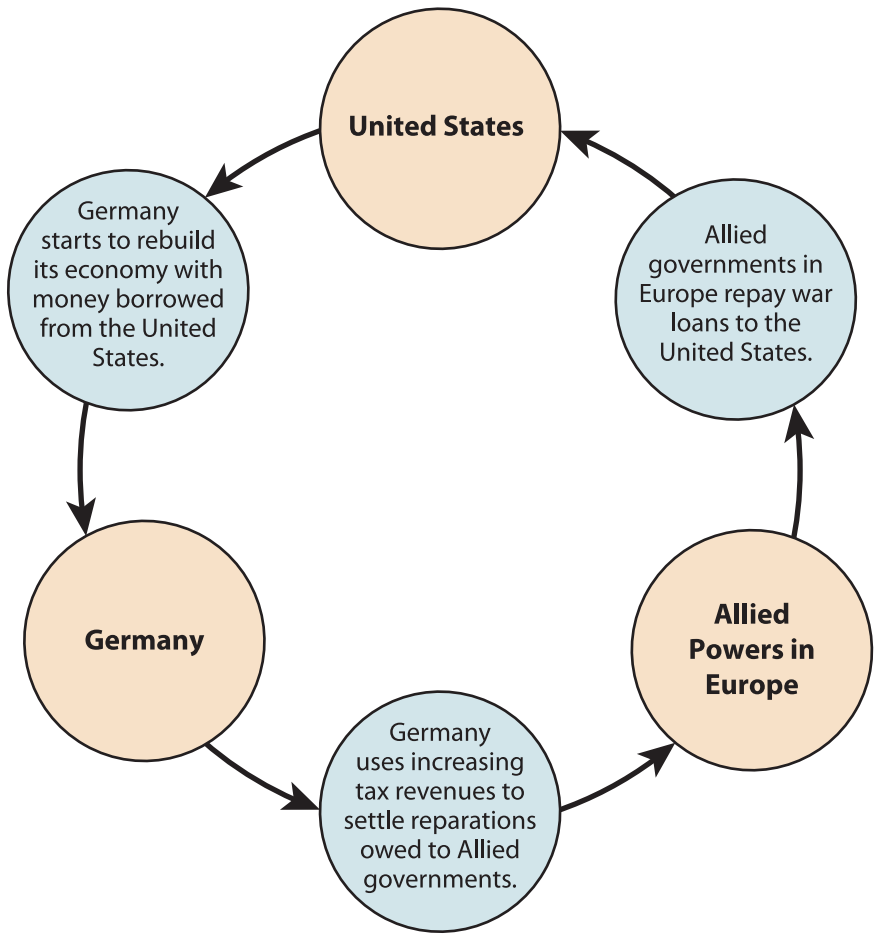
The Bonus Act awarded additional pay that, in some cases, would nearly double what veterans had earned during their service. The catch was that this bonus would only be paid out twenty years later, in 1945, and with interest. The passage of this law tempered but did not resolve veterans' dissatisfaction; many borrowed against their bonus certificates to pay expenses in the meantime. When the Great Depression plunged the nation into widespread economic hardship, a "Bonus Army" of World War I veterans marched on Washington to demand immediate payment. You will learn more about their story at the beginning of the next topic.

gift, and inheritance taxes. He also followed Harding in opposing regulations on business, which he saw as the engine of the prosperity that the country was experiencing in the mid- to late 1920s. Harding had called for "less government in business." Coolidge followed a similar line of thought, stating, "The chief business of the American people is business."

The period of "Coolidge prosperity" did not, however, extend to all areas of the American economy. In particular, this prosperity largely excluded the agricultural sector, which had taken advantage of generous crop prices set by the federal government during World War I to secure loans for farm upgrades. These subsidies had since ended, and while protectionist policies from the Harding era had raised the prices of farm produce, they did not outpace the rising costs of farming. In fact, because of a decrease in demand for staple foods such as

grain and pork, many farmers found themselves sitting on a surplus. They had to sell this surplus at low prices and sometimes even at a loss. Technological advances such as the tractor increased efficiency, but they also made farmers more reliant on resources that they could not produce for themselves and had to purchase, such as gasoline and mechanical parts. While manufacturing and mining wages grew to outpace inflation during this period, farmers saw their earnings stagnate or even decline. During Coolidge's presidency, thousands of rural banks closed, and farmers generally experienced a prolonged economic downturn that foreshadowed the wider depression that would hit the entire country by the end of 1929.

Coolidge's foreign policy approach initially yielded promising results. Coolidge and Charles Dawes, who would later become his vice president, endorsed a plan to settle the reparations owed by Germany after World War I. Elements of the plan included a large loan from the United States and a renegotiation of Germany's reparation payments, which would



Under the Dawes Plan, the United States loaned money to Germany in the hopes of jumpstarting loan repayments from Allies, including France and Great Britain.

be reduced temporarily but increase gradually as the severely weakened and inflation-prone German economy recovered. The goal was to prevent renewed conflict in Europe by stabilizing Germany's economy and helping it meet the Allied financial demands. The plan's architects also hoped that enabling Germany to repay the other Allies would in turn allow those Allies to repay their own war debts to the United States.

The Dawes Plan, as it came to be called, went into effect in 1924, leading Americans to hope for a lasting peace in Europe. However, as you will read in Topic 3, the rise to power of Germany's Nazi political party in the 1930s prompted a sharp reassessment of the Dawes Plan and its long-term goals.



Think Twice

What impact did the Republican Party have on the politics of the United States during the 1920s?

The Postwar Economy

Despite its horrors and hardships, World War I had been a boon to the U.S. economy. Mobilization of the armed forces—both in the United States and earlier in other parts of the world—created enormous demand for industrial goods, munitions, and the numerous other supplies that an army needs to fight, including textiles, foodstuffs, and fuel. As a result, the U.S. manufacturing sector experienced especially strong growth during the war. With many of the sector's workers serving in the armed forces, the country experienced a drastic labor shortage, and the remaining workers—including the many African Americans, Mexican Americans, and women who answered the call to fill these jobs—had more bargaining power than they had ever held before.

After the war, the government removed the price controls it had placed on certain goods to manage distribution of resources that the war effort required. The absence of these pricing thresholds, combined with pent-up consumer demand for new goods, caused inflation to rise. The demand for goods allowed businesses to charge higher prices, while the demand for labor to produce the goods drove wage increases. Eventually, policymakers struggled to reduce inflation without hampering the economy. The Federal Reserve, the creation of which you read about in Unit 2, began raising interest rates after years of intentionally keeping them low, and the federal government sharply reduced its spending beginning in 1919.

By the end of 1920, it was clear that the country had entered a recession. Factory production, already declining with the end of wartime demand, dropped dramatically. Unemployment, which had dropped to nearly 1 percent during the war, rose sharply and peaked near 12 percent by mid-1921.

The manufacturing sector had enjoyed especially strong growth during the war; now, in just over a year, industrial production fell by nearly one-third, with automobile production in particular falling by more than half. Businesses of all sizes and across all industries failed as purchasing power dropped and demand contracted.

Think Twice

How did World War I and its aftermath affect the American economy during the 1920s?

Labor Reacts

Labor on the home front had been critical to U.S. success in World War I. Now, with millions of soldiers returning to the civilian workforce, employers, not employees, had more leverage when hiring. When the recession began, a wave of strikes arose.

During the war, President Wilson's government had imposed restrictions on labor strikes to protect the production of military assets. In exchange, Wilson had upheld workers' rights to form and join unions and to bargain collectively for better pay and working conditions. Additionally, the U.S. government directly mediated labor–management disputes throughout the war. As soon as these wartime measures were lifted, however, employers recommenced efforts to weaken and sometimes destroy unions, such as firing union leaders. Faced with postwar inflation, millions of workers in many industries, including steel, coal, textiles, and transit, went on strike in 1919. They sought higher wages to keep pace with the rising cost of living, and they wanted an end to anti-union activities. Organizing many



Workers across many cities and industries participated in the strike wave of 1919. Here, Pennsylvania metalworkers protest at the factory gates.

of these strikes was the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which you read about in Unit 2.

Labor unrest did not end with the 1919 strikes. After wartime federal control that had improved rail workers' conditions ended, private railroad companies reasserted control and imposed wage cuts, prompting the massive Great Railroad Strike of 1922 by maintenance and repair workers.

The Harding administration, led by Attorney General Harry Daugherty and the Railroad Labor Board, responded forcefully, authorizing strikebreakers and obtaining a federal injunction banning strikes. Enforcement by U.S. marshals ended the strike, but the administration faced public backlash for its harsh tactics and failure to negotiate.

The railroad strike also highlighted the fragility of labor unions during the 1920s. While union membership had surged before and during World War I, it began to decline rapidly after the war. Although many railroad workers were unionized, they did not all support the strike, enabling employers to undermine collective efforts by negotiating only with select unions.

The racial discrimination present in some unions also impaired worker solidarity. One reason many AFL-led strikes in 1919 failed was that numerous member unions excluded African American workers. These workers were thus forced into non-union jobs in the same industries, leading them to be maligned as "scabs" who undermined unionized workers' activism, even when that was not at all the case. Over the course of the 1920s, African Americans seeking economic security and racial inclusion responded by forming their own unions. A notable example was the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), led by A. Philip Randolph and formed in 1925 by workers who served passengers in overnight accommodations on long-distance train routes. When the BSCP received an AFL charter in 1935, it marked an important step forward—though hardly the last step—in race relations within the American labor movement. In addition to fighting for economic equality, the BSCP represented part of the larger movement for civil rights that grew during the twentieth century.

Think Twice



Describe two challenges that organized labor faced during the decade following World War I.

The First Red Scare

Public perception of organized labor soured as a by-product of the First Red Scare (1917–20), a wave of widespread panic around fears of communism that also inspired anti-immigrant sentiment. The name of the era, and that of the Second Red Scare that would follow decades



Political cartoons, such as this one from 1919, depicted Bolshevism as an evil influence that would spread out from Russia to eventually smother the world, stoking violence and severely limiting individual freedoms.

later, comes from the color symbolically associated with communism and related political ideologies.

Concerns about communism in the United States emerged following the Russian Revolution and the rise of Bolshevism. The term *Bolshevism* became associated with alarm and suspicion in public discussions. It appeared in newspaper editorials, political cartoons, and congressional debates to critique communist and anarchist activities. Additionally, it was used to rally opposition against organized labor. Media coverage often portrayed labor movements negatively, contributing to a perception of unions as centers of radicalism. As a result, the public frequently encountered portrayals of striking workers as agitators with extreme demands.

Additionally, many immigrants from countries in southern and eastern Europe with a history of political instability and radicalism worked in manufacturing and industry, leading many Americans to associate them with radical political movements. Anti-communist attitudes and anxieties fueled a deepening sense of nativism and xenophobia in the United States. Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1918, which gave the Department of Immigration sweeping authority to deport foreign-born people suspected of holding "anarchistic" views. The law's broad language made it a tool for targeting nearly any noncitizen who criticized the government or supported organized labor and workplace reforms, all under the pretext of preventing a government overthrow like the one that had occurred in Russia.

Sacco and Vanzetti

Of the individuals caught up in the First Red Scare, few became better known than Sacco and Vanzetti. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian immigrants and anarchists living in Massachusetts. The two were arrested as suspects in the 1920 killing of two men during the robbery of a shoe factory. Both men insisted they were innocent and argued that they had been wrongly accused. However, they were convicted of murder in 1921 and sentenced to death. After numerous appeals and public protests in cities all over the world, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed on August 23, 1927. The case became one of the most politically charged trials in American legal history. Some Americans supported aggressive actions against immigrant anarchists, while others held that the two men were arrested, convicted, and sentenced purely *because* of their immigrant status and anarchist beliefs. In 1977, the governor of Massachusetts issued a proclamation stating that Sacco and Vanzetti had been unfairly tried and executed and should no longer be considered guilty.



The Sacco and Vanzetti case became a source of international interest, with people around the world protesting the verdict and sentence. This "Save Sacco & Vanzetti" banner calls for protesters to gather in Trafalgar Square, London.

Palmer Raids

Around the same time that labor unrest was growing, violent anarchist responses to the widespread anti-immigration sentiment soon gave some credence to the fear of radicalism. In the spring of 1919, militant anarchists mailed bombs to dozens of American political, media, and business leaders. Because many bombs were meant to arrive on May 1—a holiday of great significance to international organized labor and socialist movements since the late 1800s and the Haymarket incident you read about in Unit 2—these attacks came to be known as the May Day bombings. The bombings, which killed two people and injured two more, caused widespread alarm and dominated national headlines. Another series of bombings occurred across eight cities the following month, targeting judges, law enforcement, and politicians, including Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. Concerned about the impact of the Russian Revolution on U.S. workers, President Woodrow Wilson and Palmer had previously expressed fears of an immigrant-led uprising against the U.S. government. Now, it seemed to many Americans, they had proof.

In November 1919, Palmer authorized the first of more than six thousand arrests targeting foreign-born labor activists and anarchists. Fewer than 10 percent of those arrested were ultimately deported, but the Red Scare continued to gain intensity. In September 1920, a man now thought to be an affiliate of the May Day bombers detonated a cartload of explosives on Wall Street in New York, the center of the nation's financial system and a symbol of capitalism. The act, which killed dozens and was likely intended to protest anti-immigration laws, rallied popular support for the government's antiradical policies.

Immigration Quotas

Two laws enacted in the 1920s established numerical immigration quotas based on country of origin. The first was the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, which restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe and continued to bar most Asian immigrants—a policy that began with earlier legislation that you have read about, including the Chinese Exclusion Act. Those who drafted the law aimed to favor immigrants from western and northern Europe, whom they saw as racially similar to white Americans and therefore more desirable. The Emergency Quota Act was followed by the creation of the U.S. Border Patrol via the Labor Appropriation Act of 1924, which eventually policed both land borders and seacoasts. That same year, a second quota act, the Immigration Act of 1924, further reduced immigration by setting stricter national quotas and effectively halving the number of immigrants allowed annually. It also increased restrictions on Asian immigration, essentially banning all Asians except for Filipinos, who were U.S. nationals due to the Philippines' status as a colony.

Think Twice



How did fears about communism and radicalism after World War I influence U.S. government actions toward immigrants and labor unions?

The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and Immigration Act of 1924

	Emergency Quota Act of 1921		Immigration Act of 1924	
Region of Origin	**1910 Population**	**Quota (3%)**	**1890 Population**	**Quota (2%)**
Italy	1,343,125	40,294	182,580	3,652
Russia	1,602,782	48,063	182,644	3,653
Greece	101,282	3,038	1,887	38
Africa	3,992	120	2,207	44

Both laws used past census figures to create a percentage-based quota for new immigrants. In 1921, quotas were set at 3 percent of the figure from the 1910 census; in 1924, they were set at 2 percent of the (smaller and therefore more restrictive) 1890 total.

The Roaring Twenties

The exact reason for the United States' recovery from the brief recession of the early 1920s remains a matter of debate. One school of thought credits President Harding's low-tax policies with putting more money into the hands of consumers. Others argue that the Federal Reserve's cuts to interest rates in 1921, modest though they were, helped spur freer spending and boost employment. The recovery, in any event, was rapid and decisive. By the second half of 1921, most of the United States was experiencing falling unemployment, growing wages, and increased personal savings. New construction, from skyscrapers to houses, soared to new heights. As you will read later, consumerism and the stock market similarly soared, impacting the 1920s economy in major ways.

This economic growth, as well as social and political growth, was part of the "roar" of the Roaring Twenties. But the term also refers to the worlds of music, art, and popular culture, where prewar norms of modesty had given



The premieres of Hollywood films attracted crowds, as this 1926 photo demonstrates. By the end of the decade, weekly movie attendance in the United States hovered near one hundred million people.

way to bold fashions and new styles of dance. Up until this point, films had been silent; now, the technology of "talkies," or black-and-white motion pictures with synchronized audio tracks, began to be used in ambitious ways. The release of the talkie *The Jazz Singer* in 1927 marked a major milestone in film history, as it featured synchronized recorded music along with lip-synced singing and spoken dialogue. Jazz was a new type of uniquely American music, and it became so ubiquitous among Americans of all races and backgrounds that those of old-fashioned sensibilities felt alarmed by the new sound.

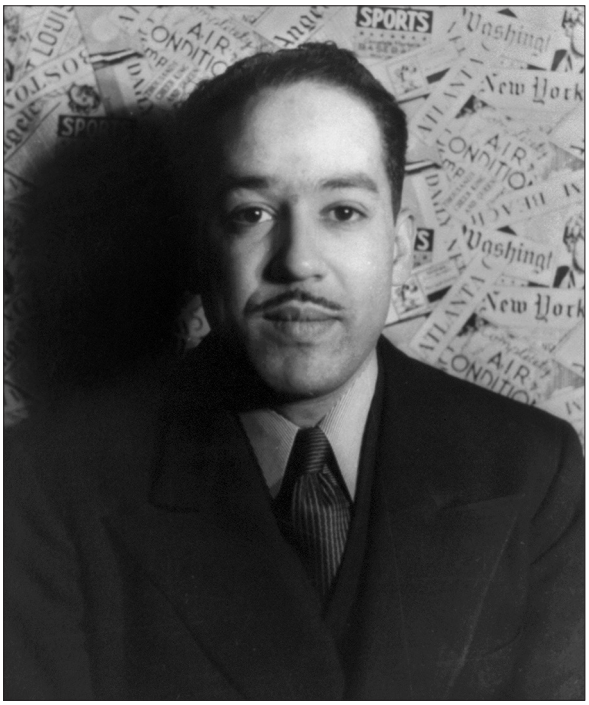
The Harlem Renaissance

As millions of African Americans moved north during the Great Migration, many settled in New York City. One of the city's neighborhoods, Harlem, became a prominent cultural hub in the 1920s. A predominantly Black neighborhood within a global hub of trade and culture, Harlem was the home of an artistic and intellectual movement known as the Harlem Renaissance. It became not only a hub for African American writers and artists but also a launching point from which they addressed broader audiences of readers, listeners, and theatergoers. Those who took part were often interested in shaping a distinctly African American artistic culture that would combine "high art" influences with familiar or colloquial tradition.

Like the European Renaissance from which it took its name, the Harlem Renaissance spanned numerous forms of art and writing. Poet Langston Hughes, born in Joplin, Missouri, moved to New York and developed a unique style known as jazz poetry. Published to great acclaim in 1926, his debut collection, *The Weary Blues*, used African American musical traditions to express hope, sorrow, and courage. Many of his poems have since been widely anthologized. Zora Neale Hurston, a novelist and anthropologist

A Uniquely American Genre

Jazz was born from the creativity of African American musicians in the early twentieth century and became the defining sound of the 1920s. Rooted in African American musical traditions, especially blues, ragtime, and spirituals, jazz first emerged in New Orleans before spreading to cities like Chicago, New York, and Kansas City. It was a uniquely American art form, blending African rhythms and call-and-response patterns with European instruments like the trumpet, piano, and clarinet. Known for improvisation and requiring skillful playing, jazz captured the energy and freedom of the 1920s. As radio and records brought jazz to a national audience, performers like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington became stars. Although some critics initially dismissed it as wild or inappropriate, jazz reshaped American music and paved the way for future genres like swing, rock, and hip-hop.



The poet and playwright Langston Hughes was among the best-known authors of the Harlem Renaissance, often focusing on the day-to-day life experiences of working-class African Americans.

of the American South, documented her experiences in both fiction and nonfiction works. Her best-known works include the 1935 folklore collection *Mules and Men* and the 1937 novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Harlem became not just a center of cultural activity but also a symbol of something greater: a new cultural identity for African Americans. In 1925, philosopher and cultural critic Alain Locke proclaimed Harlem the cultural capital of a new generation of African Americans—a generation that was outspoken, politically active, and determined to demand fair treatment.

In the visual and performing arts, too, Harlem thrived. Jazz achieved a broader and more class-diverse audience through the work of pianist and composer Duke Ellington, who led a jazz orchestra at Harlem's Cotton Club for many years. Other performers there included many jazz and blues musicians who went on to become household names, such as Fats Waller and Bessie Smith. Meanwhile, photographer and longtime New York resident James Van Der Zee captured the life and times of his contemporaries, showing off the vibrancy and opulence of Harlem fashions. Marcus Garvey, a Black nationalist leader, was among his most famous portrait subjects.

The Harlem Renaissance, in its strictest sense, was short-lived, lasting a little more than a decade between the First World War and the start of the Great Depression, which you will read about in the next topic. Yet it brought with it a sense of self-determination that few African Americans had been able to experience under slavery or during the repressive aftermath of Reconstruction. Its leaders differed somewhat on just what message should be drawn from these achievements. For instance, Locke spoke of a new sense of "race pride"—a concept that Hurston rejected because she believed achievements should be celebrated on their own merits, not defined by race. Nonetheless, the ideas and stereotype-shattering works of the authors and artists of the Harlem Renaissance laid

the groundwork for civil rights activism in subsequent decades.



Think Twice

Who were some key figures of the Harlem Renaissance, and how did they contribute to this movement?

The Lost Generation

Distinct movements emerged in fine arts and literature in the 1920s, capturing the spirit of the times and the preoccupations of the people who lived through them. Young Americans who came of age during World War I inherited a society in which change seemed rapid on all fronts—social, political, technological—and traditional values seemed to have died off with the war. Tens of thousands of young people had not returned from the war at all, and those who did were haunted by the horrors of mechanized warfare. Those who had urged them to fight had often done so with a moral certainty that now seemed suspect. This Lost Generation, as it came to be known, produced art and writing that reflected a sense of disillusionment.

Many writers associated with the Lost Generation, such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, had lived and worked in Europe for at least part of the 1920s. Their fiction often centered on a lively group of **expatriate** Americans following an indulgent lifestyle while failing to find true satisfaction or fulfillment. *The Sun Also Rises* (1925), Hemingway's early novel of expatriate life in western Europe, epitomizes this trend, as does Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), set during a jazz-fueled summer in New York. The term *Jazz Age*—widely used as an epithet for the hard-partying, youth-oriented popular culture of the 1920s—gained traction partly from its use in Fitzgerald's short fiction.



Racial Tensions

Harlem in New York City was only one location where the millions of African Americans who embarked on the Great Migration settled. They spread out across the more industrialized North and Midwest in search of industrial jobs and an escape from the continued oppression of Jim Crow laws and vigilante violence. Many of these migrants were African American veterans who had returned from World War I. The availability of many job opportunities during wartime, along with the new restrictions on immigration from other countries, gave Black Southerners hope that there was room for them in the growing economies of other regions.

The Red Summer

Despite this hope, across much of the country, particularly in the Midwest, migrants encountered what were called *sundown towns*: all-white communities where African Americans were unwelcome after dark. This form of segregation was sometimes enforced through local laws and signposted at city

limits to warn African Americans to leave by sundown. Additionally, in cities where African Americans were able to buy homes, they often faced the problem of redlining, in which banks denied **mortgages** to people in specific neighborhoods, usually based on race. The name comes from federal maps created by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, which marked "high-risk" areas—typically African American neighborhoods—in red.

The color red has also been used to describe an outbreak of violence against African Americans in the summer of 1919. During the Red Summer, as it came to be known, white supremacist groups initiated many instances of rioting, lynching, and property destruction. This often happened as a reaction to the appearance of African Americans in exclusively white neighborhoods or to the hundreds of thousands of African American service members with whom white Americans were now competing for housing and jobs.

In some cases, those provoking violence targeted Black veterans specifically. At other times, they stoked some white Americans' fears that African Americans were determined to change U.S. government and society. In still other cases, white vigilantes took it upon themselves to enforce segregation including in places where no segregation laws actually existed. One such case, the killing of an African American teenager who had swum at a "whites-only" stretch of lakefront, was how the infamous Chicago Race Riot of 1919 began. Between July 27 and August 3, 1919, white rioters in the city killed thirty-eight people and destroyed more than a thousand homes. In all, around fifty incidents of racial violence, across both urban and rural areas, were documented between April and November 1919.

Think Twice



Describe the reception some African Americans experienced in areas of the North and Midwest during the Great Migration.

The Tulsa Race Massacre

African Americans also faced violent attacks in predominantly Black communities. This was true of one of the worst race-based attacks in U.S. history. At the beginning of the 1920s, one of the most affluent African American communities in the country was found in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Known as Black Wall Street, the city's Greenwood district attracted many early participants in the Great Migration with plentiful jobs, modern homes, and schools that offered their children opportunities unavailable in the more rigidly segregated Deep South. In late May 1921, an unsubstantiated rumor that an African American teenager, Dick Rowland, had assaulted a white female elevator operator triggered widespread outrage among white supremacists, who demanded that he be lynched without trial.



The aftermath of the Tulsa race massacre left much of the city's Greenwood neighborhood in smoldering ruins.

On the night of May 30, white vigilantes gathered outside the courthouse where Rowland was being held, demanding he be handed over. A smaller group of armed African Americans gathered in support of Rowland. The two groups exchanged gunfire, and soon, a white mob rampaged through Greenwood, killing dozens and setting fire to thousands of homes and businesses. In the aftermath, Tulsa police failed to stop the violence and instead arrested and detained thousands of African Americans, blaming them for the unrest. Eventually, the city government did step in—not to offer aid, but to attempt to buy out the property of African American residents as cheaply as possible and redevelop the Greenwood district as an industrial zone.

Think Twice

What did the aftermath of the Tulsa race massacre reveal about the city's government?

The Resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan

The 1920s also saw the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which had first emerged during Reconstruction. The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*, hugely controversial even in its own time, had portrayed the KKK as heroes who defended white women against predatory African American men. Though widely protested by African American leaders as malicious and inaccurate, the film became the highest-grossing motion picture of its day. Stoking fears and prejudices, *Birth of a Nation* contributed to a surge in KKK membership. This "second Klan" engaged in many of the same tactics of violence and intimidation as its predecessor, such as arson and lynching. Its members also supported nativist laws and infiltrated local and state politics to push anti-immigrant policies. As you learned earlier, its members were not only anti-Black but also staunchly anti-Catholic. Ireland and Italy were two of the biggest sources of "new" immigrants to the United States in the years leading up to the First World War, and both had predominantly Roman Catholic populations. In the 1920s, Klan members circulated numerous speeches and newsletters demanding that these groups be excluded from the country. Indeed, many Klan chapters viewed the influx of immigrants, not the movement of African Americans from South to North, as the greatest threat to the Klan's vision of white supremacy.

Amid such setbacks, some African Americans wondered whether it would be best to resettle outside the United States altogether. This was the opinion of Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey, who had formed an organization called the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 before moving to Harlem. Instead of advocating for advancement within American society, Garvey, a **separatist**, urged African Americans to join a "back to Africa" movement using passenger ships he had chartered. His movement, which at its peak had millions of followers, received substantial criticism from civil rights leaders and politicians for his alliance and communications with certain controversial and often prejudiced organizations, including the KKK. Ultimately, Garvey never visited Africa, nor did he ever send any ships there. However, as you will read, after World War II, Garvey's message and the UNIA would regain influence amid the growth of Black pride, Black nationalism, and Black separatism.



Marcus Garvey sometimes dressed in military regalia when he appeared in front of followers.

Think Twice

How did the Ku Klux Klan adjust its tactics to reflect the changes of the 1920s?

Advancements in Transportation and Communication

You read in the topic opener that air travel developed substantially during the 1920s, helped along in its popularity by feats such as Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight. This was not the only way Americans were moving around. Car ownership more than doubled between 1920 and 1930, expanding some Americans' choices of where to work and where to live. At the same time, communication technology also improved substantially during the 1920s, meaning that ideas, not just people, were also on the move.

Aviation

Aviation advanced during the 1920s. Most aircraft used in World War I were European-made, but this changed as American aviation

companies entered the market. It was an American engine that, in May 1923, powered the first nonstop transcontinental flight, from Long Island, New York, to San Diego, California. The journey took nearly twenty-seven hours. Alongside such record-breaking feats, airplanes also found use for mail and other commercial deliveries. Famous aviators such as Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, and Bessie Coleman continued to push the boundaries of what this rapidly evolving technology could accomplish. These early civilian uses of aircraft also provided the impetus for a small but fast-growing airline industry, and with it, the creation of specialized passenger airplanes. By the mid-1930s, air travel was no longer just for daredevils and stunt pilots; in the United States alone, nearly half a million passengers took to the skies each year.

The Automobile

In the meantime, the automobile industry became one of the largest parts of the American manufacturing sector. Due to the tremendous success of the Model T, the Ford Motor Company alone employed more than 120,000 people by the decade's end. Selling, fueling, and repairing cars was big business as well; by 1929, nearly 600,000 people worked at U.S. car dealerships, gas stations, and auto repair shops.

Leisure tourism arose in tandem with this infrastructure, initially in the form of car

The Model T and the American Motorist

In 1913, automaker Henry Ford introduced a method of production that would soon become standard across different industries: the *moving* assembly line. The idea of workers assembling a product in distinct phases, with each worker handling one step of the process, was nothing new—you read about the concept of an assembly line in Unit 2 and about an eighteenth-century example in Unit 1, where Adam Smith described a pin-making workshop. Ford's innovation was to have the cars move from one worker's station to the next while the workers themselves remained in place. This reduced the time it took to assemble a car. Other automakers quickly adopted Ford's method, and manufacturers in sectors like shipbuilding and aviation followed over time. This innovation made cars more affordable. By speeding up production and reducing costs, Ford was able to lower the price of his cars. In fact, when it was first released, a Model T cost $825, but by the mid-1920s, the price had dropped to less than $300. Meanwhile, by making his workers more productive, Ford was able to offer them a higher wage. As a result, even the factory workers building the cars could afford to own them. What had once been a hand-built luxury item had evolved into a mass-produced and widely accessible consumer product.



By 1921, streets like Detroit's Michigan Avenue were crowded with pedestrians, cars, and streetcars.

camping. Soon, campsites were built up into so-called tourist courts with individual cabins, showers, and kitchens. By 1925, the first "motor hotels," or motels, had begun to appear.

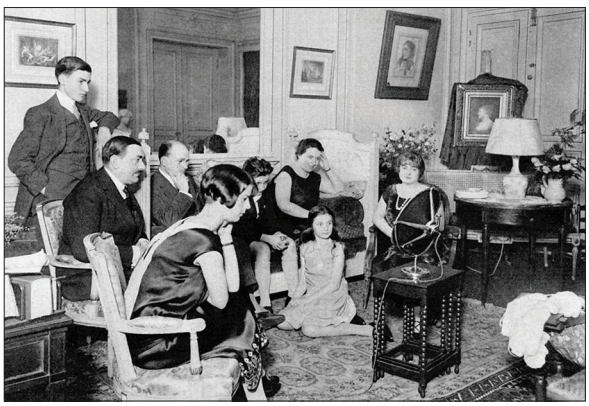
Think Twice

How did advances in transportation change both American culture and the country's economic direction?

Radio

Today, radio is an important source of music and spoken-word programming such as broadcast news and sports commentary. For the first few decades after its invention in the late 1800s, radio technology was used essentially as a wireless telegraph—more to communicate information than to entertain. Only around 1920 did broadcast radio become a source of entertainment and thus a part of American culture. News programs appeared in 1920, followed by dramas, comedy and variety shows, and both classical and popular music. Advertisers underwrote many of these programs, beginning a practice of media sponsorship that would later carry over into television. Meanwhile, rapid technological advances made radios both more affordable and powerful enough to use speakers instead of the once-common headsets. By the end of the decade, almost half of American homes had a radio set.

One defining feature of both radio and film during the 1920s is that they were mass media, or media designed to reach many people. As such, they contributed to a mass culture in which millions of people saw the same films, tuned in weekly for the same radio shows, and even followed the same sports teams. In the twenty-first century, it seems unremarkable when "everyone" watches a certain TV show, plays a certain video game, or picks up the use of a certain slang expression. Yet in the 1920s, this was a new phenomenon. Quite quickly, the United States went from being a nation of largely



The new, more powerful radio sets of the 1920s became a form of family entertainment—and helped create a national culture. Here, a family gathers to listen to one of the decade's popular radio programs.

local and regional media consumers to one where entertainment had a broader reach. Baseball, for instance, was recognized as a national pastime as early as the 1850s, but before the spread of radio, few Americans experienced major-league games play-by-play. Now, even those who couldn't visit a ballpark could follow major-league games in real time.

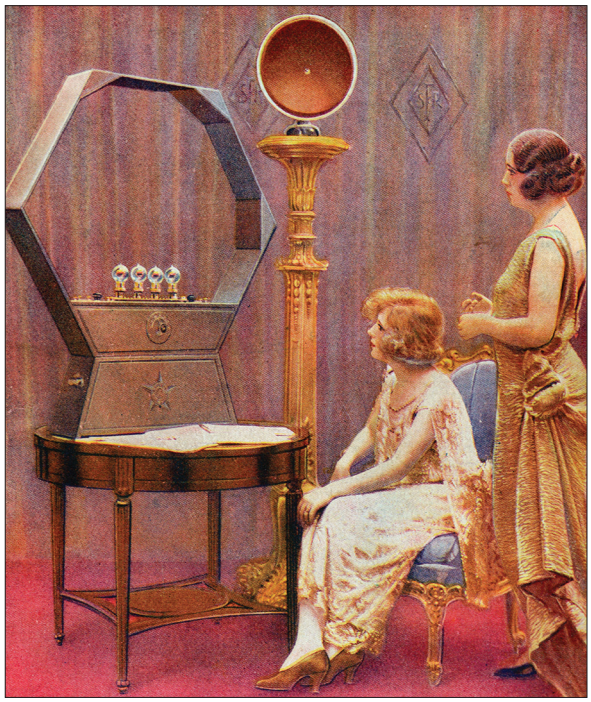
Think Twice

How did technological developments shape the media and popular culture of the 1920s?

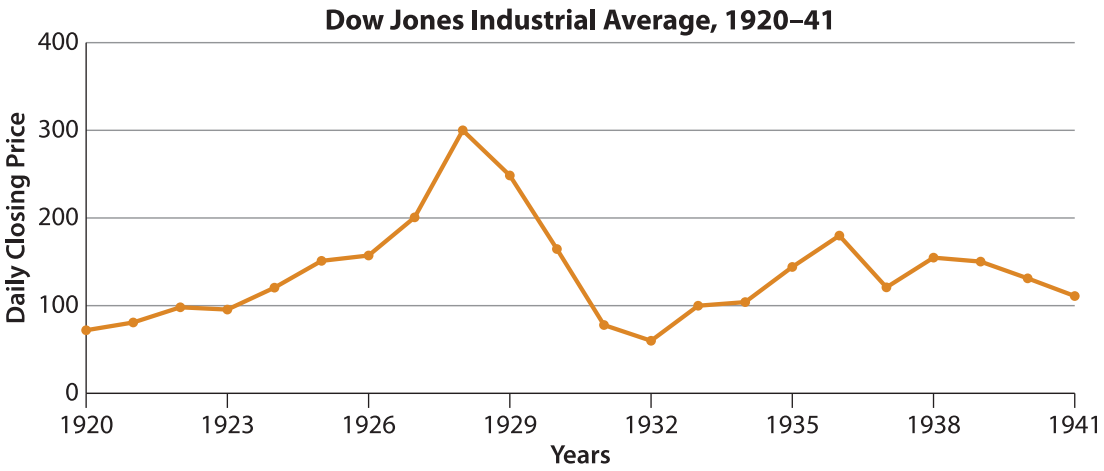
Consumerism and Speculation

A key feature of the prosperity of most of the 1920s—prosperity that contributed to the term *Roaring Twenties*—was a rise in the consumerism you first read about in Unit 2. Advertisers, using the radio boom to their advantage, both contributed to and exploited consumerism, promoting all manner of both useful and unnecessary conveniences with great fervor and ingenuity. Some goods previously deemed luxuries, such as automobiles, became available to a much broader class of buyers. American manufacturers also created new products designed to improve people's lives, such as electric appliances; the refrigerator and the home radio set first became widely available to consumers during this decade. At the same time, banks also helped spur consumerism with easy lending policies. Many consumers now bought everything from cars to houses on credit, and consumer debt—in the form of installment plans, mortgages, and charge accounts—more than doubled during the decade. Earlier attitudes about avoiding debt at all costs changed as Americans eager to buy the latest and greatest products took advantage of "buy now, pay later" purchasing plans.

Meanwhile, rapid rises in stock prices convinced many investors to enter the market. Stocks are shares of the value of a corporation. They rise or fall in value as investors come to believe that



Advertisements of the 1920s, like this one for a large-scale radio, often focused on creating an air of glamour and sophistication rather than simply displaying the product or describing its benefits. Many consumers were able to buy such luxury goods by purchasing them on credit, then slowly paying back the original price plus interest.



The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which tracks the prices of several of the country's largest companies, approximately quadrupled from 1920 to 1929 before stock prices crashed between 1929 and 1932. A period of uneven recovery stretched into the early 1940s.

the whole company is worth more or worth less. When there is a widespread belief that the price will continue to rise, demand also rises as investors rush to buy low and sell high. As with most other goods, this generally raises the price. Eventually, the price of a company's stock—or even prices on the stock market at large—can reflect investor optimism more than a company's real value or earning potential.

Such was the situation in the 1920s, as members of a newly prosperous public invested their life savings and borrowed much more to try to secure their share of corporate profits. Banks, too, invested their depositors' money to take advantage of what seemed to be ever-rising stock prices. The practice of **buying on margin**—using one's own money to buy a fraction of an asset's value and borrowing the rest—became much more widespread, not just among financial professionals, but also among private investors. Risky as it was, this practice of **speculation**, or trading with substantial risk of loss but also the potential for significant gain, could pay off as long as stock prices kept rising. An investor who bought low on margin and then sold high would keep the profits from the money they had borrowed, as well as from their own money, after they repaid the borrowed amount. For a time, investors' optimism seemed justified, as stocks quadrupled in price between 1920 and 1929. But as you will read in Topic 2, speculation would be a major cause of a stock market crash that would ignite the Great Depression.

Think Twice



What did a growing enthusiasm for buying on credit and stock market speculation reveal about Americans' attitude toward the economy in the 1920s?

Topic 2
The Great Depression

Framing Question

What factors contributed to the Great Depression, and how did the government respond?



Veterans and sometimes their families, like this group from South Carolina, traveled to the nation's capital to demand financial relief and acknowledgment of their past service. As the smaller photo shows, the Bonus Army's encampment was brutally dismantled, a circumstance that convinced the American public that the military, on President Hoover's orders, had gone too far in suppressing the protesters.

The Bonus Army

Setting the Scene

It is July 1932, and for the past two months, an unarmed, makeshift "army" has been gathering from all over the country to meet in Washington, D.C. They have come not to fight but to assemble in protest. Dubbed the Bonus Army, the group is made up of seventeen thousand World War I veterans and some twenty-six thousand of their family members and supporters. When they reach the nation's capital city, they make their camps on the Anacostia Flats or in condemned housing. Some of them camp right on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol.

Like many demonstrators in the early 1930s, these veterans have gathered to demand that their government do more to provide relief. Under a 1924 law informally known as the Bonus Act, those who fought in World War I are entitled to additional payment for their service, but not until 1945, two entire decades later. Unable to find work, or to support their families on what work they can find, the members of this so-called Bonus Army have come to ask for their payment immediately—and in cash. They have met with some limited success. In June, the House voted to pay out the bonus ahead of schedule. But the Patman Bonus Bill to authorize the early cash payments died in the Senate,



and President Herbert Hoover strongly opposed the bill and promised to veto it if it did pass. All the while, thousands more protesters arrived in the city.

These soldiers will eventually go home empty-handed, but for now, the government is unsure what to do about them. That sentiment—uncertainty—has been a common one in Congress and the White House during the early 1930s as American leaders grow less and less confident that the country's economic crisis will fix itself. Thousands of banks are failing, destroying people's life savings as completely as a fire or a flood. Twenty-four percent of the workforce is unemployed, and that number will continue to rise. Crops and communities throughout the heartland have been uprooted by natural disasters.

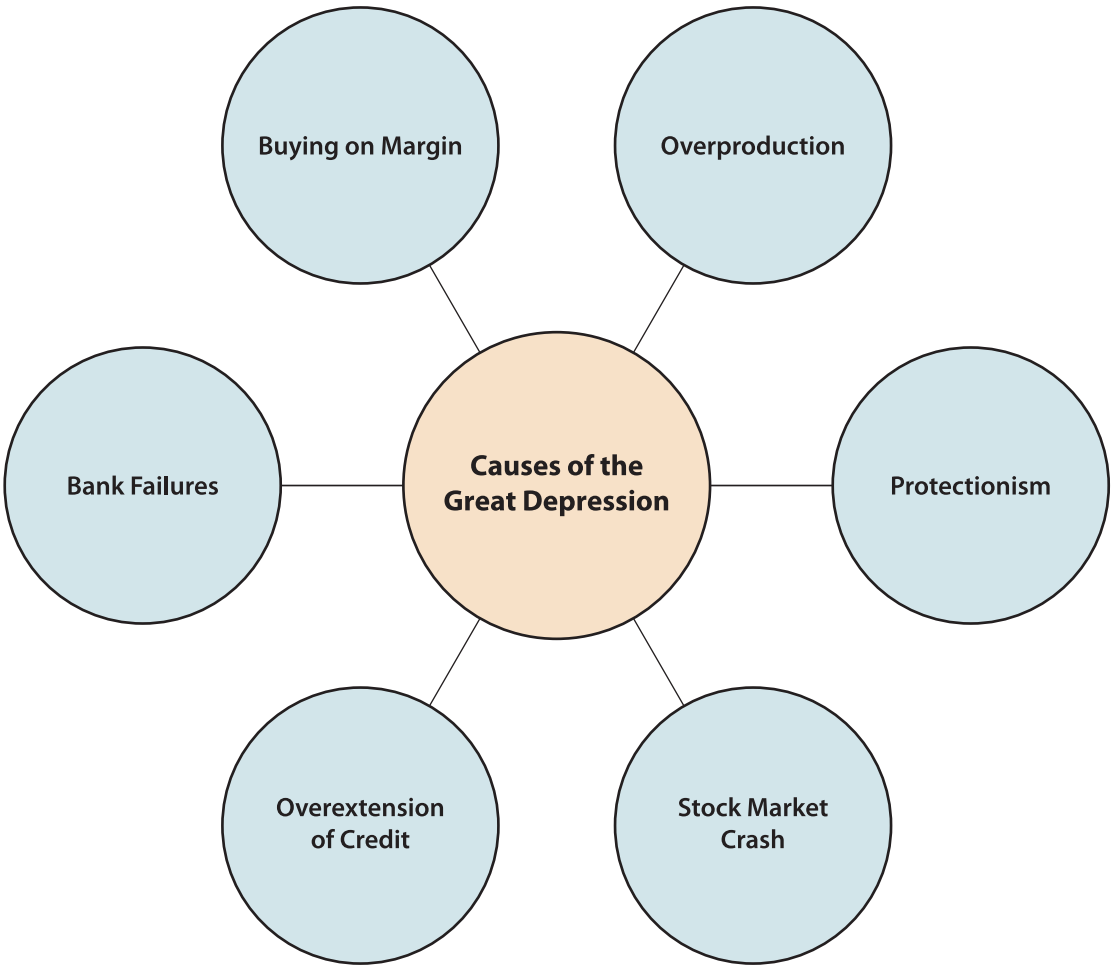
For now, the veterans join the millions of others seeking relief in food lines, work programs, and makeshift cities that have become a part of the American landscape. Their service in the war grants them few advantages in a country where many are wondering where their next meal will come from. Toward the middle of the decade, there will be reason for hope as the country's economy begins to stabilize and jobs become more plentiful. Before that happens, however, matters will get worse.

Causes of the Great Depression

The era known as the Great Depression began in 1929, its arrival announced by a major stock market crash in October of that year. Yet the Depression was not a sudden or random event. It stemmed from earlier economic policies and trends that began shortly after World War I, including rising consumer debt, agricultural overproduction, and global financial instability.

The 1920s Global Economy

In the previous topic, you read about some of the measures that the U.S. government took to address the post–World War I recession of 1920–21. Faced with a sudden, rough transition from the wartime economy, the Federal Reserve had raised interest rates to curb inflation, then relaxed them when it became evident that a recession was underway. At the same time, other industrial countries, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, were struggling even more desperately to recover



There were several economic and political factors that led to the Great Depression.

Recession vs. Depression

The statistics and measures used to gauge economic activity, such as production output and employment, make up what is called a *business cycle*. When these measures increase, the business cycle is said to expand. When this expansion peaks and then begins to decrease, the business cycle is said to contract. If this contraction is marked by a significant decrease in economic activity and lasts for several months, it is considered a recession. A depression, such as the one referenced in the title of this topic, is a severe recession from which it takes much longer than usual for an economy to recover.

from the war. They faced the task of not only retooling their economies for peacetime but also physically rebuilding from the damage to infrastructure and loss of life that the war had brought. Faced with their own domestic economic struggles, the United Kingdom and other Allied countries could not consistently pay back the money they had borrowed from the United States during the war. European consumers also did not have much money to spend on imported American goods. To make matters worse, between 1921 and 1923, Germany experienced a period of severe hyperinflation that temporarily prevented it from making reparation payments to the Allies. This led to international instability and fears of future conflict in Europe.

Overproduction and Protectionism

In the 1920s, American farmers were still adjusting to a post–World War I economy. During the war, when the federal government had put price controls in place for agricultural products like wheat, farmers had benefited from locked-in, guaranteed prices. Wartime farmer-friendly loans had also encouraged farmers to borrow money to improve their operations, which boosted farm production. But when the federal government ended the price controls, farmers found themselves unable to make their loan payments, which led to **foreclosures** and the failures of rural banks. At the same time, their farms were now *over*producing—at lower crop prices. Meanwhile, industries that had boomed during the 1920s, notably steel and automaking, slowed dramatically as the market for some consumer goods began to saturate and new construction tapered off.

Then, in late 1920, Americans elected Warren G. Harding as president, hoping his leadership would restore stability following postwar economic and social unrest. As you learned earlier, Harding, a Republican, adopted laissez-faire policies toward business and protectionist policies toward international trade, which aimed to shield American industry from foreign competition. He signed into law the Emergency Tariff of 1921 and the Fordney–McCumber Tariff of 1922, whereby he and Congress aimed to make American industry

and agriculture more competitive by raising the prices of imported goods. Harding's successor, Calvin Coolidge, then followed similar pro-business and protectionist policies.

Yet farms continued to overproduce, keeping crop prices low. Meanwhile, tariffs on imported goods increased the cost of essential farm supplies like machinery, gasoline, and fertilizer, further decreasing farmers' profits. Additionally, foreign countries retaliated against American tariffs by placing tariffs on American goods, decreasing American farmers' ability to export their produce. With elevated input costs, low selling prices at home, and a sharply limited export market, American agriculture did not prosper as much as the service and manufacturing sectors did in the 1920s.



Even as finance, manufacturing, and service industries boomed, farmers in the 1920s struggled to eke out a profit from their land. Many had to sell their farms and seek work elsewhere.

Think Twice

How did American farmers struggle immediately after the end of World War I and then again in the 1920s?

Overextension of Credit

The different economic experiences of rural and urban Americans in the 1920s reflect the ways consumer habits shifted as urban Americans grew wealthier.

Many households could now more easily afford consumer goods like cars and radios for the first time, and advertising only made people more excited to buy them. However, more income did not always mean that Americans could buy those goods with cash. As businesses offered consumers the opportunity to buy on credit—such as "buy now, pay later" schemes—or pay in installments, earlier attitudes about debt shifted, and Americans became more comfortable with taking it on. Manufacturers were able to take advantage of this huge domestic demand for new products, especially with foreign competitors out of the way.

Meanwhile, people's consumption of farm products did not increase significantly, even though their incomes were rising. As a result, oversupply and the decline in foreign trade hurt farmers more than manufacturers.

Continued Speculation and the Stock Market Crash

As the recession began to ease in the early 1920s, the government continued to take actions that lowered interest rates and made money more available. Banks that lent to consumers and businesses followed suit, providing easy credit. The stock market speculation you read about in Topic 1, often done on margin, became widespread in a market that seemed like it would keep growing forever. As more and more people bought on speculation, stock prices just kept rising.

Eventually, the illusion of endless growth began to crack, as the prices of stocks bore less and less of a relationship to the actual value of the companies. In 1928, amid concerns over runaway speculation, the Federal Reserve began to raise interest rates, thus making it harder and more expensive for people to borrow money.

Despite the higher rates, stock speculation continued. In March 1929, the Federal Reserve issued a public statement warning that speculation was growing out of control. This caused a brief but notable plunge in stock prices; a similar small crash occurred in late May. The most devastating crash began at the end of October 1929. On October 23, stock prices fell by nearly 5 percent, signifying that major investors were concerned that the market had been overvaluing what businesses were actually worth. The dip surprised traders and encouraged more selling. The next day, known as Black Thursday, the market dropped by another 11 percent almost as soon as trading began. Wall Street bankers tried to prop up the prices by buying stocks above their market value, but this provided only temporary relief. Between October 28 and 29—Black Monday and Black Tuesday—the stock market plunged another 25 percent. For the next three years, it continued to decline, ultimately losing nearly 90 percent of its 1929 value by July 1932.

Think Twice



How did overextension of consumer credit contribute to an economic crisis?

Effects of the Crash

Recall that through the 1920s, many ordinary Americans had borrowed money any way they could to enter the stock market and claim their portion of the rising stock prices. Often, they had sold off safer assets such as bonds, cashed out their savings accounts, or put up their homes as **collateral**. This meant that the U.S. stock market held a substantial portion of the personal savings of many millions of Americans. When the market

crashed, much of this wealth was effectively erased. Worse, people still had to repay what they had borrowed.

And there was more fallout to come. Banks also lost much in the crash. They had lent heavily to facilitate stock market speculation, and those loans were now unlikely to be repaid. Individuals who still had savings in banks panicked that they would not be able to withdraw their money if the banks failed. They rushed to reclaim their deposits, causing a series of **bank runs** that depleted the banks' cash. Unable to meet depositors' demands, some banks temporarily closed, and many smaller banks went out of business altogether, collapsing under the combined pressure of bad debt and sudden depositor demand. Across the United States, some depositors lost their entire life savings. In communities that had been served by only one small, local bank, a closure left residents and businesses without access to credit, deepening the financial crisis in rural and working-class areas.



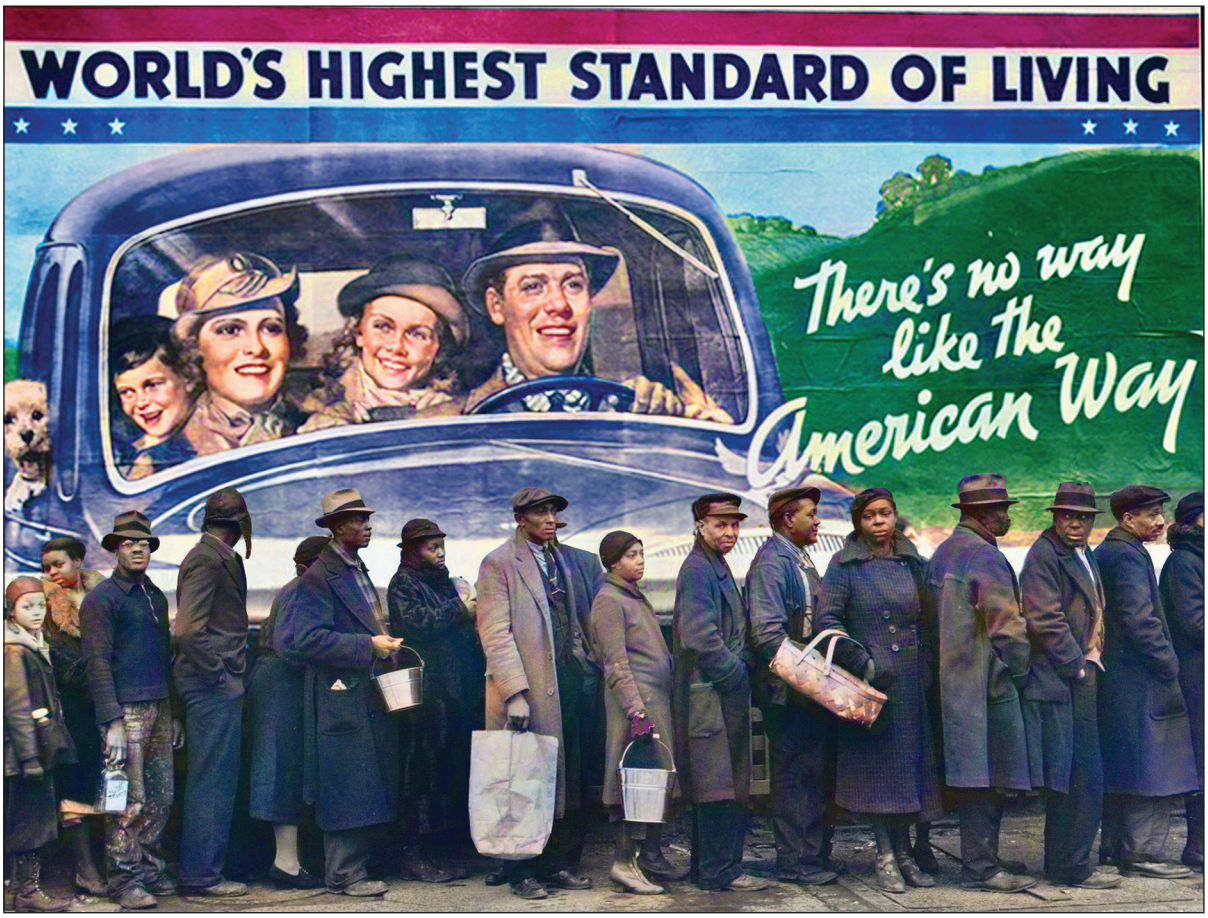
Think Twice

How did the stock market crash of 1929 affect the wider U.S. economy?

Ripple Effects of the Crash

Trouble in the finance and banking industries soon spread throughout the U.S. economy and eventually rippled worldwide. Banks that survived the initial wave of failures held fewer reserves due to depositor withdrawals and unrecoverable loans, which left those banks less able or willing to lend money for major purchases such as cars and appliances. In the 1920s, easy credit had fueled high demand for these goods, whose manufacture had been a factor in the booming 1920s economy. As access to credit declined and consumer purchasing power dwindled, so too did manufacturing. This contributed to a sharp increase in unemployment, which rose to approximately 25 percent by 1933. Personal income fell by close to half—around 40 percent—during the same period.
A downward spiral took hold: Fewer goods were bought, so fewer goods were made, so fewer people were employed, so fewer people had disposable income—leading once again to the purchase of fewer goods, whether domestic or imported. American loans to European countries—especially Germany, which relied on U.S. credit to pay war reparations—dried up, stalling postwar rebuilding efforts and contributing to the global economic downturn.

A similar pattern arose in the housing market, where homes bought on easy terms in the 1920s suddenly became unaffordable. Many people had borrowed too much to buy homes they could not afford. When these people became unemployed or underemployed, they very quickly found they could no longer make their mortgage



Bread lines, in which people waited for hours to receive free food, became a common sight as people throughout the United States lost their livelihoods. This iconic photo of people waiting in line in front of a poignant mural was taken in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1937 by celebrated photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White.

payments. By 1933, nearly half of American home loans were in default, and some 275,000 homes had been foreclosed, or repossessed by banks from homeowners who could no longer make their mortgage payments. Similarly, many renters were evicted from their apartments and homes. Some two million people, or 1.6 percent of the country's population, became homeless. Shantytowns, or clusters of makeshift living structures, emerged on the outskirts of major cities where people had migrated looking for work. You will read shortly why these encampments were called "Hoovervilles" and why people living in them blamed the president they were named after for their troubles.

Think Twice



In what sense was the early phase of the Great Depression a "downward spiral"?

The Great Depression Sets In

The Great Depression began with a series of financial shocks, including the stock market crash of 1929 and widespread bank failures. Yet its causes, like its consequences, extended well beyond Wall Street. As poverty and unemployment rose, the government's sluggish and limited response in the early years of the crisis deepened the economic suffering. Additionally, unsustainable farming practices had depleted the soil of the Great Plains, leaving the region vulnerable to drought and the high winds that would cause the Dust Bowl.

Hoover's Policies

At the beginning of the Great Depression, government action—and inaction—certainly played a role in the extent of the national crisis. President Herbert Hoover had campaigned for election in 1928 with a promise to continue the pro-business, limited-government policies of Presidents Harding and Coolidge.

Hoover was already well-known for his successful leadership of American relief responses to World War I and its aftermath. He had gone on to serve in both of his predecessors' administrations as secretary of commerce. Politically, Hoover was to some extent more progressive and more



Makeshift encampments called Hoovervilles sprang up on unused land where occupants would not have to pay rent. Homes were made from whatever materials could be found for free, such as scrap metal and discarded lumber. In general, living conditions in Hoovervilles were unsanitary and dangerous; both fire and crime were regular risks for those living there.

reform-minded than either Harding or Coolidge had been. For instance, he sought to improve living conditions on Native American reservations and convened a presidential panel to study child welfare. He also shepherded the Hoover Dam project—an enormous engineering feat that provided power, water, flood control, and jobs throughout much of the Southwest—through Congress, from final approval to initial construction. Still, Hoover was highly skeptical of government intervention in the economy, even in the deeply worrisome economic times of the Depression. This meant, for example, that he was opposed in principle to farm subsidies, about which you learned earlier. Instead, he tried to solve the continued struggles of American farmers with government-backed loans that would help cover some of the costs of planting, growing, and harvesting crops.

When the Great Depression began, Hoover remained confident that it would be a relatively brief economic downturn that Americans could weather with limited federal assistance. Earlier presidents had taken a comparable approach during similar crises, and the economy had eventually recovered. However, it became harder and harder to maintain this primarily hands-off stance, and Hoover faced backlash from a growing number of Americans who were losing their jobs and their homes. Sarcastic terms resulting from the president's stance soon made their way into the American lexicon: *Hooverville* for a shantytown; *Hoover blanket*, meaning a newspaper worn for warmth; and *Hoover flag*, an empty pocket turned inside out.

In 1930, the Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act, which hiked import duties on tens of thousands of foreign products, arguably worsened the Depression. Other countries retaliated by refusing to buy American goods or by imposing their own trade restrictions, thereby depriving the United States of an export market. Hoover himself had not sought higher tariffs, but he did support the tariff bill passed by Congress. In contrast, the relief bills proposed by Congress in late 1930 and early 1931 met with Hoover's veto, which legislators only sometimes succeeded in overriding. Hoover objected to congressional attempts to use treasury funds for "charity," which he feared would undermine private and nonprofit charitable efforts to help struggling families. The president believed that voluntary, local, and private efforts were better suited to address hardship than federal aid, which he feared would foster dependency.

Finally, toward the end of 1931, Hoover acknowledged that the economic crisis was worsening and that a sustained effort on the part of the federal government was likely needed to resolve it. He accepted Congress's call for a $2.3 billion emergency relief package in 1932, most of which was to be used for public works construction. Hoover also eventually persuaded Congress to establish the Federal

Home Loan Bank System to help protect people from losing their homes. Although the funds supported some infrastructure projects and loans, the relief package was too small and too slow for the scale of the crisis, and public pressure for stronger federal intervention continued to build.

Think Twice

What was Herbert Hoover's approach to relief during the Great Depression, and how did it shift?

The Dust Bowl

A major factor that deepened the economic crisis was a series of severe droughts that began in 1930 and affected the Midwest and the southern Great Plains. So severe were the cumulative effects of this drought that, in 1935, journalist Robert Geiger coined the phrase *Dust Bowl* to refer to the extreme dust storms that sifted away the topsoil and uprooted crops.

In some ways, the story of the drought parallels what happened on Wall Street. During the 1920s, ill-advised practices had come to seem sensible or even necessary to make a farm profitable. Desperate to increase their incomes, farmers tilled and planted land that would not have been cultivated at all in more prosperous times. In so doing, they destroyed prairie grassland and left huge expanses of soil unprotected. Moreover, few farmers used soil conservation techniques because they felt they were inefficient. They plowed deeper, left fields bare instead of rotating crops, and burned the stubble of harvested crops instead of leaving it to help retain the soil. Drought made fields unproductive, and the exposed and overworked topsoil, unprotected by either



Observers often compared Dust Bowl storms to blizzards. These immense clouds of dust dwarfed buildings and vehicles, filling the sky and making it impossible to see.

Migration During the Great Depression



Reduced employment opportunities across the country, but particularly in the central United States, led to migration both east and west. Additionally, the challenging agricultural conditions in many Southern states prompted some groups, including tenant farmers and sharecroppers, to seek employment farther north.

crops or native grasses, was flung into the sky in a series of "black blizzards."

The Dust Bowl affected parts of six states: Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Farms in the Dust Bowl lost much of their value as drought and dust storms rendered the land unproductive. When the land could not provide a living, people abandoned it and left to find something better, whether they were tenant farmers—those who paid to farm land owned by someone else—or landowners. Many migrated to California, where they were often dubbed "Okies," a derogatory term originally applied to Oklahomans that later became a general label for Dust Bowl migrants from any state.

Think Twice

How did farming practices of the 1920s contribute to the Dust Bowl?

The Election of 1932

The 1932 presidential election was in large part a contest of different proposals to halt and then reverse the country's economic decline. President Hoover had a difficult reelection battle ahead of him. Under his leadership, the stock market had crashed and the economy had entered a deep and prolonged depression. Many Americans viewed his response to

the crisis as too limited to revive struggling industries or aid the unemployed.

His Democratic challenger, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was the governor of New York and had implemented state-level programs to help the unemployed. In his nomination speech at the 1932 Democratic National Convention, Roosevelt promised "a new deal for the American people"—a sweeping set of federal social programs that would get ordinary Americans back on their feet. In subsequent speeches, he laid out the specific ways he would use federal resources to fight hunger, homelessness, and unemployment.

Eleanor Roosevelt, his wife, used her connections in the New York Democratic Party and in various women's organizations to promote her husband's campaign. Later, in her new role in the White House, she would remain politically engaged in a way that no First Lady before had attempted.

Where Hoover had come to seem cold and uncaring, Roosevelt's direct outreach to the American people gave the impression of warmth, accessibility, and genuine concern for ordinary citizens. Moreover, Roosevelt addressed popular audiences in a conversational, plainspoken manner that



Those backing Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential contest, a three years after the stock market crash, hoped that he would finally make bread lines obsolete. "Hunger marches" became a common sight during the election year.

PRIMARY SOURCE: AMERICA NEEDS A NEW DEAL, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, 1932

Breaking with precedent, Franklin D. Roosevelt chose to address the 1932 Democratic National Convention in person upon accepting the nomination. During his speech, he emphasized the differing views of the two major parties on the role of government and introduced the phrase New Deal*, signaling his vision for national recovery.*

Our Republican leaders tell us economic laws—sacred, inviolable, unchangeable—cause panics which no one could prevent. But while they prate [talk foolishly] of economic laws, men and women are starving. We must lay hold of the fact that economic laws are not made by nature. They are made by human beings.

Yes, when—not if—when we get the chance, the Federal Government will assume bold leadership in distress relief. For years Washington has alternated between putting its head in the sand and saying there is no large number of destitute people in our midst who need food and clothing, and then saying the States should take care of them, if there are. Instead of planning two and a half years ago to do what they are now trying to do, they kept putting it off from day to day, week to week, and month to month, until the conscience of America demanded action.

I say that while primary responsibility for relief rests with localities now, as ever, yet the Federal Government has always had and still has a continuing responsibility for the broader public welfare. It will soon fulfill that responsibility. . . .

Never before in modern history have the essential differences between the two major American parties stood out in such striking contrast as they do today. Republican leaders not only have failed in material things, they have failed in national vision, because in disaster they have held out no hope, they have pointed out no path for the people below to climb back to places of security and of safety in our American life. . . .

I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people. Let us all here assembled constitute ourselves prophets of a new order of competence and of courage. This is more than a political campaign; it is a call to arms. Give me your help, not to win votes alone, but to win in the crusade to restore America to its own people.

Source: Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago." July 2, 1932. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/275484.

PRIMARY SOURCE: ROOSEVELT'S NEW DEAL WOULD DESTROY AMERICA, HERBERT HOOVER, 1932

During his 1932 campaign for reelection, Herbert Hoover defended both his presidency and what he called the "American system" of individual freedoms and limited government.

This freedom of the individual creates of itself the necessity and the cheerful willingness of men to act cooperatively in a thousand ways and for every purpose as occasion requires, and it permits such voluntary cooperations to be dissolved as soon as it has served its purpose and to be replaced by new voluntary associations for new purposes.

. . . This is self-government by the people outside of the Government. It is the most powerful development of individual freedom and equality of opportunity that has taken place in the century and a half since our fundamental institutions were founded.

It is in the further development of this cooperation and in a sense of its responsibility that we should find solution for many of the complex problems, and not by the extension of the Government into our economic and social life. The greatest function a government can perform is to build up that cooperation, and its most resolute action should be to deny the extension of bureaucracy. . . . The primary conception of this whole American system is not the ordering of men but the cooperation of free men. It is founded upon the conception of responsibility of the individual to the community, of the responsibility of local government to the State, of the State to the National Government. . . .

Now, our American system is founded on a peculiar conception of self-government designed to maintain an equality of opportunity to the individual, and through decentralization it brings about and maintains these responsibilities. The centralization of government will undermine these responsibilities and will destroy the system itself. . . .

My countrymen, the proposals of our opponents represent a profound change in American life—less in concrete proposal, bad as that may be, than by implication and by evasion. Dominantly in their spirit they represent a radical departure from the foundations of 150 years which have made this the greatest Nation in the world. This election is not a mere shift from the ins to the outs. It means the determining of the course of our Nation over a century to come.

Source: Hoover, Herbert. "Address at Madison Square Garden in New York City, October 31, 1932." In *Herbert Hoover: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January 1, 1932 to March 4, 1933*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977, pp. 659–679.

suggested he had little to hide. Though he came from a wealthy and prominent political family (which included distant cousin Theodore Roosevelt), FDR, as he came to be known, succeeded in convincing the American public that he would look out for their interests and not just those of rich industrialists. In November 1932, Roosevelt won the popular vote by a considerable margin—57 percent to Hoover's 39 percent—and the electoral vote by a landslide. Hoover managed to win only six states, primarily in the Northeast and New England, while Roosevelt carried the rest of the country. With Democratic majorities also elected in both houses of Congress, voters' desire for a New Deal seemed apparent.



Think Twice

How were Hoover's and Roosevelt's plans to battle the Great Depression different?

FDR and the New Deal

Roosevelt won the election on the promise of a New Deal, and together with his congressional allies, he rapidly set about delivering it. Following his election victory, Roosevelt began meeting with key advisers to make plans for action, especially those in the so-called Brain Trust. This group of primarily Ivy League professors helped Roosevelt work out the economic policies most likely to benefit the country and the legal framework for implementing them, as well as comparable alternatives for the use of limited government resources. Some Brain Trust members held teaching positions in economics and law, while others already held prominent roles in government. With the country in crisis, the Roosevelt administration had resolved to hit the ground running. The next four years would be a period of vigorous experimentation as dozens of initiatives were tried, with many abandoned and the most successful ones preserved. Regardless of which programs succeeded and which did not, their sheer number highlighted a major change in the federal government as Roosevelt greatly expanded its role in Americans' everyday lives.

Stabilizing the Financial System

After his inauguration, Roosevelt's first priority was to stabilize the financial system and halt the bank failures that had been plaguing the country. Just two days after taking office, he declared a bank holiday—a shutdown of all U.S. banks for several days to halt panicked withdrawals and restore public confidence. During this time, federal examiners assessed each bank's financial health. Those that could prove they were able to fund withdrawals by depositors would be allowed to reopen. Those that were in danger of failing would be allowed to reopen once they had reorganized, and those that were **insolvent** would be shut down. Meanwhile, Congress unanimously passed the Emergency Banking Relief Act,

Two New Deals

	First New Deal	Second New Deal
Dates	1933–34	1935–38
Goals	Jump-start the country's recovery from the Great Depression using wide-scale federal intervention	Meet growing public demand to extend federal help to a broader segment of the population
Policies Adopted	• Banking reform • Work relief • Farm aid	• Additional work relief • Social insurance • Support for labor rights
Challenges	Courts found that some policies overstepped government authority.	Congress grew increasingly opposed to more federal spending.
Examples of Associated Laws and Agencies	• Glass–Steagall Act (1933) • Public Works Administration (PWA, 1933) • Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA, 1933)	• Social Security Act (1935) • Works Progress Administration (WPA, 1935) • National Labor Relations Act (1935)

Historians divide Roosevelt's policies into two distinct phases: the First New Deal and the Second New Deal. These labels help capture a shift in Roosevelt's priorities and strategies throughout his first term in office.

which authorized the Federal Reserve to issue additional money to those banks that were solvent enough to reopen. In effect, the government was insuring private individuals' deposits. Roosevelt and other officials were well aware that a strong banking system was essential. If a recovery were to take place, trusted banks would be needed to restore lending, encourage investment, and limit destructive fluctuations in the market.

To build public support for his wide-ranging recovery efforts, Roosevelt continued to address the nation directly in his signature style. He began a series of national radio broadcasts, which he called "fireside chats." The day before the banks reopened, Roosevelt took to the airwaves in one such chat to let the public know that he understood their fear and concern and recognized the "great inconvenience" they were being subjected to. He explained that the government was trying to put a definitive end to the cycle of bank panics that had plagued the country. He reassured listeners that those banks that were allowed to reopen would be safe places to store their money—at least as safe as continuing to hoard it at home. When

The Lame Duck Amendment

The U.S. Constitution sets Election Day as the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. From 1789 until 1933, presidents and members of Congress elected in November did not take office until March. Thus, an outgoing president would continue to serve for four months while the president-elect awaited inauguration. For Congress, this delay meant newly elected representatives could wait more than a year before beginning active service, while outgoing members could still pass laws.

The term *lame duck*, used since eighteenth-century England, describes an official who continues to serve after losing reelection.

This delay caused problems during crises like the Civil War and the Great Depression. In 1933, the Twentieth Amendment, known as the Lame Duck Amendment, set presidential inaugurations on January 20 and the start of congressional terms on January 3, ending long lame-duck sessions.

the bank holiday ended, the American public reversed a long series of bank runs by rushing to redeposit their cash.

Roosevelt's initial banking measures during his first hundred days were just the beginning of a series of financial reforms. In June 1933, the Banking Act of 1933, also known as the Glass–Steagall Act, introduced several changes aimed at stabilizing the banking system. Among these was the creation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which insured deposits in any member bank. The bill's authors reasoned that deposit insurance—a government guarantee that depositors would not lose their money—would reduce the fear of bank failures and prevent mass withdrawals during times of economic uncertainty. Another provision of the Glass–Steagall Act separated commercial banks, which accept deposits and offer loans, from investment banks, which provide specialized financial services to companies. This separation aimed to prevent commercial banks from using customer deposits to fund speculative investments, a practice widely blamed for contributing to the 1929 crash. Another new agency, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), was created in 1934 to oversee the stock market and ensure



Roosevelt's fireside chats were both a cause and a symbol of his popularity with the American public. Much like television and the Internet in later decades, radio was an immensely popular medium that provided a convenient platform for political leaders.

that companies provided adequate information to their investors.



Think Twice

Why did Roosevelt believe that a strong banking system was essential to the country's economic recovery?

Alphabet Agencies

The programs within Roosevelt's New Deal fell into one of three categories: relief, recovery, and reform. Because the New Deal dramatically expanded the federal government's role—particularly in economic regulation, public works, and **social welfare**—new agencies needed to be created to manage, fund, and oversee these programs and projects. These new government organizations came to be popularly known by their abbreviations, such as the FDIC and the SEC. For this reason, they were collectively called the "alphabet agencies," sometimes critically by those who felt Roosevelt was overstepping the checks-and-balances boundaries of the executive branch. Some of these agencies, such as the SEC and the Social Security Administration (SSA), are still a part of the federal government, while others existed for only a few years.

Addressing Unemployment

A major priority for the Roosevelt administration was reducing unemployment. This was generally accomplished by funding public works projects, which created jobs while also producing lasting infrastructure and public resources. One of the most popular and prominent of these was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This agency employed young, out-of-work men in forestry, soil conservation, and flood control projects on government-owned lands. "CCC boys" lived in group camps and received a modest but steady wage, along with food and other necessities. Their work included building roads and bridges, planting trees, fighting soil erosion, and improving parks across rural America. At its height, the CCC employed some three hundred thousand workers; it ceased operation in 1942 as the United States transitioned to a war economy.

A longer-lasting New Deal agency with a related focus on public infrastructure was the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), created in May 1933 and still in operation today. Originally, the TVA was tasked with constructing dams throughout the



Much of City Park in New Orleans was developed as a WPA project in the 1930s.

Roosevelt's Advisers

Roosevelt enjoyed the support of numerous talented advisers during his twelve years in office. None played a more prominent or varied role than First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who conducted her own press conferences and radio addresses to explain the Roosevelt administration's policies and to share her views on social and economic issues. The president also relied heavily on scholars and leaders in industry and the professions. Focused as he was on building public and congressional support for his policies, Roosevelt brought together trusted experts and then depended on their advice, much as he did with the Brain Trust.

Roosevelt never appointed an African American to a cabinet position, but early on, he created a "Black cabinet" to advise him on racial equality and civil rights. Its members included educator Mary McLeod Bethune, economist Robert Weaver, and attorney Robert Vann. Bethune, an adviser in the National Youth Administration, tried to ensure that African Americans received a fair share of New Deal program benefits. Initially, separate African American units were created within agencies, but by the end of Roosevelt's time in office, Bethune and others were calling for the integration of major agencies and programs.



Mary McLeod Bethune

Tennessee River watershed to control flooding, generate hydroelectric power, and promote economic development in the underserved region. Today, the federally owned TVA operates as a major public utility, supplying electricity to millions of customers in the Southeastern United States using a mix of renewable and fossil-fuel sources.

Two other New Deal agencies, the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), focused on creating jobs through infrastructure projects in American towns and cities. The creation of both agencies reflected the New Deal's broad approach to work relief, ranging from large infrastructure to local community improvements. The PWA typically handled large-scale, high-cost

"Alphabet Agencies" Established During the Great Depression

Agency		Dates	Authorization	Purpose	Actions	Accomplishments
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps	1933–42	Executive order (New Deal)	Reduce unemployment	Forest management, flood control, conservation projects, development of state and national parks, forests, historic sites	Provided work for three million young, unmarried men
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority	1933–present	Tennessee Valley Authority Act	Increase energy production, improve standard of living	Dams, hydroelectric generating stations, flood control	Provided cheap electricity, prime fishing/boating areas, mosquito eradication
AAA	Agricultural Adjustment Administration	1933–42	Agricultural Adjustment Act (aka Farm Relief Bill)	Limit farm production, reduce export surpluses, raise prices	Mortgage loans, payments to farmers who limited planting, price regulation	More than doubled farm income, 1932–35; unintended: contributed to long-term transition from small farms to agribusiness
NRA	National Recovery Administration	1933–35	National Industrial Recovery Act	Eliminate unfair business practices, reduce unemployment	Codes for business practices (e.g., child labor, minimum wage, maximum hours)	Improved labor conditions, aided collective bargaining and unionization
PWA	Public Works Administration	1933–39	National Industrial Recovery Act	Reduce unemployment, improve purchasing power	Public works: schools, courthouses, city halls, public health facilities, roads, bridges, subways	Constructed $4 billion worth of public works, many still in use
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	1933–present	Glass–Steagall Act	Protect bank depositors, provide economic stability to banking system	Pooled money from banks, insurance for deposits up to a set amount per year per person	Provided insurance for funds deposited in checking and savings accounts in FDIC banks
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission	1934–present	Securities Exchange Act of 1934	Regulate of all aspects of securities industry	Registration, regulation, and oversight of brokerage firms, agents, and self-regulatory organizations with periodic reporting requirements	Helped restore investor confidence after crash of 1929
FHA	Federal Housing Administration	1934–present	National Housing Act	Facilitate home financing, improve housing standards, increase employment	Insurance for home mortgage loans, reduced foreclosures, Federal National Mortgage Association	Lowered down payments, lengthened repayment period, reduced repayment risk
NLRB	National Labor Relations Board	1935–present	National Labor Relations Act of 1935	Protect workers' rights to unionize and bargain collectively	No employer-controlled "company unions," investigation and exposure of unfair labor practices	Substantially expanded federal protections for workers' rights
WPA	Works Progress Administration (renamed Work Projects Administration in 1939)	1935–43	Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935	Reduce unemployment, improve purchasing power	Public works (e.g., parks, roads, bridges, schools), oral histories, American music, public art installations, theatrical works	Federal Writers' Project (including Folklore Project) Federal Theatre Project Federal Music Project Federal Art Project Historical Records Survey
SSA	Social Security Administration	1935–present	Social Security Act	Create permanent national old-age pension system	Monthly benefits to retirees, payroll tax on employers	Provided regular income to seniors

Through the New Deal, President Roosevelt and Congress established many new federal agencies in the interest of speeding economic recovery. Some of these agencies are still in operation today.





Part of the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority was to prevent or mitigate catastrophic floods that destroyed riverfront communities. Today, several TVA dams provide both electricity and flood control, such as the Norris Dam in Tennessee, built in 1936.

infrastructure projects, such as dams and federal buildings; these were carried out by private contractors with government funding. The WPA most often dealt with smaller projects and directly hired unemployed workers, making it one of the most significant employers during the Great Depression.

Together, these two agencies offered jobs constructing a variety of public buildings, such as schools, courthouses, city halls, and hospitals, as well as roads, bridges, and subway lines. Many PWA and WPA project sites are still in use today. The WPA, renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939, also funded the collection of oral histories via interviews, including with formerly enslaved individuals, many of whom were elderly by the 1930s. Additional WPA projects also employed musicians, writers, and actors to create music, theater, photography, and visual art. Many of the 1930s-era murals that adorn American courthouses, in cities large and small, were created with the backing of the WPA.

Together, these work-relief programs provided employment for millions of Americans who were otherwise unable to find jobs. Among these were farmworkers—farm owners and tenant farmers who could no longer subsist on the proceeds from their crops, as well as the employees they could no longer pay. The New Deal also included programs intended to keep farms operating. Although the law authorizing it was later struck down by the Supreme Court for interfering with states' powers to regulate production, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) gave farmers financial incentives to leave some of their land unplanted. This had several benefits. In addition to providing farmers with relief from poverty, the subsidies helped reduce overproduction—which occurred when farmers increased production to compensate for sinking prices—and thus boosted the prices of farm produce. The subsidies also promoted soil conservation, a lack of which

had contributed to Dust Bowl conditions. The Farm Credit Administration, which has survived to the present day, helped farmers secure mortgages on more favorable terms.

Addressing Poverty

Of course, not everyone could work on a farm or a construction project during the lean years of the Great Depression. If the New Deal had relied only on work-relief programs, many millions would still have fallen through the safety net. Therefore, a series of additional acts were passed, and a variety of new federal agencies created, to assist individuals and families in securing and maintaining adequate housing and food. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), for example, insured loans made on residential properties to help revive mortgage lending.

The Social Security Act was another landmark law aimed at reducing poverty, especially among those unable to work due to age or disability. Before Social Security, many elderly Americans who had worked steadily throughout their lives still faced poverty in old age. Few had access to pensions or other sources of income after they stopped working or were unable to work. In the early 1930s, numerous states had passed old-age pension programs, but only about 3 percent of elderly Americans qualified, and the average benefit was only $0.65 per day; adjusted for inflation, this would have been the equivalent of about $15.30 today.



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was in demand as a speaker and columnist during her time in the White House, donating the proceeds to various causes. A tireless champion for civil rights, women's equality, and social progress, she regularly traveled the country to meet with struggling Americans during the Great Depression.

As enacted by Congress in 1935, the new statute created a tax-supported benefit for people of retirement age, people with disabilities, and households whose primary income earner had died. Social Security is a mandatory retirement plan jointly funded by workers and employers. Employers deduct and withhold a portion of each worker's paycheck and deposit it with the Social Security Administration, along with their own required contribution. The deposits made on behalf of younger workers fund the payments to older,

retired workers. Not everyone was eligible for Social Security in its original form; it excluded agricultural and domestic workers, which disproportionately left out African American workers.

Initially, Social Security was controversial because of its vast scope. The United States had never had a large-scale social insurance program, and some critics argued that it exceeded the government's constitutional role to "provide for the . . . general Welfare." In 1937, however, the Supreme Court decided a series of cases whose overall effect was to uphold the act. Today, the Social Security Administration oversees the country's largest social welfare program, accounting for roughly one-fifth of annual government spending.



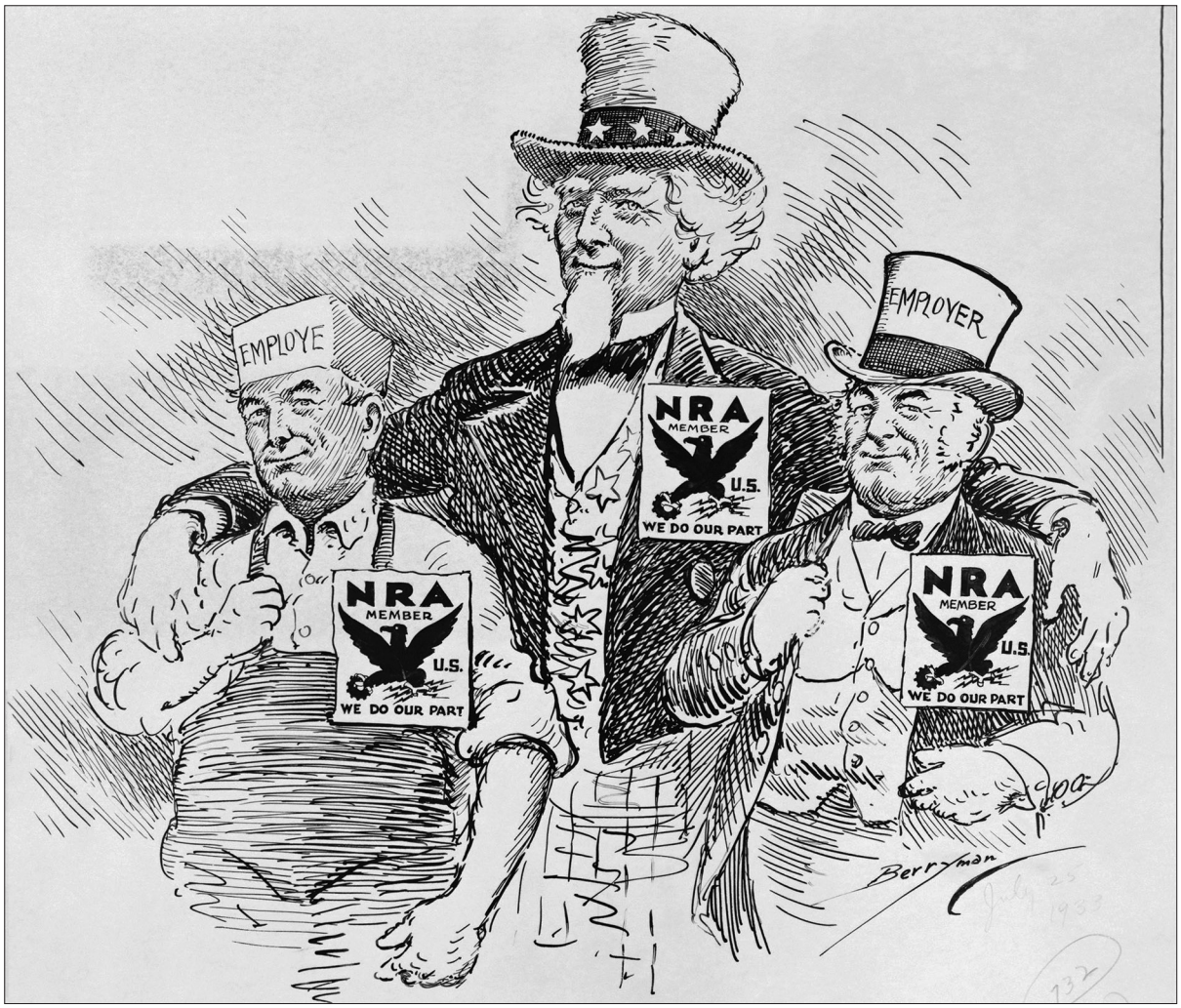
Think Twice

What major programs did Roosevelt institute to battle the Great Depression, which groups did they aim to help, and who was left out?

Roosevelt, Congress, and the Courts

Roosevelt and many of his fellow Democrats had been elected in 1932 with a mandate to implement sweeping reforms and address the nation's deep economic crisis. During Roosevelt's first term, Congress largely followed the New Deal program he laid out in his campaign speeches. In the first hundred days alone, Congress passed most of the laws that today are closely identified with the New Deal, often with broad bipartisan support. For instance, a keystone reform that addressed the Depression was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). This statute authorized the president to regulate wages, prices, and working hours across industries and granted broad protections for union membership. By removing some key causes of labor–management disputes that had plagued the 1910s and 1920s, the NIRA's creators hoped to speed recovery of industry while improving conditions for workers at the same time. While many Republicans denounced the bill, with some even comparing its provisions to communism, it passed the House by a vote of 329–80 and passed with a 61–26 vote in the Senate. The Social Security Act of 1935, arguably the most enduring and significant piece of New Deal legislation, passed the House by a vote of 372–33, and it passed the Senate almost unanimously, with only 6 nay votes. For a time, Roosevelt appeared to have broad congressional support to pursue whatever sweeping reforms he envisioned, with Republican members of Congress often crossing party lines to vote with Democrats on New Deal legislation.

However, the nine members of the U.S. Supreme Court took a more skeptical view of Roosevelt's New Deal policies. A group of four conservative justices nicknamed the "Four Horsemen" routinely voted to strike



Hopes were initially high that the NIRA—and the agency it created, the National Recovery Administration—would promote prosperity for both business owners and employees. The program later faced criticism for favoring large businesses and was ultimately struck down by the Supreme Court in 1935.

down New Deal legislation, arguing that the laws exceeded the constitutional powers of Congress or the president. Associate justice Owen Roberts, a Hoover appointee, was a swing voter whose support enabled the conservative justices to provide a significant check on what they considered to be government overreach. In 1935, the court struck down key parts of the NIRA, ruling that it unconstitutionally expanded the federal government's power over local commerce. In *Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*, the justices ruled that the executive branch lacked the authority to impose industry-wide regulations for wages and working hours on businesses that only traded locally.

Roosevelt complied by terminating the agency created by the act, the National Recovery Administration, through a December

1935 executive order. However, he and his congressional allies swiftly passed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA, also known as the Wagner Act) in 1935 as a replacement. The National Labor Relations Board, which focused on trade unions and collective bargaining instead of direct attempts to establish wages and hours, thus succeeded the National Recovery Administration and its much broader mandate.

The NLRA was intended to protect workers against employers' efforts to ban, discredit, or undermine unions. Many business owners, and the predominantly Republican lawmakers who supported them, opposed these restrictions and challenged them in court, but the NLRA was upheld as constitutional in 1937.

In early 1936, the Supreme Court struck down key elements of the Agricultural Adjustment Act in *United States v. Butler*. In his majority opinion, Justice Roberts stated that Congress had never before regulated agricultural production and there was nothing in the Constitution granting the power to do so. Thus, the Tenth Amendment reserved the power of regulating agriculture to the states. The conflict between Roosevelt and the Supreme Court would deepen during his second term.



Think Twice

What were the main sources of the conflict between Roosevelt and the Supreme Court?

Huey Long's Louisiana

Prior to his presidency, Roosevelt had already used his position as governor of New York to enact early policies addressing the Great Depression. He was not alone in doing so. Other state leaders also pursued ambitious programs. In Louisiana, Governor Huey Long, elected in 1928, emerged as a populist leader who would become one of Roosevelt's most ardent critics.

The dwindling prices of cotton, sugar, and other crops during the Depression had caused Louisiana's predominantly agricultural



This magazine cover from April 1935 shows how Huey Long had captured national attention. Three years into his Senate term, the magazine positioned him as a serious contender for the presidency.

economy to suffer. Though not among the Dust Bowl states, Louisiana had its own serious drought in 1930–31, which further depressed the fortunes of its farmers. Louisiana's oil industry slumped, too, and New Orleans, a major port for trade, was harmed by the series of tariffs that escalated from 1921 to 1930.

When he left the governor's mansion in 1932 to become a United States senator, Huey Long proposed a "Share Our Wealth" program that would have included not only a progressive tax but also a basic income program. In other words, the poorest Americans would receive financial assistance instead of paying taxes, while the wealthiest would pay virtually all of their income above a certain threshold. Extensive wealth redistribution naturally appealed more to the poorest Americans, who felt they had nothing to lose and much to gain from Long's policies. Moreover, at a time when many American households were experiencing poverty for the first time, the idea of sharing the national wealth more equitably had a unique popular appeal. Long's political slogans—like "Every man a king" and "A chicken in every pot"—resonated deeply with poor and working-class Americans, who saw in his promises of wealth redistribution and government action a rare champion of their economic struggles. Many historians believe that if Long had not been assassinated in 1935, he would have challenged Roosevelt in the 1936 presidential election.

Think Twice



Describe the main idea behind Huey Long's Share Our Wealth program.

Roosevelt's Second Term

Roosevelt won reelection in 1936 with more than 60 percent of the popular vote and carried every state except Maine and Vermont in one of the most decisive victories in U.S. presidential history. Yet despite the popularity of both Roosevelt and his policies, the New Deal did have critics. The federal government had expanded significantly from its size under Hoover, and the federal budget—and the total number of federal employees—had grown alongside it.

Even some of Roosevelt's strongest supporters were not completely satisfied. In private industry, organized labor was making a comeback after a sharp decline in the early 1930s. Newly emboldened union leaders had helped reelect Roosevelt, and they now demanded more federal legislation to improve wages and protect the right to collective bargaining.

Some public figures who initially supported aspects of Roosevelt's agenda would become outspoken critics of the New Deal. Louisiana



The cost of the many large-scale and wide-ranging New Deal programs did not escape political or public attention, as this political cartoon from the 1930s demonstrates.

senator Huey Long, whom you read about earlier, said the New Deal had not done nearly enough. Another ally-turned-critic was Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest and popular radio personality. In 1932, Coughlin had argued that the country must choose "Roosevelt or ruin." By 1934, however, Coughlin had begun to criticize the Roosevelt administration for aiding large corporations rather than focusing on the needs of individuals. He claimed that Roosevelt should nationalize the banking system so that it would not be able to prey on workers, farmers, and homemakers. Eventually, Coughlin's vitriolic rants about the U.S. financial system, which often included conspiratorial and disparaging remarks about Jewish people, led to his radio show being canceled in 1940.

Think Twice



To what extent had the policies of Roosevelt's first term succeeded? What were some major criticisms of those policies?

The Court-Packing Controversy

As you have read, during his first term, Roosevelt had an often contentious

relationship with the Supreme Court, as a conservative majority struck down several key components of the New Deal. By 1937, when Roosevelt began his second term as president, the court had already dealt serious blows to the NIRA and the AAA. Roosevelt feared that the court might continue to strike down other major New Deal programs.

To prevent what he considered judicial obstruction, Roosevelt's proposed solution was to call on Congress to enact a law that would allow him to add more justices to the court. The Judicial Procedures Reform Bill of 1937 would have allowed the addition of one Supreme Court justice for every sitting justice over seventy years old. Roosevelt defended the plan by citing the court's aging membership and its growing caseload, though many suspected his true motive was to shift the court's ideological balance, thus eliminating a constitutional check on executive power.

Then, as today, there were nine justices on the Supreme Court—and six of them were older than seventy. If Congress had passed the legislation, Roosevelt would have been able to appoint a pro–New Deal progressive majority. Six new handpicked justices, combined with three existing supporters on the bench, would have given Roosevelt a reliable majority of nine out of fifteen justices.

Debate over the proposed court-packing reform raged for more than five months. Roosevelt touted his plan to the public via his fireside chats and entreated Democratic loyalists in Congress to accept it. Roosevelt's opponents, including members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, viewed the plan as an attack on the independence of the court system. They saw the age issue as a distraction from what they surmised was Roosevelt's real aim: obtaining a Supreme Court that was more favorable to his policies. In contrast, Roosevelt supporters argued that the court had been stifling legitimate and needed measures to address pressing social welfare issues.

Ultimately, the plan to pack the court divided public opinion about evenly. It failed to muster enough votes in the Senate, and a much less controversial reform bill was passed in its place. Roosevelt eventually obtained a more favorable Supreme Court by nominating replacement justices when their predecessors retired or died. FDR's attempt to expand the Supreme Court is often regarded as one of the most controversial and damaging episodes of his presidency and a strong example of the overreach of executive power.

Think Twice



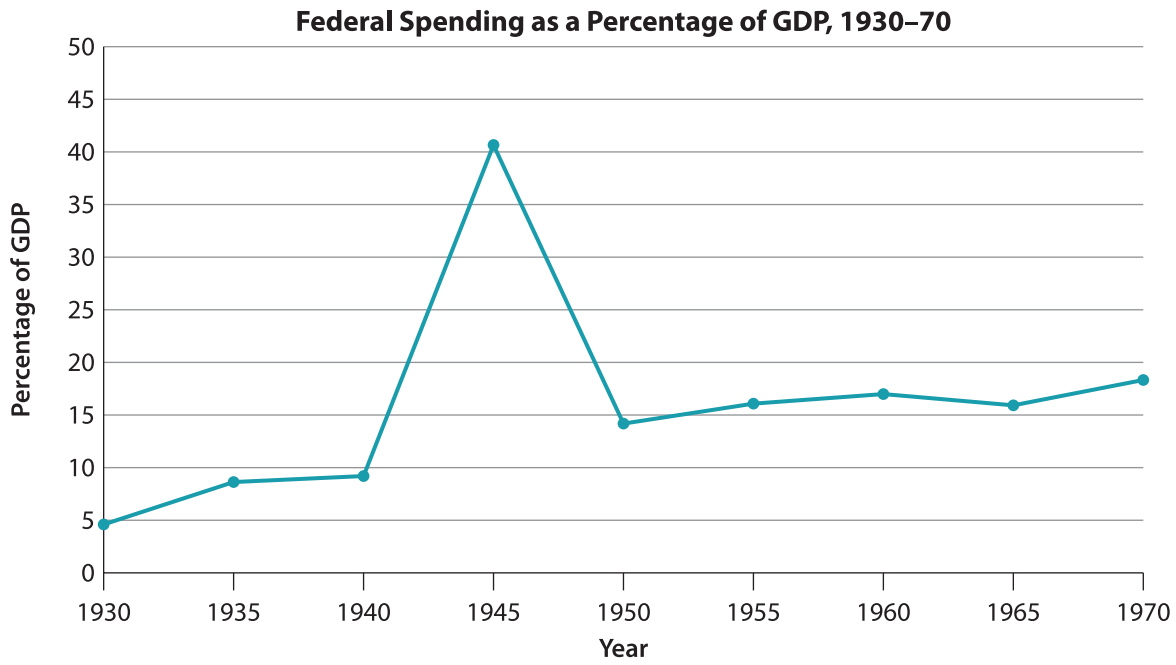
What solution did Roosevelt propose for the opposition he faced in the judiciary, and why did it fail?

The New Deal Continues

Despite legal challenges and the failed court-packing plan, Roosevelt—with congressional backing—continued expanding New Deal programs to address ongoing issues. Unemployment had dropped since 1933 but was still about 14 percent in 1937. Small farmers, especially sharecroppers and tenant farmers, continued to struggle, and many Americans lacked adequate housing. Public demand for government action persisted, and Roosevelt was determined to aid the one-third of the population still "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished" as the Depression began to ease.

Many of the early New Deal agencies continued to operate, though sometimes under different names and often within new limits imposed by Supreme Court rulings. Roosevelt and Congress added a series of additional programs designed to remedy the perceived defects of their earlier work. Among these new programs were those targeting farm relief and the construction of new housing.

By the summer of 1938, Roosevelt was also courting public support for the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which he signed on June 25. This was a major piece of workers' rights legislation; Roosevelt himself considered it the most important New Deal



Federal spending, notable for its increase during the New Deal, spiked dramatically once the United States entered World War II and the federal government faced the costs of a vast overseas conflict.

statute after the Social Security Act. Included in the FLSA were many elements of American labor law long demanded and today taken for granted: a federal minimum wage, a forty-hour workweek with mandatory overtime pay, and restrictions on child labor. By 1941, some seven hundred thousand workers had benefited from the new minimum wage, then set at $0.25 an hour.



Think Twice

What were some major problems that remained unsolved when Roosevelt began his second term of office?

The "Roosevelt Recession"

In the meantime, a brief but intense economic downturn stoked fears that the country was sliding back into a depression. Between May 1937 and June 1938, unemployment rose back to 20 percent as industrial production fell by a third.

One explanation for this development is that the government, believing that the worst of the Great Depression's effects had passed, began pulling back some of its emergency measures. Their fear now was not that the Depression would continue but that the government was accumulating too much debt when continued spending was unnecessary. The federal government had recently adopted a tighter **fiscal policy**, raising taxes and cutting spending at the same time. This reduced public investment and jobs, which slowed economic activity and lowered consumer demand. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve also tightened **monetary policy**, raising interest rates and reducing the money supply. This reduced banks' ability to lend to businesses and consumers, which in turn reduced consumer spending and business investment.

In the view of influential economist John Maynard Keynes, these actions were premature. Keynes believed that to combat a recession, a government should run a **deficit**, or spend more than it collects in revenue, and borrow to make up the difference. Keynes argued that increased government spending puts more money into circulation. When more money is available, lenders lower interest rates, which can encourage businesses to invest, expand, and hire.

Roosevelt and his advisers eventually came around to this way of thinking. In January 1938, Roosevelt managed to persuade Congress to accept a $5 billion spending package that would leave the government with a $1 billion deficit for the year. The Federal Reserve likewise loosened monetary policy, and more money went into circulation. The resulting swift recovery, much of which took place over the next five months, has been partly attributed to these measures.

At this point, the worst of the Great Depression had passed, though a fuller recovery would not occur until World War II, with its heavy demands on American industry. As you will read in the next topic, the war in Europe was a boon to American manufacturers, who sold such items as arms, vehicles, and uniforms to Britain, France, and their allies. Additionally, with European countries fighting a war, their domestic industries were unable to produce consumer goods, creating opportunities for American exporters. As a result, U.S. unemployment began to decline again.

In the meantime, the New Deal had arguably brought stability to the U.S. economy in a way that private initiatives could not. It had introduced consumer, worker, and investor protections still in use today, along with elements of the social safety net now taken for granted by American families. Still, the legacy of Roosevelt's programs is a mixed one, with some continuing to maintain that his administration exceeded its authority in ways not justified by the economic emergency. Moreover, not every program was a success—for every "alphabet agency" still in operation today, several more were either allowed to expire or wound down gradually over the late 1930s and 1940s. The overall effects of the New Deal have been a matter of debate since before Roosevelt left office, and they will likely remain so for years to come.

Think Twice



What were the causes and effects of the "Roosevelt recession" of 1937–38?

Topic 3
World War II

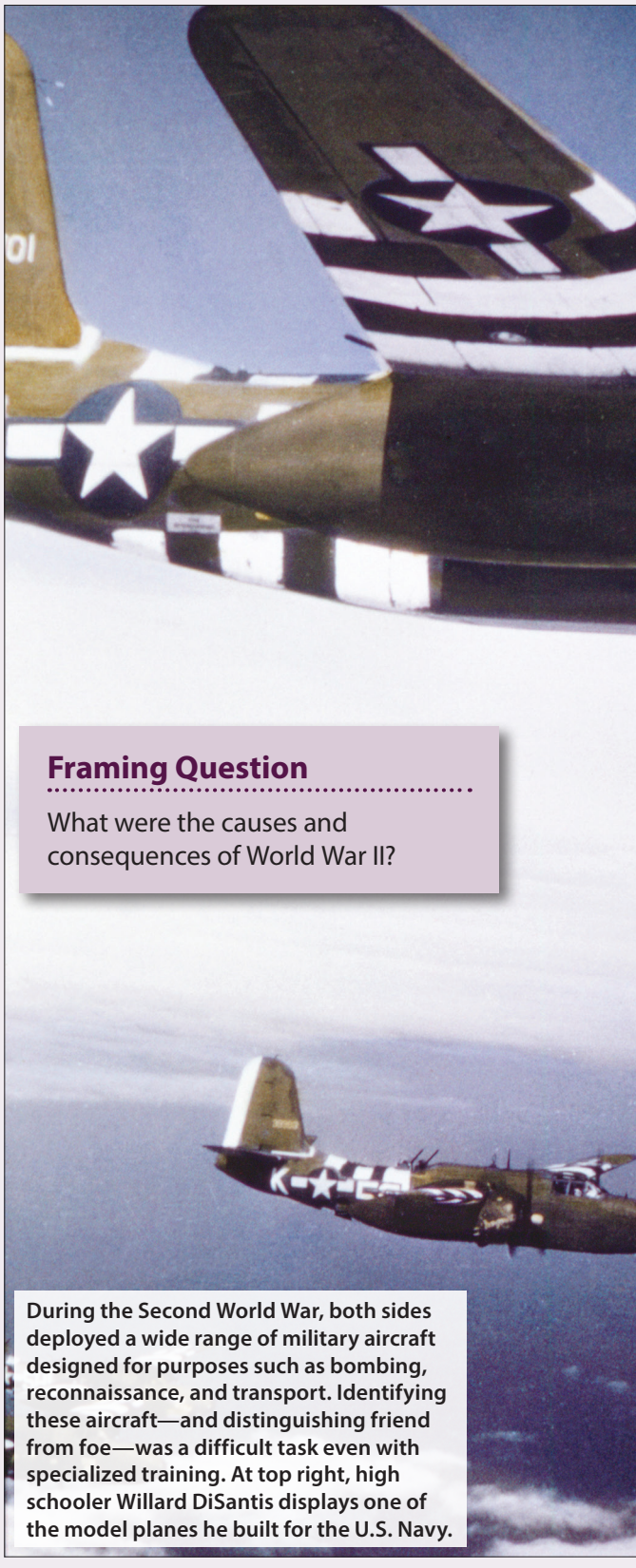
A Model Air Fleet

Setting the Scene

It is the spring of 1942, and the woodshop at McKinley Technical High School in Washington, D.C., is bustling with activity. Lathes spin, saws whine, and chisels tap away. Shavings and sawdust abound. The students focus intently on their latest project, comparing their work to detailed plans and schematics.

In ordinary times, students in shop class would be building everything from birdhouses to cabinetry. But these are not ordinary times. A few months earlier, Japanese bombers attacked Pearl Harbor, drawing the United States into a war it had long sought to avoid. As American forces mobilized, it became immediately apparent that aircrews and ground personnel would need training in identifying both enemy and friendly aircraft. Given the technology of the day, that meant they needed model planes to teach with.

Fortunately for the U.S. military, the building of model aircraft is a popular hobby among 1940s youth—American high schools are brimming with expertise in the craft. Thus, the navy enlisted the help of American shop class teachers, tasking them with leading their students in building ten thousand models representing fifty aircraft



Framing Question

What were the causes and consequences of World War II?

During the Second World War, both sides deployed a wide range of military aircraft designed for purposes such as bombing, reconnaissance, and transport. Identifying these aircraft—and distinguishing friend from foe—was a difficult task even with specialized training. At top right, high schooler Willard DiSantis displays one of the model planes he built for the U.S. Navy.



designs. (The U.S. Air Force will not become a separate branch of the military until 1947, after the war.) Individually or in production-line teams, these high schoolers are pouring millions of hours into a nationwide class project of much more than usual importance. Some six thousand schools will ultimately take part. Each student who builds a satisfactory model is awarded an honorary rank in the Victory Corps, the U.S. military program that is training high schoolers for the war effort. One especially prolific model builder, Willard DiSantis, will reportedly go on to build some seventy-six planes and attain the honorary rank of admiral.

The model airplane program is just one of many, many home-front efforts during World War II. As they did during the previous world war, American civilians are planting victory gardens, collecting scrap metal, and taking part in rationing to save food and materials for those fighting overseas. Though Americans hoped to avoid another global conflict, they have rallied to support the military, their allies, and the war effort abroad.

Causes of World War II

World War II began years before the United States became involved. It started at a time when Americans were still wary of international entanglements. Recall from Unit 3 that after World War I, Woodrow Wilson worked to create an international organization called the League of Nations that would mediate disputes between countries with the hope of preventing another world war from ever occurring. Wilson helped persuade European leaders to include the League of Nations in the Treaty of Versailles, but he was unable to persuade the U.S. Senate to ratify the treaty and join the League. With the horrors and losses of World War I still fresh in Americans' minds, the United States maintained an isolationist stance throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Also throughout the 1930s, the United States grappled with the domestic issues of the Great Depression. Unemployment soared during the early part of the decade, declined by mid-decade due to New Deal programs, then spiked again during the 1937–38 "Roosevelt recession." In 1939, for many Americans, political troubles occurring on the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean were not a major concern. Even before the war began, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts that established an **embargo** on, or outlawed, the sale of arms to nations at war. These Neutrality Acts, passed between 1935 and 1937, were rooted in the widespread belief that avoiding arms sales and entanglements would help prevent the nation from being drawn into another war. The 1937 act, however, did allow a "cash-and-carry" policy: Any nations, even those considered "belligerent," could buy American-made goods that were not weapons, as long as they paid immediately and imported the goods on ships that were not American. While Roosevelt publicly supported neutrality in the mid-1930s, he privately grew concerned about global threats and sought "every practicable measure" to avoid war while still preparing the nation for possible conflict. The prevailing isolationist attitude remained popular with the American public even as **totalitarian** dictators rose to power around the world and Germany's aggressive designs for itself became apparent.

Think Twice



How did the Neutrality Acts reflect American foreign policy following World War I?

Rise of Totalitarianism and Militarism

As with World War I, a multitude of factors contributed to the outbreak of another war in Europe. However, the way the First World War ended contributed significantly to

What Is Authoritarianism?	
Authoritarianism is a type of government in which **one person or group** (sometimes a military dictatorship) holds all power, restricting people's individual and political freedoms.	
What Is Totalitarianism?	
Totalitarianism is a form of government that seeks to control **every** aspect of public and private life, often led by a **single** party or leader. Communism and fascism can be implemented in a totalitarian manner.	
What Is Fascism?	**What Is Communism?**
Fascism is a political ideology characterized by a dictatorial leader who emphasizes strong, centralized power; promotes extreme nationalism; and suppresses opposition. Fascism sometimes allows private ownership and free-market economics. Businesses may remain privately owned, but the government can influence production, pricing, and labor policies.	Communism is a political and economic system in which the government or the people own all property and resources with the goal of establishing a classless society. Unlike socialism, which allows for some private ownership and wealth distribution, communism seeks to eliminate all private property.

the outbreak of World War II. Furthermore, the League of Nations, which had been established to prevent global disputes from exploding into future wars, proved to be too weak and ineffectual in the face of increasing totalitarianism.

As you learned earlier, Vladimir Lenin had orchestrated the rise of the communist Soviet government after the overthrow of the Russian monarchy. Following Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin began to consolidate power as the leader of the Soviet Union. His rise within the totalitarian Soviet government was marked by political maneuvering and brutal suppression of rivals. This helped ensure that he would have absolute power.

He instituted a series of Five-Year Plans from 1928 through the early 1950s to boost industrial production and bring agriculture under government control. As he pushed forward with these plans, Stalin had no qualms about crushing opposition within the Soviet Union through the use of police and military force. Moreover, he sought to expand Soviet influence by supporting (and in some cases simply installing) communist regimes in eastern European states, something that the world—including fellow totalitarian regimes—observed closely. In the 1930s, as he tightened his grip on power, Stalin launched a series of purges. He imprisoned or executed millions of Soviet citizens, including

political rivals, intellectuals, and high-ranking military officers.

Totalitarian leaders also gained power in Germany and Italy. In both of those countries, economic hardship and political instability after World War I paved the way for **fascism**—a form of authoritarian government that is often totalitarian—to take hold. Disillusioned with the representative governments that had failed to restore prosperity, citizens turned instead to leaders who promised sweeping changes and a return to national glory. In Japan, imperial ambitions would eventually lead to an alliance with these European leaders.

While the Soviet Union would eventually find itself on the same side as the United States as World War II progressed, Germany, Italy, and Japan positioned themselves firmly as enemies.

Germany: Adolf Hitler

Defeat in World War I had spelled the end of the German Empire under the kaiser and the beginning of Germany's Weimar Republic, a democratic republic that immediately faced political unrest, inflation, and widespread hardship. The German civilian population had suffered much during the First World War. Following the war, the Treaty of Versailles's harsh reparations burden, combined with Germany's decision to print money to meet payments, contributed to a period of extreme hyperinflation in 1923. While the Dawes Plan that you read about in Topic 1 helped the German government satisfy its creditors, life remained bleak for many ordinary Germans. Faith in the Weimar government's ability to bring about a recovery diminished, creating fertile ground for extremist political movements. The additional punishments of the peace treaty—the loss of territory to neighboring countries and the requirement that Germany accept sole responsibility for starting the war—made many Germans feel aggrieved. In this climate of deep dissatisfaction, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, offering radical change and scapegoats for Germany's problems, found a growing and receptive audience for their ideas.

Adolf Hitler joined the extreme nationalist German Workers' Party in 1919 and rose through the ranks in the early 1920s to become the party's undisputed leader. Austrian by birth and a veteran of World



At the height of the Weimar Republic's hyperinflation, German paper money became so worthless that people used it as wallpaper or burned it for warmth.

War I, Hitler changed the party's name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or the Nazi Party for short.

After participating in a failed coup, Hitler was sent to prison. While in jail, he wrote a book he titled *Mein Kampf*, or *My Struggle*. Part memoir, part political manifesto, *Mein Kampf* aimed to justify Hitler's racial nationalist ideology as well as his vision for a one-party totalitarian state. He declared northern Europeans, whom he called Aryans, to be superior to other ethnic groups. In the book, Hitler also explicitly described his hatred of Jewish people and his belief that they were parasites on the German economy and society. Though Jews were the most prominent group that Hitler identified as enemies, he also despised and blamed Germany's problems on the Romani people (sometimes called "gypsies"), people with disabilities, and anyone he considered to be communist.



Adolf Hitler and his party used the symbol of the swastika (shown on armbands here), or *Hakenkreuz*, as well as nationalist uniforms, stylized flags, and imagery drawn from Germanic mythology to rally support for the Nazis' goals of ethnic cleansing and territorial conquest.

Another major theme in *Mein Kampf* was the concept of *Lebensraum*, German for living space. Hitler claimed that Germany must take over neighboring territories and displace their residents so that the nation's "Aryan" population—by which he meant German-speaking and supposedly biologically superior ethnic Germans—would have room to grow. In effect, Hitler argued that Germany must become a racial empire, built not on monarchy but on Nazi principles of authoritarianism, nationalism, and racial hierarchy.

The onset of the Great Depression worldwide, which undercut the Weimar government's chances of stabilizing the German economy, gave the Nazis their opening to claim a wider following. Though the Nazi Party never secured a majority in free elections, Hitler leveraged political instability and backroom negotiations to be appointed Germany's chancellor by President Paul von Hindenburg in 1933. He would proceed to systematically root out any opposition to himself and his party through a combination of repressive laws, police action, and extrajudicial killings. He banned rival political parties, created a secret police force—the Gestapo—and insisted followers call him *der Führer*, or the leader. Hitler and the Nazis considered themselves at the head of what they called the Third Reich, which they imagined as the next great empire, after the Holy Roman Empire and the German Empire.

By March 1933, the first of the Nazi detention centers known as **concentration camps**

had opened at Dachau, located in southeast Germany. Its first prisoners were jailed primarily because of their political views or activities and included social democrats, communists, and trade unionists. Other groups would be added to the population of this infamous camp over its twelve years of operation.

Using every tool from lawmaking to mob violence, Hitler also followed through on his threat to make **anti-Semitism** both a state policy and a cultural norm in Germany. He rallied non-Jewish Germans against Germany's Jewish population, whom he claimed had undermined the country during World War I and had been hampering economic recovery ever since. In 1935, Hitler's government enacted the Nuremberg Laws, which stripped Jewish people of their German citizenship, prohibited marriage between Jews and non-Jews, and barred Jewish people from many professional and government roles. Three years later, on November 9, 1938, Nazi mobs conducted the *Kristallnacht*, or the Night of Broken Glass. Led by Hitler's paramilitary forces—especially his *Schutzstaffel* (SS), or protection squad—they attacked and destroyed Jewish homes, storefronts, and synagogues throughout Germany. The attackers killed more than ninety Jewish people and arrested tens of thousands more in a series of mass arrests, sending them to concentration camps. Kristallnacht was an important turning point for Germany's Jews, many of whom now concluded that there was no safe future for them in Nazi Germany.



Benito Mussolini and his followers built up the Fascist cult of personality to extreme proportions. Mussolini's face—never shown smiling, as that was prohibited by law—appeared on posters, statues, and numerous other propagandist artworks.

Think Twice

Describe two ideas or events that benefited Hitler in his quest for power.

Italy: Benito Mussolini

Germany was not the only country to shift toward fascism during troubled times following World War I. In Italy, the Fascist Party—from which the term *fascism* derives—rose throughout the 1920s almost in parallel with the Nazis to the north. Like Hitler, Italy's fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, was known to his followers as "the leader"—*il Duce* in Italian. From the early 1920s onward, Mussolini ruled Italy as a dictator, supported by a paramilitary group known as the Blackshirts. (Formally, Italy remained a constitutional

monarchy in name, but the king had little real power under Mussolini's dictatorship.) The official Fascist viewpoint was that the state was everything and the individual nothing, so work, education, and leisure all fell under the supervision of Fascist organizations. By nationalizing vast sections of the economy and suppressing disputes between labor and management, Mussolini created the impression that the country was finally prospering after the rocky postwar years.

Though their rise to power preceded that of the Nazis, the Fascists in Italy had much in common with their German counterparts. They were intolerant of political dissidents and used both legal repression and mob violence, often delivered by the Blackshirts, to silence protests. They promoted a cult of personality—the practice of presenting a political leader as a heroic, ideal figure who requires almost godlike reverence. They shared with the Nazis, too, a nationalist belief in the need to expand their country's territory to make room for those they deemed ethnically pure. To accomplish this, both countries promoted military service as the most important way that one could show one's devotion to the nation.

According to Mussolini's propaganda, the "pure" Italian identity could be traced back to the ancient Roman Empire, which he dreamed of restoring by reconquering lands and peoples that had been ruled by the Romans nearly two thousand years ago. A program of cultural and linguistic "Italianization" naturally followed in areas controlled by Italy, even if these had been populated by German or French speakers for centuries. Colonial conquest was, Mussolini claimed, really a *reconquest* of territory that should have belonged to Italy all along. In 1935, he sent an expeditionary force to add Ethiopia to Italy's other colonies in Africa—Somalia, Eritrea, and Libya. Italy also annexed Albania in 1939.

Think Twice



What were characteristics of fascism under Mussolini?

Japan: Imperial Ambitions

Unrelated to the events taking place in Europe, Japan was rapidly building its own empire in East Asia through military conquest. As in Germany, Japan's leaders pursued a similar policy of territorial expansion. A key goal was to establish colonies that could provide vital resources, such as food, petroleum, and raw materials, for the resource-poor island nation. These efforts became more urgent after U.S. trade embargoes, which heightened anti-American sentiment in Japan.

Like the Nazis and the Italian Fascists, the architects of Japan's imperial program attempted to justify their ambitions with claims of racial superiority. They held that the Yamato, the native people of the Japanese islands, were superior to the peoples of mainland Asia and destined to lead them. This

belief would eventually serve as a pretext for racial discrimination and forced assimilation of colonized peoples.

Before then, however, Japan's territorial expansion went through several stages. In 1910, Japan occupied Korea and imposed military rule, aiming to force assimilation by destroying cultural sites and making Japanese the official language.

Korea served as a base for Japan's invasion of a region of China called Manchuria in 1931, which drew only weak international response. Remember that the League of Nations had been established after World War I to prevent such acts of aggression between countries. However, it simply rebuked Japan for the invasion and refused to recognize the puppet state Japan established. No actual sanctions, or penalties, were imposed, which only emboldened Japan to continue its aggressive behavior. In 1933, Japan left the League.

Japan's regional occupation of Manchuria gradually erupted into a full-scale invasion of China. In July 1937, with their sights set on control of the major city of Beijing, the Japanese army took control of a neighboring region, overran the nearby Marco Polo Bridge, and proceeded across the Yongding River to capture Beijing proper. That December, the army advanced south to capture Nanjing, then China's capital, where it massacred an estimated three hundred thousand civilians and prisoners of war, a tragedy now known as the Nanjing Massacre.

Comparing Ideologies

The Empire of Japan in the late 1930s had many ideological similarities to its European fascist counterparts. The leaders of all three nations promoted militarism and used racism toward neighboring peoples to justify conquering and colonizing them. All three had cults of personality: The Nazis glorified Hitler as their *Führer*, the Fascists praised Mussolini as a larger-than-life hero, and in Japan, a long-held tradition claimed that the emperor, at that time Hirohito, was a living god. Moreover, the three powers had similar goals of amassing territory and influence in their respective regions of the world.

Therefore, for both ideological and practical reasons, Japan eventually entered a series of agreements with Nazi Germany and later Italy. In 1936, Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, an anti-communist treaty ostensibly for defense against the Soviet Union. Formally, this pact aimed to stop the international spread of communism; in practice, its main effects were to draw the signatories closer together politically, embolden them in their expansionism, and worsen already-tense Japanese–Soviet relations. Italy joined this pact in 1937, and as you will soon read, a more thorough alliance—with

the United States as the main adversary—followed the outbreak of World War II.



Think Twice

How were the goals and ideology of Nazi Germany similar to those of the Empire of Japan?

Growing German Aggression and Expansion

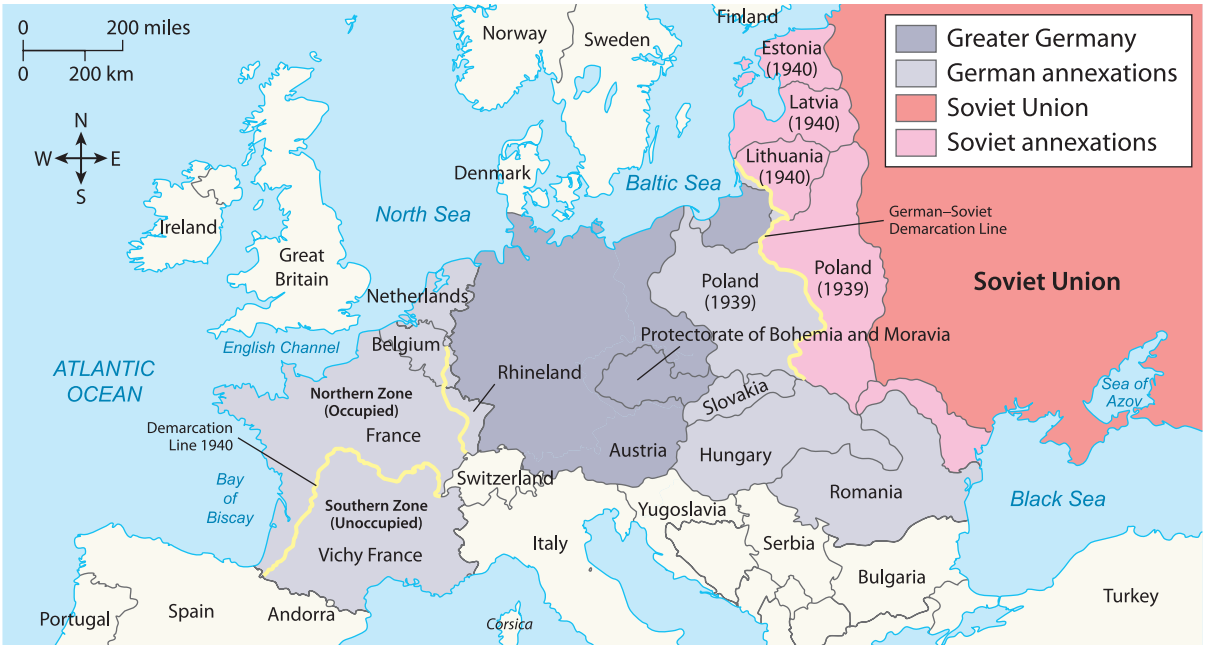
While the program of state anti-Semitism proceeded, the Nazis began a pattern of blatantly ignoring the restrictions placed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. Germany rearmed and expanded its military, an action disallowed by the treaty. This move was taken to prepare for territorial expansion, another treaty-defying action that aligned with the Lebensraum principle. The Nazis began in March 1936 by reoccupying the Rhineland, an area west of the Rhine River and bordering France, which had been officially demilitarized—prohibited from use for military purposes—after World War I. Despite this major provocation, neither France nor its ally Britain did anything to protest the move. Both countries were still recovering from the human and economic costs of World War I and were reluctant to enter into a new foreign conflict.

Under Hitler's plan for the Third Reich, all German-speaking peoples were considered ethnically one people and deserved a single nation-state. To this end, he annexed Austria in March 1938. Aided by Austrian Nazi sympathizers and a lack of opposition from the Austrian military, the Nazis seized both Austria's land and its government. The annexation was forced upon Austria, yet the action was called the *Anschluss*, or connection. Some international observers protested that whether or not the "connection" was voluntary in the minds of some Austrians, it clearly violated the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Yet no other countries intervened to prevent the union or to sanction it after the fact. Soon after, Hitler turned his attention to parts of Czechoslovakia and Poland.

By now, the leaders of the various world powers could see that Germany's imperial project was gaining momentum, and they debated how to deal with this new threat. In September 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain and French prime minister Édouard Daladier met with Hitler and Mussolini in Munich to try to forestall a direct conflict. They learned that Hitler was planning to annex the Sudetenland, a region in western Czechoslovakia with a large German population. In the resulting Munich Agreement, Britain and France agreed not to resist the annexation in exchange for Hitler's promise that it would be Nazi Germany's final territorial demand.

Chamberlain considered the Munich Agreement a major accomplishment, very publicly claiming it would bring "peace for our time." But Winston Churchill, a member of

German- and Soviet-Occupied Territory, Late 1940



The nonaggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union gave Hitler and Stalin the freedom to focus on seizing the parts of Europe they wanted without getting in each other's way. By late 1940, Germany and the Soviet Union had divided up a large proportion of the territory in Europe.

Parliament who would succeed Chamberlain as prime minister upon his resignation in 1940, blasted the appeasement agreement as a "total and unmitigated defeat." He told Chamberlain, "You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor and you will have war."

Thus began a formal policy of **appeasement** in which other European countries made concesssions to avoid additional conflict. However, Hitler reneged on the Munich Agreement almost immediately, invading the remainder of Czechoslovakia the following March.

Soon after, Hitler removed another obstacle to his expansion plans by striking a nonaggression pact with Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union. Germany had learned from the failed Schlieffen Plan in World War I that it was paramount to avoid fighting on two fronts. Hitler proposed the nonaggression pact to shield Germany from attacks from the east, enabling him to focus on his main foes, Britain and France. For Stalin, the pact ostensibly offered free rein to aggressively advance on his own western neighbors, including the Baltic states—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—and eastern parts of Poland. Stalin was aware that Hitler would only keep his promises when it suited him; the speed and ease with which Hitler had ignored the Munich Agreement had made that clear. Still, Stalin

The Holodomor

One of Stalin's most brutal methods of silencing dissent was the deliberate use of famine to starve people in the Soviet Union. This was especially true during the early 1930s. In Ukraine, then a state within the Soviet Union known as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Stalin's government purposely exacerbated a yearslong famine by blocking aid to Ukrainians. The goal of this was to depopulate the country and erode Ukrainian national identity. At the same time, Soviet agents seized large quantities of grain and other foodstuffs from Ukraine for use elsewhere in the Soviet Union and to sell as exports. The policy was cruelly effective: As many as 7.5 million people in Ukraine died as a result of the famine, which is known in Ukrainian as the *Holodomor*, or killing by starvation. The modern consensus is that the selective withholding of food aid constitutes an act of **genocide** on the part of the Soviet government.

agreed to Hitler's proposal, hoping it would buy him sufficient time to rebuild the Soviet military.



Think Twice

Why do you think the leaders of other countries formed pacts with Hitler if they did not believe they could trust him?

The War in Europe Begins

By the middle of 1939, it was impossible to deny that appeasement had been a failure and the wrong approach to the aggression of Hitler's Nazi Germany. Hitler had flouted the terms of the Munich Agreement and was now poised to invade western Poland. Britain and France warned that any further aggression, especially an invasion of Poland, would leave them no choice but to declare war. On September 1, Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France, now known as the Allied powers, responded to the invasion by declaring war on Germany. Poland fell within weeks as Germany launched a *Blitzkrieg*, or lightning war, of swift and decisive force. Germany proceeded to occupy the western two-thirds of the country while the Soviets claimed the remainder. A quiet six-month period then ensued, during which the Allies and Germany engaged in no battles but remained at war. The temporary absence of hostilities earned these months the nicknames "Phony War" and "Sitzkrieg," as a contrast to the earlier blitzkrieg.

In April 1940, invasions began again. The German army invaded Denmark and Norway, then employed a blitzkrieg strategy in western Europe, beginning with an invasion of France. France had anticipated a German invasion and had erected extensive

fortifications known as the Maginot Line along its eastern border. While the Maginot Line was strongest along France's border with Germany, it was weaker in the northeast, where France bordered Belgium. In a matter of weeks, the German army took control of Belgium and Luxembourg, then attacked France in the north. Unprepared for the assault, hundreds of thousands of French and British troops evacuated to England from the port town of Dunkirk on France's northeastern coast.



Hundreds of "little ships"—private English boats that included fishing vessels and pleasure craft—assisted in the rescue of Allied soldiers from the shallow beaches at Dunkirk.

In June 1940, Hitler captured the capital city of Paris, and by July, he effectively controlled all of France. The northern and westernmost parts of the country, including Paris, came under military occupation. In central and southern France, the Germans installed a collaborationist regime known as the Vichy government. Vichy France, officially called the French State, was led by Marshal Philippe Pétain, a World War I hero who later came to be regarded as a traitor. In a matter of a few months, the Germans had succeeded in conquering Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France.

Almost as soon as France had fallen, Hitler turned his attention to the conquest of Great Britain. A drawn-out battle, mostly fought in the skies, raged from early July to the end of October 1940. British fighter pilots tried to prevent German bombers from attacking military and civilian targets on the ground. This four-month-long engagement is known as the Battle of Britain. The Blitz, a long and vicious German bombing campaign, followed and lasted through early May 1941. Defending the island was a major test of the capabilities of the British Royal Air Force, the first independent air force in the world and then one of the largest. Hitler's attacks killed more than forty thousand civilians and caused widespread damage to British infrastructure, but in the end, Hitler abandoned his goal of invading Britain.

In September 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan formed a new military alliance. Under the terms of the Tripartite Pact, the member states, which would later become known as the Axis powers, agreed to come to one another's defense if any were attacked by a nation not already involved in the conflict. The language echoed the kinds of mutual defense agreements that had helped trigger World War I, signaling a similarly dangerous escalation of global alliances.

In June 1941, Hitler reneged on the nonaggression pact he had made with Stalin, sending German troops to invade and seize control of key parts of the western Soviet Union. As a result, Stalin promptly joined the Allies in the war against Germany. Despite its earlier determination to avoid it, Germany was now fighting a war on two fronts, in multiple **theaters** of the war, or areas of fighting. On the Eastern Front, Germany's primary foe was the Soviet Union, which was defending the homeland against a German invasion. The Soviets also hoped to reverse advances Germany had made in Poland, Romania, and the Baltics and thus prevent the Germans from taking more Soviet territory. On the Western Front, eventually centered in France and Belgium, Germany faced British, French, and soon American forces.



Think Twice

Why was appeasement a failure?

The United States Watches and Waits

Despite Hitler's flurry of conquests against nations long friendly to the United States, American politicians remained divided as to how they should respond. One issue was how to handle the many Jewish **refugees** who were fleeing Germany and Austria in the 1930s. U.S. immigration policy at the time gave no consideration to refugee status; refugees were treated the same as other classes of immigrants. While the quota system you read about in Unit 3 remained in place during the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt did use executive authority to extend the visas of German visitors who were deemed at risk if they returned to Europe. Other than that, most Jews attempting to flee Nazi oppression were turned away, as the United States remained mostly unaware of the atrocities they faced under Nazi rule and occupation.

The bigger issue was whether and how to oppose German military aggression. Roosevelt wanted to aid the British but was opposed by nativists and isolationists such as the America First Committee, founded in 1940 to oppose American intervention in the war. This influential group had the support of some key figures in American culture and industry, including famed aviator Charles Lindbergh and automaker Henry Ford.

Despite the pressure exerted by this and other groups, Congress did gradually relax the Neutrality Acts you read about at the beginning of this topic to allow for the supply of arms to the Allies. For example, under the Neutrality Act of 1939, the earlier arms embargo was replaced by another cash-and-carry policy. This allowed Britain to purchase

arms if it could pay for them with cash, rather than a loan.

Although Roosevelt was aware that many Americans supported isolationism over U.S. participation in the war, he was not certain that neutrality could continue. As it appeared more likely the Nazis would conquer Europe, Roosevelt increased his efforts to persuade Congress and the American public that *some* intervention was needed. In late 1940, as Britain continued to defend itself from German bombings, Roosevelt proposed the Lend-Lease Act, under which the United States would lend, not sell, military supplies to the United Kingdom. To the public, Roosevelt compared this idea to lending a hose to a neighbor to help put out a fire, thus preventing its spread to one's own house. Roosevelt continued to insist that although he would not send troops into any "foreign wars," the United States must serve as the "arsenal of democracy" against Nazi totalitarianism.

As the Lend-Lease Act was being debated, President Roosevelt delivered a famous speech in which he claimed that basic human freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—were under attack by tyrants around the world. This address, known as the Four Freedoms speech, is now understood as an effort to prepare Americans for the likelihood of the country's eventual entry into the war. Roosevelt had also, in a less publicized way, begun preparing the country's agencies and institutions for war. For instance, in 1940, he formed the National Defense Advisory Commission to coordinate American industry in the service of national defense. Naval escorts were assigned to protect Allied convoys from German submarines, which had begun attacking American merchant vessels, much as they had during the First World War. The Selective Service Act of 1940 instituted a draft to build up the nation's armed forces.

Two weeks after his Four Freedoms address, Roosevelt began an unprecedented third term in office. By that time, popular sentiment had shifted. In the spring of 1940, only 7 percent of Americans polled supported sending soldiers to fight Germany, but in early 1941, a narrow majority favored aiding Britain, even at the risk of war.

The first wartime meeting between Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, now the prime minister of the United Kingdom, took place in August 1941 off the coast of Newfoundland. The meeting was arranged in secrecy, given the dangers of crossing the Atlantic and the threat of German submarines even in the coastal waters of North America. Officially, Roosevelt was on a long fishing trip, while Churchill had departed via battleship from the Orkney Islands in northern Scotland. Once they had arrived, the two drafted the Atlantic Charter, a short symbolic document

PRIMARY SOURCE: OPPOSITION TO THE LEND-LEASE BILL, CHARLES LINDBERGH, 1941

Personally, I do not believe that England is in a position to win the war. If she does not win, or unless our aid is used in negotiating a better peace than could otherwise be obtained, we will be responsible for futilely prolonging the war and adding to the bloodshed and devastation in Europe, particularly among the democracies. In that case, the only advantage we can gain by our action lies in whatever additional time we obtain to prepare ourselves for defense. . . .

What we are doing in following our present policy, is giving up an ideal defensive position in America for a very precarious offensive position in Europe. I would be opposed to our entering the internal wars of Europe under any circumstances. But it is an established fact today, that our army and our air force are but poorly equipped on modern standards, and even our Navy is in urgent need of new equipment. If we deplete our forces still further, as this bill indicates we may, and if England should lose this war, then, gentlemen, I think we may be in danger of invasion, although I do not believe we are today. . . .

I advocate building strength in America because I believe we can be successful in this hemisphere. I oppose placing our security in an English victory because I believe that such a victory is extremely doubtful.

I am opposed to this bill because I believe it endorses a policy that will lead to failure in war, and to conditions in our own country as bad as or worse than those we now desire to overthrow in Nazi Germany.

I do not believe that the danger to America lies in an invasion from abroad. I believe it lies here at home in our own midst, and that it is exemplified by the terms of this bill—the placing of our security in the success of foreign armies, and the removal of power from the Representatives of the people in our own land.

Source: *To Promote the Defense of the United States: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, on S. 275, a Bill Further to Promote the Defense of the United States, and for Other Purposes*. Part 1. 77th Cong., 1st Sess. 490–492 (1941). Statement of Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, Lloyd Neck, NY.

The Louisiana Maneuvers

The United States did not simply draft soldiers and then send them to fight when needed. Instead, the military began a systematic program of field maneuvers, or large-scale training scenarios over open terrain. Some of these exercises were held near the Louisiana–Texas border, just south of Shreveport. The maneuvers, which ran from August to the end of September 1941, started out fairly simple, with four hundred thousand participants divided into Red and Blue armies to suit the needs of each scenario. Forces practiced intercepting, flanking, capturing and holding positions, and, when necessary, retreating in a methodical way. Commanders gained field experience by leading soldiers in practice versions of scenarios they might encounter under actual combat conditions. One of the outstanding commanders of these exercises was Major General George S. Patton, who would later lead notable World War II campaigns in North Africa and Europe

Not far from Shreveport, at Barksdale Field (now Barksdale Air Force Base), the U.S. Army hosted a series of "complete military maneuvers" intended to simulate potential combat conditions in Europe. The exercises involved 320 aircraft of the Army Air Corps, the predecessor of the U.S. Air Force, and took place over the course of three days. Throughout the remainder of the war, Barksdale Field served as the training ground for more than a dozen aerial units, many of which saw action in the European and Mediterranean regions of the conflict.

outlining postwar aims for their nations and the world. The agreement would help inspire subsequent developments in trade, diplomacy, and decolonization, in many ways creating the foundation for the yet-unformed United Nations. However, it stopped short of Churchill's ultimate goal—getting the United States to enter the war on the side of the Allies.



Think Twice

Why did the United States not act sooner and more decisively against Nazi Germany?

The United States Enters the War

The United States' relationship with Japan had grown tense amid continued Japanese conquest and colonization in Asia. Having made inroads into both mainland and maritime Southeast Asia, in 1940, Japan invaded French colonies in the region. The United States viewed this as a direct threat to its allies, and in July 1941, Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the United States. Two months later, having received no response to demands that Japan withdraw its forces from Indochina, the American government placed

an embargo on shipments of oil to Japan. Japan's prime minister, General Hideki Tojo, interpreted these actions as a form of economic warfare. He recognized that the oil embargo would put a stranglehold on both Japan's industrial economy and its war-fighting ability.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the U.S. isolationism debate came to an abrupt halt when Japanese bombers launched a surprise attack on a U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. More than 2,400 Americans were killed, nineteen U.S. Navy ships were sunk, and many others were damaged. Within hours, Japan also launched smaller attacks on U.S. bases in Guam, the Philippines, and Wake Island and on British forces in Singapore, Malaya, and Hong Kong. Japan wished to prevent any further interference with its continued expansion in the Pacific Ocean.

The attack on Pearl Harbor came as a complete surprise, not only to American sailors and other personnel stationed in Hawaii, but also to U.S. military intelligence and diplomats, who had still been hopeful that Japan could be persuaded to scale back its aggression. An attack on American soil had been, for many, unthinkable.

In a speech the following day, President Roosevelt declared December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy" and called on Congress for an immediate declaration of war. Lawmakers did so that same day, and three days later, Germany in turn declared war on the United States under the terms of the Tripartite Pact. Americans, outraged by the attack, vowed to defeat the Empire of Japan and its allies.

Think Twice



How did the Pearl Harbor attack end the isolationism–interventionism debate?

The American Home Front

World War II affected life in the United States in myriad ways. Millions of Americans were deployed overseas, where they fought in battles on land and sea and in the air. Those who remained at home supported the war effort by working in manufacturing, rationing food and other goods to make sure enough could be reserved for troops, and contributing financially.

In homes across the country, a flag now hung prominently in a window. Each blue star on the flag represented a family member actively serving in the military. If a blue star was replaced with a gold star, those who saw the flag recognized that the family had lost a loved one to the war that raged on across the world.

The Nation Mobilizes

Roosevelt's foresight in calling for a peacetime draft proved valuable as the country now prepared to engage in war. The size of the U.S. Armed Forces had increased rapidly under

PRIMARY SOURCE: "DAY OF INFAMY" SPEECH, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, 1941

Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. . . .

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. . . .

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

But always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. . . .

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

Source: Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address to Congress Requesting a Declaration of War with Japan." December 8, 1941. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/210408

The Tuskegee Airmen

Not everyone was given an equal opportunity to serve in the war. African American men often found themselves assigned to the more undesirable duties in segregated units. The Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American pilots in the U.S. Army Air Forces, were an exception to this norm. Based in Tuskegee, Alabama—the location of the Tuskegee Institute that you read about in Unit 2—they began training in 1941 and flew both fighters and bombers in thousands of missions over Italy from 1943 to 1945. The unit drew particular praise for its fighter pilots, who escorted heavy bombers with minimal losses.

The success of these African American aviators led to renewed calls to grant Black men equal standing in the U.S. military. In the meantime, the Tuskegee Airmen and their officers faced systematic discrimination both on and off base, often being denied the use of facilities that white airmen enjoyed freely. World War II would be a catalyst to the Civil Rights Movement as African Americans fought overseas for a democracy they did not experience at home.

the Selective Service Act, from half a million personnel at the end of 1940 to more than 1.8 million by the end of 1941. In 1942, when registration for the draft became mandatory, this number doubled again. Ultimately, about 60 percent of those who served were draftees. Roughly three-quarters of American service members would spend at least part of the war overseas, often departing via the New Orleans Port of Embarkation.

Industrial production pivoted to wartime goods under the recommendations of the National Defense Advisory Commission. In Detroit, automakers retooled their factories to produce planes, jeeps, tanks, and munitions. Farther south, tens of thousands of workers at New Orleans–based Higgins Industries produced amphibious landing vehicles, which would be used in invasions from the sea. Higgins Industries stood out for hiring women and African Americans at a time when many other employers,

U.S. Military Personnel, 1939–45

Year	Total Service Members
1939	334,473
1940	458,365
1941	1,801,101
1942	3,915,507
1943	9,195,912
1944	11,623,468
1945	12,209,238

The number of individuals serving in the U.S. Armed Forces expanded dramatically as World War II progressed. These totals reflect membership in the U.S. Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marines.

especially in the American South, did not. Factory bosses and production-line workers alike deemed it their patriotic duty to provide the equipment needed to fight the war.

Women's Contributions

As American workers became soldiers preparing for deployment, they vacated civilian jobs. To help the country meet its now-dual needs of supplying the civilian population with ordinary goods *and* supplying the military with weapons, armaments, vehicles, uniforms, and so on, many women filled jobs previously held by men. Women took on more agricultural labor and worked industrial jobs in factories and shipyards. To celebrate and encourage women's participation in these nontraditional roles, the U.S. government created a series of posters featuring a female factory worker known as Rosie the Riveter. Magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post* presented their own versions of this patriotic image.



Rosie the Riveter remained an icon of women's empowerment well beyond World War II.



Designed by Andrew Higgins and produced in New Orleans, Higgins boats were landing craft that became essential to Allied amphibious assaults. General Dwight D. Eisenhower once remarked, "Higgins is the man who won the war for us."

Many women also served in the military through the Women's Army Corps (WAC). This was a branch of the U.S. Army whose members served in health care, communications, and other support roles. Though they did not serve in combat roles and did not enjoy many of the same opportunities for advancement as their male counterparts, members of the WAC deployed

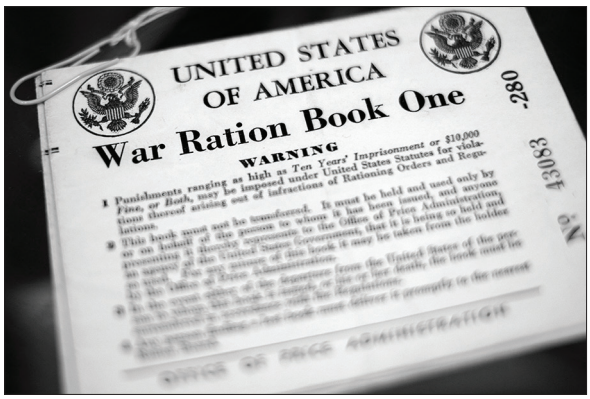
to all major battle regions and often faced dangerous conditions.

Think Twice

In what ways did U.S. mobilization for war reflect earlier, peacetime plans and preparations?

Sacrifices on the Home Front

It was not only in the fields and factories that civilians participated in the war effort. In January 1942, the federal government enacted the first of several rationing programs. These were mandatory, not voluntary as in World War I. To ensure sufficient supplies were available for the fighting forces, the Office of Price Administration restricted purchases of a variety of goods. The list of rationed goods grew as the war progressed, and civilians commonly found themselves patching and repairing items they would ordinarily have replaced, such as tires, shoes, and clothing.



Under rationing orders, consumers were issued a monthly book of stamps with various point values. A certain number of these stamps had to be presented along with payment for various goods that were in limited supply. At first, the system covered only sugar and coffee, but eventually it expanded to cover meat, dairy, and most types of packaged groceries.

Meanwhile, through scrap drives, civilians collected metal, rubber, paper, and other materials to be repurposed for the war. In the kitchen, Americans made different meal choices to account for tightly rationed foodstuffs, most notably meat, often opting to eat items that used fewer ration points, such as cheese. They supplemented what they bought with homegrown vegetables from victory gardens, much like they had during World War I. Even cooking fats, such as bacon grease, were saved, strained, and repurposed for soapmaking and munitions production. Fuel, including coal and kerosene, was also rationed. Restrictions on gasoline led to increased car sharing and bicycle usage for adults and far less driving in general.

Americans contributed to the war effort financially, too, most famously by buying war bonds. Like their World War I predecessors, these were loans to the government that would be repaid later with modest interest. Celebrities such as singer Kate Smith and comedians Laurel and Hardy led bond drives, and auctions of donated memorabilia, such as the horseshoes of champion racehorse Man o' War, collectively raised millions. Government posters, many produced under the Office of War Information, encouraged workers to set aside a portion of each paycheck to buy war bonds.

After 1942, Americans also funded the war effort through a historic increase in income tax revenue as the government expanded both the number of taxpayers and the tax rates they paid. Under the Revenue Act of 1942, anyone with a positive taxable income paid at least 19 percent of their income to the federal government. This increased the number of people paying individual income taxes by a factor of ten, from four million in 1939 to forty-two million by 1945. Tax revenue itself grew by an even larger ratio—from $1 billion to $19 billion over the same period.



Though a German invasion of the United States never materialized, many in the country supported the war effort to help ensure their children would be safe from the threat of Nazis.

Think Twice

What were the main ways Americans mobilized to support the war on the home front?

Japanese American Internment

Americans' anger at the Empire of Japan after its attack on Pearl Harbor killed more than 2,400 service members was understandable. Mixed in with those sentiments, however, was a rising current of anti-Japanese racism. The FBI began monitoring Japanese Americans, regardless of citizenship status, and even U.S.-born Americans of Japanese ancestry out of fear that they were spies for the Japanese government. Agents carried out many raids and arrests that proved baseless.

In February 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which required that all persons of Japanese ancestry, regardless of their citizenship status, be relocated to **internment** camps. These government-run detention centers severely restricted the freedoms of the people held there. In effect, those relocated there were imprisoned. As many as 120,000 people were forced to leave their homes, farms, and businesses with little time for any preparation. Many of these properties were seized and never returned. Subsequent orders established a federal agency, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), and authorized the creation of an "exclusion area" in which all persons of Japanese heritage

were to be prohibited from living for the duration of the war. The area covered western California, along with parts of southern Arizona and the Pacific Northwest. At the time, about 90 percent of Japanese Americans lived in this area. Military and political leaders assumed that if Japan were to stage a land invasion of the United States, the West Coast would be the major target. Some officials believed, without evidence, that people of Japanese ancestry in the region might sympathize with Japan rather than the United States.

Charged with no crime and offered no trial, internees were moved inland to isolated facilities formally known as "relocation centers." The internees were forced to abandon their communities and livelihoods. As a result of the forced removals, crops withered in the field and storefronts stood empty across the West Coast. Despite this mistreatment, some four thousand Japanese American men volunteered as part of the 442nd Infantry Regiment. Members of this unit fought in Italy, France, and Germany throughout 1944, receiving twenty-one Medals of Honor and nearly ten thousand Purple Hearts, symbols of their extreme valor and sacrifice.

Two conflicting Supreme Court cases, both decided in December 1944, marked the end of the internment era. In *Korematsu v. United States*, a Japanese American man named Fred Korematsu challenged the legality of Executive Order 9066. The court found that the order was constitutional in allowing the government to exclude people of Japanese descent from designated military areas on the basis of national security. However, in *Ex parte Mitsuye Endo*, the court ruled that a citizen loyal to the United States could not be detained without charge. This meant that while the government could forcibly relocate individuals, it could not detain U.S. citizens without due process. This effectively rendered internment unconstitutional, which dealt a fatal blow to the programs of the War Relocation Authority. Before the rulings were even made public, President Roosevelt rescinded the exclusion orders.

In 1988, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act, a formal government apology for the internment and an acknowledgment that it had been driven by "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." The law also provided monetary reparations to the tens of thousands of surviving internees.

Think Twice



How did public opinion about Executive Order 9066 and the *Korematsu* decision change in the years immediately after the war?

Theaters of the War

When the United States entered the war, the country was still adjusting to the reality of the attack on Pearl Harbor. There was some

support for a "Japan first" strategy among the American public, the U.S. Navy, and some of Roosevelt's top military advisers. However, Roosevelt considered the Nazis a greater overall threat, and the United States joined the Allies in pursuing a "Germany first" strategy, meaning it would fight its way through France and Italy to subdue Nazi Germany.

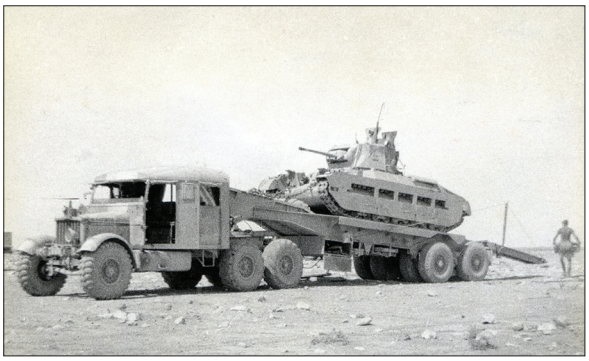
The Allies understood that even with the help of U.S. forces, they were not yet prepared to successfully carry out an invasion in France. Therefore, they agreed to enter Nazi-controlled western Europe through what was deemed the "soft underbelly of Europe," by way of North Africa and then Italy, while still planning for a future land invasion via the French coast. In the meantime, the U.S. Navy and Marines, along with forces from other Allied countries, would engage the Japanese through naval and island campaigns, delaying a full-scale ground invasion in the Pacific theater until later. Stalin, having contended with Hitler's invading troops for several months, was frustrated by this plan. He had hoped that as the U.S. Army joined the fighting on the Western Front, the Germans would be forced to divert resources there, which would relieve pressure on the Eastern Front. Despite some disagreement, the Allies were guardedly optimistic that the U.S. forces would give the British the additional might they needed to overcome the powerful German army.

Over the course of the war, U.S. forces saw action in all three major theaters: Africa, Europe, and the Pacific. Most fought in Europe, while a sizable portion fought in East and Southeast Asia and throughout the Pacific Ocean. A small but significant number assisted predominantly British and French forces in North Africa.

The War in Africa

For the Allies, North Africa was a potential launch site for the so-called soft underbelly of Europe through a future invasion of Italy. Fighting in North Africa had been ongoing since September 1940, and the Allies had struggled to overcome Axis troops, particularly those under the direction of Nazi general Erwin Rommel, a bold tactician known as the Desert Fox.

This changed in late 1942, when the Allies finally forced the Axis soldiers to retreat. In October, Allied forces breached the German line at El Alamein, Egypt, before going on to recapture parts of Libya. In the meantime, other Allied troops, led by U.S. general Dwight D. Eisenhower, staged a November invasion of French North Africa, then held by the French Vichy government that collaborated with Nazi Germany. Called Operation Torch, the landing simultaneously targeted major ports in Morocco and Algeria



Tanks saw widespread use by both Axis and Allied forces in North Africa. However, the climate challenges of the desert terrain made tank maintenance and logistics especially difficult.

and cleared the way for the capture of the last Axis holdout, Tunisia.

In May 1943, caught in a pincer movement, or pinched, between Eisenhower's and British general Bernard Montgomery's forces, the Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered as well. This marked the end of the North African campaign and secured for the Allies the important staging ground they needed for the eventual invasion of Italy.

Think Twice

How did U.S. forces contribute to victory in North Africa?

The War in Europe

Fighting in the European theater played out largely along three distinct fronts. On the Eastern Front, the Soviet Union resisted and ultimately repelled German advances that at one point extended into Russia. On the Western Front, where an invasion via France was now considered possible, the Allies pushed back against Germany from positions in Nazi-occupied France and Belgium. Finally, Allied forces advanced northward from North Africa and the Mediterranean, invading first Sicily and then mainland Italy to confront Mussolini's Fascist forces. Italy surrendered in 1943, but Allied forces fought Nazi troops in the country through May 1945, thereby occupying even more of the German army. Mussolini, no longer the leader of his Fascist "empire," was initially captured by Allied troops in 1943 but then snatched from confinement by German soldiers. After going into hiding, Mussolini was spotted by angry, war-exhausted Italians in 1945 and executed by machine gun, after which his body was hung upside down in a public location to be ridiculed.

Overall, the Allies' strategic goal was in some ways a larger-scale version of their earlier pincer plan in Africa: to keep German forces divided by forcing them to fight on multiple fronts, with every Allied advance squeezing the Germans more tightly in between.

The Eastern Front

In 1942, the German army had significantly overextended itself on the Eastern Front. In February 1943, its six-month-long attempt to besiege the Soviet city of Stalingrad ended in defeat, signifying an important turning point in the war in the Allies' favor. Over the next two years, Soviet forces

would roll back German territorial gains in Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus. By the end of 1944, they were pushing westward into Germany proper.

The Western Front

The decision to open a front on the French–German border came about at a November 1943 meeting among the "Big Three" Allied leaders: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. They decided that relieving pressure on the Eastern Front, which Stalin was actively advocating for, was a crucial war aim and agreed that the Americans would lead a large-scale invasion to retake occupied France.

This plan, known as Operation Overlord, culminated in the massive landings at Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, commonly known as D-Day—the launch of the Normandy invasion. Nearly 160,000 Allied troops stormed the beaches of northern France. Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division, based at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, were among the first to land under cover of night, proceeding to seize German artillery and command infrastructure in advance of the amphibious assault.

Operation Overlord was a high-risk endeavor, as the occupying German forces had built an extensive network of gunner positions, tank traps, mines, and other fortifications along what was called the Atlantic Wall. Secrecy was paramount, and the Allies staged elaborate deceptions to mislead German forces into believing that the landings would take place elsewhere. About four thousand Allied troops died on D-Day alone, attempting to charge ashore amid heavy machine-gun fire. Those not killed in the initial assault then undertook weeks of grueling rural combat and urban fighting before they reached Paris in August, only two months later. Despite the heavy casualties and difficult terrain, the Normandy landings were an Allied success and marked a critical turning point in the European war. To support the continued invasion, the Allies constructed portable artificial harbors called Mulberries that allowed them to unload troops, vehicles, and supplies directly onto the beaches. The Allies now had a foothold on the European continent and were able to establish a Western Front to begin their advance into occupied territory.



Operation Overlord, or D-Day, was a massive undertaking that included nearly 160,000 Allied soldiers.

From their beachhead in Normandy, Allied forces advanced slowly along the French–

German border throughout late 1944. The final German offensive began in December and is known as the Battle of the Bulge. The engagement takes its name from how the German front line appears on a map to bulge westward. Ultimately, the Allies committed nearly 750,000 troops to the battle, which lasted nearly six weeks before the Nazis were driven back. Meanwhile, U.S. and British forces heavily bombed Berlin, one of many air campaigns that wreaked havoc on the German capital.

From January 1945 onward, the German forces were on the defensive. As Soviet forces closed in on Berlin and Allied air attacks continued, it became clear that Germany could not repel the assault. Hitler died by suicide, and Germany made its unconditional surrender on May 8, today known as Victory in Europe (V-E) Day.



Think Twice

What were the Allies' objectives on the Eastern and Western Fronts?

The Yalta Conference

In February 1945, as Allied victory in Europe seemed very likely, the Big Three met at Yalta in Crimea, a region in eastern Europe under Soviet control at the time. They determined that their first priority was to seek the Nazis' unconditional surrender, to be followed by a period of demilitarization and denazification. The leaders also discussed future zones of occupation within Germany. Additionally, they agreed that war criminals would be punished, and reparations would be exacted in the form of money and labor. All three powers pledged to allow free elections in territories they had liberated from Nazi Germany—a promise Stalin would break with vast consequences, as you will read in Unit 5.

The Holocaust

As Germany occupied more territory, its concentration camp system had swiftly expanded to absorb additional political prisoners and provide forced labor for German factories in conquered lands. Back in August 1938, just months after the annexation of Austria, the SS had opened a labor camp in Mauthausen, Austria. Similarly, in May 1940, not long after the blitzkrieg, the SS established the now-infamous Auschwitz camp in southern Poland. Concentration and labor camps were often death camps, where Jews and others were murdered by the millions in mass shootings, gas chambers, and other horrific ways. Yet the systematic murder of Jews was not limited to the camps. As early as 1939, mobile Nazi killing squads called *Einsatzgruppen* (task forces) began committing mass murder in areas of Poland and the Soviet Union under the control of the German army. An estimated 1.5 million Jews, political opponents, Roman Catholics,

The Role of Military Intelligence

Surveillance and spycraft were important parts of the war effort. Both Allied and Axis forces relied on encryption to prevent the enemy from finding out their plans. The main system used by the German military was based on the Enigma machine, an electromechanical device that shuffled the letters of the alphabet according to extremely complex rules. A message could only be decoded by an identical machine using the precise settings that the encoding machine had used, so even when the Allies obtained an Enigma machine, they could not decrypt the messages without knowing the machine's exact settings for that day. A team led by British mathematician Alan Turing eventually produced a decoding machine that, when messages could be intercepted, allowed the Allies to anticipate Axis plans.

In some cases, Allied message encryption relied on a far older method than Enigma: spoken language. American service members from the Navajo (Diné) nation served as code talkers, a term used for Indigenous soldiers who transmitted secure communications using their native language. These code talkers took advantage of the fact that this language was spoken by very few non–Navajo (Diné) and had syntax rules that were nothing like the rules of any European or Asian language, making it extremely difficult to decode. Their encoded radio messages provided a secure channel for Allied communications.

Japanese and German speakers who supported the Allied cause also played a part through the Military Intelligence Service, or MIS. This military unit provided fluent speakers of major Axis languages for purposes of translation, interpretation, and interrogation of prisoners. The service of second-generation Japanese immigrants in this pivotal role helped counter widespread suspicion of Japanese Americans, especially in light of the internment policies that affected their communities. Meanwhile, new communication technologies saw use during the war almost as quickly as they were developed. Radar systems, developed in the 1930s, were operated by the Army Signal Corps to detect incoming Japanese aircraft and provide early warning to Allied vessels. The Signal Corps was an early and extensive employer of WAC personnel. Through its research laboratories, it developed sophisticated backpack radios that could receive and transmit clear signals from the front lines. A third responsibility of the Signal Corps was to produce films for training, orientation, and documentary purposes. The hundreds of surviving Signal Corps film reels today serve as an important record not only of U.S. military procedures and strategies but also of everyday life among those who served.

and others targeted by the Nazis died at the hands of the *Einsatzgruppen*.

As American troops pressed on into Germany, they encountered horrifying evidence of the Nazis' atrocities. Throughout the war, they knew the Nazis were systematically rounding up and murdering Jews, others deemed incompatible with the Aryan vision, and supposed enemies of the state. Yet it was only as they liberated concentration camps throughout the spring of 1945 that the scale of the Nazi genocide became clear.

The Nazis had built a massive camp system that included hundreds of concentration camps and sub-camps. They aimed to kill as many Jews worldwide as they possibly could as part of what Hitler declared to be the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question," as formally explained and planned at a 1942 meeting of German officials called the Wannsee Conference. American soldiers discovered huge piles of bones and other human remains and rooms constructed specifically for mass killings that testified to murder on an unimaginable and horrifying scale. Surviving prisoners at Buchenwald, Dachau, and the many other camps were barely alive due to starvation, overwork, and physical abuse. Troops provided food and medical aid and worked to save as many as possible. Eisenhower, who visited Buchenwald in April 1945, was disgusted but also galvanized by what he saw there. "We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is

The Warsaw Ghetto

One of the ways that the Nazis monitored, terrorized, and destroyed Jewish communities was through a policy of ghettoization, in which Jews were forced from their homes into confined areas. The Warsaw Ghetto was one such instance. Following the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1940, approximately four hundred thousand Jews were forced to live in a walled-off area of 1.3 square miles in the city of Warsaw. Over more than two years, nearly one hundred thousand residents of the ghetto died from disease or starvation; at times, the Nazis allotted each person only 180 calories a day. Many more from the ghetto were gradually deported to labor and death camps.

Despite facing terror and death on a daily basis, those in the Warsaw Ghetto resisted the Nazis as best they could. Some secretly documented the atrocities they witnessed so that there would be a historical record; others attempted to smuggle their fellow Jews out to freedom. In the spring of 1943, some Jews still living in the ghetto actively resisted the Nazis in an organized uprising, inflicting casualties on German military and intelligence units. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising lasted about four weeks before the ghetto was burned and destroyed, with most of those imprisoned there killed or deported to labor and death camps.

fighting for," the general said. "Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against."

In all, Nazis killed approximately six million Jews—two-thirds of the Jewish population in the area of Europe that Nazi Germany then controlled. This program of mass murder, now known as the Holocaust, also targeted millions of other non-Jewish victims, including Soviet prisoners of war, Poles, and Romani people. Those with disabilities, people believed to be homosexual, and political dissenters were also transported to the camps and murdered.

Operated by the SS, the camps had also provided the Nazis with a source of forced labor. Underfed and poorly treated, the prisoners quarried stone, farmed crops, and manufactured weapons. In some cases, they also manufactured goods for private companies; some German and Austrian industrialists willingly went along with Hitler's plan specifically for this reason. Prisoners were beaten and tortured for any perceived resistance, and sometimes at the arbitrary will of guards. German doctors and scientists conducted sadistic and grotesque experiments on camp inmates, exposing them to extreme cold, infectious diseases, and chemical weapons. When prisoners could no longer work or were otherwise no longer deemed useful, the SS herded them into gas chambers and suffocated them. Many others died of starvation or disease or were shot. As U.S. troops liberated the camps, they extensively documented the maltreatment in the hope of eventually bringing the Nazis to justice.

Although the Allies condemned the atrocities, ending the Holocaust itself was not treated as a primary military objective. Allied leaders argued that the most effective way to stop the killings was to defeat Nazi Germany as swiftly as possible.

Think Twice



What did American soldiers uncover about the scope and methods of the Nazis' "Final Solution," and why was this discovery significant?

Asia and the Pacific

Once Italy and Germany were defeated, the Allies' remaining goal was to defeat Japan and bring the war to a definitive close. This entailed an extensive naval and aerial campaign over thousands of islands that were separated by the immense distances of the Pacific Ocean. By recapturing many of the islands held by the Japanese empire, the United States hoped to protect its allies, including European colonies in Asia such as British Malaya (modern-day Malaysia) and the Dutch East Indies; thwart any attempt at a land invasion on American shores; and check Japanese dominance over the Pacific. The huge distances meant that this would have to be accomplished gradually, as the repositioning of troops and equipment predominantly took place via slow-moving convoys.

While the Allies had focused most of their efforts on Europe and North Africa, the Empire of Japan had gone from conquest to conquest in the Pacific. In January 1942, Japanese forces invaded the Philippines, beginning the Battle of Bataan. After holding them off for three months, Filipino and American troops surrendered in April. Under orders from President Roosevelt, American commander General Douglas MacArthur led a partial evacuation to Australia, promising the Filipino people, "I shall return."

Allied troops who had not been evacuated were taken as prisoners of war. Japanese soldiers subjected them to the Bataan Death March, a grueling sixty-five-mile (105 km) trek through the jungle. During this forced march of more than seventy thousand prisoners, thousands died of starvation or exhaustion or were killed on the spot by Japanese soldiers. Others died while held in prisoner camps.



This iconic photograph captures the moment a group of U.S. marines raised the American flag on the island of Iwo Jima.

In the meantime, the United States undertook an **island-hopping campaign**. Beginning with the Battle of Midway in 1942, U.S. forces selectively attacked and took control of Pacific islands with strategic value, such as potential for future airfields, and avoided island locations that the Japanese had heavily fortified. By gradually acquiring a series of bases closer and closer to Japan, the Americans could slowly sever enemy supply lines and eventually come within air-strike distance of the island nation. The ultimate goal was to "island hop" close enough to launch a land invasion of Japan. There would be many more battles in the long process of eliminating Japanese forces in the Pacific piece by piece.

In October 1944, MacArthur made good on his promise to the Philippines. In the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle of the war, the United States sank twenty-six Japanese ships, including several carriers and battleships. This success came despite a new fighting strategy by the Japanese: the use of *kamikaze*, or suicide pilots, who would crash their planes directly into U.S. aircraft carriers or other ships. It became increasingly untenable for Japan's navy to do more than protect its home islands from invasion.

By the beginning of 1945, American forces were pushing northward toward Japan's outlying volcanic islands. In February, U.S.

Marines landed at Iwo Jima, a Japanese island whose airfields could be used as a launching site for an invasion of the rest of Japan. Over a period of five weeks, with air and artillery support from the U.S. Navy, the marines gradually overran the heavily fortified Japanese position, sustaining heavy casualties in the process. Then, on March 9 and 10, the United States conducted Operation Meetinghouse, a massively destructive firebombing campaign targeting Tokyo. Between eighty thousand and a hundred thousand people were killed in one night.

On April 1, the final major land battle of World War II began on Okinawa, a mere 340 miles (547 km) from the four largest and most populous Japanese islands. There, American soldiers and marines fought intensely amid brutal conditions against an increasingly desperate adversary. Anxious to avoid losing ground, the Japanese military pressed tens of thousands of civilians—including schoolchildren—into labor, support, and even combat roles, and at least forty thousand Japanese civilians died during the battle. It took nearly three months of fighting before the United States gained definitive control of this strategic island. Though Japan did not yet surrender, its options for resistance were growing more and more limited.



Think Twice

How did U.S. forces contribute to the Allied victory in the Pacific theater?

The Atomic Bomb

Since December 1941, the U.S. government had been conducting research to develop nuclear weapons. President Roosevelt had authorized the research, known as the Manhattan Project, after prominent physicist Albert Einstein warned him that the Nazis could be the first to create such a device. Under the direction of J. Robert Oppenheimer, a team of physicists designed and created an atomic bomb that was tested at a secluded site in New Mexico on July 16, 1945. Meanwhile, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died in April, not long into his fourth term of office. He was succeeded by Vice President Harry S. Truman.

When Germany surrendered in the summer of 1945, the Big Three—with Truman replacing Roosevelt—convened at Potsdam, Germany, to decide the terms of the peace, which you will read about shortly. While at this meeting, Truman was told of the successful New Mexico test. The Allied leaders then issued an ultimatum to Japan: Surrender unconditionally or face "prompt and utter destruction."

This message received no reply. Truman was faced with a momentous and grave decision. Should he use the atomic bomb to win the war—a weapon he called "the most terrible bomb in the history of the world"? Truman and his advisers estimated



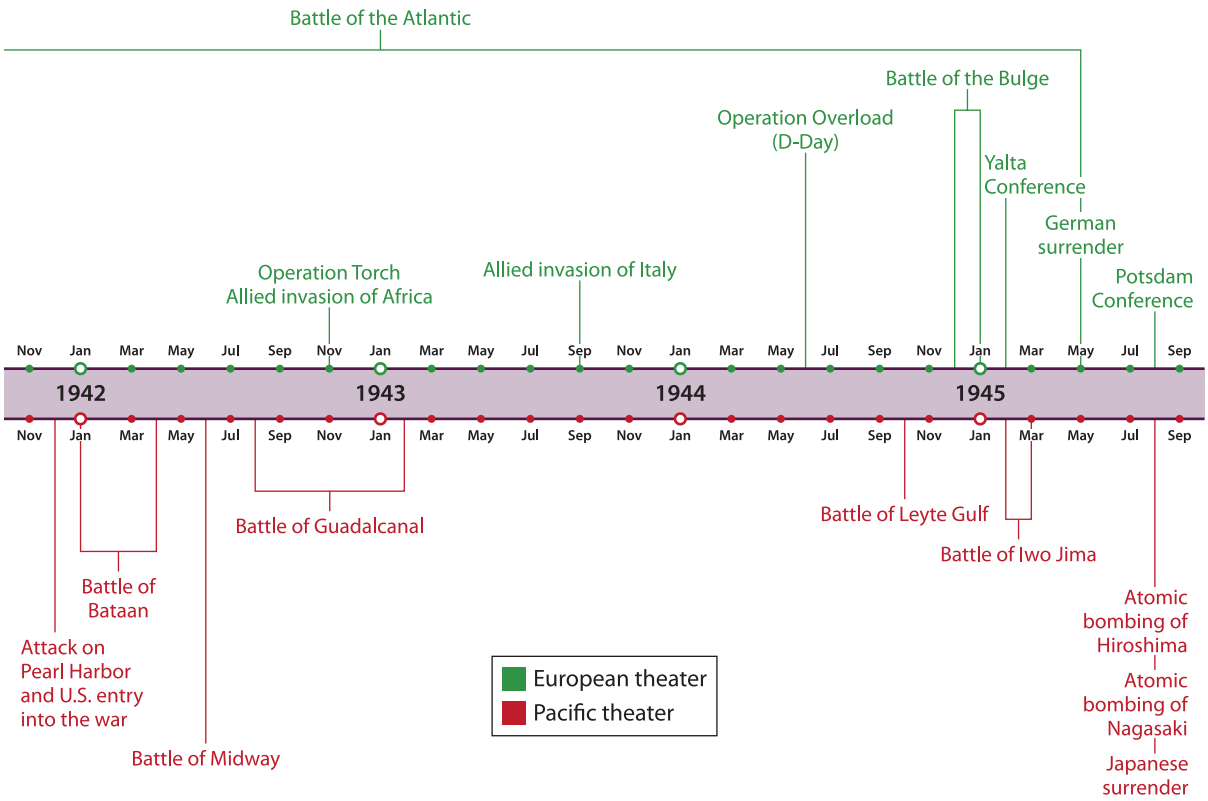
Large swaths of Hiroshima (shown here) and Nagasaki were reduced to rubble by the atomic bombs.

that even though the bomb would kill many, many civilians, it would bring the war to an end swiftly, whereas a land invasion would lead to the same kind of vicious fighting as at Okinawa, which could result in hundreds of thousands of American deaths. Truman gave the go-ahead to use the weapon.

The first atomic bomb ever used in warfare, nicknamed Little Boy, was dropped above the city of Hiroshima from the aircraft *Enola Gay* on August 6, 1945. While the exact death toll remains uncertain, the blast instantly killed an estimated seventy thousand people, and thousands more later died from the effects of the radiation. That evening, Truman issued a statement that unless Japan surrendered immediately, more such attacks would follow. At that time, he had already approved more atomic strikes, beginning with one at Nagasaki. Three days later, after the Japanese government did not issue a formal surrender, the bombing of Nagasaki proceeded. Forty thousand people died instantly. Large areas of both targeted cities lay in ruins. The more than six hundred thousand survivors of the two bombings, known in Japanese as *hibakusha*, often suffered severe burns and scarring, along with an elevated cancer risk from the radiation exposure.

On August 15, with no way of knowing how many more such bombs would be deployed and no practical means of resisting them, Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's

Major Events in World War II, 1941–45



This timeline notes some of the major events of World War II, though there were many other smaller conflicts and hostilities.

unconditional surrender. This day is now known as Victory over Japan (V-J) Day.

Think Twice

What factors contributed to Roosevelt's and Truman's decisions to develop and deploy the atomic bomb?

Aftermath of the War

As you read earlier, the Big Three had begun planning their postwar policies months before Germany was defeated. Even as battles still raged in Europe, Allied leaders began outlining their vision for a postwar order. When Germany did surrender, the Big Three convened again. This time, they met at the Potsdam Conference to decide the terms of the peace. Stalin was once more in attendance, as were Churchill and, toward the end of the conference, his successor, Clement Attlee. President Harry S. Truman represented the United States. Although they had discussed it earlier, the three main Allied powers confirmed that Germany would be split up into four occupation zones, to be administered by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and



Before Roosevelt's death, he and Stalin engaged in tense negotiations over how postwar Europe would be governed, as well as the future reconstruction of Germany and eastern Europe.

the Soviet Union, respectively. The city of Berlin would be divided as well.

The Allies also revisited the issue of reparations. Stalin pushed for steep repayments from Germany in money and materials, while Truman worried that this would reproduce the economic crisis that followed the Treaty of Versailles and ultimately encourage more conflict and authoritarianism. Eventually, the Soviet Union agreed to exact reparations from its zone of occupation and to accept limited concessions from the other zones, such as a share of their industrial equipment. The decision of how to treat the German population and economy was thus largely left to the individual occupying powers.

Think Twice



What were the Allied leaders' main goals for the end of World War II?

The Nuremberg Trials

Nazi leaders met their fate through a series of tribunals held in Nuremberg, Germany, between November 1945 and October 1946. The Allies had agreed to establish a precedent for holding individuals accountable for violating

international law, particularly for crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. A panel of judges from the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union oversaw a lengthy process formally called the International Military Tribunal but usually referred to as the Nuremberg trials. The conduct of the trials was governed by an agreement negotiated by attorneys and jurists representing the four Allied powers. Supreme Court associate justice Robert H. Jackson served as the United States' chief prosecutor.

These proceedings marked the first time that international law recognized crimes against humanity, or acts of mass violence against citizens, as punishable offenses. Twenty-four men stood trial for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other grave charges. Three were acquitted. Seven received prison terms ranging from ten years to life. Ten were sentenced to death and hanged, including foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, who among other crimes oversaw the deportation of Jews to concentration camps in various Axis-controlled regions. Hermann Göring, who had given the order to begin the "Final Solution," was also sentenced to death but committed suicide before he could be hanged. Heinrich Himmler, the SS officer who supervised the death camps, avoided trial by also committing suicide.

Japanese leaders were similarly tried for their actions in the war by military tribunals in their own country. Most notably, Hideki Tojo, who led both Japan's government and its military throughout most of the war, was tried and convicted of war crimes and executed by hanging in 1948.

The Nuremberg trials were a consequential step toward bringing justice to the postwar world. Based on the Nuremberg experience, over many years, an international treaty was made, creating the International Criminal Court (ICC). As of 2025, 125 countries are party to the ICC, which investigates and prosecutes genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.

Think Twice



Who oversaw the Nuremberg trials, and what was their aim in conducting them?

The United Nations

At the Yalta Conference, the leaders of the world's major powers made plans for peace after the war, based in part on the Atlantic Charter created years earlier between Roosevelt and Churchill. They agreed to form a worldwide intergovernmental organization known as the United Nations (UN) to promote international peace and security. In creating the framework for the UN, the Allies reflected on the failures of the League of Nations, most notably its inability to prevent World War II by providing a meaningful check on German and Japanese imperialism. To address this, the UN created a Security Council with the power to issue sanctions and authorize military

force. The UN's broader membership aimed to avoid the failings of the League of Nations, which the United States never joined. The UN's charter was completed at a conference in San Francisco in April 1945 and was ratified in October of that year. Eleanor Roosevelt served as the United States' first delegate to the UN General Assembly, where she led the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The survivors of the Holocaust continued to face discrimination when they attempted to return home. In Kielce, Poland, for instance, Jews returning to their homes were greeted with mob violence that resulted in dozens of deaths. Meanwhile, roughly a quarter million Jews waited in displaced persons camps administered by the Allied military. These camps housed not only Jewish Holocaust survivors but also millions of others displaced by the shifting borders and destruction of the war. As countries refused to relax their immigration policies and admit these refugees, many attempted to emigrate to Palestine. The location of the ancient kingdom of Israel, Palestine had been regarded from biblical times as the ancestral Jewish homeland. For centuries, however, Palestine had had a predominantly Arab population, and following the end of World War I, it had come under British control via a decision of the League of Nations.

Thousands of these Jewish postwar émigrés were intercepted en route and forcibly returned to Europe. The refugee crisis led the newly formed UN in 1947 to partition Palestine into two segments—one intended to become an Arab state and one to become a Jewish state. The Jewish state of Israel was created in 1948. Arab countries did not support the UN's decision to partition the region, and Israel was almost immediately attacked by nearby Arab nations. A series of wars and conflicts among Israel, other nations, and Palestinian Arabs has continued for more than seventy-five years. While millions of Palestinian Arabs live in parts of the segment designated as a future Arab state, an official Palestinian state does not exist.

Legacy of World War II

The Second World War was a time of widespread destruction, death, and displacement. It is hard to form a precise estimate of how many people died due to the war. Apart from combat deaths, bombing campaigns, and systematic killings such as the Holocaust, many died of famine and disease. One estimate is that sixty million people—three-quarters of them civilians—perished from wartime violence or from hardship caused directly by the war.

The United States did not experience a famine or a breakdown in civilian infrastructure as happened in many other countries. Its approximately two thousand civilian deaths, largely attributable to bombings and war crimes, pale in comparison to the more than twelve million Soviet civilians who were killed. The United

States did, however, send sixteen million troops to fight in the war, and of these, some four hundred thousand died. With its domestic infrastructure almost completely spared, the United States did not face the kinds of extreme postwar hardship that prevailed in many parts of Europe and Asia.

In fact, the war cemented the United States' position as one of two superpowers—countries able to exercise their influence around the world. The other was the Soviet Union, a wartime military ally that would soon prove to be a political and economic adversary. You read in the previous unit about the Red Scare that followed the Soviet Union's rise to power in the 1910s; in the next unit, you will read about a similar mass panic that arose following the Second World War. Nonetheless, the United States and many other countries emerged from the war with a greater investment in international cooperation. The UN was just one of numerous alliances to arise after the war for purposes of political, economic, and military cooperation.

The war also led to broader societal changes as millions of soldiers demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life. Millions of Americans who had been deployed overseas now returned to a United States with a less agriculturally focused and more industrialized economy. These veterans, many of whom had acquired new skills during the war, faced the challenge of what to do next for education and employment. In 1944, Congress passed the G.I. Bill—formally, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act—to help with this process. The law provided veterans with health care as well as financial support for education. Millions of veterans used their G.I. Bill tuition benefit to attend trade school or obtain a college degree. Another provision of the G.I. Bill assisted veterans in buying a home at a preferential interest rate.

African American veterans benefited from the bill in some ways, though their efforts at homeownership were often frustrated by discriminatory housing practices. Moreover, Black service members abroad had often experienced better treatment from European officers and civilians than from their own commanders and peers. The return to unequal treatment after years of service overseas angered many and contributed to the rising Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s.

Think Twice



What lasting effects did World War II have on life in the United States?

Unit 5: Tension Abroad and Change at Home

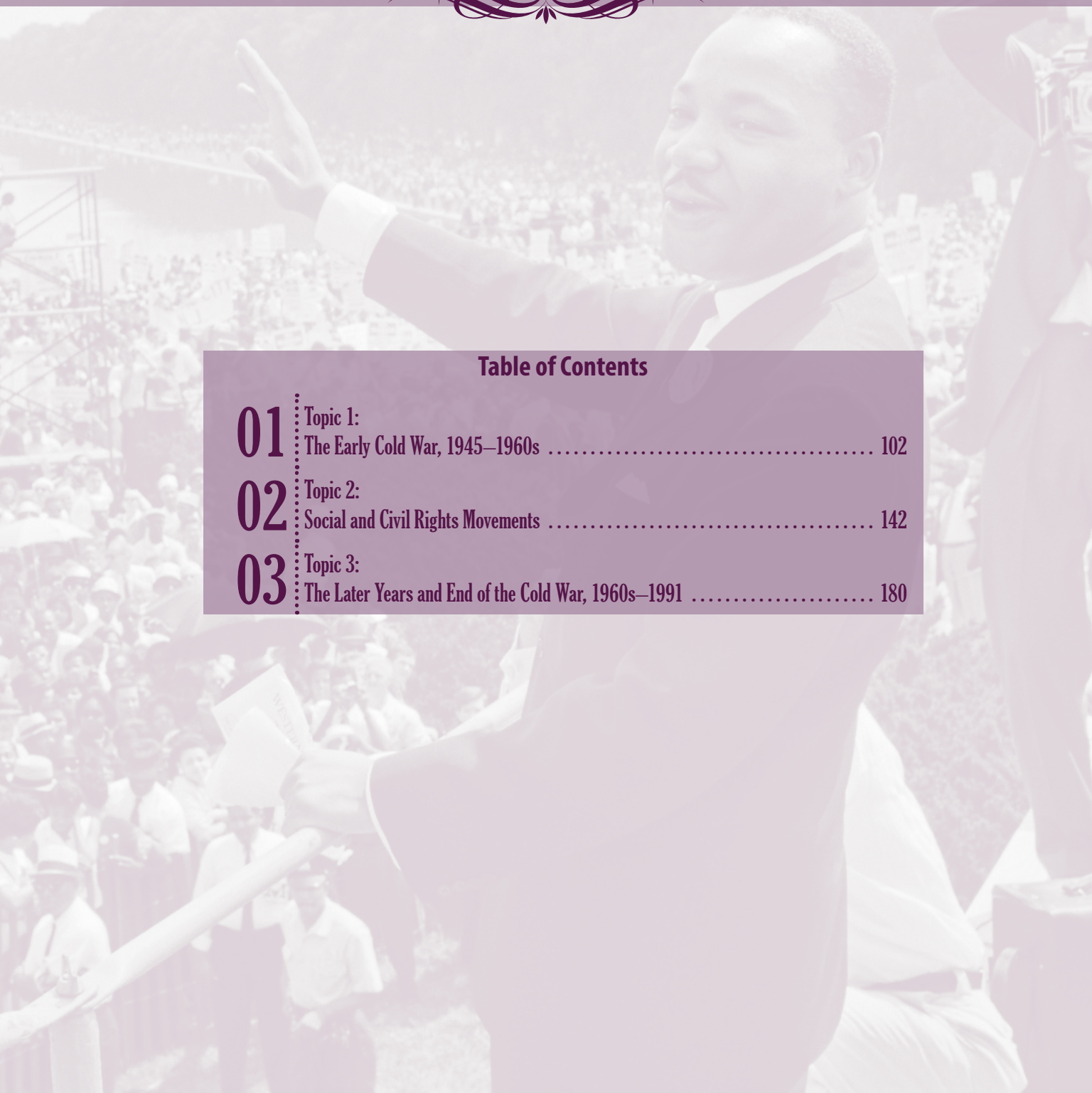


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Topic 1
The Early Cold War, 1945–1960s

Framing Question

How did the Cold War shape American society and global politics during the period from 1945 to 1960, and what key factors contributed to its origins and development?



British prime minister Winston Churchill, standing next to President Harry S. Truman, makes the V-for-victory gesture he helped popularize during World War II.

The Iron Curtain Descends

Setting the Scene

On March 5, 1946, a crowd gathers in the gymnasium at Westminster College, a small school in Fulton, Missouri, President Harry S. Truman's home state. The people in attendance are not there to watch a sporting event. Instead, they have come to hear Winston Churchill, the former British leader who navigated his country through the harrowing and deadly years of World War II.

Now in retirement, Churchill recognizes that he stands on a much smaller stage in the world than he once did, but he cannot rest or abandon his public role—not when a real and present danger looms. With U.S. president Harry Truman at his side, Churchill tells the crowd, "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the [European] Continent." He warns



Americans that if they do not stop communism from spreading, this "iron curtain" of communist, totalitarian rule will stifle and crush them, just as is happening across much of central and eastern Europe.

Churchill is correct: The Second World War is over, but a new conflict—the Cold War between the capitalistic Western world and the communist government of the Soviet Union and its satellite states—has just begun. Churchill's speech will quickly gain the attention of the international community. It will also shape public opinion in the United States and among its western European allies, setting the tone for the emerging conflict.

The Cold War Begins, 1945–49

By most accounts, 1945 was a good year for the United States. After a little more than three years of fighting around the world, American troops were coming home. The war effort had brought an end to the Great Depression, and the American economy was rapidly transitioning from wartime production to meet new demands for consumer goods. At the same time, countries around the world were coming together to form the United Nations, an international peacekeeping organization whose new members were determined to prevent a repeat of the two world wars.

Yet this time of positivity and peace was not destined to last long. The United States was not the only economic and military superpower to emerge from World War II. As Europe's once-great powers struggled to rebuild their war-torn lands and economies, the U.S.S.R.—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, commonly known as the Soviet Union—became a potent adversary of the United States. For the next few decades, the two world superpowers would engage in a Cold War, a conflict in which neither party directly fought each other. Still, each vied for influence indirectly through espionage, subversion, and **proxy wars**—military conflicts in which they offered support but did not directly participate—in other countries.

Ideological Origins

Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union had existed well before 1945, and Americans had remained nervous



Crowds poured into the streets in New York City to celebrate Victory over Japan (V-J) Day in 1945.

about the influence of Bolshevism and Soviet communism even after the peak of the First Red Scare. Americans' fears were rooted in the contrasting **ideologies** championed by the U.S. and Soviet governments. The United States was and is a representative democracy; essential principles such as limited government and individual rights are enshrined in the Constitution and are central to American society. Likewise, businesses are privately owned, and producers of goods and services generally have the freedom to decide what to produce and how to make it. Consumers are generally free to buy what they want at prices determined by market forces such as competition and consumer demand.

The Soviet Union, by contrast, was a communist country. As you have learned in earlier units, under communism, the government owns the means of production and makes the decisions about what to produce, how to create it, and what to charge for the finished product. The Soviet government was authoritarian, run by a small number of leaders who belonged to the Communist Party. The people's votes had no influence; favored members of the Communist Party won sham elections. The party repressed religious practices and encouraged a secular "scientific atheism." The government also prevented citizen protests. Dissent was punished by arrest, detention, imprisonment, and even death. To this end, the Soviet government relied on the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), a powerful secret police force that later became the KGB, to gather intelligence, terrorize citizens, and enforce government rule.

Political Origins

Ideological differences were not the only reason the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union developed. Political differences and disappointments were also a spark, many of them stemming from promises broken after the conclusion of World War II. As you learned in the previous unit, when the Big Three—the leaders of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union—met at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences in 1945, they agreed to a variety of plans. These included how Germany should be governed by the Allies after its surrender and how and when it should be expected to pay reparations. The Yalta Conference also produced a guarantee from Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet government and the Soviet Communist Party, not to interfere in free elections, particularly those in central and eastern European countries where the Soviets had left occupying forces.

Yet large cracks in the fragile wartime alliance began to show almost immediately. As the war neared its end, Stalin remained frustrated about the amount of time it took the United States and Great Britain to draw the German army's attention away from the Eastern Front and toward western Europe. At the same time,

PRIMARY SOURCE: IRON CURTAIN SPEECH, WINSTON CHURCHILL, 1946

Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain speech outlined the stark division between Eastern Europe and the rest of the continent following World War II.

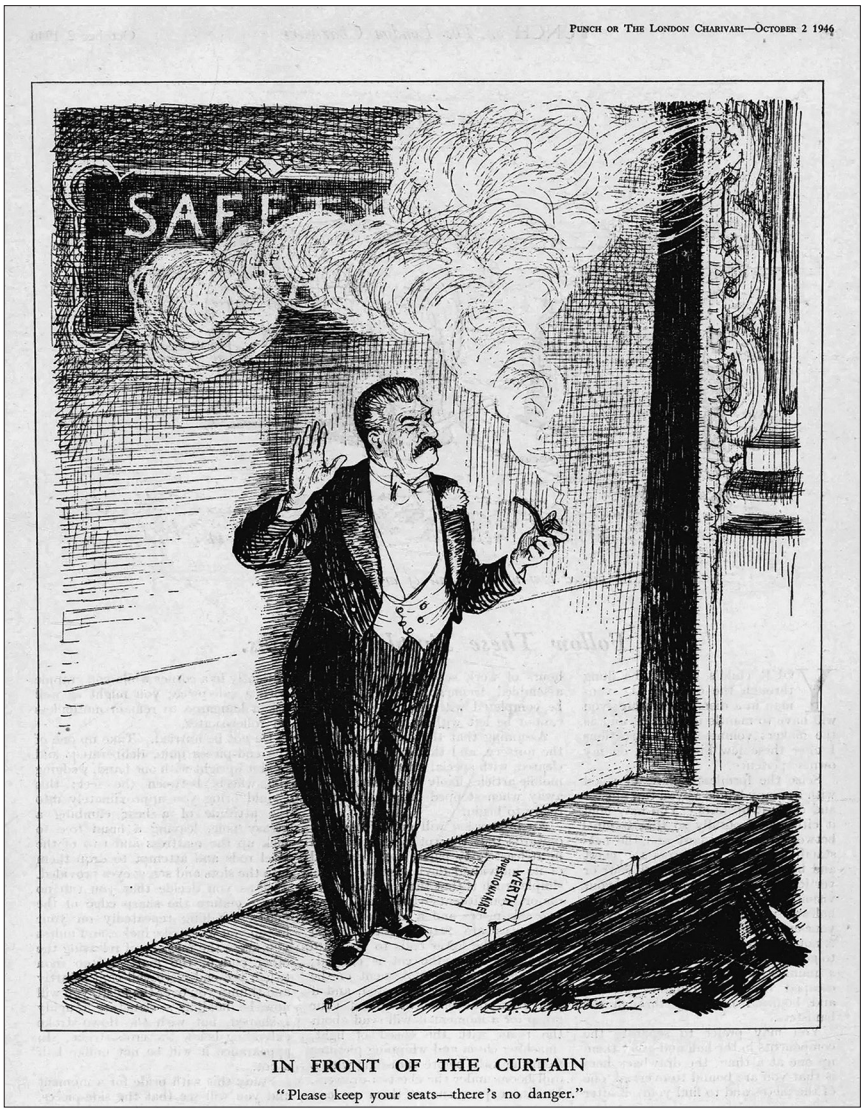
The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe-inspiring accountability to the future. . . .

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. . . .

From Stettin [Poland] in the Baltic to Trieste [Croatia] in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. . . . The Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy. . . . An attempt is being made by the Russians in Berlin to build up a quasi-Communist party in their zone of Occupied Germany by showing special favors to groups of left-wing German leaders. . . .

. . . It is because I am sure that our fortunes are still in our own hands and that we hold the power to save the future, that I feel the duty to speak out now that I have the occasion and the opportunity to do so. I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. But what we have to consider here today while time remains, is the permanent prevention of war and the establishment of conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries. Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be removed by a policy of appeasement. What is needed is a settlement, and the longer this is delayed, the more difficult it will be and the greater our dangers will become.

Source: Churchill, Winston S. "The Sinews of Peace." Speech at Westminster College, Fulton, MO, March 5, 1946. NATO On-line Library. https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1946/s460305a_e.htm.



The satire magazine *Punch* published this cartoon of Joseph Stalin obscuring an "iron curtain" in a theater in 1946, after Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain speech.

the United States' decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan—and not share its nuclear knowledge—was seen as a demonstration of its new role as an atomic superpower. Additionally, while the United States thought the most pragmatic plan for postwar Germany would be to help it recover economically, the Soviets wanted major reparations from Germany. Stalin also wished to keep Germany economically weak to prevent it from becoming a threat to the world yet again.

When Stalin then failed to uphold the promises he made at Yalta and created puppet communist governments in central and eastern European countries, the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union quickly

devolved to one based on suspicion and then outward distrust.

Former British prime minister Winston Churchill was increasingly alarmed by Stalin's actions and the rapid spread of communism in central and eastern Europe. He regarded them as a threat not only to liberal democracies in western Europe but also to the stability of the postwar world. On March 5, 1946, Churchill expressed these concerns in the Iron Curtain speech, also known as the "Sinews of Peace" speech. Churchill's speech was more than a warning to other Western countries. It served as a reminder of the importance of the alliance between the United States and Great Britain and a call for increased international cooperation in the new fight against communism. His speech proved highly influential in shaping Western perceptions of the Soviet Union.

The early battle lines of the Cold War had been drawn, and two distinct spheres of influence emerged: the United States as the leader of the democratic, capitalist West and the Soviet Union as the leader of the communist Soviet **bloc** of Eastern Europe, also called the Eastern bloc. Throughout the Cold War, both sides would work to extend these spheres of influence globally.



Think Twice

How did the differing ideologies and economic policies of the United States and the Soviet Union contribute to the outbreak of the Cold War?

Containment

Harry S. Truman, whom you know from Unit 4 as the U.S. president who oversaw the conclusion of World War II, was born into a farming family in Missouri in 1884. After serving honorably in World War I, Truman embarked on a highly consequential political career, rising from county judge to the U.S. Senate within twelve years, and then to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's running mate in 1944. Truman served as vice president for not even three months before assuming the presidency upon FDR's death on April 12, 1945.

Roosevelt had not informed Truman of most of the administration's plans, including the Manhattan Project. As a result, Truman had to learn on the job—and quickly—as he addressed a whirlwind of decisions and events in just a few months, from victory in Europe in May and the Potsdam Conference in July to the decision to drop atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in August. World War II had barely concluded when Truman was confronted with the question that Churchill would ask in his Iron Curtain speech: How should the United States address the spread of communism in Europe?

In 1947, George F. Kennan, an American diplomat who had been stationed in Moscow, the Soviet capital, articulated a policy designed to counter what he saw as the imminent Soviet plan to expand

communism beyond its current borders. "The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union," Kennan wrote, "must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."

This policy of **containment**, as it came to be known, would shape U.S. foreign relations for most of the Cold War. In the spring of 1947, President Truman officially committed to a policy of containment in southeastern Europe. The British government had been providing economic and military support to the government of Greece, now fighting a civil war against the Greek Communist Party, which was receiving indirect support from the Soviet Union. It had also been giving funds to Turkey to help rebuild its military. This British assistance in both Greece and Turkey was focused on preventing Soviet influence and possible expansion in both countries. When the British announced they would no longer provide aid to these countries, Truman asked Congress for $400 million to support Greece and Turkey, as well as approval to send U.S. troops to the area.



George F. Kennan entered the U.S. foreign service in 1925 and served at a number of "listening posts" around Europe to gather intelligence about the Soviet Union.

Truman warned that if communism were allowed to spread to Greece, it might then spread to Turkey—which could provide a Soviet gateway to the Middle East, where Stalin was already seeking greater access to the region's oil resources. Truman also framed U.S. involvement as a moral obligation, declaring, "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." This approach, later known as the Truman Doctrine, led to U.S. economic, military, and political aid.

The Truman Doctrine marked a turning point in U.S. foreign policy, with major consequences both at home and abroad. It very publicly committed the United States to the international community in an unprecedented way, signaling a major shift away from isolationist policies and toward a more active global role. It led to the creation of new national security organizations, including the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency. The Truman

Doctrine also contributed to increased military spending and a growing arms race with the Soviet Union.

Think Twice

How did containment contribute to the development of the Cold War?

The Marshall Plan

In Unit 4, you read about the vast destruction that World War II caused in Europe and around the world. The war nearly bankrupted Great Britain, which, like France, Germany, and other countries on the continent, faced the staggering task of rebuilding the cities, villages, factories, farms, roads, and rail lines that the years of conflict had reduced to rubble. Britain was also increasingly unable to maintain its colonies overseas.

At the end of the conflict, upward of eleven million people were still displaced from their homes, and many Europeans struggled with hunger. European countries desperately needed to rebuild, yet it was unclear how they might do this with their depleted national reserves, ruined infrastructure, and seriously handicapped industries.



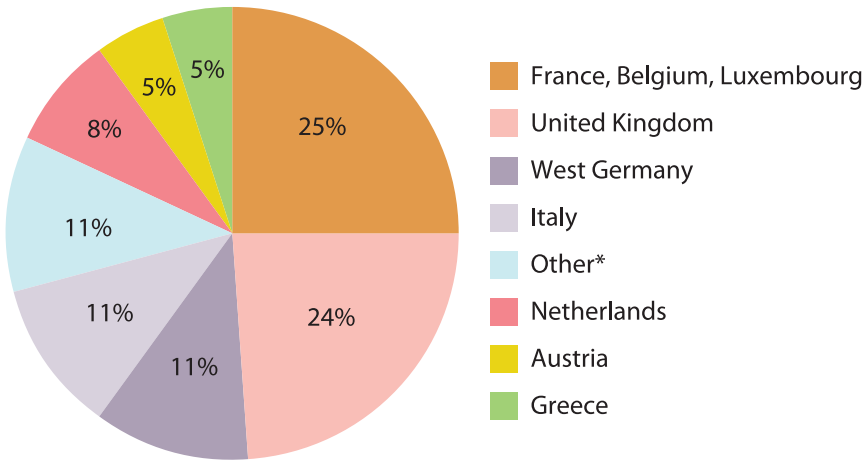


The heavily promoted Marshall Plan was designed in part to help war-damaged areas and to promote American support as a counter to growing communist influence. This poster promoting the Marshall Plan in Germany states, "The Marshall Plan helps Europe."

U.S. secretary of state George C. Marshall and others were concerned that economic insecurity was making countries in western Europe vulnerable to the spread of communism. In June 1947, Marshall outlined a plan to rebuild European economies with the help of American financial aid. This idea was translated into the Economic Recovery Act of 1948. Commonly known as the Marshall Plan, the act was consistent with the Truman Doctrine and promised to provide economic support to any European country, including the Soviet Union, that wished to accept it. Ultimately, the United States distributed $13.3 billion in aid over several years, mostly with no expectation of repayment, to seventeen countries in western and southern Europe. Stalin prevented central and eastern European countries from receiving American funds. In response to the Marshall Plan, which Stalin considered a U.S. ploy to buy European loyalty, the Soviet Union instituted the 1947 Molotov Plan to strengthen economic ties within the Eastern bloc. The Molotov Plan later became Comecon in 1949, an organization that worked to encourage economic development among member nations.

Flush with this new influx of American funds, western and southern European countries rebuilt their economies at an astounding pace. This recovery had significant benefits for the United States, too. In addition to stabilizing democratic governments in Europe, the recovery of

Percentage of Marshall Plan Funds by Country



*Other: includes Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey

Countries that participated in the Marshall Plan received funds based on their relative need, which was often connected to their potential for industrial regrowth.

European economies created expanded markets and ensured democratic trading partners for U.S. goods, including food and farming and industrial equipment. This in turn spurred U.S. job growth, as more Americans went to work producing agricultural and manufactured goods to meet the demand from overseas.

Think Twice

How did the Marshall Plan contribute to the Cold War?

Berlin Blockade and Airlift

At the Yalta Conference in 1945, the Allied leaders agreed to divide Germany into four zones of occupation after the war. The United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union would each occupy and administer a zone. Germany's capital, Berlin, though entirely within the Soviet zone of Germany, was also divided into four sectors administered by the Allies. The U.S.-, British-, and French-administered zones of the city were all in western Berlin, while the Soviets administered eastern Berlin.

This joint occupation was uneasy, to say the least. In 1949, the United States, Great Britain, and France merged their zones. Unsurprisingly, Soviet premier Joseph Stalin was furious. He feared a strong, democratic, and capitalist West Germany and saw the merger of zones as a betrayal of the earlier agreement. On June 24, 1948, he retaliated by cutting off all outside access—including access by land and river transit—to the Western-controlled zones in Berlin.

As the map on page 121 illustrates, the city of Berlin, though divided between the Western Allies and the Soviets, was located in Soviet-controlled East Germany. Stalin's goal was to force the United States, Great Britain, and France out of Western-controlled West Berlin, leaving the city entirely under Soviet control. However, the United States and Great Britain were determined to put up a fight and get supplies to Germans living in West Berlin. Starting on June 26, American and British planes began landing at Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin, laden with supplies.

Eventually, Stalin realized that the Western Allies were prepared to continue the airlift indefinitely, and he lifted the blockade on



A fleet of C-47 Skytrains unload their cargo at Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin during the airlift. At its busiest point, the airlift landed one plane at this airport every forty-five seconds.

May 12, 1949; however, the Berlin airlift continued until September 30 of that year. Over fifteen months, the Western Allies had delivered 2.3 million tons of cargo, including coal and food, to two million residents of West Berlin. Although the blockade ended, tensions in Berlin persisted. Years later, in 1961, the Berlin Wall was erected by the East German government, with the support of the Soviet Union, to stop the flow of East Germans fleeing through West Berlin to West Germany to escape life under communist rule.

Think Twice

How did the Berlin airlift contribute to the early progress of the Cold War?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

As you have learned, at the Yalta Conference, Stalin promised the Western Allies that he would allow free elections in Eastern Europe. Instead, Stalin supported the removal, often by assassination or intimidation, of noncommunist leaders in Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania, and in 1948, he facilitated a coup in Czechoslovakia (/chek*eh*slo*vah*kee*uh/). The presence of Soviet troops in central and eastern Europe underscored the perceived threat that Stalin posed to the democratic West.

In response, on April 4, 1949, the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland,

NATO and Warsaw Pact Countries in Europe, 1960



More than just a response to the creation of NATO, the Warsaw Pact also formed a buffer zone between the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe. This helped safeguard the Soviet Union from invasion while also allowing it to project power into Eastern Europe.

Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to provide for the collective defense of its members. Per Article 5 of the treaty, an attack against any NATO member "shall be considered an attack against them all." The formation of NATO communicated to the Soviet Union that members would form a united front against any aggression in western Europe. Greece and Turkey joined NATO in 1952. In 1955, the newly established Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), formed from the unified U.S., British, and French occupation zones but excluding West Berlin, joined NATO as well.

Although the NATO agreement was a defense treaty, the Soviets viewed the creation of NATO and West Germany as a form of aggression. To avoid being outmaneuvered, they established the Warsaw Pact in 1955. Like NATO, the Warsaw Pact united all Eastern bloc countries under a single military alliance. But beyond providing for mutual defense, as NATO did, the Warsaw Pact also served as an instrument to expand Soviet influence over Eastern Europe. A provision allowing Soviet troops to be stationed in other member countries meant that future pro-democracy uprisings would often be quashed by military intervention.

Think Twice

How did the formation of NATO contribute to the Cold War?

1949

The Cold War was well underway by the end of the 1940s. Tensions quickly spilled east from Europe to Asia, first to China and then to Korea, where U.S. involvement in a regional conflict would result in the deployment of hundreds of thousands of American troops. Both the Chinese Civil War and the development of nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union made 1949 a very troublesome year for the United States as it prepared to enter a new decade of the Cold War.

Chinese Civil War

China, long an empire, had become a republic in 1921. In the years leading up to World War II, a civil war had broken out between the ruling Nationalist Party, led by Chiang Kai-shek (/chahng*ky*shek/), and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Zedong. The Japanese aggression you read about in Unit 4 temporarily paused the civil war as the two sides uneasily united to fight Japan. However, the war resumed after Japan surrendered in World War II, and the CCP once again fought for control of the country.

With the policy of containment in mind, Truman and other U.S. leaders anxiously observed the conflict in China, concerned that the the country might fall to communism.

Truman sent Secretary of State George C. Marshall to China in December 1945 to negotiate an armistice and compromises, but corruption and fighting on both sides prevented a peaceful resolution.

While the Nationalists continued to make modest gains in early 1947, the CCP soon increased in strength, especially in rural regions of the country. Many Chinese were disillusioned by the national economic issues that persisted under the Nationalists, including rising inflation and a high cost of living. In January 1949, Chiang stepped down as China's president; on October 1, Mao declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The Soviet Union recognized the new government just a few days after its establishment. The United States, which had backed the Nationalists, refused to recognize the new Communist Party government. By the end of December, the Nationalist government had fled to the island of Taiwan. The Chinese Communist Party now controlled the world's most populous country.



In September 1945, Mao Zedong (left) and Chiang Kai-shek, celebrated Japan's defeat. Their fragile wartime alliance disintegrated after peaceful talks devolved into fighting between the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party.

The Chinese Civil War devastated the country. An estimated 600,000 Nationalist troops were killed, and the People's Liberation Army (the military force aligned with the CCP) suffered about 1.5 million casualties. Additionally, a staggering 5 million civilians died, many due to famine. The outcome of the war escalated American anti-communist sentiment and fueled the notion that Truman's policy of containment had failed and he had "lost" China. It also increased the fear that communism was spreading globally, not just in the Soviet Union's immediate orbit.

The Soviet Bomb

The Chinese Civil War was far from the only event to worry the United States in 1949. That August, Soviet scientists successfully detonated their first atomic bomb in Kazakhstan, a republic of the Soviet Union.

There were now two nuclear superpowers in the Cold War. The U.S. government soon began development of an even more powerful atomic weapon, the hydrogen bomb. It succeeded at this in late 1952; the Soviet Union followed suit three years later.

Think Twice



Why did the Chinese Civil War concern the United States?

Korean War

Not long after the Chinese Civil War ended, the world's attention turned to the Korean Peninsula. Japan had controlled Korea starting in 1910 but was forced out when it lost World War II. In September 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union divided the Korean Peninsula along the thirty-eighth parallel into two administrative zones, North Korea and South Korea. In 1948, the South declared itself the Republic of Korea, and the North declared itself the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Despite its official name, North Korea, influenced by the Soviet Union, was an authoritarian communist state. South Korea, influenced by the United States, was a democracy.

North Korean leader Kim Il-sung built up the military and eventually secured Soviet approval and support for an invasion of South Korea. On June 25, 1950, more than one hundred thousand North Korean troops, bolstered by Chinese soldiers and Soviet weaponry, surged across the thirty-eighth parallel in a surprise attack. On June 28, they reached the South Korean capital of Seoul.

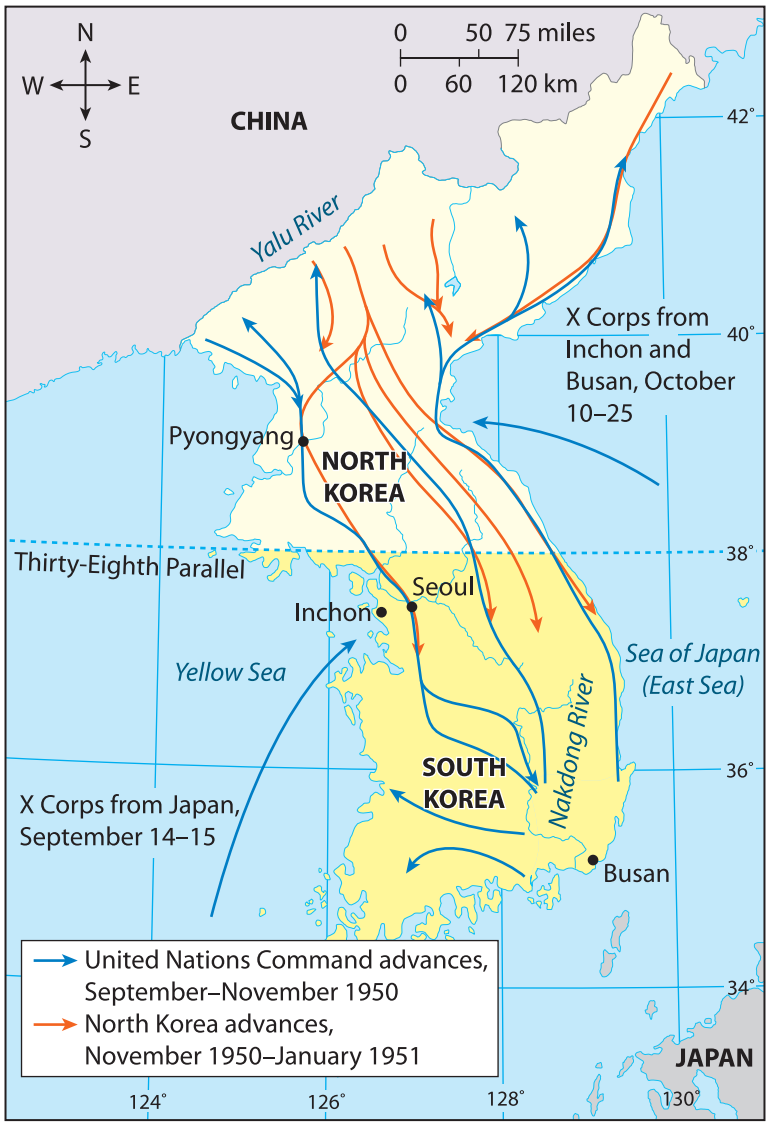
It was clear to Americans that South Korea needed support—and fast. President Harry S. Truman petitioned the United Nations for sanctions against North Korea and requested military assistance for South Korea. The UN Security Council responded by passing Resolutions 82, 83, and 84. The first resolution condemned the invasion and called for the removal of North Korean troops from South Korea. The second gave UN member states the legal authority to intervene in the Korean War. The third designated the United States the leader of the United Nations Command (UNC).

While UN forces were preparing, North Korea pushed farther south. The tide began to change in August. General Douglas MacArthur—who remained popular with the American public due to his role in the Allied victory in World War II—was assigned to the conflict, and the influx of U.S. Army and Marine Corps troops and a steady flow of supplies strengthened the position of the South Korean army and the UNC. The North Koreans had taken nearly the entire country, but the combined forces were able to stop their advance at the Nakdong (/nahk*dong/) River, just above the critical southern port of Busan.

As early as July, General MacArthur began planning an ambitious amphibious landing behind enemy lines. He believed a surprise attack was just what South Korea and the UNC needed to break North Korea's grip on the peninsula. Despite treacherous conditions, MacArthur designated Inchon, a port on the west coast of South Korea, as the landing site. The Inchon landing began on September 15; less than two weeks later, on September 26, marine and infantry units recaptured Seoul.

MacArthur was authorized to push deeper into North Korean territory only as long as

Korean War, 1950–51



UNC forces, led by General MacArthur, made up significant ground in the fall of 1950, but most of this progress was lost in the North Korean counteroffensive later that year and in early 1951.

there was no threat of Chinese or Soviet intervention. President Truman and the UNC warned that pushing too close to Chinese and Soviet borders would escalate the conflict and could lead to, in Truman's words, "a third world war." They knew that more than two hundred thousand Chinese troops were massed at the Korean border. When MacArthur ignored their warnings as well as those of the Chinese government and continued north, determined to capture the entirety of North Korea, Mao Zedong ordered Chinese troops to fight alongside North Korean soldiers. The combined Chinese and North Korean forces

pushed American-led forces back to the thirty-eighth parallel by the end of December. After nearly a year of fighting, both sides had returned to their original positions.

As the war dragged on and a stalemate developed, support for both President Truman and the conflict began to decline. Truman and MacArthur also began to clash openly. Whereas Truman supported a diplomatic solution to conflict with China, MacArthur openly supported a full invasion that could include the use of atomic bombs. He also criticized Truman publicly. In response to MacArthur's insubordination, Truman fired the general on April 11, 1951.

It soon became clear that neither side could win the conflict, and on July 8, representatives from the UNC, the South Korean army, and the North Korean army met to discuss an armistice agreement. It took two more years for discussions to reach an agreement that would satisfy all parties. The armistice did not technically end the war, but both parties agreed to a ceasefire and to honor a demilitarized zone (DMZ) separating the two countries along the thirty-eighth parallel. Because only an armistice was signed, the war technically never ended. North and South Korea remain in a state of ceasefire today.

Though relatively brief, the Korean War consumed significant resources and resulted in significant casualties. About 300,000 U.S. troops were deployed to Korea between 1950 and 1953. At the peak of the conflict, Americans composed 40 percent of the UNC forces. Approximately 37,000 Americans died, 92,000 were wounded, and 8,000 were declared missing in action. At least half a million North Korean and South Korean forces on each side were killed or wounded. Meanwhile, more than 1.6 million civilians were killed or went missing during the conflict. China, too, suffered significant casualties, with hundreds of thousands of its people dead or wounded.

The Korean War was the first military conflict in which African American servicepeople—of whom an estimated six hundred thousand served during the conflict—were not segregated from their white counterparts. In 1948, President Truman had issued Executive Order 9981, formally desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces.

Think Twice



Was the Korean War a success in the United States' fight against communism? Why or why not?

Fighting Communism at Home

As communism took hold in Europe and Asia, Americans worried about not only its spread overseas but also its presence within the United States. In Unit 4, you read about the First Red Scare, which took place in 1918 and 1919 in response to the Russian Revolution. Though the intensity of this initial panic eventually dulled,

the fear that communists would somehow take over the United States redeveloped in the late 1930s and continued into the 1950s.

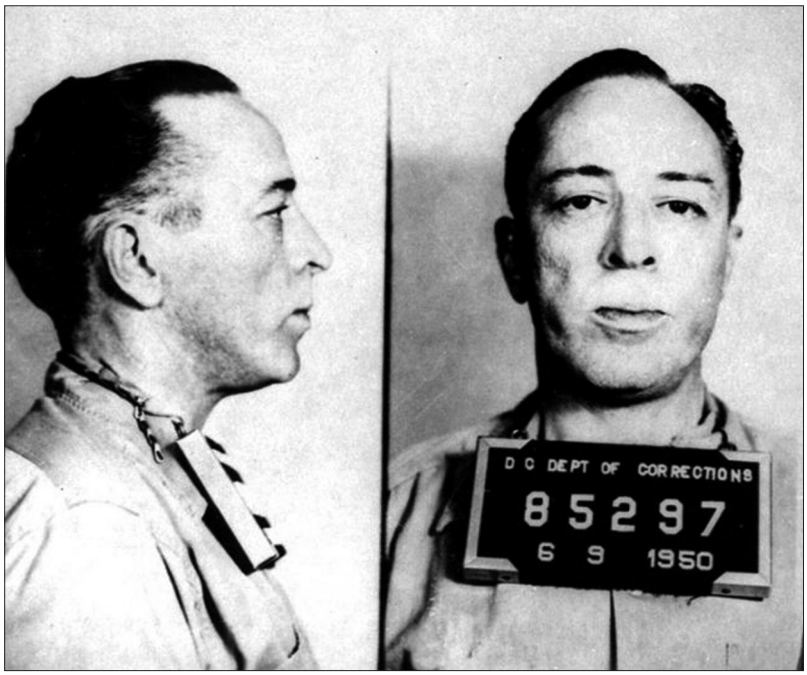
The U.S. House of Representatives established the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1938. Its original purpose was to investigate disloyal and subversive individuals and groups in the United States. Individuals alleged to be communists and a threat to national security were compelled to appear before HUAC, where committee members questioned them about their associations with other communists and the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA). The CPUSA, formed in the late 1920s, was especially influential in the labor movement. Membership grew during the Great Depression. It peaked at eighty-five thousand members in 1942 during World War II while the United States and the Soviet Union were temporarily allied.

During the late 1940s, HUAC accused many Hollywood actors, directors, and writers of being communists or sympathizers who wanted to influence Americans through their movies. Most of them were not communists, but the way they expressed their political views caused HUAC to target them. Many people in Hollywood and in the media wound up on **blacklists** as a result of HUAC hearings, most notably a group known as the Hollywood Ten.

The August 1949 detonation of a nuclear bomb by the Soviet Union caused panic in the United States. The following year, three people—Klaus Fuchs, a scientist on the Manhattan Project, and an American couple named Ethel and Julius Rosenberg—were arrested for their involvement in the transfer of nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union, which had led to the Soviets' successful detonation attempt. Arrested in Great Britain, Fuchs was sentenced to prison; the Rosenbergs, arrested in the United States, were executed on June 19, 1953.

HUAC investigations into the scientific community intensified. At the same time, other federal efforts, including a "loyalty program" that President Truman established by executive order, led to the investigation of millions of federal employees. By the end of 1950, as many as 10 percent of the nation's engineers and scientists were required to take a loyalty pledge to keep their government security clearances.

Like HUAC, Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin, fanned the flames of the Second Red Scare and brought it to a fever pitch. McCarthy was not a member of HUAC. However, he used similar tactics to propel himself to the national stage. In February 1950, McCarthy gave a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, alleging without evidence that more than two hundred communists worked in the State Department. When the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations later called upon McCarthy to testify about his claims, he was unable to provide a single name. Despite this, McCarthy gained prominence as Americans looked for an outlet for their fears and frustrations. Over the next four years,

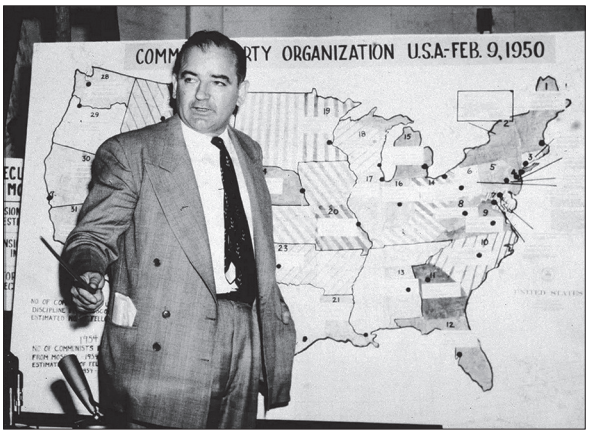


Dalton Trumbo, a well-known Hollywood screenwriter, refused to answer questions in a HUAC hearing and was arrested and then sentenced for contempt of Congress. After serving ten months in prison, Trumbo was blacklisted by movie studios, though two of his movies—one credited to someone else and the other written under a pseudonym—would later win Oscars.

McCarthy very publicly accused, investigated, and interrogated a wide range of federal employees; not even the U.S. Army and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were immune from his unsubstantiated probes. McCarthy went so far as to attack those close to Truman's successor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower—including George C. Marshall, the man who organized Operation Overlord, conceived and implemented the Marshall Plan, and tried to negotiate peace in the Chinese Civil War.

Even though McCarthy's attacks were baseless, many people were afraid to speak out against him, fearing accusations that could ruin their careers and reputations. Some brave individuals did stand up to McCarthyism. In June 1950, just a few months after McCarthy's bombshell "revelation" about communist infiltration at the State Department, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine gave an impassioned speech on the Senate floor, decrying McCarthy's actions and chastising Democrats and Republicans alike for their failure to curb his behavior.

In March 1954, esteemed journalist Edward R. Murrow openly criticized McCarthy on national television. Unlike some of his contemporaries in the media, Murrow resisted industry blacklisting and was not afraid to challenge McCarthy's bullying tactics. Buoyed by a rise in anti-McCarthy sentiment, Murrow presented a special report that featured numerous clips of McCarthy behaving like



During the Senate hearings in which McCarthy "investigated" army personnel, the senator relied heavily on dramatic posturing and misleading visual aids and documents to make his claims.

a demagogue as he spread false claims to maintain his place in the national spotlight.

Murrow's coverage preceded McCarthy's ultimate undoing. From April to June 1954, major news networks broadcast televised coverage of what became known as the Army–McCarthy hearings. Americans watched as McCarthy made increasingly reckless accusations against U.S. Army officials and service members, including questioning their actions and interrogating their political beliefs. During a hearing on June 9, Joseph Welch, an attorney for the army, rebuked McCarthy's accusations against his client, saying, "Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or recklessness." And when McCarthy persisted in his assault, Welch interrupted forcefully, exclaiming, "Have you no sense of decency?" This moment caused McCarthy's popularity to decline dramatically, and he was later censured, or formally reprimanded, by the Senate in December of that year.

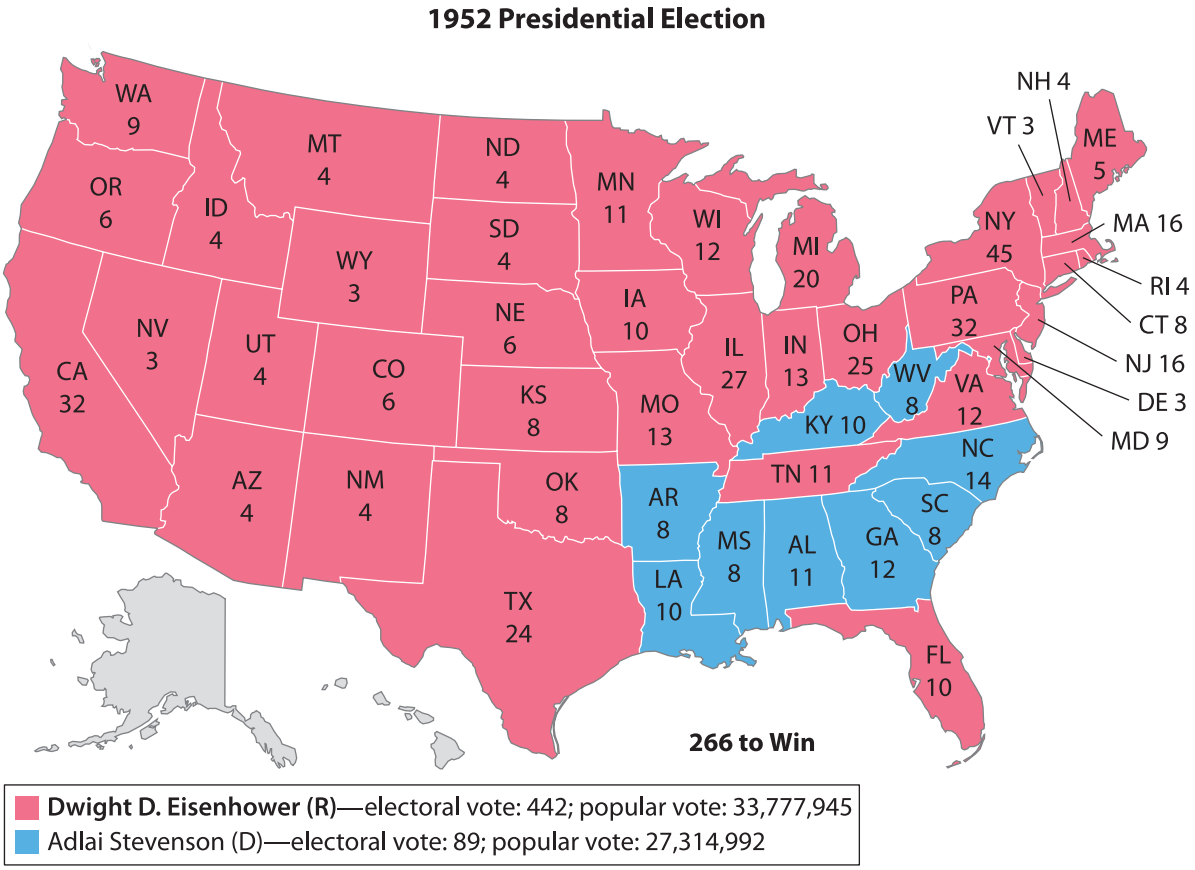
Think Twice

How did the Cold War help shape American society during the early 1950s?

The Eisenhower Years, 1953–61

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969) was born in Texas and raised on a farm in Kansas. He graduated from West Point in 1915 and oversaw a tank training center during World War I. Although that war ended before he was deployed overseas, his experiences stateside marked the beginning of an illustrious military career. He rose through the ranks of the U.S. Army, serving during World War II first as a brigadier general and later as a five-star general. As you learned in Unit 4, Eisenhower commanded the Allied invasion of North Africa during Operation Torch, led the amphibious invasion of Italy, served as the supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force starting in 1943, and commanded the Allied invasion at Normandy on D-Day. Eisenhower returned to the United States a war hero, and a very popular one at that.

Both the Democratic and Republican Parties approached Eisenhower about



The 1952 Republican platform focused on what it called the K_1C_2 formula: Attack the Truman administration's handling of Korea, communism, and corruption. Buttons, posters, and television ad spots promoted Eisenhower's candidacy, popularizing the slogan "I like Ike!"

running for president. But Eisenhower declined, and in 1950 he instead became NATO's first supreme Allied commander Europe, a leadership position responsible for overseeing the organization's military operations in Europe.

Eisenhower faced similar pressure to run for president again in 1952, and this time he agreed. He accepted the Republican nomination and chose Richard M. Nixon, a U.S. senator from California, as his running mate. Eisenhower remained very popular with the public; his stellar military record and plain, direct manner of speaking both worked in his favor. He was also politically moderate, which increased his appeal. Eisenhower went on to defeat Democrat Adlai Stevenson in the general election, securing 55 percent of the popular vote and 442 of 531 electoral votes. Stevenson carried much of the Deep South, an area that had voted Democrat since before the Civil War.

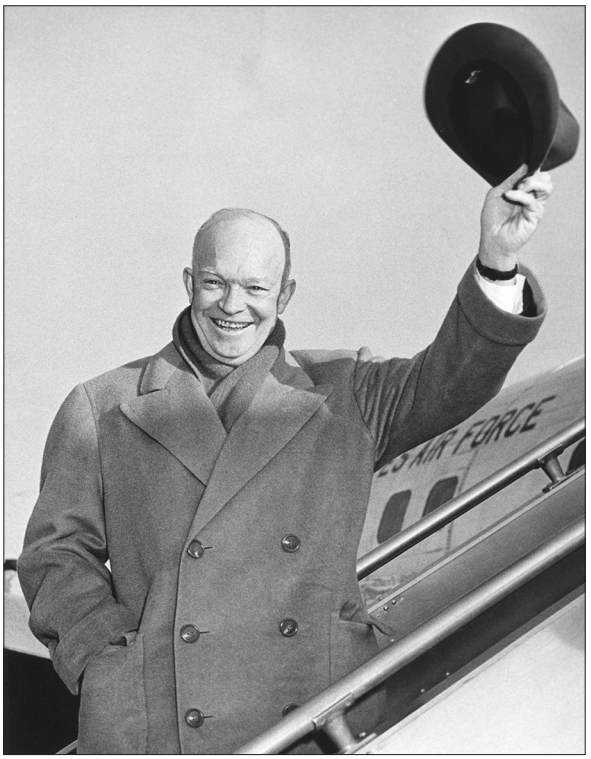
Think Twice

How did Dwight D. Eisenhower's military career contribute to his popularity and eventual election as president?

Domestic Prosperity

Domestic prosperity, consumerism, and Republican-steered economic agendas were defining characteristics of the Truman and then Eisenhower years. The Great Depression and World War II were over, and unemployment and inflation were low. This postwar prosperity had the added benefit of showcasing the superiority of capitalism over communism during the Cold War.

In 1944, Congress had passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act—also called the G.I. Bill—which provided college tuition assistance, making career advancement more accessible to World War II veterans. The G.I. Bill also provided inexpensive home loans, which helped lead to a boom in homeownership and the growth of suburbs. Likewise, the increased affordability and ownership of automobiles allowed Americans to live farther from their workplaces. Between 1946 and 1964, millions of Americans had children, resulting in the birth of more than seventy million babies during what became known as the baby boom. Growing families moved from crowded urban areas into housing developments built outside cities. Developers like William Levitt capitalized on this growth and built prefabricated homes, making them affordable for many American families.



Dwight D. Eisenhower

A federal focus on road infrastructure encouraged suburban migration. Building a federal interstate highway system that would better connect the country's regions was a priority for Eisenhower when he took office. Decades earlier, after World War I ended, Eisenhower had participated in a U.S. Army motor convoy to see how long it would take the military to travel across the country. It took sixty-two days for eighty vehicles and 280 men to travel the 3,251 miles (5,232 km) from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco in 1919. Then, during World War II, Eisenhower experienced the efficiency of Germany's network of freeways known as the *Autobahn* and the competitive advantage it created for the Nazis—and for the Allies, later in the war.



New highways built under the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act standardized lane and shoulder widths, underpass heights, and the frequency of exits. This photograph shows a newly completed cloverleaf interchange in Denver, Colorado, in 1958.

The National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, also known as the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, expanded the U.S. interstate highway system from 6,500 to 41,000 miles (10,460 to 65,980 km). It also allocated $25 billion to fund the massive undertaking, which eventually impacted the United States in a variety of ways. From a national security standpoint, the highway system reflected Cold War concerns, as planners believed it could facilitate rapid evacuation or military deployment in the event of a nuclear attack or invasion. But it also made commuting to work from suburbs to cities easier, increasing reliance on cars and accelerating the rise of American car culture.

The National Interstate and Defense Highways Act also had negative consequences. The new interstate highway system often followed existing roads. In the past, these roads connected to other, smaller byways that led to small towns and rural communities. However, the highway system utilized entrances and exits that were often a significant distance from each other, which eliminated the byways. As a result, many small towns and rural communities were now isolated from passing traffic. New highways were frequently built through existing neighborhoods, separating one side from the other. Other neighborhoods—communities that were disproportionately poor, African American, or both—were leveled to make way for new construction.

Consumerism and Conformity

The Eisenhower years were also characterized by mass consumerism and growing

conformity. During World War II, women had helped keep the country running on the home front and made direct contributions to the war effort overseas. But as men returned to the United States, some women were pressured to leave the workforce and focus on the roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. Television helped increase this pressure. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of U.S. households with television sets grew from 9 percent to 90 percent. Americans tuned in to the same programs across the country and were therefore exposed to the same ideas at the same time. Situation comedies like *Leave It to Beaver* and *The Donna Reed Show* reinforced cultural norms of the suburban, middle-class nuclear family. In a short period of time, conformity stretched across much of American culture and society, with Americans wearing similar clothes, buying similar products, and living in houses that often looked very similar to all the others in the neighborhood.

Not all Americans embraced postwar conformity. A counterculture emerged among some young people during the 1950s. Members of the "Beat generation," such as authors Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, challenged and rejected normative social and cultural values in their writing, instead favoring spontaneity and experimentalism. Folk and rock-and-roll music became increasingly popular with younger Americans, and the singer Elvis Presley scandalized audiences with his gyrating hips. The growing counterculture movement foreshadowed larger shifts that would occur during the 1960s, which you will learn more about in the next topic.

Modern Republicanism

As a political moderate, Eisenhower frequently clashed with members of his party over the country's economic and social direction. Conservative Republicans at the time remained opposed to the federal programs that had been created under the New Deal and during President Harry S. Truman's time in office. Many Republican politicians also sought to reduce regulations on businesses, including consumer and environmental protections. But Eisenhower adhered to what he referred to as "Modern Republicanism." He supported individual choice and the free market, but he also emphasized the importance of social safety nets for unemployed people, aging Americans, and others who were unable to care for or support themselves. During his time in office, Eisenhower expanded Social Security and raised the federal minimum wage. He also secured federal funding for low-income housing and created the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Not all Americans enjoyed prosperity in the Eisenhower years. Though the G.I. Bill was race-neutral on paper, it was often

administered in discriminatory ways. Many African American veterans were denied benefits they should have received. African Americans continued to be denied home loans through a policy called redlining, which you read about in Unit 4, and they were often explicitly excluded from newly built suburban communities. Even though poverty rates declined under Eisenhower, forty million Americans—about 20 percent of the population—still lived in poverty in 1960. Certain groups were more likely to experience poverty than others, especially children and people over the age of sixty-five, as well as African Americans, who experienced wage and employment discrimination.

A range of other issues came to the surface at this time, especially the push for civil rights. The Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the doctrine of "separate but equal" established by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which you read about in Unit 2. Yet noncompliance with this ruling in Southern states, especially Arkansas, led Eisenhower to take direct action to uphold civil rights. You will read more about this in the next topic.



Think Twice

How did domestic prosperity, consumerism, and conformity during the 1950s reflect the ideas of Modern Republicanism under Eisenhower?

Eisenhower's Foreign Policy

The pressures of the Cold War compelled the Eisenhower administration to prioritize foreign policy. In 1953, Eisenhower and his administration outlined the New Look, a military strategy designed to prepare the country for the growing conflict with the Soviet Union. The New Look outlined a series of priorities for the country, including strengthening existing alliances and forming new ones, especially with countries that had not aligned themselves with the Soviet Union. The strategy outlined the use of CIA covert operations to undermine Soviet influence worldwide. It also emphasized the importance of minimizing the economic impact of defense spending while allocating more resources to building up the Air Force.

Deterrence by way of expanding the country's nuclear arsenal was essential to the New Look. In 1954, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles introduced two policies related to deterring a Soviet nuclear attack. The first was massive retaliation: The United States announced that if attacked, it would respond with a significantly larger counterattack. For example, an attack using conventional weapons could be met with a nuclear response. The second policy was **brinksmanship**. Instead of working to maintain the careful balance of global powers, the Eisenhower administration was

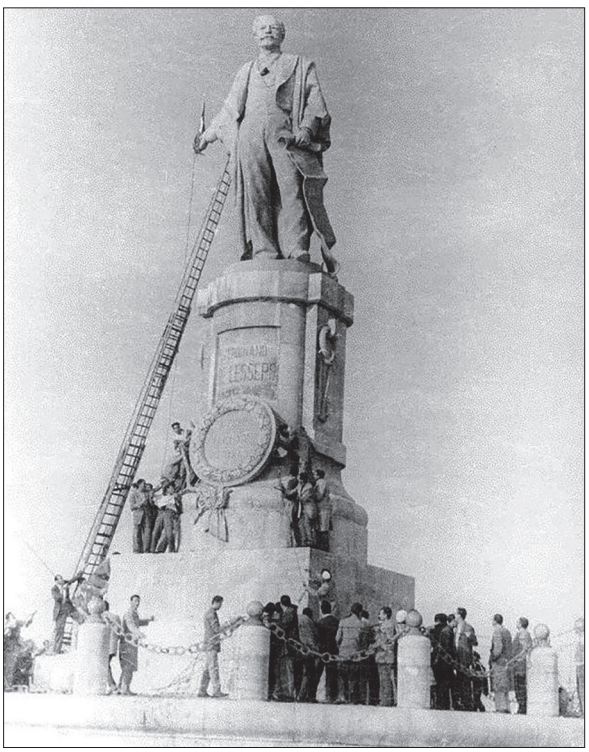
committed to never backing down; it would push the country to the brink of war and even risk starting an actual war to gain the upper hand.

Think Twice

Explain Eisenhower's New Look strategy in the Cold War.

Suez Crisis

Just a few years after the Korean War, a crisis in the Middle East pitted the United States and the Soviet Union against each other once again. This time, it involved the Suez Canal.



Egyptians removed a statue of French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps, the designer of the Suez Canal and a symbol of European imperialism, from the canal during the Suez Crisis.

The Suez Canal is a waterway that cuts across Egypt's Sinai Peninsula to connect the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is a crucial shipping route for goods and oil between Europe and the Middle East.

In 1955, the United States and Great Britain announced that they would commit $70 million to help Egypt finance the construction of the Aswan High Dam on the Nile River. This significant project would enable the country to control flooding and generate electricity. The U.S. government hoped that the aid would encourage Egypt's president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, to reconsider his ties to the Soviet Union—and, as a result, would reduce Soviet influence in the Middle East. Less than a year later, when it became clear that Nasser had no intention of severing ties with the Soviet government, Secretary of State Dulles reneged on the funding. In response, Nasser seized control of the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956.

According to the contract that funded construction of the canal in 1869, Great Britain and France retained legal ownership of the canal until 1966. But Nasser ignored this arrangement and declared that the Egyptian government now owned the Suez Canal. The revenues it collected from passing ships would fund construction of the new dam.

The United States, worried that the Soviet Union would intervene, scrambled for

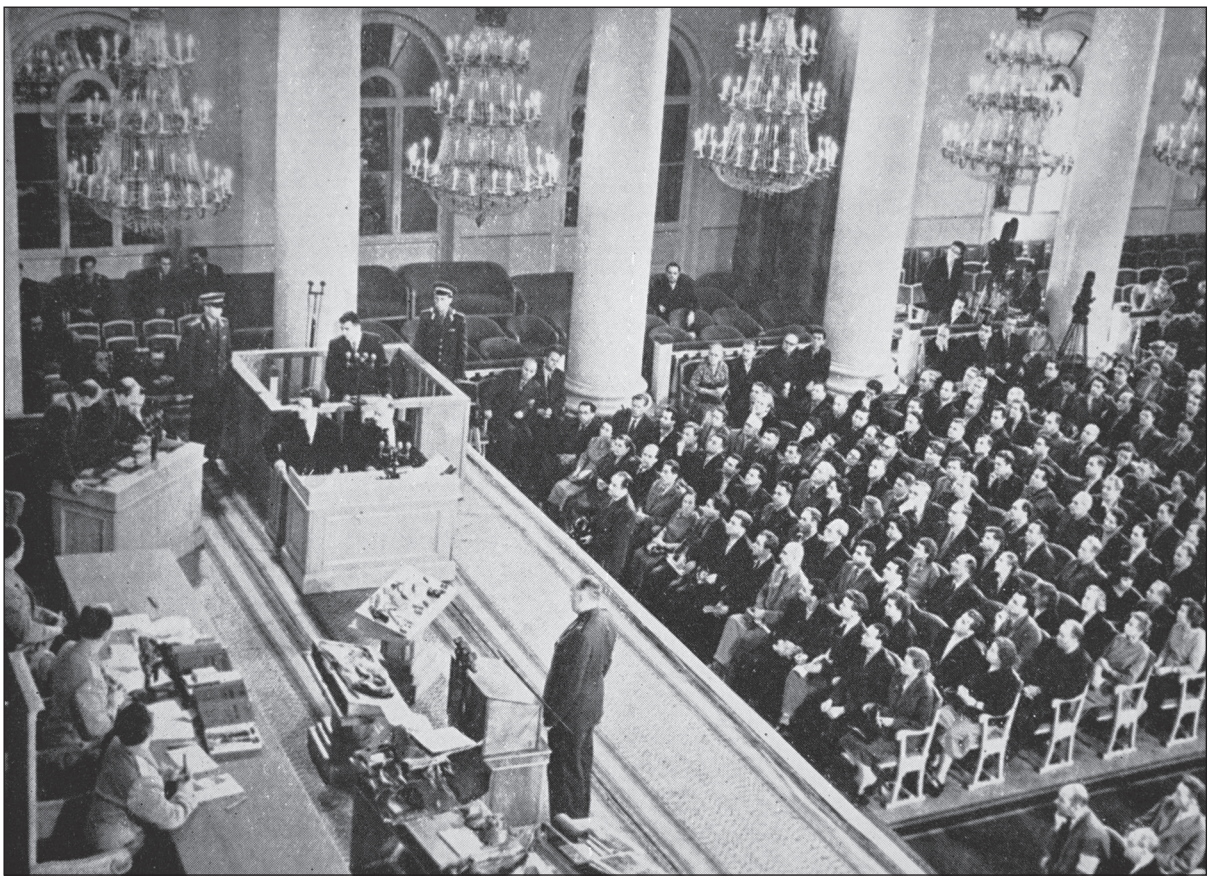
a diplomatic solution to the Suez Crisis, including proposing the creation of a Suez Canal Users' Association. This eighteen-country organization would operate the canal. When negotiations failed, British, French, and Israeli forces invaded Egypt in late October 1956, intending to reclaim the canal and overthrow Nasser. The United Nations ordered a ceasefire on November 7. British and French troops withdrew in December, while Israeli troops remained in Egypt until March 1957. The Suez Canal remained firmly in Egyptian hands.

Think Twice

How did U.S. concerns about Soviet expansion contribute to the Suez Crisis?

The U-2 Incident

As you read earlier, covert operations were an essential part of Eisenhower's New Look. In May 1960, one covert operation became world news when the Soviets shot down an American U-2—a high-altitude aircraft—that was secretly taking photographs of Soviet military bases. On May 5, Soviet leader Nikita



The Soviet Union tried Francis Gary Powers and sentenced him to ten years in prison. He was returned to the United States two years later in exchange for a Soviet spy.

Khrushchev exposed the incident and called it an "aggressive act." The United States initially denied the mission, unaware the Soviets had captured the pilot. Two days later, Khrushchev released more information to the press. Not only did the Soviets have the American pilot, Francis Gary Powers, in custody in Moscow, but Powers had revealed the details of his mission and confessed to working for the CIA. Eisenhower eventually acknowledged his awareness of the U-2 program on May 11.

The U-2 Incident, as it came to be known, heightened tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Later that month, President Eisenhower and Khrushchev met in Paris for a previously scheduled summit. On May 16, Khrushchev announced he would not participate in the talks unless Eisenhower took specific actions: Apologize to the Soviet Union, stop future reconnaissance missions over Soviet territory, and hold those who authorized the mission to account. Eisenhower promised that no such flights would happen in the future, but that was not enough for Khrushchev, and the summit came to an abrupt end the following day.

Cuba and Eisenhower's Farewell

In Unit 3, you read about U.S. interest in Cuba, a small island nation just ninety miles (145 km) off the east coast of Florida. In 1959, Fidel Castro, a communist revolutionary leader, took control of the Cuban government. His close relationship with the Soviet Union and its leader, Nikita Khrushchev, meant that Cuba posed a new threat to the United States.

In March 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had approved a CIA plan to train Cuban exiles who would invade Cuba, rally support among the Cuban people, overthrow Castro, and establish a pro–United States government on the island. The mission was supposed to be covert. However, many members of the Cuban community in Florida knew of the plan, including that the CIA was running training camps in Guatemala. Cuban intelligence brought this information back to Castro as early as the fall of 1960. As you will read shortly, it would be Eisenhower's successor, President John F. Kennedy, who handled the fallout.

A few days before Kennedy's inauguration, President Eisenhower gave a farewell address, a tradition begun by our country's first president. Like George Washington's address, which you read in Unit 1, and to the surprise of some Americans, Eisenhower's farewell included warnings. He spoke of the significance of the growing arms race with the Soviet Union and the rise of the military-industrial complex—the increasingly intertwined relationship among the government, the military, and the people who produce military technology. Eisenhower warned that this third group would continue to push the government to produce more and more weaponry, not in the interest of the nation, but in the interest of

increasing their own economic and political power. Eisenhower also warned Americans that they could "no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense." In other words, the federal government needed a plan to successfully navigate the Cold War conflict. President Kennedy learned quickly just how difficult this would be.

Think Twice

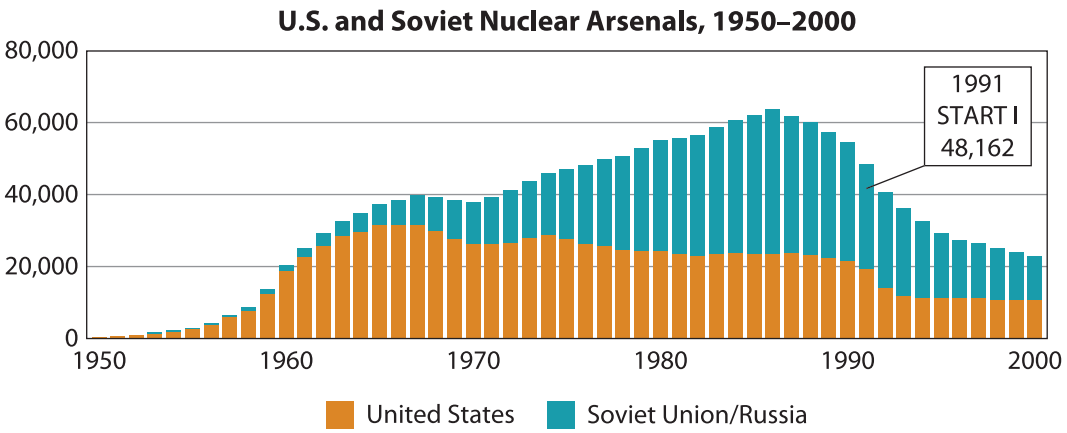
What warning did President Eisenhower give about the military-industrial complex in his farewell address, and why did he think it was important for the United States to plan for national defense?

The Arms Race

In Unit 4, you read about the Manhattan Project and President Truman's decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which eventually persuaded Japan to surrender, ending World War II. U.S. atomic capabilities had spurred the Soviet Union to ramp up its nuclear program.

During the Cold War, both countries worked to build up their nuclear arsenals, competing to amass the largest stockpile. In 1956, the United States had just over 2,100 strategic nuclear **warheads**, and the Soviet Union had fewer than 100. But at their peaks, the U.S. nuclear stockpile reached 31,000 warheads compared to the Soviet Union's 40,000. After a while, the arms race was no longer just about who had the most nuclear warheads. Both sides also developed more destructive weapons, specifically thermonuclear, or hydrogen, bombs.

Building massive nuclear arsenals was more economical than maintaining large standing armies, and nuclear war was a greater deterrent than conventional war. Earlier in the topic, you read about Secretary of



Nuclear stockpiles continued to grow through the early 1990s despite multiple agreements to limit them.

PRIMARY SOURCE: ATOMS FOR PEACE, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, 1953

President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech sought to ease global tensions surrounding the development and use of nuclear weapons. It also marked a significant shift in American nuclear policy and set the stage for later efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons.

If at one time the United States possessed what might have been called a monopoly of atomic power, that monopoly ceased to exist several years ago. Therefore, although our earlier start has permitted us to accumulate what is today a great quantitative advantage, the atomic realities of today comprehend two facts of even greater significance. First, the knowledge now possessed by several nations will eventually be shared by others, possibly all others.

Second, even a vast superiority in numbers of weapons, and a consequent capability of devastating retaliation, is no preventive, of itself, against the fearful material damage and toll of human lives that would be inflicted by surprise aggression. . . .

It is with the book of history, and not with isolated pages, that the United States will ever wish to be identified. My country wants to be constructive, not destructive. It wants agreements, not wars, among nations. It wants itself to live in freedom and in the confidence that the peoples of every other nation enjoy equally the right of choosing their own way of life.

So my country's purpose is to help us to move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light, to find a way by which the minds of men, the hopes of men, the souls of men everywhere, can move forward towards peace and happiness and well-being. . . .

The United States, heeding the suggestion of the General Assembly of the United Nations, is instantly prepared to meet privately with such other countries as may be "principally involved," to seek "an acceptable solution" to the atomic armaments race which overshadows not only the peace, but the very life, of the world.

We shall carry into these private or diplomatic talks a new conception. The United States would seek more than the mere reduction or elimination of atomic materials for military purposes. It is not enough to take this weapon out of the hands of the soldiers. It must be put into the hands of those who will know how to strip its military casing and adapt it to the arts of peace. . . .

To hasten the day when fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds of the people and the governments of the East and West, there are certain steps that can be taken now.

Source: Eisenhower, Dwight D. "Atoms for Peace Speech." Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, NY, December 8, 1953. International Atomic Energy Agency. https://www.iaea.org/about/history/atoms-for-peace-speech.

State John Foster Dulles's policy of massive retaliation. Under the deterrent theory of mutual assured destruction (MAD), massive nuclear arsenals made people safe: A nuclear attack by one power would be met with a nuclear response in kind, making the prospect of starting a nuclear war—with its potential to annihilate humanity—an act of madness.

Nonetheless, the threat of such madness led to a pervasive fear that dominated American life, and from 1949 to 1991, this threat remained constant. In the interest of easing fears, President Truman signed the Federal Civil Defense Act into law in 1950. The purpose of the law was to help educate the public about what to do in the event of a nuclear attack, although much of the guidance is considered naive today. For example, schoolchildren were taught to "duck and cover" and practiced hiding under their desks. The act also funded the construction of fallout shelters around the country. These underground bunkers would supposedly protect people from radioactive material. In 1959, the federal government published millions of copies of *The Family Fallout Shelter*, a pamphlet that explained how to build and stock a fallout shelter.

Beyond civilian preparedness, the U.S. government and other countries took action to alleviate fears of nuclear technology. In 1953, President Eisenhower delivered a speech before the United Nations in which he expressed his belief that atomic technology could and should be used for the benefit of humankind rather than for destruction.

The Space Race

In October 1957, just a few years after the formation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Soviet Union launched the first human-made satellite into orbit. *Sputnik I* marked the beginning of the space race. One month later, the Soviets launched *Sputnik II*, a larger satellite that carried the first earthling, a dog named Laika, into space. The United States then learned that the Soviet Union had tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), a weapon whose massive range made the threat of a nuclear attack on American soil more of a reality.



Propaganda factored heavily in the space race for both the United States and the Soviet Union. Laika, the first dog *and* first earthling in space, became a national hero in the Soviet Union. Laika, who did not survive the flight, was also beloved by the West, and her image was reproduced on toys, clocks, and even dishes.

These developments had a cascading effect. The United States had also been working on satellite technology, though unsuccessfully, and none of the American satellites were as large as the 184-pound (83.4 kg) *Sputnik I*. In addition to being shocked by the technological superiority of the Soviet Union, Americans were now even more worried: Were the Soviet satellites spying on Americans and U.S. military bases?

In response to the growing arms and space races—and Americans' fear that they were "losing" the Cold War—the U.S. government boosted its investment in developing ICBMs and launched initiatives to enhance its global competitiveness, including the 1958 establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA. NASA's mission included developing flight and space exploration technologies and studying Earth and the universe. That same year, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act to strengthen national defense by funding education in key fields like engineering, science, math, and foreign languages. The act provided resources for primary and secondary education as well as loans, scholarships, and fellowships to support students pursuing higher education.

The space race intensified throughout the 1960s as each superpower sought to outpace the other in space technology and achievements. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy made putting a person on the moon by the end of the decade a national priority. You will read more about this endeavor later in the topic.

Think Twice



How did the arms race and space race influence American society?

John F. Kennedy and the 1960s

John F. Kennedy, born in 1917, came from a prominent family in Massachusetts. His father, Joseph Kennedy, had become a multimillionaire from banking, shipbuilding, and bootlegging during Prohibition, among other business ventures. Joseph Kennedy later served as the head of the Securities and Exchange Commission and then as U.S. ambassador to Great Britain in the years leading up to World War II. Kennedy's maternal grandfather, John Fitzgerald, had been mayor of Boston.

John F. Kennedy joined the U.S. Navy in 1941, just a few months before the United States entered World War II, and was sent to the Pacific in 1943. Kennedy returned to the United States a war hero. He had planned to pursue a career as a journalist or an academic, but his older brother's death in the war meant that the family's continued political aspirations now fell to him. He successfully ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1946, at the age of twenty-nine, and served

three terms. Then, in 1952, he defeated incumbent Henry Cabot Lodge for one of Massachusetts's U.S. Senate seats.

As a Democrat in Congress, Kennedy fought to improve working conditions, raise wages, and expand Social Security. He supported the Marshall Plan but criticized how the Korean War dragged on with no end in sight. Kennedy first became a prominent national figure in 1956 when he very nearly became Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson's running mate that year. (Stevenson once again lost to Eisenhower.) In January 1960, Kennedy announced he was running for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, positioning himself as a new leader for a new decade. But there was a roadblock in Kennedy's way: He was a Roman Catholic. In Unit 2, you read about the Know-Nothing Party of the 1850s and the existence of anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States. Even during the 1960s, people were concerned about the influence of the pope in American politics. Kennedy gave a televised speech explaining his commitment to the First Amendment and the separation of church and state, which helped allay many Americans' concerns. Kennedy secured the Democratic nomination and chose Lyndon B. Johnson, a veteran U.S. senator from Texas, as his running mate.



John F. Kennedy was forty-three years old when he was elected president, making him one of the youngest to hold the office. He and his wife, Jacqueline, were widely regarded as charismatic and intelligent.

Despite Kennedy's appeal, he trailed his opponent, Republican candidate Vice President Richard Nixon, in the polls through the fall of 1960. Kennedy's prospects would change on September 26 with the first of four televised debates. This was the first time in American history that a presidential debate had been broadcast on television. The seventy million Americans who tuned in could not just hear the candidates' voices and opinions but also see how they looked in action. Nixon was recovering from a knee injury and looked and sounded tired during the debate. Kennedy, by contrast, looked vigorous and tanned from days spent outside on the campaign trail. Kennedy also opted to wear stage makeup, while Nixon did

not. Americans who watched the televised debate noticed the difference and perceived Kennedy as the winner, leading him to rise in the polls the next day. People who only listened to the debate on the radio, however, thought that Nixon had won. Though Nixon had a much stronger showing in the next three televised debates, Kennedy won the election by a thin margin: He secured 49.7 percent of the popular vote, while Nixon won 49.5 percent. About 56 percent of the electoral votes went to Kennedy.

On January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy was sworn in as the first Catholic and youngest person ever elected president. During his inaugural address, Kennedy declared:

> In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.
>
> And so, my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

Kennedy's speech constituted an important call to public service, setting the tone for his ambitious domestic agenda. In it, he also made an important appeal to the international community that signaled his commitment to fighting the Cold War: "My fellow citizens of the world: Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

Think Twice



How did television impact the 1960 presidential campaign?

The New Frontier

In his nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1960, Kennedy had declared that Americans stood "on the edge of a new frontier—the frontier of the 1960s." Once in office, he introduced an ambitious legislative agenda to make the New Frontier a reality. Kennedy urged Congress to allocate federal funding for education and to increase the government's powers to manage economic recessions. He asked for increased Social Security benefits and the creation of a government health insurance program for people sixty-five and older. He pushed to raise the minimum wage and to establish a federal department of urban affairs.

One of Kennedy's early victories as president was the passage of the Housing Act of 1961. This law provided federal funds to improve public transportation and to



Kennedy made the Peace Corps, a federal agency established to promote international understanding through service, a central part of his New Frontier platform. The agency was established in March 1961. This photo shows Kennedy meeting with Peace Corps volunteers at the White House the following year.

preserve community areas, such as parks. It also extended low-interest loans to families that did not qualify for public housing and expanded funds for existing housing assistance programs. Congress also raised the minimum wage and increased Social Security benefits, meaning Kennedy met two more of his goals. However, because Kennedy had been elected on a thin margin, he lacked evidence of strong public support for the policies he promoted. This meant that much of his agenda did not make it through Congress, at least not during his administration.

Kennedy had become increasingly committed to civil rights while serving in Congress, and he carried this energy into his presidency. Early in his administration, Kennedy took some steps toward enforcing equal employment opportunities. Executive Order 10925, signed in March 1961, established the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and prohibited federal contractors from race-based discrimination. But this was just one small action by the government in terms of securing civil rights; in the next topic, you will read more about the growing

Civil Rights Movement and the Kennedy administration's role in it.

Think Twice

How did Kennedy try to achieve the goals of his New Frontier agenda, and what challenges did he face in implementing his policies?

The Space Race Continues

The space race between the United States and the Soviet Union that began in 1957 with the launch of *Sputnik I* only intensified under President Kennedy. Following their earlier *Sputnik* successes, in August 1960, the Soviets launched *Sputnik V*. This craft carried the dogs Strelka and Belka out of Earth's atmosphere and back, making them the first earthlings to survive a spaceflight. Then, in April 1961, Soviet **cosmonaut** Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space and the first person to orbit Earth. The United States put the first American, Alan Shepard, into space the following month. While this was a significant step, President Kennedy recognized that it was not enough; the United States could not be a half step, let alone two steps, behind the Soviet Union.



NASA flight controllers in Houston, Texas, celebrate the safe return of the Apollo 11 crew on July 24, 1969.

On May 25, 1961, President Kennedy addressed Congress and the nation, asking for several billion dollars in funding for the space program. He also set a new national priority: By the end of the decade, the United States would land humans on the moon and bring them back to Earth safely. Kennedy reiterated this goal in an address at Rice University in 1962, stating:

> We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept . . . and one which we intend to win.

The space race progressed at a rapid pace. NASA launched Project Gemini to test and perfect spacecraft maneuvers as well as to study the effects of space travel on

astronauts. NASA's Apollo program was charged with landing humans on the moon.

The Soviets experienced several key successes ahead of the United States, including the first human spacewalk, landing the first unmanned spacecraft on the moon, and launching an unmanned spacecraft that orbited the moon and came back to Earth. However, the space race was not without danger and setbacks. In 1967, three American astronauts were killed in a launchpad fire, and a few months later, a Soviet cosmonaut died in a crash.

The tide of the space race began to turn in the late 1960s. In 1968, the Apollo 8 crew became the first humans to orbit the moon. The following year, on July 20, 1969, the United States landed astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin on the moon during the Apollo 11 mission—and then brought them back to Earth safely. The United States had won the space race, making Kennedy's vision a reality.



Think Twice

How did President Kennedy's policies contribute to U.S. success in the space race?

JFK's Cuban Policy

John F. Kennedy became president at a tenuous time in American history, and his foreign policy was tested shortly after he took office. While the covert operation authorized earlier in 1960 by President Eisenhower had been discovered by the Cuban government, Kennedy approved the planned CIA-backed invasion in February 1961. However, he insisted that U.S. involvement must remain a secret. The invasion would begin with two air strikes to take out Cuba's air bases. Paratroopers would disrupt the island's transportation networks before a nighttime invasion of 1,400 Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs on Cuba's southern coast. Then a second, smaller force would land on the island's east coast and seize control of the government with the help of the Cuban people.

The invasion began on April 15, 1961—but not according to plan. The first air strike missed many targets and caused little harm to the Cuban air force. As the news of the air strike broke, photos showed that the planes involved were old American bombers from World War II that had been repainted to look like Cuban aircraft. The global community now knew that the United States was involved in the invasion, leading Kennedy to cancel the second air strike.

On April 17, the Cuban government was ready for the invading force at the Bay of Pigs and met the exiles with heavy fire. The Cuban air force sank the invaders' ships and caused significant damage to air support. Castro then launched a counterattack with twenty thousand troops. President Kennedy authorized U.S. fighter planes to help, but they were shot down. The invasion was a failure.

All told, 100 Cuban exiles were killed in the fighting, and another 1,200 surrendered to the Cuban government. They were held captive for nearly two years before Kennedy could negotiate an exchange. Castro eventually accepted $53 million worth of medicine and food for the return of the exiles to the United States. The Bay of Pigs invasion significantly damaged U.S. credibility as well as Kennedy's reputation; only months into his presidency, Kennedy publicly took responsibility for the operation's failure. Castro remained the leader of Cuba until 2008.

The Cuban Missile Crisis

President Kennedy's attention was once again directed to Cuba in 1962. To deter any future invasion of Cuba, Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro secretly planned to install nuclear missiles on the island. U.S. intelligence discovered this covert agreement, and on September 4, Kennedy publicly warned the Soviet Union not to install nuclear missiles in Cuba, which is located only ninety miles (145 km) from the southernmost point of Florida. The following month, a U-2 spy plane confirmed that the Soviet Union had ignored Kennedy's warning. Construction of missile launch sites was underway.

The Kennedy administration weighed the best course of action. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the country's highest-ranking military officers, urged Kennedy to authorize an air strike to destroy the missile sites and then invade Cuba. Other advisers, however, wanted Kennedy to issue another warning before taking any drastic action. Kennedy opted for a plan somewhere in the middle. On October 22, he ordered a naval quarantine of Cuba to prevent Soviet ships carrying weapons from reaching the island. He also sent a letter to Khrushchev stating the United States would prevent the delivery of nuclear missiles to Cuba and demanding that the Soviets disassemble the launch sites and remove any atomic missiles from the island.

Khrushchev responded on October 24, calling Kennedy's quarantine an "act of aggression." Soviet ships en route to Cuba would stay the course. Tensions rose over the following days. Some Soviet ships voluntarily turned around, while the quarantine stopped others. Those not carrying weapons were allowed to continue their voyage. At the same time, the



Kennedy's advisers were not the only ones divided on how best to manage the mounting crisis in Cuba. Americans both for and against a U.S. invasion of Cuba demonstrated outside of the White House.

missile sites in Cuba were nearing completion. The United States and the Soviet Union were closer to the brink of nuclear war than ever before.

A combination of direct communication between Kennedy and Khrushchev and backdoor meetings ultimately led to a resolution. Publicly, the United States promised not to invade Cuba. In exchange, the Soviet Union agreed to disassemble missile launch sites and remove any offensive weapons—a move that reduced the possibility of a nuclear attack on American soil. The United States also agreed to remove missiles from Turkey, though this remained secret at the time. The Cuban missile crisis helped restore Kennedy's international reputation. It also led to the creation of a "hotline" between the White House and the Kremlin to prevent similar events in the future.



Think Twice

What events led to the Cuban missile crisis, and what were the outcomes for the United States and the Soviet Union?

Assassination of a President

President Kennedy began preparing for his reelection campaign in the fall of 1963 and delivered speeches around the country. On November 21, the Kennedys—traveling with Vice President Johnson and his wife—arrived in Texas for a whirlwind five-city fundraising tour. They came into Dallas, their last stop, midday on November 22, where they were greeted by Texas governor John Connally and his wife, Nellie Connally. The Kennedys joined the Connallys in the back of an open-air convertible that would take them to President Kennedy's speaking engagement downtown.

About two hundred thousand people, eager to get a glimpse of President Kennedy and the First Lady, lined the ten-mile (16 km) route. Around 12:30 p.m., as the presidential motorcade reached Dealey Plaza near downtown Dallas, shots rang out. Governor Connally was shot in the back, while the president was struck in the neck and head. The convertible raced to Parkland Memorial Hospital, but it was too late. President Kennedy was pronounced dead half an hour later. Governor Connally survived and recovered. Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as president aboard Air Force One at 2:38 p.m., only about ninety minutes after Kennedy was pronounced dead.

Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested shortly after President Kennedy was assassinated. A former U.S. Marine with pro-Soviet political

leanings, Oswald would never go to trial for killing the president: On November 24, a Dallas nightclub owner named Jack Ruby shot and killed Oswald on national television as he was being transferred to the county jail. At the end of November 1963, President Johnson established a commission to investigate Kennedy's assassination and Oswald's murder. Led by Supreme Court chief justice Earl Warren, the committee reported the next year that it had found no evidence of a domestic or foreign conspiracy related to the deaths.

Looking Ahead

The early Cold War years coincided with significant domestic change in the United States that spanned multiple presidential administrations, including those of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. The growing Civil Rights Movement and other social movements, including the American Indian, women's rights, and environmental movements, gained momentum through the 1950s and 1960s.



Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as president aboard Air Force One shortly after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. His wife, Lady Bird, stands to his right, and Jacqueline Kennedy is to his left.

Topic 2

Social and Civil Rights Movements

"Unbought and Unbossed"

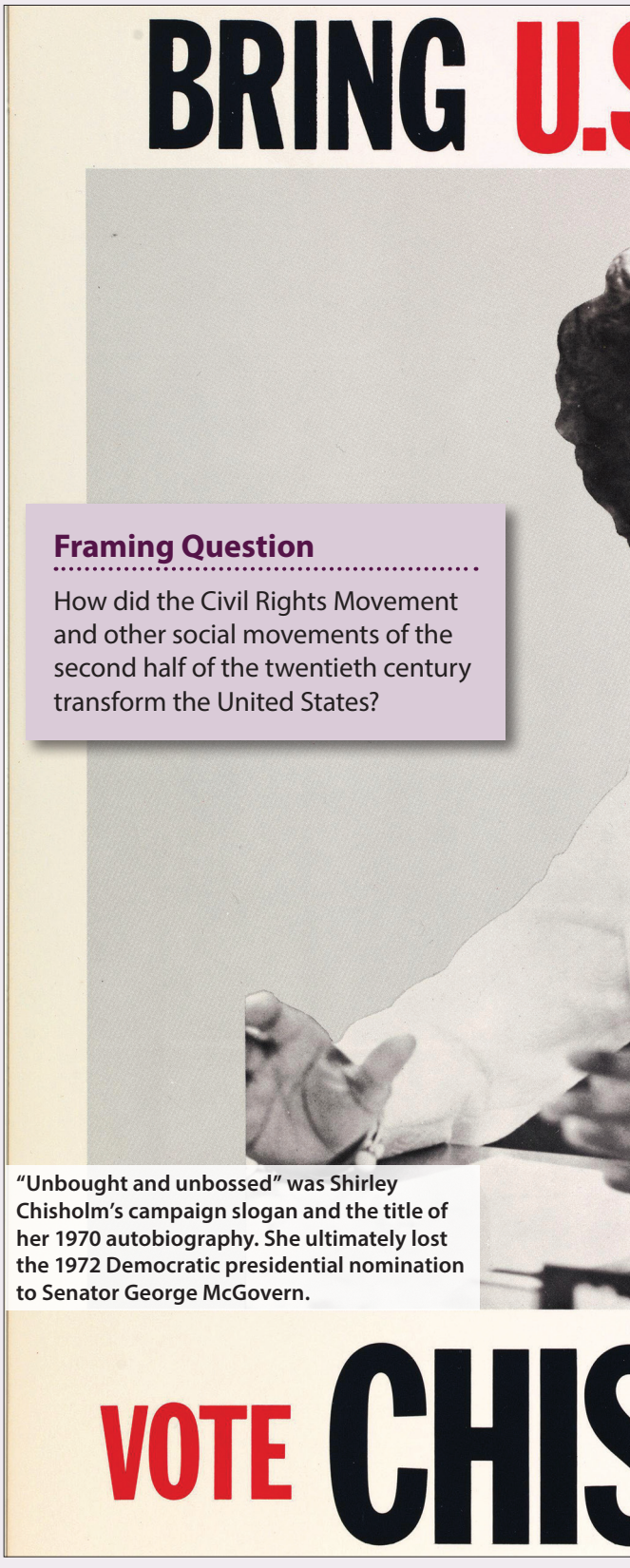
Setting the Scene

On a winter day in January 1972, Shirely Chisholm looks out over a crowd at the Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. Standing in front of a podium bristling with the microphones of media stations and waving as her audience claps excitedly, Chisholm announces, "I stand before you today as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency of the United States of America."

Chisholm makes this historic announcement not far from where she was born in Brooklyn in 1924. The child of immigrant parents from Barbados and Guyana, she graduated in 1946 from Brooklyn College, where her professors, witnessing her talent for debate, urged her to consider going into politics. Chisholm declined, citing the barriers to political advancement that African American women faced in the mid-twentieth century. She built a career in education, earning a master's degree in early childhood education from Columbia University in 1951 and later consulting for the NYC Division of Day Care. Confronting

Framing Question

How did the Civil Rights Movement and other social movements of the second half of the twentieth century transform the United States?



"Unbought and unbossed" was Shirley Chisholm's campaign slogan and the title of her 1970 autobiography. She ultimately lost the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination to Senator George McGovern.



racial and gender inequality firsthand, she became active in organizations like the NAACP and the League of Women Voters.

By 1964, Chisholm had started to change her mind about politics. She became the second African American elected to the New York State Legislature. Four years later, Chisholm was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where she earned the nickname "Fighting Shirley" for her relentless advocacy for gender, income, and racial equality. But Chisholm knows she can do more for the United States. She is setting her sights on the executive branch, a quest that begins at this podium on this wintry day in 1972. She is the first African American woman to seek the Democratic Party's presidential nomination—something that would have been unthinkable just ten years ago.

Chisholm will experience immense discrimination during her presidential bid. She will be excluded from televised primary debates, her campaign will be underfunded, and she will face significant opposition from the male-dominated Congressional Black Caucus. Yet her fierce campaign will earn her support among women, students, and minorities. Chisholm will ultimately participate in twelve state primaries and capture about 10 percent of primary votes. Though Shirley Chisholm will not become the Democratic candidate for president, she is living proof of just how much the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century has transformed the country—and a reminder of how much work still needs to be done.

Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, 1945–54

In earlier units, you read about issues of equality in the United States. Following Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws made African Americans second-class citizens by restricting their voting rights, enforcing segregation, and limiting economic opportunities. Inequality was also pervasive in the North, where many African Americans had moved during the Great Migration. You have also read about early leaders and groups that used different—and often divergent—approaches to fight discrimination and advocate for equality and civil rights. After World War II, a new generation of leaders fighting for civil and social equality emerged, reinvigorating the Civil Rights Movement.

World War II and the Postwar Years

In January 1941, nearly a full year before the United States entered World War II, union leader A. Philip Randolph called for one hundred thousand African Americans to march on Washington, D.C., to demand equal treatment for African Americans working in defense industries and serving in the military. Randolph's proposed march received widespread support, and it appeared that a mass demonstration in the nation's capital was a very real possibility. On June 25, less than a week before the march was scheduled to take place, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which declared that "there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin." The order also established the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC).

Executive Order 8802 represented an important victory, albeit a small one. Millions of African Americans were serving in the military and working in defense industries to combat tyranny abroad. Yet



The African American newspaper *Pittsburgh Courier* launched the Double V campaign during World War II, promoted here on a handkerchief. The campaign played on the common wartime slogan "V for victory" by demanding a simultaneous victory against racial discrimination at home.

PRIMARY SOURCE: ON THE USE OF NONVIOLENCE, A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, 1945

Non-violent, good-will direct action is based upon the acceptance of the following assumptions as being valid and workable: First, the organic unity of the human family, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry. Second, the inevitable corollary of this principle, namely, that no human being is the natural enemy of another, but that human antagonisms of all kinds are the product of ignorance, fear, or anti-social selfishness, and that all hostile attitudes between persons and groups are subject to influence and change by some form of non-violent direct action for good-will. Third, human beings are not born with prejudices of race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry, but they acquire them in the homes, schools, churches, press, movies, radio, book—that is, from our environment. Fourth, violence has not settled and cannot permanently and constructively settle any basic social problem. Violence begets violence. He who draws the sword will perish by the sword. From these fundamental truths will flow the varied techniques: investigations, negotiations, and direct action with non-retaliation, the disciplined absorption of violence, non-violence in speech and action, refusal to engage in legal action for damage because of physical injury, and repetitive, non-violent, good-will direct action to make token victories real, for repeated action makes for the development of group cause-consciousness.

Source: Randolph, A. Philip. Foreword to *Erasing the Color Line*, by George M. Houser. New York: Fellowship Publications, 1945, pp. 7–8.

as Black veterans returned home, they encountered a nation that was rife with prejudice and largely stratified by race. Once World War II ended, Randolph and others recognized that patience alone would not bring lasting change. In 1945, Randolph wrote about the role and importance of nonviolent resistance in ending discrimination. This philosophy, also embraced in the 1940s by organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), would become a bedrock of the Civil Rights Movement that was to come.

Racial tensions proliferated after World War II, especially in the South. In December 1946, racial violence spurred President Harry S. Truman to appoint the President's Committee on Civil Rights to make recommendations about "more adequate means and procedures for the protection of the civil rights of the people of the United States." The committee

presented a list of proposals in October 1947, including establishing a permanent FEPC (the first had been disbanded by Congress after the war), a stronger civil rights division at the Department of Justice, and laws to end lynching and poll taxes. Truman asked Congress for legislation to put the committee's recommendations into effect. When Southern senators threatened to block the legislation, Truman responded by expanding some civil rights through executive orders.

Truman's push to expand civil rights was also influenced by pressure from A. Philip Randolph and other civil rights leaders. In 1948, Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which required men living in the United States to register for the draft. As the U.S. military was still segregated at this time, Randolph responded to the new legislation by organizing the League for Non-Violent Civil Disobedience Against Military Segregation. He encouraged young men of all races to refuse to register for the draft, which he referred to as "a Jim Crow conscription service."

Truman, aware of the impact that both **civil disobedience** and the loss of African American votes could have on his reelection campaign, signed Executive Order 9981 in July 1948 to desegregate the military. Despite resistance from military leaders, the armed forces were almost fully integrated by 1953.

Think Twice



How did the end of World War II contribute to the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement?

Jackie Robinson

By the 1940s, baseball was unequivocally "America's pastime." Immensely popular with people of all races and ages, baseball also served as a microcosm of the many divisions within American society. Professional baseball's policy of excluding Black players was just one of many instances of de facto segregation in the United States at this time.

During the 1940s, pressure from the media and within Major League Baseball led officials to consider integrating Black players. Brooklyn Dodgers executive Branch Rickey began scouting African American athletes, knowing he needed someone with both talent and the strength to endure racism and criticism. In 1945, he found that person: Jackie Robinson.

Born in Georgia in 1919 and raised in California, Robinson had played for the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro Leagues after serving in World War II. Rickey signed him in 1945, and on April 15, 1947, Robinson broke baseball's color barrier, becoming the first Black player in the modern major leagues. His impact was profound—paving the way for other African American athletes, inspiring civil



Jackie Robinson was well-known for his athletic excellence. He ran track and played baseball, basketball, and football at the University of California, Los Angeles.

rights leaders, and shifting public attitudes. As Martin Luther King Jr. later said, "Jackie Robinson made my success possible. Without him, I would never have been able to do what I did."

Brown v. Board of Education

In Unit 2, you read about the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1935, an attorney named Charles Houston began serving as a lawyer for the NAACP, focusing on cases of racial injustice and laying the groundwork for what would eventually become the Legal Defense Fund. Houston recruited a talented and diverse team of attorneys and activists that included Thurgood Marshall. Lobbying for antidiscrimination legislation was a major function of the NAACP, and Marshall now planned to actively challenge and help overturn existing discriminatory policies, especially those in education.

Houston and Marshall devised a strategy: They would slowly chip away at the "separate but equal" doctrine. To this end, Marshall and his team secured two significant victories in 1950, when the Supreme Court ruled in two different cases that universities that segregated African American students by providing separate facilities on campus were violating the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Encouraged by the NAACP's victories, African American parents living in states where schools were segregated by law began attempting to enroll their children in all-white public schools. Between 1951 and 1952, the NAACP brought lawsuits in Delaware, Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Lower federal courts ruled against the **plaintiffs** in each case, leading the NAACP to appeal to the Supreme Court. Though the individual facts of each case differed, the underlying issue remained the same. As a result, the Supreme Court consolidated the cases under a single case that would forever memorialize a Kansas



Monroe Elementary School, the segregated school in Topeka, Kansas, where Linda Brown was required to enroll, became a National Historic Site in 1992.

girl named Linda Brown: *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

Marshall assembled a team of talented attorneys, legal scholars, historians, and social science researchers to build their case. They emphasized that the quality of facilities, resources, and education at schools for African Americans was inferior to that at all-white schools, which violated the "separate but equal" doctrine established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Marshall's team provided evidence that inferior education created by segregation had harmful effects on African American students. This contributed to the attorneys' central argument that "separate but equal" was impossible—that segregated public schooling was a violation of equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court issued a unanimous ruling on May 17, 1954. Writing on behalf of the court, Chief Justice Earl Warren explained, "In the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned its earlier ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

On paper, the *Brown* decision dealt a significant blow to de jure segregation in the United States. Enforcing the Supreme Court's ruling was an entirely separate and more complicated matter. Instead of changing their laws to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling, the states with segregation laws began mounting a resistance. Local and



Attorneys George Hayes, Thurgood Marshall, and James Nabrit celebrate the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. In 1967, Marshall became the first African American to serve as a justice of the Supreme Court.

state authorities gave a litany of excuses for not integrating public schools. This led the Supreme Court to issue a second decision, known as *Brown II*, on May 31, 1955. The court ruled that states must act to desegregate public schools "with all deliberate speed." However, the phrase "all deliberate speed" was vague and allowed many school districts to delay integration for years or even decades.

Despite *Brown II*, the federal government initially did little to enforce the court's ruling. President Eisenhower was less than supportive of the Warren court's decision, noting that "it is difficult through law and through force to change a man's heart." At the same time, Southern leaders openly resisted the order to desegregate. In 1956, 101 Southern politicians, led by Virginia senator Harry Byrd, signed the "Southern Manifesto," an agreement to use "all lawful means" to oppose the *Brown* ruling. That same year, Senator Byrd called on states to pass a series of laws to delay or block school integration, a plan called "Massive Resistance."

As you will read shortly, rising tensions over desegregation eventually put state and local authorities on a collision course with the federal government, making integrated schools a tangible reality.



Think Twice

Why was the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* significant?



The Civil Rights Movement: Protest

Recall that individuals such as Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B. Du Bois and organizations such as the NAACP had been fighting to end discrimination against African Americans since the turn of the twentieth century. Following the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, momentum grew nationwide. A series of events, starting with the death of Emmett Till in 1955, captured the nation's attention and helped give a voice to the increasingly comprehensive Civil Rights Movement.

The Murder of Emmett Till

Emmett Till was a fourteen-year-old African American boy from Chicago who was visiting his family in Money, Mississippi, during the summer of 1955. On August 28, Till allegedly offended a white woman named Carolyn Bryant in the grocery store that she and her husband, Roy, owned. In response, Roy Bryant and his half brother, J. W. Milam, kidnapped, brutally beat, and murdered Till before depositing his body in the Tallahatchie River. The two men were accused of murder but were ultimately acquitted by an all-white, all-male jury.

Despite the constant threats of racial violence, including against the local NAACP chapter and later against those who had testified against Bryant and Milam, Emmett Till's family and the



Emmett Till was accused of whistling at Carolyn Bryant, highlighting how any perceived interaction between a Black man and a white woman could provoke extreme violence. This case underscored the urgent need for the Civil Rights Movement's reforms.

NAACP were determined to make the boy's gruesome death a symbol of institutional racial injustice. At Emmett Till's funeral, his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, insisted on having an open casket so that people could bear witness to the horrific violence that had killed her son. More than fifty thousand people were in attendance, including journalists and photographers from *Jet* magazine, a prominent African American publication. The magazine printed photos of Emmett Till's severely disfigured body. Soon, other publications around the country carried the stories and images as well. The international press also picked up the story of Till's murder. People around the world were shocked and horrified not just by the violence committed against Till but also by the fact that his murderers went unpunished. Emmett Till's murder increased awareness of the plight of African Americans in the Jim Crow South and contributed to demands for immediate change.

Think Twice



How did the murder of Emmett Till influence the goals and momentum of the Civil Rights Movement?

Bus Boycotts

Jim Crow laws segregated public life in the South, including on transportation. Recall that the case *Plessy v. Ferguson* pertained to a Louisiana law that segregated railroad cars. Over time, Southern states passed laws to segregate other forms of transportation, too, including buses. Boycotts became a major tool of the Civil Rights Movement to end this practice.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The first major anti-segregation boycott of a bus system took place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In 1950, the Baton Rouge Bus Company secured an exclusive contract with the city, which subsequently revoked the licenses of several dozen African American–owned bus services. Approximately 80 percent of bus riders in Baton Rouge were African American. The front of all buses was

reserved for white riders, while Black riders had to sit at the back or stand, regardless of whether there were available seats in the "whites only" section.

In early 1953, the bus company increased fares by 50 percent, sparking a call by Reverend T. J. Jemison to allow African American passengers the freedom to sit in any seat they chose. The city council responded by passing Ordinance 222, which instituted a "first come, first serve" policy: White passengers would enter from the front of the bus, Black passengers would enter from the back of the bus, and the seats would fill up toward the middle. Additionally, Black passengers would be allowed to sit at the front of the bus if there were empty seats—as long as they did not sit in front of or next to a white passenger.

Local government and the Baton Rouge Bus Company supported the ordinance. However, members of the white bus drivers' union went on strike in June 1953. The Louisiana attorney general overturned Ordinance 222 four days later on the grounds that it violated state segregation laws.

Jemison and other civil rights leaders quickly organized a response. Boycotters queued up at bus stops, but when the buses approached, they turned their backs. People who owned cars volunteered to drive people who could not walk to work. In a matter of days, the bus company was facing financial ruin. Jemison, the Baton Rouge city council, and the bus company worked out a compromise: The bus company would designate fewer "whites only" seats; however, African American passengers would still be prohibited from sitting in vacant seats at the front of the bus. Some criticized Jemison for compromising. He defended his decision by citing the increase in seats for African American passengers.

The Louisiana boycott event made national headlines. Americans now knew that transportation boycotts were an effective and peaceful strategy that civil rights leaders could use to effect change.

Montgomery, Alabama

A little more than two years later, the Baton Rouge boycott was eclipsed by a much larger and longer boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, another city with a segregated bus system. Rosa Parks was a forty-two-year-old seamstress living in Montgomery. On December 1, 1955, Parks boarded a Montgomery bus and took a seat directly behind the "whites only" section. As the bus filled up, Parks and three other African American passengers were instructed by the bus driver to vacate their seats for white passengers. Others in the row complied, but Rosa Parks refused. Her seat was not in the "whites only" section, she argued, which meant she had every right to sit there. The bus driver called the police, and Parks was arrested.

Parks was a well-respected member of Montgomery's civil rights circles, and her arrest quickly became a flashpoint. Local civil



After her arrest and the subsequent Montgomery bus boycott, Rosa Parks became known as the "mother of the Civil Rights Movement."

rights leaders called for a one-day boycott of Montgomery's bus system on December 5. That day, African American ridership dropped by 90 percent. Encouraged by the support and hoping to build on this success, the leaders formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) later that day to coordinate a long-term boycott. They elected Martin Luther King Jr. as its president. King, a Baptist minister with a PhD in theology from Boston University, would eventually become one of the most celebrated leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

The MIA presented the city of Montgomery and the bus company with a clear list of demands: Bus drivers must treat African American passengers with respect, the bus company must end segregated seating and adopt a "first come, first served" policy, and the bus company must hire African American bus drivers. At the same time, the MIA worked tirelessly to keep the boycott going. Its leaders organized carpools, fundraised, and led legal challenges against the city and the bus company. What began as a single-day boycott evolved into a protest that lasted more than a year and cost the bus company as much as $3,000 in revenue each day—approximately $35,000 per day in 2025 dollars.

As the Montgomery bus boycott continued, Rosa Parks's attorneys appealed her conviction in Alabama state courts. At the same time, the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund challenged Montgomery's segregated busing in the federal court system. On June 4, 1956, a U.S. district court ruled in the case *Browder v. Gayle* that state-enforced racial segregation on privately owned buses was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court upheld this decision on November 14. The MIA officially ended its 381-day boycott on December 20 once the city of Montgomery was ordered to integrate its bus system.

The Montgomery bus boycott had numerous effects. Dr. King's role in the boycott made him a national figure and inspired him and other leaders to bring the energy of their actions in Montgomery, Alabama, to other Southern cities. This led to the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in

1957, which would work to coordinate efforts between different civil rights organizations.

As the leader of the SCLC, Dr. King advocated for civil disobedience—the refusal to obey a law because it goes against one's conscience—and nonviolent protest to resist racism and the oppression of Black people in American society. Nonviolent protest took a variety of forms, including boycotts, marches, public gatherings, and sit-ins. You will read more about the SCLC and nonviolent protest later in this topic.



Think Twice

What were the effects of the Montgomery bus boycott?

The Little Rock Nine

As you read, states with segregated public schools were slow to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In September 1957, events in Little Rock, Arkansas, illustrated just how rocky the road to integration would be.

Earlier that year, the superintendent of the Little Rock school district had outlined a plan to gradually integrate the school district, starting with Central High School. While the school board invited African American students to enroll at the school, the superintendent made clear that they would be barred from participating in any extracurricular activities. At the same time, employers in the city threatened to fire the parents of African American students who enrolled at Central High School. In the end, nine students enrolled; they became known as the Little Rock Nine.

On September 2, 1957, Governor Orval Faubus announced that he was deploying the Arkansas National Guard to Central High School to help keep the peace. The true purpose of the National Guard's presence in Little Rock became clear two days later when, on September 4, they prevented the Little Rock Nine from entering the school.

President Eisenhower attempted to appeal to Governor Faubus, who agreed to stop interfering with integration at Central High School. The Little Rock Nine entered Central High School on their third attempt, on September 23. However, they were later removed for their safety after a riot broke out in front of the school.



Despite a variety of threats made against them and their families, nine teenagers—Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Patillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls—bravely decided to enroll at Central High School.

The federal government intervened in the escalating Little Rock crisis the following day. Viewing Faubus's actions as a direct challenge to federal authority, the U.S. Constitution, and the Supreme Court ruling, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10730, which placed the Arkansas National Guard under federal control. The order also sent one thousand troops from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock. On September 25, federal troops escorted the Little Rock Nine as they entered Central High School.

The events in Little Rock had mixed effects. The nine brave students had succeeded in integrating Central High School, a massive achievement. However, their time there was often an isolating experience. The students had to be escorted to their respective classes by guards. They were subjected to verbal and physical abuse from their classmates, and white students who attempted to befriend them were also subject to intimidation. Despite these setbacks, Ernest Green became the first African American student to graduate from Central High School in May 1958. That fall, Governor Faubus ordered all Little Rock high schools to close for the entire 1958–59 school year to avoid integration.

Think Twice



How was the integration of the Little Rock Nine a significant event in the Civil Rights Movement?

Sit-Ins

Segregation took different forms in different types of facilities, from schools and transit hubs to retail locations. Civil rights activists continued to protest segregation in a variety of ways, including through sit-ins—a form of civil disobedience in which demonstrators refuse to leave a place until their demands are met. For example, the Woolworth's store in Greensboro, North Carolina, allowed African American patrons to order food in the dining area, but they were not permitted to sit at the lunch counter. In early 1960, four students from what was then the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina, now North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University—Ezell Blair Jr. (later Jibreel Khazan), Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond—found a way to bring national attention to this issue. On February 1, the four entered Woolworth's and began a sit-in. Each made a small purchase to prove that they were paying customers. Next, they took seats at the "whites only" lunch counter. When the white waitstaff refused to serve the students and asked them to leave, they remained seated—an act of peaceful, passive resistance.

The store manager called the police. However, the police did not make the students leave. As far as the police were concerned, the four young men were paying customers and had not done anything to disturb the peace. Ralph Johns, a white businessman who supported



Inspired by the Greensboro sit-in, student protesters organized a sit-in at a "whites only" lunch counter in Charlotte, North Carolina, on February 9, 1960.

and knew of the students' plan in advance, tipped off the local media about the small-scale protest. The newspapers printed stories and pictures of the "Greensboro Four." The students returned to Woolworth's the next day, this time joined by more than twenty other college students. Again, the African American students were refused service. The sit-in continued over the following days, growing so large that protesters occupied all the lunch counter's seats as well as the sidewalk outside the store.

The Greensboro sit-in made national news and sparked similar actions by tens of thousands of college students across seventy cities within just a few months, resulting in the integration of lunch counters across the South.

Freedom Rides

On October 12, 1960, the Supreme Court ruled in *Boynton v. Virginia* that bus terminals could not discriminate against interstate travelers because of their race. In the spring of 1961, an interracial group of student activists working with CORE organized the first "Freedom Ride" to test enforcement of this Supreme Court ruling. On May 4, 1961, two buses carrying seven African American

students and six white students departed from Washington, D.C., for New Orleans. At each stop, the Freedom Riders would use facilities designated for the race other than their own. For example, an African American Freedom Rider would deliberately use facilities designated for white passengers, challenging segregation laws.

The Freedom Riders expected to encounter violence on their trip and trained in nonviolent direct action before beginning the journey. In fact, they hoped that resistance from Southern segregationists would prompt the federal government to intervene and enforce the Supreme Court's decision. They experienced some resistance in Virginia, and a few of the riders were arrested. The group first experienced violence in South Carolina, where one student was arrested and two others were badly beaten. This incident garnered media attention.

When the Freedom Riders reached Alabama, the violence they encountered was far more extreme than they had anticipated. On May 14, during a stop in the town of Anniston to repair a tire, a white mob firebombed one of the buses and brutally attacked the Freedom Riders. The remaining bus was greeted by another violent mob in Birmingham two days later, and again, the Freedom Riders were severely beaten. When this initial group of activists encountered yet another violent mob at the bus station in Montgomery on May 20, CORE decided to end its campaign.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC; pronounced *snik*) was a group that coordinated activities of student civil rights organizations. SNCC was determined to continue the Freedom Rides, despite the concerns of civil rights leaders and activists. On May 17, a group of activists from Nashville arrived in Birmingham to resume the Freedom Rides. They were arrested by Birmingham police, who charged them with breaking segregation laws, and forced to return to Tennessee.

The Freedom Riders remained undeterred. They returned to Birmingham the next day and, with the assistance of U.S. attorney general Robert F. Kennedy—the brother of the president, John F. Kennedy, about whom you will read again shortly—found a bus to carry them on to Mississippi and Louisiana. The Department of Justice also convinced Alabama's governor to have the state highway patrol escort the Freedom Riders as they traveled from Birmingham to Montgomery, where the local police would take over. But Montgomery police did *not* protect the Freedom Riders from the hundreds of segregationists armed with bats, hammers, and pipes who greeted them.

In response, Attorney General Kennedy sent federal marshals to protect the riders, whose experiences soon inspired other groups of riders to continue on to Jackson, Mississippi. From late May through the summer of 1961, SNCC and other groups sent dozens of new riders to Jackson, Mississippi, where arrests

became so frequent that the jails reached capacity. Kennedy also directed the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to establish and enforce stronger anti-segregation guidelines for interstate travel. In September 1961, the ICC banned segregated seating on interstate buses and ordered interstate bus terminals to integrate, including removing "whites only" signage, by November of that year. The Freedom Rides—smaller versions of which eventually reached New Orleans by the end of 1961—had succeeded in increasing equal access to public spaces across the South.



Think Twice

How did the Freedom Rides impact the Civil Rights Movement?

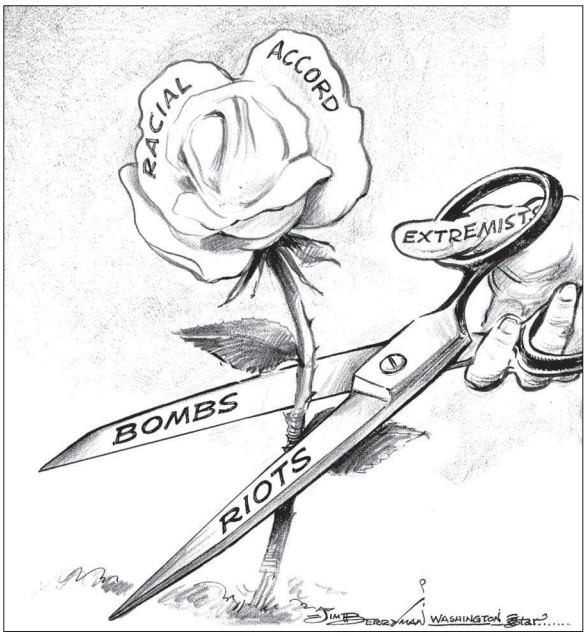
The Birmingham Campaign

In the spring of 1963, Dr. King, the SCLC, and a local civil rights organization called the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) began a coordinated campaign to apply economic pressure to business owners in Birmingham. The overall goal of the campaign was to work toward desegregating the city, which had experienced regular outbreaks of violent racism since the 1940s. Movement leaders organized sit-ins at lunch counters, mass meetings, marches, and boycotts of local businesses in downtown Birmingham. Dr. King stressed the importance of using nonviolent methods. The campaign grew quickly as more people participated in actions across the city; hundreds of protesters were arrested in just the first week.

On April 10, a state court issued an injunction against the anti-segregation protests in Birmingham. Despite dwindling funds and concerns about affording bail, movement leaders, including Dr. King, chose to defy the order. On April 12, Dr. King and another activist were arrested for leading a march, and King was placed in solitary confinement.

That same day, the *Birmingham News* published a statement by local white clergymen who criticized participants in the Birmingham campaign for their "impatience" and for what they characterized as "extreme" actions during the protests. In response, King wrote what would come to be known as his "Letter from Birmingham Jail." In it, Dr. King defended the movement's use of civil disobedience and cited numerous examples from the Bible and from history in which people had refused to obey unjust laws. While the clergymen had criticized King's actions, he criticized their inaction. Dr. King's letter was published as a pamphlet and in newspapers and magazines, where many white Americans read and reflected on its ideas. King was released from the Birmingham jail on April 20.

The Birmingham campaign progressed. The Children's Crusade began on May 2 when more than one thousand African American students skipped school to march from the



On May 10, 1963, city leaders and protest leaders finalized a deal to end the Birmingham campaign. The next day, white segregationists bombed the hotel where SCLC leaders, including King, were staying. This cartoon, created by Jim Berryman, was published on May 14, 1963, in the *Washington Star*.

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church to downtown Birmingham. Police lines greeted the students, arresting hundreds of the peaceful protesters, but students and other activists gathered for a second march the following day. This time, Eugene "Bull" Connor, the city's public safety commissioner, directed police and firefighters to attack the peaceful protesters, many of whom were children. Photographs and televjsed broadcasts of law enforcement attacking demonstrators with clubs, police dogs, and fire hoses made national and international news. Connor's use of police violence horrified Americans across the country and swayed public opinion in support of the Birmingham campaign. The Children's Crusade persisted.

The boycotts harmed Birmingham's economy, yet business owners and city leaders remained resistant to desegregation. However, the national attention on Birmingham increased pressure on President John F. Kennedy to take action; he, too, had been greatly affected by the violence he had witnessed in the televised news reports. His administration sent a negotiator to meet with business leaders and protest leaders. Dr. King agreed to temporarily end the demonstrations on May 8. Two days later, the city reached a final agreement with Dr. King and other movement representatives. Birmingham would desegregate restrooms, drinking fountains, and lunch counters. It would also create a program to improve economic opportunities for African American residents and form an interracial committee to oversee implementation of the agreement.

Four months later, white supremacists who opposed the agreement that ended the Birmingham campaign took violent action. Members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where much of the Birmingham campaign was organized. Four girls— fourteen-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, and Carole Robertson and eleven-year-old Cynthia Wesley—were killed.

Think Twice

How did the Birmingham campaign and television coverage of the event impact the Civil Rights Movement?

Ruby Bridges

Although the landmark cases *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Brown II* made segregation in public schools illegal, five years later, New Orleans still did not have one integrated school. This delay was just one of countless examples that showed how "all deliberate speed" had been interpreted.

Following the *Brown* decisions, some school districts moved to "comply" with the court's order by instituting entrance exams for African American students. In 1960, Ruby Bridges and five other students passed their entrance exams for New Orleans public schools. The six-year-old Bridges enrolled in first grade at William Frantz Elementary School in November, making her the youngest Black student to integrate an all-white elementary school in the South.



Ruby Bridges's father was hesitant to let her enroll at an all-white school, but her mother insisted that Ruby receive the best education possible, regardless of the barriers she had to overcome.

Bridges's first day was turbulent. Escorted by U.S. marshals for her protection, Bridges faced an angry mob of white protesters as she entered the school. She then spent the rest of her first day in the principal's office as white parents withdrew their children from the school. Bridges was subjected to discrimination from the teaching staff, too. Only one teacher—Barbara Henry, a white teacher from Boston—would teach her, and soon, Bridges was in a class of one. She was also excluded from the cafeteria and from recess.

Still, Ruby Bridges remained at the school. The protests dissipated as the school year progressed, and many white students returned to the school. More African American students enrolled at Frantz the following year, and they and Bridges were taught alongside their white classmates.

Think Twice

How did Ruby Bridges contribute to the expansion of civil rights in the United States?

The Civil Rights Movement: Policy

By the early 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement had achieved meaningful results through Supreme Court decisions and through

Medgar Evers

Medgar Evers was born in 1925 in Mississippi, deep in the Jim Crow South. He dropped out of high school to join the U.S. Army during World War II and served honorably during Operation Overlord in Normandy, France. Like so many other African American veterans, Evers quickly learned that fighting for the freedoms of others abroad did not translate to freedom back at home. In 1946, he and a group of friends were barred from registering to vote by a group of armed white men. This was just one of many events that led Evers to a life of activism.

Evers finished high school, and after graduating from Alcorn College (now Alcorn State University), he applied to law school at the University of Mississippi. Despite the Supreme Court's recent ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the university denied Evers admission based on his race. This led Evers to join the NAACP to help desegregate the school, and he eventually landed a field officer position in the organization, from which he organized new NAACP chapters, protests, boycotts, and voter registration drives across the South. Evers also investigated violent crimes committed against African Americans. His work on the Emmett Till case made him a national figure, as well as the target of death threats, violence, and multiple murder attempts.

Around midnight on June 12, 1963, after Medgar Evers pulled into his driveway, Byron De La Beckwith, a member of the Ku Klux Klan, shot and killed Evers as he exited his car. De La Beckwith was tried twice; each time, an all-white jury failed to convict him, despite expert testimony from the FBI. Myrlie Evers-Williams, Medgar Evers's wife, petitioned to have the case reopened nearly thirty years later, leading to De La Beckwith's conviction in 1994.

News of Medgar Evers's death reverberated throughout the country. Evers's death underscored the need to pass a strong civil rights bill and spurred many people to participate in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom later that year.

direct nonviolent action in places such as Greensboro, Birmingham, and New Orleans. However, resistance to desegregation and to the expansion of civil rights remained strong. In 1963, George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, declared, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Later that year, he barred African American students from registering for classes at the University of Alabama by personally blocking the doorway to a campus building.

Despite such actions by elected leaders and citizens, pressure was mounting across the country for real and meaningful

change—both from the bottom up and from the top down. On June 11, 1963, President John F. Kennedy gave a civil rights address to the nation. Amid growing racial tensions and the ongoing struggle for civil rights in the United States, President Kennedy called for moral leadership and legislative action to address racial inequality. In short, he was calling on Congress to act by passing a new civil rights bill.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

Following the successes of the Birmingham boycott and campaign and as a coordinated reaction to President Kennedy's call for meaningful civil rights legislation, movement leaders began organizing a massive demonstration, which would take place in the nation's capital in the late summer of 1963. This event was inspired by A. Philip Randolph's original call for a march on Washington in 1941; Randolph himself was named honorary chair of the event.

The leaders of the country's major civil rights organizations, later joined by leaders of other national groups—including the American Jewish Congress and the United Auto Workers—planned and organized the massive march. Turnout more than exceeded expectations when 250,000 demonstrators, about 190,000 Black and 60,000 white, marched peacefully through the nation's capital on August 28 during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

The demonstrators gathered at the Lincoln Memorial, where the organizers laid out the movement's ten demands. Some of the demands were specific to the "Freedom" aspect of the event, including comprehensive civil rights legislation, desegregation in public schools by the end of the year, an executive order banning housing discrimination, and stronger enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment. Other demands pertained to "Jobs"—for example, a federal work training and placement program for all unemployed people regardless of race, a national minimum wage, and a federal ban on employment discrimination.

The marchers also listened to musical performances and speeches. John Lewis of SNCC, one of the original Freedom Riders, was one of many speakers who took the stage. He spoke to the pervasive economic inequality experienced by African Americans and other minority groups, saying, "We march today for jobs and freedom, but we have nothing to be proud of. For hundreds and thousands of our brothers are not here. For they are receiving starvation wages, or no wages at all." Lewis went on to declare, "We do not want our freedom gradually, but we want to be free now!" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also delivered his now-famous "I Have a Dream" speech, laying out his vision for a world in which



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addresses marchers gathered from the base of the Lincoln Memorial all the way back to the Washington Monument. The Lincoln Memorial was chosen as the site for the event to mark the hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.

people are judged not "by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Think Twice

What were the goals of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom?

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Dr. King and other civil rights leaders met with President John F. Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson to discuss civil rights legislation after the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The march had strengthened Kennedy's resolve to make sure a bill was passed. Yet he would not get to see his civil rights bill enacted into law.

As you read in Topic 1, Kennedy was assassinated just a few months after the march. Lyndon B. Johnson suddenly became the president. In a rousing speech to Congress that November, Johnson declared, "We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. We have talked for one hundred years or more. It is time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the books of law." He urged members of the



Politicians and civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., joined President Johnson in the East Room for the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

House and Senate to pass the civil rights bill in the late president's honor.

Johnson, a Texas native, began his political career during the Great Depression and was a supporter of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1937 at the age of twenty-eight, Johnson fought to bring infrastructure and housing projects to his home district. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1948 and, six years later, became the youngest Senate majority leader in U.S. history. Johnson, a Democrat, proved highly adept at this position. A skilled coalition builder, he kept his own party members in line and worked closely with President Dwight D. Eisenhower and congressional Republicans.

Johnson's background as a legislator turned out to be critical to passing Kennedy's civil rights bill. He urged Democratic Senate leaders to work with the Republican Senate minority leader Everett Dirksen, noting, "The bill can't pass unless you get Ev Dirksen. . . . You talk with Dirksen. You listen to Dirksen." Under the president's direction, Senate Democrats built a **bipartisan** team to maneuver the civil rights bill through Congress. Some Republicans, including Dirksen, worried about the language in certain parts of the bill. After much back-and-forth, Democrats and Republicans worked together to amend it, ultimately creating a stronger bill than what Kennedy had initially introduced. The Senate passed the bill on June 19, and President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law on July 2.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was unlike anything Congress had passed before, representing a significant triumph for the Civil Rights Movement. The law prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce the law. It also expanded equal protection under the law by giving the federal government the power to desegregate public spaces; extending the Commission on Civil Rights, established in 1957; banning discrimination in federally assisted programs; and addressing segregation in public schools.

Think Twice



How did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 enact political and social change?

Voting Rights

Even before the Civil Rights Act passed, the movement had expanded its focus to voting rights. African Americans continued to encounter obstacles designed to disenfranchise them, particularly in the South. Activists were determined to tackle the widespread obstacles to voting, including poll taxes, literacy tests, and other practices designed to intimidate African Americans from even registering to vote.

The Twenty-Fourth Amendment

Opposition to the poll taxes you read about in Unit 2 began during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration; however, the federal government did not officially address this practice until President Kennedy's administration. In August 1962, Congress adopted an amendment to abolish poll taxes in federal elections—the elections for president, vice president, and members of Congress. The proposed amendment was then sent to the states for ratification. At this time, five states still had poll taxes on the books: Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia.

The ratification of an amendment, rather than the passage of legislation, was necessary because the U.S. Constitution grants states the power to regulate elections, which, as it turned out over the decades, included the ability to institute poll taxes. As a result, Congress would have to change the Constitution to specify that instituting poll taxes was an action the states could *not* take. At the same time, supporters of the amendment believed it had a better chance of passing Congress if it focused on elections specific to the federal government, reflecting the constitutional principle that states have the primary authority over elections.

Three-fourths of the states had ratified the Twenty-Fourth Amendment by January 23, 1964, just a few months before the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled 6–3 in the case *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* that the Twenty-Fourth Amendment applied to the states, making poll taxes in state and local elections illegal.

Think Twice

Why was a constitutional amendment necessary to ban poll taxes, and how did the Twenty-Fourth Amendment eventually affect state and local elections?

The Freedom Summer

Many African American registered voters faced discrimination when it came to casting their vote, but Black people also encountered impediments when it came to *registering* to vote. In the South, African American voter registration was remarkably low. At less

than 7 percent, Mississippi had the lowest percentage of registered eligible African American voters in the United States.

Voter registration drives were a key component of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1964, SNCC organizer Robert Moses, in conjunction with members of CORE, the NAACP, and the SCLC, launched the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, better known as the Freedom Summer. Moses and hundreds of mostly white volunteers joined with Black Mississippians to register as many African American voters as possible. The volunteers also opened Freedom Schools in the state to teach literacy and civics.

The first of the student volunteers arrived in Mississippi in mid-June for training in how to register people. They were also prepared for the conditions and resistance they were likely to face, including the possibility of arrest. One week into the Freedom Summer, volunteers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were arrested for speeding. After they paid their fine, a deputy sheriff released them from jail and instructed them to leave the county. Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner then disappeared.

The FBI launched a kidnapping investigation on June 22, and they recovered the volunteers' vehicle the following day. The story gained national attention, mainly because Goodman and Schwerner were white (James Chaney was a Black Mississippi resident).

FBI agents eventually found the three volunteers' bodies in a shallow grave in early August. The federal government, unable to bring murder charges, ultimately brought charges against twenty-one men, including the local sheriff and members of the Ku Klux Klan, for violation of the volunteers' civil rights. A jury later found seven of the men guilty.

The murders of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were truly terrifying; however, volunteers persisted despite acts of violent intimidation. The Freedom Summer led to the registration of hundreds of new voters. Meanwhile, about three thousand African Americans studied literacy and civics at Freedom Schools established by SNCC volunteers.

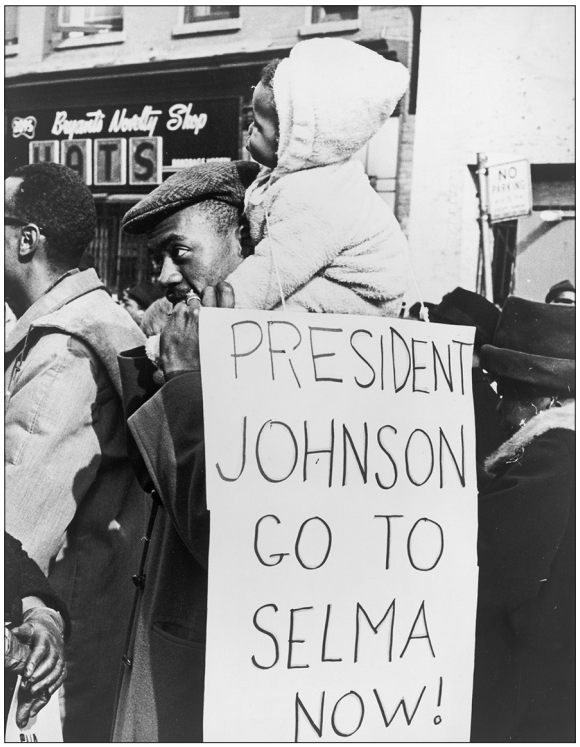
Think Twice



Why was voter registration such an important part of the Civil Rights Movement, and how did the Freedom Summer Project address these challenges in Mississippi?

The Selma-to-Montgomery Marches

SNCC volunteers also worked to register eligible African American voters in Selma, Alabama. While about 19 percent of eligible Black voters were registered across the state, only about 1–2 percent were registered in Selma. The city only offered voter registration two days a month, and voters had to fill



Marchers covered about twelve miles (19 km) a day and slept in fields on their way to the Alabama state capital. Their calls to the federal government to take more action, as captured on a sign here, drew the attention of people around the world.

out massive amounts of paperwork and pass literacy tests. After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became law, SNCC and local civil rights organizations increased their voter registration efforts. As militant resistance from law enforcement increased, an appeal was made for the SCLC to get involved in Selma.

Tensions in Selma continued to escalate into early 1965. The police arrested hundreds of demonstrators, including SNCC members and supporters, and on February 18, a state trooper shot a young African American demonstrator named Jimmie Lee Jackson. When Jackson died a week later, movement leaders decided to march from Selma to Montgomery, the capital of Alabama. In addition to protesting Jackson's killing, the march would draw national attention to ongoing violence and discrimination and, it was hoped, encourage President Johnson to move on voting rights legislation.

Organizers, including John Lewis from SNCC, scheduled their demonstration for Sunday, March 7. They planned to march the six blocks from Selma's Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church to the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Then they would cross the bridge over the Alabama River and out of Selma to continue the fifty-mile (80 km) journey to Montgomery.

As marchers gathered at the church, leaders reiterated the importance of nonviolence as they marched. Lewis and Hosea Williams of SCLC then led six hundred peaceful protesters across the bridge. Dozens of state troopers and sheriff's deputies, some on horseback, waited for the marchers as they reached the end of the bridge. The night before the march, Alabama governor George Wallace had directed state troopers to "take whatever means necessary" to stop the protest from happening. Now, officials announced with a bullhorn that the protesters had two minutes to turn around. When they refused, law officers savagely attacked the marchers with clubs, whips, and tear gas. John Lewis and dozens of other marchers were hospitalized following the attack.

Television cameras captured the events of "Bloody Sunday," and millions of Americans bore witness to the senseless brutality in the following days. Dr. King called for another Selma march; however, a judge had temporarily blocked additional protests in Selma. King and two thousand protesters marched from the church to the Edmund Pettus Bridge but were turned around by state troopers.

On March 17, a judge ruled that a march from Selma to Montgomery could take place. When Governor Wallace refused to guarantee the protesters' safety, President Johnson nationalized part of the Alabama National Guard and sent U.S. Army troops, federal marshals, and FBI agents to the state. On March 21, Dr. King and other civil rights leaders led anywhere from three thousand to eight thousand marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and out of Selma. Thousands of marchers joined along the way, bringing the total to about twenty-five thousand people by the time they reached Montgomery on March 25.



Think Twice

What was the purpose of the Selma-to-Montgomery march?

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Freedom Summer and the Selma-to-Montgomery marches ratcheted up the pressure on President Johnson to respond to calls for voting rights legislation. On March 15, 1965, about one week after Bloody Sunday, Johnson delivered a televised address to Congress in which he declared, "Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is . . . all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome." Two days later, Johnson called for Congress to pass a comprehensive voting rights bill. Both houses of Congress eventually passed the legislation by a wide margin, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) into law on August 6.

The VRA introduced sweeping protections for voting rights in the United States. The law banned literacy tests and other tools of voter suppression, enforcing the Fifteenth Amendment by removing barriers to African American voter registration. The VRA also increased federal oversight of elections, empowering the federal government to intervene in certain voting districts across the South that had a history of denying voting rights. Voting districts that met the criteria now had to get preclearance—advance approval—from the Department of Justice before they could make any change in how they conducted voter registration or elections. As a part of preclearance, these districts had to prove that the change would not have the effect of restricting voting by African Americans.

Percentage of Eligible Voters Registered to Vote Before and After Passage of the Voting Rights Act

Alabama Non-white: 19.3 ➔ 51.6 White: 69.2 ➔ 89.6	**North Carolina** Non-white: 46.8 ➔ 51.3 White: 96.8 ➔ 83.0
Arkansas Non-white: 40.4 ➔ 62.8 White: 65.5 ➔ 72.4	**South Carolina** Non-white: 37.3 ➔ 51.2 White: 75.7 ➔ 81.7
Georgia Non-white: 27.4➔ 52.6 White: 62.6 ➔ 80.3	**Tennessee** Non-white: 69.5 ➔ 71.7 White: 72.9 ➔ 80.6
Louisiana Non-white: 31.6 ➔ 58.9 White: 80.5 ➔ 93.1	**Texas** Non-white: 53.1 ➔ 61.6 White: n/a ➔ 53.3
Mississippi Non-white: 6.7 ➔ 59.8 White: 69.9 ➔ 91.5	**Virginia** Non-white: 38.3 ➔ 55.6 White: 61.6 ➔ 63.4

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 led to major increases in voter registration, especially among African Americans in the South. In each pair of numbers, the first number is the percentage of registered voters before the Voting Rights Act was passed, and the second number is the percentage of registered voters after the act was passed.

The effects of the VRA were swift and extensive. By the end of the year, an additional 250,000 African Americans had registered to vote, and the following year, nine out of thirteen Southern states had registered at least 50 percent of eligible Black voters. All Southern states surpassed the 50 percent threshold by 1968. The number of Southern African American legislators also grew in the years after the VRA.



Think Twice

What were the long-term and short-term effects of the Voting Rights Act?



Other Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s

The Civil Rights Movement did not come to an end following the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. There was still plenty of work to be done to ensure equal treatment. As the 1960s progressed, the push for civil rights diversified as more radical Black voices, as well as Native and feminist voices, broadened the focus to include racial justice, gender equality, and Indigenous rights.

Malcolm X and Black Power

The Black Power movement emerged during the second half of the 1960s. Instead of working for an equal, integrated society, Black Power championed the creation of separate and distinctly African American political and cultural institutions and emphasized the importance of Black race consciousness, cultural pride, economic empowerment, self-reliance, and self-respect. Some movement leaders, frustrated by the slow progress toward greater civil rights, openly rejected Dr. King's nonviolent methods.

Malcolm X was a civil rights activist whose ideas provided the intellectual framework for the emerging Black Power movement. Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, he was exposed from a young age to his father's support of Marcus Garvey's Black nationalist ideas. He was an excellent student but dropped out of high school before graduating and became involved in petty crime, which later turned into more serious crime. He was eventually sentenced to six years in prison for robbery.

While in prison, Malcolm joined the Nation of Islam, a movement that blended Islam and Black nationalism. He changed his last name from Little to X in recognition that his family name was a "slave name" assigned by slaveholders and that he might never know the names of his African ancestors. He read avidly, devouring one book after another from the prison's library. After his prison sentence ended, Malcolm X became an important organizer for the Nation of Islam, opening new temples and recruiting members, eventually helping the organization grow to half a million followers.

Malcolm X was a compelling speaker who articulated the storm of emotions that he and other African Americans felt regarding the false hopes of American liberty and equality. From the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s, he became well-known for his criticisms of the Civil Rights Movement and of white liberals, whom he deemed guilty of making empty promises and exploiting Black leaders for political gain. Malcolm X believed that African Americans should be fighting for more than just the right



Malcolm X sent Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. numerous articles and invitations; however, the two men met only once, during a press conference as the Senate debated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In a letter to Malcolm X's widow, Dr. King wrote, "While we did not always see eye to eye on methods to solve the race problem, I always had a deep affection for Malcolm and felt that he had the great ability to put his finger on the existence and root of the problem."

A Turbulent 1968

The year 1968 proved to be horrific for the prospects of freedom fighters and those committed to human rights. On April 4, a gunman assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as he stood on the balcony of his hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. Two months later, Robert F. Kennedy, the former U.S. attorney general and younger brother of the late President John F. Kennedy, was assassinated at a hotel in Los Angeles, California, during his campaign to be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. President Lyndon B. Johnson urged Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1968 in honor of Dr. King's legacy. This law expanded on the earlier Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit housing discrimination and extend most Bill of Rights protections to Native Americans.

to cast a ballot or to drink from the same water fountains and ride the same buses as white Americans. He spoke about the importance of the African American identity and self-determination, and he openly criticized the slow results of nonviolent protest action.

Internal divisions ultimately led Malcom X to leave the Nation of Islam. In 1964, he made a pilgrimage to Mecca and converted to Sunni Islam. Malcolm X's activism took a more global view, shifting from civil rights in the United States to human rights of Black people around the world.

Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, during a speaking engagement in New York City. Three members of the Nation of Islam were charged with and convicted of the assassination; two were exonerated fifty years later. The exact motivation for Malcolm X's murder remains unclear, although many believe it was connected to his shift in focus away from tenets of the Nation of Islam.

Inspired by Malcolm X's slogan "Freedom by any means necessary," Black nationalists Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California, in 1966. The group openly carried firearms, a legal practice at the time and a deliberate act of resistance against police violence. The Black Panther Party also advocated awareness of draft inequities, sometimes encouraging African American resistance to the draft, and established community assistance programs.

Think Twice



How did the Black Power movement differ from the mainstream Civil Rights Movement?

The American Indian Movement

Native Americans were not considered U.S. citizens until 1924, meaning that they were denied civil rights such as the ability to

vote in elections. The federal government began to promote more self-determination for Native Americans during the 1930s and 1940s; however, Congress reversed course in 1953 when it adopted the termination policy. Through termination, Congress could end federal recognition of Native American tribes and further force Native Americans to assimilate into mainstream American culture by stripping funds, land, and authority away from tribal governments. Congress brought terminations against sixty different tribes between 1953 and 1970, forcing Native Americans to give up three million acres (12,140 sq km) of tribal lands. By the 1960s, many Native Americans lived in cities, where they experienced high rates of unemployment, extreme poverty, and racial discrimination.

Occupation of Alcatraz

Inspired by the struggle and successes of the Civil Rights Movement, in 1968, a group of five Ojibwe activists in Minneapolis, Minnesota, formed the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM worked toward a variety of goals, including a renewal of traditional Native culture, economic independence, protection of Native American civil and legal rights, complete autonomy over tribal lands, and land reclamation, or the return of tribal lands that had been taken illegally in the past.

Tribes across the country joined AIM, which gained national attention through high-profile protests, most notably the occupation of



During the occupation of Alcatraz, Native American activists painted messages on buildings across the island. This message reads "Indians welcome" at the top, and the phrase "Indian land" can be read faintly at the bottom. The site is now managed by the National Park Service.

Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. The first occupation occurred on March 9, 1964, when five Sicangu Lakota claimed the abandoned prison site, citing the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which allowed them to reclaim deserted federal land. Though that initial occupation lasted only four hours, it inspired a larger movement. On November 9, 1969, a group of Native Americans, led by Richard Oakes of the Akwesasne Mohawk, returned to Alcatraz and claimed it on behalf of all Native peoples. By November 20, the occupation had grown to around a hundred participants, mostly Native American students.

The federal government did not meet AIM's demands for ownership of the island, instead opting to wait out the occupiers, who dwindled and were ultimately removed by law enforcement in June 1971. Although the activists' demands went unmet, the nineteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT OCCUPIES ALCATRAZ, LENADA JAMES, 1983

In this excerpt from a panel discussion at the 1983 Conference on Indian Self-Rule, Lenada James, one of the Native American activists who occupied the abandoned federal prison on Alcatraz Island in 1969, describes her experience.

We turned our attention to Alcatraz Island. This abandoned prison site was being turned over to the city of San Francisco. We believed that, under treaties, federal surplus property was supposed to revert to Indians, if they claimed it. The Indian student groups at San Francisco State and Berkeley went out and occupied the island. We really did not know what we were doing. . . .

Nevertheless, we were working for an important goal. We were trying to get the issue that Indians had the right to retrieve federal surplus property litigated in the courts. I spent a whole year on the island. I commuted back and forth to the university with my two-year-old son. We would hitchhike and then catch a sailboat or a speedboat to the island. I wrote all the public relations proposals that were released from the island. I then turned in some of this material for the work that I was doing in my classes.

The protest movement at Alcatraz had positive results. Many individuals were not ashamed to be Indian anymore. People who had relocated in the cities were reidentifying themselves as Indians. But there was riff raff on the island. Many people were using drugs and getting drunk. That was not the kind of image we wanted to project to the press or to the world. We hoped to project a positive image of Indian people. We wanted to show what the federal government was doing to destroy our people. Throughout the United States, Indian men were being sent to prison, people on reservations were starving, and Indian family units were being destroyed. I call this systematic annihilation.

Source: James, Lenada. Personal account. In *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan*, edited by Kenneth R. Philp. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995, p. 230.

brought the issue of Native American self-determination into the national discourse.

Continued Protest and Victories

In 1972, AIM coordinated the Trail of Broken Treaties protest. On October 6, three caravans originating in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle carried Native American activists across the country to Washington, D.C. Later, another caravan departed from Oklahoma and followed the path of the Trail of Tears.

On November 2, the four-mile-long (6.4 km) caravan of activists from two hundred tribes and twenty-five states reached the nation's capital, where they occupied the building of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for a week upon discovering that no one from the executive branch would meet their demands. Ultimately, members of President Richard Nixon's administration agreed to form a task force to evaluate AIM's demands. President Nixon eventually ended the termination policy, and many of the movement's demands became a part of Native American policy over time. Shortly after, in February 1973, AIM members took control of the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. At this site of the massacre you read about in Unit 2, AIM continued to press the federal government to honor its treaties with tribal nations, among other demands. The protest action lasted for seventy-one days and once again drew the nation's attention to the issue of Indigenous rights.

In 1975, the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act marked a significant victory for AIM. In a major shift in federal policy, the act empowered tribes to take over federally funded programs and services, including BIA schools for Native American children. The tribes could now manage delivery of these programs and services and decide how best to meet the unique needs of their communities.

Think Twice



What were the goals and outcomes of the American Indian Movement?

The Women's Rights Movement

Suffragists worked for decades to secure voting rights for women, starting in the late 1800s and continuing until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. This early women's movement is referred to as first-wave **feminism**. You have also read about the role of women during the First and Second World Wars. Recall that as American men returned from overseas in 1945, many women were forced back into more traditional roles, often against their wishes. Around the middle of the century, a new movement emerged.

Second-Wave Feminism

A new women's movement, referred to as second-wave feminism and inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, emerged during the 1960s and 1970s and coincided with the Civil Rights Movement. Second-wave feminists wanted more than just political equality; they wanted equality in all aspects of life. And like the movement that preceded it, second-wave feminism relied on legal challenges in the courts to overturn existing discriminatory laws and pushed for new legislation to expand women's rights. Second-wave feminists worked toward numerous goals, such as

ending domestic violence and securing reproductive rights and equal pay.

Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* was a major driver of second-wave feminism in the United States. Friedan graduated from Smith College in 1942 with a psychology degree before studying for a year at the University of California, Berkeley. She married in 1947, moved to the suburbs, and became a mother and housewife. She also did occasional freelance work for magazines. In 1957, Friedan sent a questionnaire to women with whom she had graduated from Smith. The results of the questionnaire were telling: Many of the women experienced dissatisfaction in their daily lives, just as she did. Friedan expanded this preliminary revelation into a comprehensive research study detailing and analyzing the experiences of white, college-educated women and their frustration with gender expectations that severely limited women's life choices. Her book questioned these expectations by arguing that women could and should have the opportunity to find fulfillment outside the roles of mother and homemaker. *The Feminine Mystique* became an instant bestseller and inspired many women to join the women's movement.

Equal pay was a major issue for the movement. Women were typically paid less than men, even for identical work. The first move to legislate equal pay came in 1944. Winifred Stanley, a U.S. representative from New York,



Members of the women's movement held a demonstration in Washington, D.C., in August 1970, the fiftieth anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Protesters' demands included equal opportunity in education and employment and national access to free childcare centers.

recognized that women were integral to the war effort; they were doing work that had historically been performed by men, and they were doing it well. In June 1944, Stanley introduced H.R. 5056, a bill that amended the National Labor Relations Act to make wage discrimination based on sex illegal—in other words, to make it illegal to pay a woman less than a man for the same job. Stanley's bill died in the House Committee on Labor.

By the early 1960s, twenty-five million U.S. women worked, making up about a third of the country's workforce. And their participation in the labor market was growing rapidly. In 1960, however, women earned just 60 percent of what men earned doing the same job. Nineteen years after H.R. 5056 was introduced, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act of 1963. The act prohibited "discrimination on account of sex in the payment of wages by employers engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce." The act covers multiple forms of compensation, including salary, bonuses, paid time off, insurance coverage, and travel reimbursement. It also stipulates that employers cannot respond to gender pay complaints by lowering the higher wage; instead, they must raise the lower wage. The act also provides for legal recourse for people who have received unequal pay based on sex. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 had a significant impact on women's pay.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a major victory for the Civil Rights Movement. It was also a major step forward for women in the United States. Recall that the law prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Title VII of the law established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). This five-member commission is responsible for monitoring and enforcing antidiscrimination laws, such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963. It also investigates claims that antidiscrimination laws have been violated.

Think Twice



What changes emerged during the 1960s for women in the U.S. workforce?

The Equal Rights Amendment

Like the Civil Rights Movement, the growing women's movement created local and national organizations to help bring about change. In October 1966, a group of women's activists, including Betty Friedan, formed the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW's stated purpose was "to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men." NOW members put pressure on the EEOC to enforce Title VII; organized boycotts, marches, protests, and strikes to advance women's rights; and supported female candidates for political office.

NOW also campaigned for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). As

you read in Unit 2, Alice Paul had been instrumental in drafting the first Equal Rights Amendment in 1923. After the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, the move from universal enfranchisement to gender equality seemed like a natural next step. But a version of the ERA was introduced in every session of Congress for nearly fifty years without passage. Several factors thwarted the ERA. First, very few women served in Congress—just 10 total in the Senate and 230 in the House of Representatives from 1922 to 1970. At the same time, the leader of the House Judiciary Committee, New York representative Emanuel Celler, had refused to hold hearings on the ERA for three decades. As more women lawmakers served in Congress starting in the 1960s and early 1970s—Shirley Chisholm included—Representative Celler finally relented, and the ERA made its way to the House floor for a vote.

The Equal Rights Amendment states, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Both houses of Congress passed the amendment by a wide margin—354–24 in the House and 84–8 in the Senate—and set a seven-year deadline for ratification. Thirty-eight states had to approve the amendment for it to become part of the Constitution. The proposed amendment was sent to the states for ratification on March 22, 1972, and Hawaii approved it the same day. Twenty-one more states ratified the ERA by the end of 1972, and a total of thirty states approved it within a year. Support for the ERA then began to stall. Additionally, organized opposition to the ERA continued to exist, notably under the leadership of conservative author and analyst Phyllis Schlafly, who believed that it would weaken the American family and threaten women with the possibility of military draft. Schlafly argued that the ERA would end up countering gender-specific protections that many women already possessed, such as paid maternity leave and financial rights in the case of divorce, as well as those within the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

By 1977, thirty-three states had ratified the amendment, while four states—Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Tennessee—had withdrawn their earlier support. These states were later joined by South Dakota. The Congresswomen's Caucus, a group of female legislators, led the charge to extend the deadline for ratification. Meanwhile, NOW and other **grassroots** organizations lobbied members of Congress for an extension, and tens of thousands of people marched on Washington, D.C., in support of the ERA in July 1978. Congress ultimately voted to extend the ratification deadline to 1982, but the ERA did not receive approval from thirty-eight states until 2020, long after the deadline had passed. Additionally, some states that ratified it later announced their intention to withdraw ratification. As a result, the ERA has not yet become a part of the U.S. Constitution.

Think Twice

What challenges have been involved in the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment?

Title IX

Just a few months after the ERA made its way to the states, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX stipulates that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX applies to public and private schools, colleges, universities, and libraries that receive federal funding for academics, athletics, or any other extracurricular programs that they may offer. Under Title IX, the government has the power to enforce the law and to end financial aid to institutions that fail to comply.

U.S. representative Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii was the primary author and sponsor of the law. She later explained why Title IX was so personal to her:

> I had written to a dozen or more medical schools to seek entry, [and] each one of them turned me down by saying that they did not admit women to their schools. It came to me as quite a shock that in America it was not a person's grade, aptitude, tests, recommendations that got the person into the careers of their choice, but that it had to do with one's gender. . . .
>
> I was determined that no other young woman in this country should ever have to endure the kinds of frustrations and injustice that I had to face while I was trying to find my place in this great democracy.

Title IX was a major step forward for the women's movement and helped improve the safety, academic outcomes, and athletic opportunities for women and girls in schools. For example, it prohibited excluding women and girls from programs, such as science and engineering, based on sex; it also prohibited sexual harassment and discriminatory dress code policies. Additionally, Title IX required that opportunities for athletic participation be equal, leading to an expansion of women's sports.

Second-wave feminism came to an end during the early 1980s. The movement had made significant inroads for women in many aspects of American life, leading many to believe that the movement had reached its major goals, though others argued that many issues—particularly regarding race and class—remained unresolved. Divisions over the movement's priorities also contributed to its end.

Think Twice

What did Title IX prohibit, and why was this significant to the progress of the women's movement?



Congresswomen were barred from accessing Congress's "members only" gym. House representatives Charlotte Reid, Patsy Mink, and Catherine May protested this policy by crashing a men-only fitness class in 1967, highlighting gender discrimination in government spaces.

The Supreme Court

As you know, the Supreme Court has also helped expand constitutional protections in the United States. Earlier in the topic, you read how the Supreme Court ended the "separate but equal" doctrine with its ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. This was a major win for the Civil Rights Movement. But it was just one of many landmark decisions that the court made during the mid-twentieth century.

Gideon v. Wainwright

When the Founders adopted the Bill of Rights, the amendments applied only to the federal government, not to the states. That meant that the Sixth Amendment right to an attorney in criminal cases only applied to federal cases. In 1961, a man named Clarence Gideon was charged with breaking and entering in Florida. Because of the nature of his crime, Gideon was not entitled to a state-provided attorney. Gideon could not afford to pay an attorney, so he defended himself in court. He was found guilty and sentenced to five years in prison. Gideon petitioned the Florida Supreme Court to release him because he believed that his trial had been unfair and that he was therefore being detained unlawfully. After the Florida Supreme Court denied his petition, Gideon appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which agreed to hear his case. The justices ruled unanimously in *Gideon v. Wainwright* that the Fourteenth Amendment right to due process, or fairness, under the legal system meant that the Sixth Amendment right to an attorney applied to both federal and state criminal cases.

Miranda v. Arizona

The case *Miranda v. Arizona*, like *Gideon v. Wainwright*, was also related to due process. As you read in Unit 1, the Fifth Amendment protects people against self-incrimination, or being forced to give evidence against themselves. At the same time, if a person decides not to speak on their own behalf in court, their silence cannot be taken as evidence that they are guilty. In 1963, a man

named Ernesto Miranda was arrested at his home on suspicion of kidnapping and taken to a police station. The police interrogated him for hours, eventually leading Miranda to write and sign his confession. Miranda's attorney objected when the signed confession was later used as evidence at his trial. He pointed out that police had not made Miranda aware of his Fifth Amendment rights, including the protection from self-incrimination, before they questioned him. Miranda's case was eventually appealed to the Supreme Court. The justices ruled 5–4 in favor of Miranda. They held that the protection from self-incrimination applied to both trials and interrogations. Additionally, the justices ruled that law enforcement had to make all suspects aware of their Fifth Amendment rights.

Roe v. Wade

The case *Roe v. Wade* was especially relevant to the women's rights movement, specifically the goal of expanding women's reproductive rights. In 1970, Jane Roe (a fictional name used to protect the plaintiff's identity) challenged a Texas law that made it illegal to have an abortion unless a doctor said it was necessary to save the woman's life. Roe filed the lawsuit after she tried to illegally end her pregnancy but failed. Roe's legal team argued that the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protected the right to make decisions about one's own body. The Supreme Court ruled 7–2 in favor of Roe, stating that a woman's right to choose to have an abortion was protected by the Constitution. The Supreme Court later overturned *Roe v. Wade* in the 2022 case *Dobbs v. Jackson*, in which it returned power to regulate abortion to the states.

Think Twice



How are the cases *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, and *Roe v. Wade* similar?

Other Reform Movements and Social Changes

During the 1960s and 1970s, a wide range of equality movements emerged alongside the push for civil rights, each addressing the unique struggles of different communities. The United Farm Workers fought for better working conditions and fair wages for migrant laborers, and the Chicano Movement demanded educational and political rights for Mexican Americans. The environmental movement brought attention to pollution and the need to protect natural resources, linking environmental justice to human health and safety. Meanwhile, the Asian American movement challenged stereotypes and called for greater representation and civil rights. Together, these efforts reflected a broader national demand for justice, dignity, and equal treatment across many areas of American life.

Topic 3

The Later Years and End of the Cold War, 1960s–1991

Framing Question

How did the Cold War influence U.S. foreign policy and affect domestic society between 1961 and 1991?



The American victory over the Soviet ice hockey Olympic team quickly became the stuff of twentieth-century legend.

Miracle on Ice

Setting the Scene

Since the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, members of the global community have gathered to compete in a range of sporting events. Outwardly, the games are a celebration of athleticism and skill, sportsmanship and camaraderie, and international goodwill. But the Olympics can be heavily influenced by international politics, which is especially true during the Cold War.

The Soviet ice hockey team has dominated the Winter Olympics since 1956, and most people assume it will win the gold again at the 1980 games in Lake Placid, New York. Team USA, made up of college students, will be lucky to win a single game. The American team's underdog status is confirmed just a few days before the games begin, when the Soviet team overwhelms Team USA 10–3 in an exhibition match.



The Soviet team wins all five of its games during the first round of the Olympic tournament. But in a shock to most observers, Team USA ties one of its games—and wins the other four. Ten thousand people crowd into the Olympic field house on February 22 to watch Team USA and the Soviet Union face off in the first medal round.

The game is incredibly tense. The Soviet team is relentless, but Team USA holds its ground; at the end of the first period, the teams are tied 2–2. By the end of the second period, the Soviet team has managed to score just one additional goal, which means they are ahead going into the third and final period of the game. Team USA ties the game about nine minutes in, then takes the lead ninety seconds later. Both teams fight fiercely for the rest of the period, with the Soviets trying to tie the score and Team USA battling to maintain its lead.

The crowd counts down the final seconds as the period comes to an end. The field house immediately erupts into chants of "USA, USA, USA!" Viewers at home listen as television announcer Al Michaels shouts on the live broadcast, "Do you believe in miracles? Yes!" Team USA will go on to win the gold medal after defeating Finland in the next round.

The "Miracle on Ice" will become one of the most iconic cultural moments of the Cold War, often mentioned alongside events such as the Berlin airlift and the moon landing. It is a decisive American victory over the Soviet Union. The Miracle on Ice also illustrates just how different *the Cold War is from other wars. It has transcended traditional political and military posturing and seeped into the cultural arena—even ice hockey games.*

Lyndon B. Johnson and the Cold War

As you read earlier in this unit, Lyndon B. Johnson became president at a turbulent time in American history. Sworn in on Air Force One just hours after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Johnson was now responsible for navigating the United States through significant changes at home, many of which arose from the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the escalating Cold War abroad. As a result, the ambitious domestic and foreign policy agendas he proposed were often in competition for his attention and for support from an observant American public.

Johnson's Domestic Policies

Lyndon B. Johnson's successful effort to win passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 demonstrated his commitment to strengthening the federal government's role in ensuring equal protection under the law. Later that year, he ran for election on the promise of a "Great Society," a set of federal social welfare programs with the double-pronged goal of ending poverty and reducing racial injustice. Achieving these goals would prove that American democracy could deliver economic fairness at home, in contrast to communism abroad.

At the time Johnson launched his Great Society agenda, approximately one in five Americans lived in poverty. Johnson argued that such widespread poverty was not the personal failure of individuals who struggled to make ends meet but a social failure. As such, according to Johnson, it was up to the federal government to implement solutions—solutions that would become known as the War on Poverty. Following Johnson's lead, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which created the Office of Economic Opportunity to fund a variety of vocational training and employment programs. It also established the Head Start program, a federally funded preschool program that offers services to children from low-income households, in response to research showing that a child's family's socioeconomic status can influence their future educational outcomes. To address disparities in public education



Head Start preschool programs, still in operation today, focus on providing preschool-age children with social, academic, nutritional, and emotional education and enrichment. In this photo, a teacher and students cook together in a 1970s Head Start classroom.

PRIMARY SOURCE: "GREAT SOCIETY" SPEECH, LYNDON B. JOHNSON, 1964

Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" speech, delivered at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964, laid out an ambitious vision for solving the many social and economic challenges facing Americans.

The purpose of protecting the life of our Nation and preserving the liberty of our citizens is to pursue the happiness of our people. Our success in that pursuit is the test of our success as a Nation.

For a century we labored to settle and to subdue a continent. For half a century we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people.

The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization.

Your imagination, your initiative, and your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, or a society where old values and new visions are buried under unbridled growth. For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society.

The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning. . . .

. . . You can help build a society where the demands of morality, and the needs of the spirit, can be realized in the life of the Nation.

So, will you join in the battle to give every citizen the full equality which God enjoins and the law requires, whatever his belief, or race, or the color of his skin?

Will you join in the battle to give every citizen an escape from the crushing weight of poverty?

Will you join in the battle to make it possible for all nations to live in enduring peace—as neighbors and not as mortal enemies?

Will you join in the battle to build the Great Society, to prove that our material progress is only the foundation on which we will build a richer life of mind and spirit?

Source: Johnson, Lyndon B. "Remarks at the University of Michigan." May 22, 1964. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/239689.

at older ages, the Johnson administration also worked with Congress to pass and enact the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). This law increased funding for primary and secondary education to help close the achievement gap that many disadvantaged students experienced. This included funds for increased teacher training and curricular materials.

The Great Society also sought to address disparities in access to affordable health care by establishing the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Medicare is a federally funded program that pays many of the health care costs of older Americans. Medicaid does the same for households with limited income.

The Great Society was one of the most expensive and wide-reaching government efforts in U.S. history, aiming to tackle nearly every major issue facing the country in the 1960s. It poured billions of dollars into programs that provided health care for the elderly and poor, built public housing, supported schools, expanded food assistance, and enforced civil rights laws. New federal agencies were created to manage the dozens of new initiatives, and existing ones grew rapidly. At its peak, the government was funding hundreds of programs designed to fight poverty and inequality, making the Great Society not just a bold vision but also a massive and costly transformation of American society.

The legacy of Johnson's Great Society, particularly his War on Poverty, remains unclear. Great Society programs provided critical services to underserved communities across the country, and many still offer essential benefits to millions of Americans, including Head Start, Medicare, and Medicaid. However, economists and scholars still debate whether the War on Poverty had a meaningful impact on the poverty rate in the United States. At the same time, the Great Society and the War on Poverty helped define political ideologies, serving as a social ideal for Democratic politicians and a point of criticism for Republicans; the latter denounced the resulting increases in federal spending and the role of the federal government, arguing that dependence on federal programs reduced incentives for personal responsibility and local solutions.

As you are about to read, President Johnson was increasingly distracted from his domestic agenda by U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, a major development in the Cold War and a significant drain on federal funds. The conflict would ultimately define much of Johnson's presidency.

Think Twice



Was the Great Society a success? Why or why not?

Intervention in Southeast Asia

The United States first became involved in Vietnam in the 1940s, long before Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency.

The government of France controlled the present-day countries of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam in a territory then called French Indochina. After World War II, nationalist groups inspired by communism in the Soviet Union and China began to fight against French colonial rule. In the ongoing American effort to halt the spread of communism through containment, first President Truman and then President Eisenhower committed millions of dollars to the French government between 1945 and 1954. The U.S. government also established the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in 1950 to support the French military. Through MAAG, American military advisers provided training and combat guidance, but they did not actively fight in the conflict.

In May 1954, Vietnamese **guerrillas** defeated French colonial forces at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, leading to the end of French control over Indochina. Two months later, the Geneva Accords, a series of treaties negotiated in Geneva, Switzerland, recognized the independence of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The treaties also divided Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel into communist North Vietnam and U.S.-aligned South Vietnam. Vietnamese nationalist Ho Chi Minh became the leader of North Vietnam. With the backing of the Soviet Union and China, Ho Chi Minh aimed to expel colonial powers and reunite Vietnam under a communist government aligned with his vision of Vietnamese independence.

President Eisenhower and other officials coined the term *domino theory* to justify U.S. involvement in Vietnam: If one country fell to communism, then surrounding countries might also fall, like a row of dominoes. In other words, if Vietnam became communist, then other countries in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia and Laos, could become communist, too. As France withdrew its forces from Vietnam, MAAG played a greater role in advising and training South Vietnamese military forces. At the same time, the United States increased its own military presence in the country.

Both North Vietnam and South Vietnam experienced political dissent, unrest, and corruption over the next several years. By 1958, communist rebels in South Vietnam, known as the Viet Cong, were fighting the South Vietnamese government. Between 1961 and 1962, the Kennedy administration increased the number of military advisers in South Vietnam from a few hundred to a few thousand. The administration also committed U.S. troops to the region. Soon, the Viet Cong were battling American soldiers, including

U.S. Army Special Forces, known as the Green Berets.

President Johnson inherited the Vietnam conflict in late 1963. As a senator and as vice president, he had supported the containment policy, but the stakes were much higher now that he was president. Only three weeks before Johnson had assumed the presidency, the political unrest in South Vietnam had escalated, leading to the assassination of the South Vietnamese president. Worried about being remembered as the president who "lost" Vietnam to communism, Johnson elected to commit additional resources to the conflict. In late 1963 and early 1964, Johnson approved a plan to push the Viet Cong from South Vietnam. When that failed, he approved plans to increase covert operations against North Vietnam, expand the U.S. military presence in South Vietnam, and begin implementing air strikes.

Although Johnson was steadily escalating U.S. involvement, he campaigned in 1964 as a peace candidate, assuring voters that he would not send "American boys" to fight in a foreign war. These promises contrasted sharply with the decisions he made once elected. The South Vietnamese government was becoming increasingly unstable, and Johnson and other officials believed that increased U.S. involvement was the only way forward if communism was to be kept out of South Vietnam. In the late summer of 1964, they got their opening. On August 2, the North Vietnamese attacked the USS *Maddox*, an American spy ship, off the coast of North Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin. The United States then sent a second spy ship, the USS *Turner Joy*, to provide support to the *Maddox*. On August 4, the ships reported a second attack, this time on the *Turner Joy*, as they sailed out of the gulf; they later canceled the report, instead blaming the bad weather.

President Johnson gave a televised speech on August 4 to report on the recent events. He asked Congress to pass a resolution that would give him the power to "take all necessary measures" against North Vietnam to secure peace in Southeast Asia. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution three days later. This authorized the president to take military action in Vietnam without a formal declaration of war, effectively allowing him to escalate U.S. involvement into a full-scale conflict.

Think Twice



What led to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, and why was it significant for later U.S. actions in Vietnam?

The Vietnam War Begins

The U.S. military conducted limited bombing raids throughout 1964. Then, in early 1965, President Johnson approved a bombing campaign called Operation Rolling Thunder in

North Vietnam. The goal of the operation was to convince North Vietnam and the Viet Cong to stop their incursions into and within South Vietnam. The first wave of U.S. troops—3,500 marines—landed on the coast of South Vietnam to help protect and support military bases that American planes would use during the bombing campaign. The troops were instructed to fire only in self-defense and not to initiate combat.

When Operation Rolling Thunder failed to yield the desired results, Johnson committed an additional twenty thousand troops to Vietnam in early April, and within a few weeks, the U.S. military was on the offensive rather than the defensive. By the end of 1965, there were 184,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam; this number grew to 536,000 by the end of 1968.



By mid-April, President Johnson had authorized U.S. troops to go on "search and destroy" missions to eliminate North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces at their bases and strongholds.

Warfare

Despite its troop strength and firepower, the U.S. government struggled to fight an unpredictable and unfamiliar guerrilla war in Vietnam. The early years of the conflict in the second half of the 1960s were characterized by jungle warfare, as small units composed of U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers responded to sudden attacks by North Vietnamese soldiers and the Viet Cong in dense, humid, and heavily forested jungles.

At the same time, the U.S. government struggled to win the support of the South Vietnamese people for whose freedom they were fighting. Beginning in the early 1960s, the South Vietnamese government, supported by the U.S. military, launched the Strategic Hamlet Program, which forcibly relocated rural families into fortified villages. Though intended to isolate the Viet Cong, the program often alienated villagers, disrupted farming, and deepened opposition to both the South Vietnamese government and the U.S. military.

The United States' decision to use chemical and incendiary weapons such as Agent Orange and napalm further alienated the South Vietnamese. Agent Orange was a powerful herbicide used to destroy jungle cover. Its toxic chemicals caused long-term environmental damage and serious health effects, including birth defects, cancer, and respiratory illness, for both Vietnamese

civilians and American veterans. Napalm, a jellied form of gasoline that the U.S. military used to burn forests, villages, and people, also contributed to a variety of health and environmental problems in Vietnam.



Think Twice

How did the challenges of warfare in Vietnam affect the South Vietnamese people?

Shifting Public Opinion

Americans were increasingly conflicted as the Vietnam War dragged on. Students, academics, and members of the clergy became more and more critical of the draft, the number of American men it was forcing into military service, and the effect of the war on the Vietnamese people.

After World War II ended, President Truman had urged Congress to pass the Selective Service Act of 1948 to maintain a peacetime army. Congress reauthorized the act through the 1950s and 1960s. The law required all men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six to register for the draft. About 1.4 million American men were drafted between 1954 and 1964, about ten thousand a month. Beginning in July 1965, the Johnson administration increased the number of draftees to thirty-five thousand a month.

The Selective Service Act allowed people to defer their military service under certain circumstances, including if they

Tinker v. Des Moines

Anti-war sentiment among students was not just limited to college campuses. In 1965, a group of students at a public school in Des Moines, Iowa, planned to wear black armbands to school to protest the Vietnam War. When school administrators learned of the plan, they created a new policy banning the armbands. Administrators argued that such a protest could interfere with the students' learning. Two students, Mary Beth Tinker and Christopher Eckhardt, defied the policy and were suspended when they refused to remove their armbands. With the support of their parents, Tinker and Eckhardt sued the school district. They argued that the First Amendment protected the students' right to wear the armbands. Their case was appealed to the Supreme Court in 1969. The justices ruled in *Tinker v. Des Moines* that students maintain their constitutional rights at school. The court also ruled that the armbands were a form of "pure speech" and that wearing them should be allowed as long as it does not cause any interference in how a school operates. "Pure speech" means that wearing the armbands communicated the students' beliefs in the same way that speaking or writing their beliefs did.

were enrolled in college. Many argued that this policy put people who could not afford to pursue higher education at a disadvantage, claiming that the conflict was the "poor man's war" because the draft disproportionately affected young, working-class, and minority men. In 1969, the federal government ended the deferment policy and instituted a lottery system to randomly determine the order in which men were called up for service. The lotteries were broadcast on radio and television.

Just as they had during the Civil Rights Movement, students played a crucial role in protest actions. Inspired by students' own experiences and the activism of others, anti-war protests were common on campuses across the country by 1967. Students organized teach-ins, sit-ins, and demonstrations. They also encouraged draft resistance, including holding events where people burned their draft cards. Protest songs by popular musicians such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez gave voice to anti-war sentiment and helped rally support for protest movements.



In an iconic image of the anti-war movement, a protester outside the Pentagon offers a flower to the military police as a sign of peace.

In October 1967, anti-war student groups organized the March on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Thirty-five thousand protesters marched from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon to carry their anti-war message to the secretary of defense, Robert McNamara. A small group of protesters eventually forced their way into the building as a riot erupted outside. U.S. marshals arrested about seven hundred protesters.

Whereas the March on the Pentagon brought the anti-war movement further into the public discourse, an event in 1968 intensified domestic opposition to the war, and not just among students. That January, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong began a multiphase, coordinated attack on hundreds of cities and American positions in South Vietnam. The first phase of the attack began on January 30 during Tet, a lunar new year holiday. Historically, the North and South Vietnamese laid down arms during Tet, so the attack caught the United States completely off guard. Pro-communist forces captured towns and small cities across South Vietnam and even attempted to enter the

Tet Offensive, 1968



The first wave of the Tet Offensive lasted from January to February 1968, and later phases lasted through September. The Ho Chi Minh Trail, a complex network of paths and trails used by the Viet Cong to move people and supplies, helped enable the offensive.

U.S. embassy in the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon.

Ultimately, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces recaptured the areas they lost, though the effort resulted in significant military and civilian casualties. But the Tet Offensive was a strategic and psychological win for the North: It convinced many Americans, officials and civilians alike, that the war was unwinnable at a reasonable cost. The following year, in 1969, news broke about the My Lai massacre, a horrible atrocity that

had taken place the year before. American soldiers on a search-and-destroy mission to root out Viet Cong had brutally killed more than three hundred unarmed women, children, and old men in a South Vietnamese village. News of this event further eroded support for the war.

The media played a major role in shaping and shifting public opinion about the Vietnam War, which was the first widely televised war. Americans watched events unfold daily on the evening news. This also meant that they were exposed daily to graphic images of combat, wounded soldiers and civilians, and military abuses. Walter Cronkite was a popular television news anchor during this time. His straightforward reporting on the evening news earned him the reputation of "the most trusted man in America." After visiting Vietnam following the Tet Offensive, Cronkite concluded in February 1968 on national television that the Vietnam War was "mired in stalemate." Put simply, Cronkite did not think the war could be won. This statement influenced future media coverage and public opinion of the war.

The Tet Offensive had a significant impact on President Johnson as well, and by extension the course of the Vietnam War. As the number of casualties grew, Johnson and the Vietnam War reached new levels of unpopularity. On March 31, 1968, the president announced in a televised address that the United States would stop bombing North Vietnam and that he wanted to negotiate a peace agreement with the North Vietnamese government, marking a sharp reversal in U.S. policy. In a shocking turn of events, he then announced that he was ending his reelection campaign for president. President Johnson's time directing U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was coming to end—but the conflict itself was certainly not yet over.

Think Twice



How did Americans' attitudes and actions reflect growing criticism of the Vietnam War during the 1960s?

The Nixon Years

Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War made him and the conflict very unpopular, and members of his own party, including Senator Robert F. Kennedy (the attorney general about whom you read in Topic 2), mounted strong primary challenges. As the Democratic Party struggled with infighting, the Republican Party rallied around a familiar politician from California: Richard Nixon.

Richard Nixon was born to a Quaker family in Yorba Linda, California, in 1913. He earned a law degree from Duke University in 1937 and later served in the U.S. Navy during World



President Johnson's decision not to seek reelection was highly unusual and reflected the toll the Vietnam War, an extension of the Cold War, had taken on his presidency. Incumbent presidents eligible for another term typically sought reelection and secured their party's nomination.

War II. Nixon was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1946. During the election, he implied that his opponent, a five-term Democrat, was a communist sympathizer. Nixon was reelected in 1948 and became a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee, where he gained national prominence for his strong anti-communist politics. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1950, then elected as Dwight D. Eisenhower's vice president in 1952. He later lost the 1960 presidential election to John F. Kennedy.

After spending the better part of the 1960s working in the private sector, Nixon emerged once again as the Republican candidate for president, this time in 1968. His nomination was due in large part to his "Southern strategy": Nixon shifted conservative white voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party by promising numerous concessions, including appointing a Southern justice to the Supreme Court and picking a moderate Republican running mate—Spiro T. Agnew, the current governor of Maryland. Nixon's campaign promises to end the Vietnam War and the draft, and a pledge to restore law and order to U.S. cities, appealed to American voters. As you read in the previous topic, the spring and summer of 1968 resulted in two tragic deaths. In addition to the assassination of Dr. King in April, Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated after winning California's presidential primary election

in June. Then in August, massive anti-war demonstrations erupted outside of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, leading to violent confrontations between protesters and police. Nixon narrowly defeated Hubert Humphrey, the eventual Democratic candidate, in the popular vote but took a comfortable majority in the Electoral College.

Nixon claimed that he represented the "silent majority." Unlike the "vocal minority" who were outspoken about the Vietnam War and the actions of the government, Nixon's alleged silent majority included ordinary Americans who did not participate in protests and supported traditional values, law and order, and the continued U.S. presence in Vietnam. Nixon would later call upon this group to support his decision to "keep [the United States'] commitment in Vietnam" as the government worked toward "peace with honor."



Think Twice

What was the "silent majority"?

Nixon's Vietnam

On November 3, 1969, President Nixon revealed his plans for winding down the war in Vietnam in a nationally televised address. Nixon characterized President Johnson as having "Americanized" the Vietnam War, stating that instead of helping the South Vietnamese fight their own war, the United States was actively fighting it for them. Nixon explained that moving forward, the United States would gradually withdraw U.S. troops while providing necessary training and equipment to the South Vietnamese to enable them to take over the conflict. This policy is known today as Vietnamization.

Outwardly, Nixon's Vietnamization appeared to be focused on de-escalating the conflict. Behind the scenes, however, Nixon was actively expanding the geographic scope of the war. In March 1969, before the official start of Vietnamization, Nixon ordered a secret bombing campaign along the border of South Vietnam to destroy Viet Cong supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which ran into neighboring Cambodia and Laos. As peace talks in Paris stalled later in 1969, Nixon sought other, less visible ways to increase pressure on North Vietnam to end the war. On April 30, 1970, he announced that U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were invading Cambodia to destroy Viet Cong base camps. The news came just days after an announcement that the United States had already withdrawn 115,000 troops from Vietnam.

Nixon's announcement stunned and infuriated Americans, especially students, and resulted in a wave of anti-war protests on college campuses across the country. On May 1, five hundred students held



Nixon, like his predecessors, used the domino theory to justify U.S. invasion of Cambodia and then Laos. This cartoon's creator emphasizes that countries are not the only dominoes that have fallen during the conflict.

a peaceful anti-war rally at Kent State University, but tensions escalated after a few protesters lit a garbage can on fire. In response, the Ohio National Guard was deployed, and on May 2, protesters set fire to the ROTC building. By May 4, thousands had gathered on campus, and clashes with the troops intensified. After protesters refused to disperse and threw rocks, the National Guard responded with tear gas and ultimately opened fire, killing four students and wounding nine. The Kent State shooting shocked the nation and ignited widespread student protests across the country. At Jackson State College in Mississippi, police opened fire on protesters, injuring twelve and killing two. The events in Ohio and elsewhere only strengthened anti-war sentiment across the United States. Pressure to end the draft and to end the Vietnam War now came from all corners of the country.

In 1971, public support for the war and for the U.S. government suffered another blow when the Pentagon Papers were published. These classified documents revealed that U.S. military and government officials had long believed the war in Vietnam was

PRIMARY SOURCE: STATEMENT OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, JOHN KERRY, 1971

Decorated Vietnam War veteran John Kerry delivered this speech before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 23, 1971, on behalf of the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Kerry, who later served as a U.S. senator and U.S. secretary of state, expressed the disillusionment that he and other veterans felt about the war.

In our opinion, and from our experience, there is nothing in South Vietnam, nothing which could happen that realistically threatens the United States of America. . . .

We found most people didn't even know the difference between communism and democracy. They only wanted to work in rice paddies without helicopters strafing them and bombs with napalm burning their villages and tearing their country apart. They wanted everything to do with the war, particularly with this foreign presence of the United States of America, to leave them alone in peace, and they practiced the art of survival by siding with whichever military force was present at a particular time, be it Vietcong, North Vietnamese, or American.

. . . We saw first hand how money from American taxes was used for a corrupt dictatorial regime. We saw that many people in this country had a one-sided idea of who was kept free by our flag, as blacks provided the highest percentage of casualties. We saw Vietnam ravaged equally by American bombs as well as by search and destroy missions, as well as by Vietcong terrorism, and yet we listened while this country tried to blame all of the havoc on the Vietcong. . . .

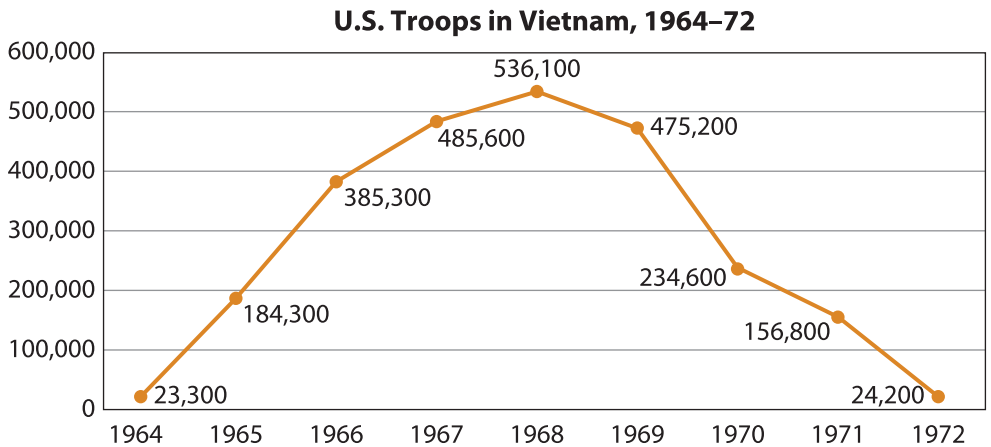
Each day to facilitate the process by which the United States washes her hands of Vietnam someone has to give up his life so that the United States doesn't have to admit something that the entire world already knows, so that we can't say that we have made a mistake. Someone has to die so that President Nixon won't be, and these are his words, "the first President to lose a war."

Source: *Legislative Proposals Relating to the War in Southeast Asia: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, on S. 376, S. 974, S.J. Res. 82, S.J. Res. 89, S. Con. Res. 17, S. Res. 62, S. Res. 66.* 92nd Cong., 1st Sess. 181–183 (1971). Statement of John Kerry, Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

not winnable but deliberately misled the American public. Daniel Ellsberg, an analyst who worked at the Pentagon, leaked the documents to the press. The Nixon administration, which did not yet know who had provided the information, tried to block the *New York Times* and other newspapers from publishing articles about the Pentagon Papers on the grounds that they threatened national security. The Supreme Court disagreed and ruled in favor of the newspapers' First Amendment rights. By this point, the damage was already done: The American people knew that the government had deceived them.

The Vietnam War continued into the early 1970s. In March 1972, the North Vietnamese launched a multipronged attack on South Vietnam. Nixon responded to the so-called Easter Offensive with an air-and-sea response dubbed Operation Linebacker, which lasted from early May until late October. Peace negotiations resumed later in 1972 before breaking down in November. Nixon then ordered the "Christmas bombing" of the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi as part of Operation Linebacker II, which took place between December 18 and 29, 1972. A fresh round of negotiations led to the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, marking the official end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, which Nixon announced in a January 1973 speech to the nation.

Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops, the North Vietnamese army invaded South Vietnam and had closed in on the South Vietnamese capital by the spring of 1975. While Nixon had promised U.S. intervention in South Vietnam if North Vietnam violated the peace accords, his successor, Gerald R. Ford, was now in office, and Congress was not supportive of further intervention. Instead, the United States raced to evacuate



By 1972, the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam had plummeted, a result of widespread public fatigue with and opposition to the conflict.

thousands of people from Saigon by helicopter, including American and South Vietnamese diplomats. The South Vietnamese government surrendered on April 30, and the country was unified as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Over ten years, from 1965 to 1975, the United States dropped more than 7.5 million tons of bombs on Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, causing massive civilian casualties and long-term ecological devastation, including the destruction of forests and farmland. Nearly three million Americans served in Vietnam from 1964 to 1973, and approximately fifty-eight thousand Americans and millions of Vietnamese people died in the conflict. Many American soldiers came home with horrific physical and mental injuries, which often went untreated and ignored. And unlike veterans of previous U.S. wars, these soldiers were not treated as heroes; instead, they were frequently insulted or denigrated after returning from a war many Americans did not support or endorse.

Recall that the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 1964 gave President Johnson virtually unlimited power to escalate the conflict in Vietnam without Congress ever formally declaring war. Eager to prevent "future Vietnams" from happening, members of Congress passed the War Powers Resolution in 1973. This resolution was intended to limit the president's power during military conflicts without a congressional declaration of war.

Think Twice



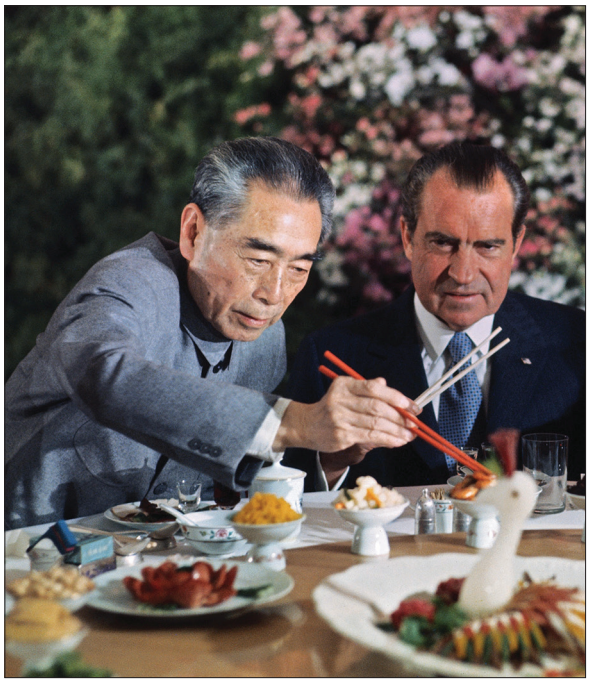
Was Nixon's Vietnamization successful in de-escalating the war? Why or why not?

Nixon's Foreign Policy Achievements

Despite Nixon's record in Vietnam, his overall foreign policy is considered quite successful, largely thanks to his use of diplomacy and his policy of **détente** (/day*tahnt/) to ease Cold War tensions with China and the Soviet Union.

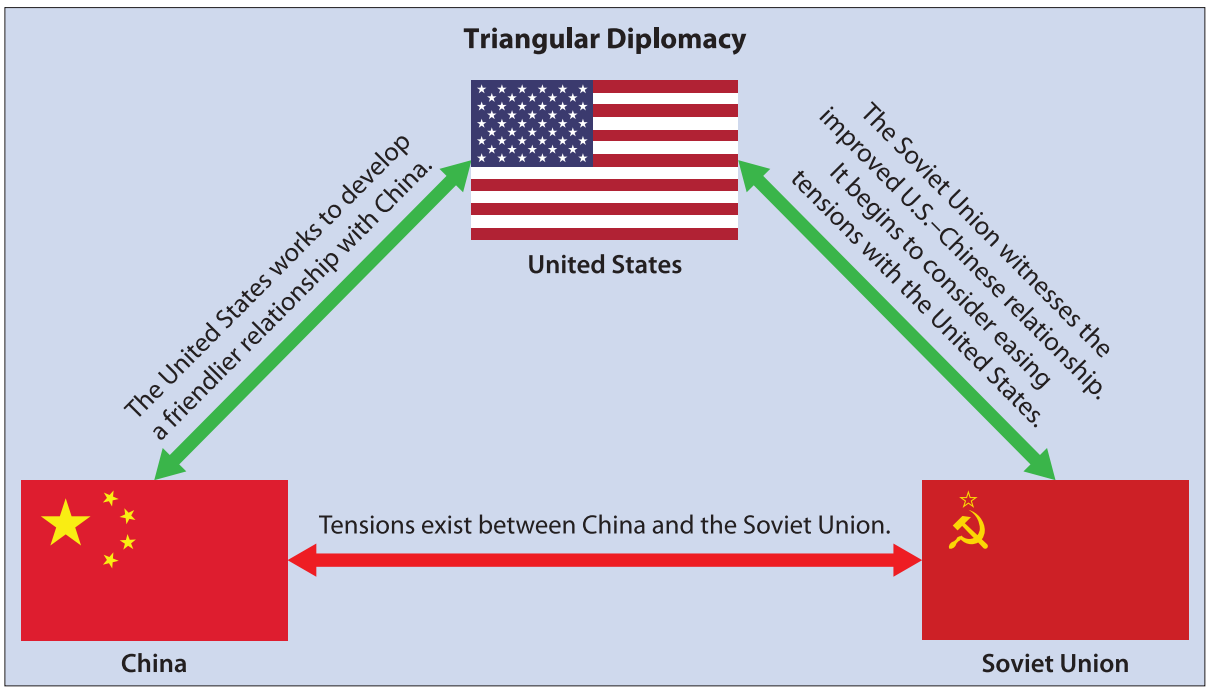
In Topic 1, you read about the Chinese Civil War, including how communist Mao Zedong came to power and established the People's Republic of China. You also learned about how the Chinese government backed North Korea during the Korean War. These factors had severely strained U.S.–Chinese relations for two decades by the time Nixon became president. They had also led the United States to ban trade with and travel to China.

The iciness between the United States and China began to thaw thanks to "ping-pong diplomacy." China's table tennis team invited American players to Beijing for a friendly tournament in 1971. The American players extended a reciprocal invitation in 1972. The events were significant for



Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and President Richard Nixon enjoy a meal together during Nixon's visit to China in 1972. The visit was a critical step in normalizing relations between the United States and China.

several reasons. First, the U.S. players and the journalists that accompanied them on their trip were some of the first Americans to visit China since 1949. Second, the Chinese players' initial invitation encouraged President Nixon to send Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to begin secret talks with China in July 1971. China and the Soviet Union had grown apart during the 1960s, a period known as the Sino-Soviet split. The Soviet Union had promised to help China develop nuclear weapons but later withdrew support, fearing that an empowered China could challenge Soviet influence. Nixon and Kissinger realized that a friendlier relationship with China could be an advantage when dealing with the Soviet Union. Then, in



The Nixon administration used tensions between the Soviet Union and China to the advantage of the United States. This diagram illustrates this triangular diplomacy.

February 1972, Nixon became the first sitting U.S. president to visit China. Recall that after the Chinese Civil War, the Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, declared the People's Republic of China, while the Nationalists established a separate government, the Republic of China, on the island of Taiwan. During his visit, President Nixon bowed to Chinese demands and officially recognized Taiwan as part of China. He stated that the United States did not support Taiwanese independence. The United States and China established diplomatic relations in 1979, thanks in part to Nixon's trip.

Cooling the nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union was also central to détente. The Johnson administration had initiated the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) in 1967 to limit the type and quantity of nuclear weapons each country possessed. Nixon continued SALT in 1969, and in 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the SALT I agreement.

SALT I included the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Antiballistic missiles (ABMs) are used to intercept and destroy missiles that have already launched; for example, the United States could use an ABM to destroy an incoming missile launched by the Soviet Union, and vice versa. SALT I limited the number of certain nuclear weapons that the United States and the Soviet Union could build. The treaty also restricted the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), a type of long-range missile, that each country could possess.

Think Twice



How effective was President Nixon's approach to détente in reducing Cold War tensions, and what challenges or limitations did it face?

Nixon's Domestic Policies

Nixon's domestic policies addressed a range of issues that affected many aspects of American life. Although Nixon espoused a more conservative political ideology, he often balanced this with the work of his Democratic predecessors.

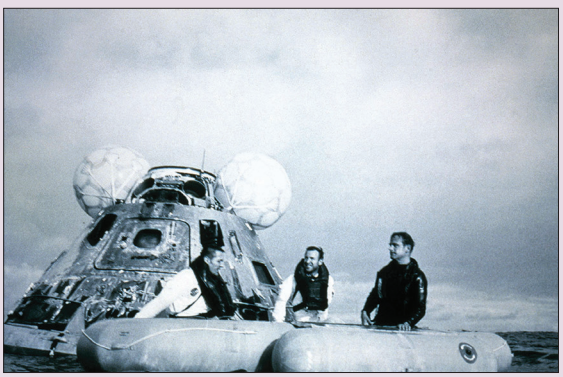
By 1970, seven Southern states were still resisting the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Additionally, in 1970, the Supreme Court ruled that busing could be used as a legal way to desegregate schools. While Nixon was not in favor of busing—and was also aware of the expectations of those targeted by his "Southern strategy"—he supported the enforcement of the court's ruling. Nixon also promoted racial equality by requiring companies and labor unions that received federal contracts to hire African American workers, and he expanded the size and enforcement powers of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 1972.

Apollo 13

The space race between the United States and the Soviet Union, initiated by the launch of *Sputnik* in 1957, figured prominently in four presidential administrations, including Nixon's. Recall that President John F. Kennedy made putting a person on the moon by the end of the 1960s a national priority. This goal was realized during President Nixon's first year in office, when the Apollo 11 mission successfully put Americans on the moon in July 1969. NASA launched the Apollo 12 mission just a few months later, marking the second time humanity had walked on the moon.

By the time NASA planned its third lunar landing for the spring of 1970, travel to the moon felt routine—yet the Apollo 13 mission turned out to be anything but. A rocket carrying three astronauts launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on April 11, 1970. On April 13, an oxygen tank explosion sent the mission into chaos. The astronauts radioed mission control, uttering the now-famous phrase "Houston, we've had a problem here." Instead of landing on the moon, the astronauts would swing around it and back to Earth. Together, mission control and the astronauts devised one plan after another to address concerns such as low fuel and rising carbon monoxide levels.

The astronauts passed behind the moon on the evening of April 14 and began their return to Earth. Millions of people around the world watched their dangerous trip. In a remarkable act of solidarity, the Soviet Union ordered "all citizens and members of the armed forces to use all necessary means to render assistance in the rescue of the American astronauts." The lunar module reentered Earth's atmosphere on April 17. The Apollo 13 mission is considered a successful failure: All three astronauts returned to Earth unharmed, and NASA learned valuable lessons that improved the safety of future space missions.



The Apollo 13 crew splashed down in the South Pacific Ocean, where they were picked up by the USS *Iwo Jima*.

President Nixon also increased protections for workers, the elderly, and people with disabilities. In 1970, he signed the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) into law. OSHA empowered the federal government to establish and enforce health and safety standards for workers across the United States. Then, in 1972, Nixon signed a

law that created the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, which helps eligible recipients pay for everyday necessities such as food, housing, and medicine.

Recall that Nixon was elected on a "law and order" platform in 1968. Nixon saw illegal drug use—and the criminal networks that trafficked the drugs—as a major problem in the United States, and in June 1971, he announced the War on Drugs. The administration worked to crack down on illegal drug use by increasing funding to drug-control agencies and drug abuse treatment centers. It also consolidated three drug-control agencies under the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Environmental policy was an additional focus of the Nixon administration. In 1970, Nixon presented Congress with a detailed, thirty-seven-point plan for a federal approach to environmental protection that included funding recommendations for a wide range of actions, from preventing future oil spills to researching ways to reduce pollution from automobiles. During Nixon's time in office, Congress passed landmark environmental legislation, including the Clean Air Act of 1970, which limited certain mobile and industrial emissions, and the National Environmental Policy Act, through which Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Nixon also inherited a challenging economic situation. During the early 1970s, the U.S. economy experienced inflation, slow economic growth, and high unemployment. In August 1971, Nixon issued an executive order that temporarily froze all wages and prices in the United States. He also proposed tax cuts to Congress to combat inflation. Nixon's wage and price freeze was justified through the Economic Stabilization Act of 1970, a law through which Congress empowered the president to "issue such orders and regulations as he may deem appropriate to stabilize prices, rents, wages, and salaries." He also ended the gold standard. Although Americans initially praised the president's actions, the resulting "Nixon shock" did not solve long-term economic problems, and inflation and other challenges continued through the 1970s.

Think Twice



Which of Nixon's domestic policies had the most lasting impact on American society, and why?

The Watergate Scandal

Republican Richard Nixon was reelected in 1972, but he would not finish his second term in office. On June 17, just a few months before the election, five men were arrested for breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate

Hotel in Washington, D.C. A subsequent investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) revealed that the burglary was done on behalf of the White House and the Committee to Re-elect the President. A special prosecutor was assigned to investigate President Nixon and his staff to determine if and how they were involved in the crime.

In 1971, a year before the break-in, Nixon had ordered the Secret Service to install tape recorders throughout the White House, including in the Oval Office and on White House telephone lines, to record conversations secretly. The special prosecutor **subpoenaed** the tapes, but Nixon refused on the grounds of **executive privilege**, claiming that a U.S. president had the right to keep the inner workings of the executive branch secret from the judicial branch and the legislative branch. Nixon's refusal put him in contempt of Congress; the Watergate scandal was now a constitutional crisis. The Supreme Court intervened and ruled unanimously in *United States v. Nixon* that the president was not above the law and was required to release the tapes.



The Watergate scandal shocked Americans across the political spectrum and deeply damaged public trust in the presidency.

The Nixon tapes ultimately proved that the president was involved in planning the Watergate break-in. The House Judiciary Committee drafted articles of impeachment against Nixon, including charges of abuse of power and obstruction of justice, and sent them to the House of Representatives.

Think Twice

Why was the Watergate scandal considered a constitutional crisis?

The 1970s

The 1970s were a tumultuous decade for the United States. The Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal had severely damaged Americans' trust in government. Meanwhile, gas shortages, rising prices, and slow economic growth created a sense of national unsteadiness. Furthermore, despite the recent slight cooldown, the Cold War remained an ever-present undercurrent of unease and anxiety. Two presidential administrations, under Gerald Ford and then Jimmy Carter, attempted to navigate the country through

this challenging time with varying degrees of success.

Gerald Ford

By 1973, Richard Nixon knew that his days in office were numbered. If he chose not to resign, he would undoubtedly face impeachment. In either scenario, the vice president would then assume the presidency. However, the Nixon administration faced a problem: Vice President Spiro T. Agnew was now facing indictment for illegal acts he had committed during his tenure as governor of Maryland, including bribery, extortion, and tax evasion. Agnew resigned from the vice presidency in October 1973 after pleading no contest to tax evasion. This meant that Nixon, a Republican, now needed to select a new vice president that the Democratic-controlled Congress would confirm. He chose House minority leader Gerald Ford. Congress confirmed Nixon's nomination, and Ford was sworn in as vice president in December 1973.

Gerald Ford, born in 1913, played football for the University of Michigan before earning a law degree at Yale in 1941. He then served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Ford was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1948, marking the start of a twenty-five-year stint in Congress. Ford was generally well-liked by members of both parties and had a reputation for being honest. Despite having served



The Ford administration printed millions of buttons, signs, stickers, and shirts promoting the Whip Inflation Now (WIN) campaign, which urged Americans to help stop inflation at a grassroots level, such as with carpooling and increased personal saving. Many Americans considered the campaign ridiculous, with some choosing to wear the promotional pins upside down so they read NIM, an acronym for No Immediate Miracles.

thirteen terms in the House, he was an outsider when it came to the inner workings of the Nixon administration—a definite plus when he took the oath of office of



President Gerald Ford (left) and General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev (right) sign the Vladivostok Accords. Brezhnev served as the general secretary of the Communist Party from 1964 to 1982.

president following Nixon's resignation on August 9, 1974.

A little less than one month after taking office, Ford pardoned Richard Nixon for all the offenses that he had committed or may have committed against the United States during his presidency. This meant that Nixon could not be prosecuted for his involvement in the Watergate scandal or for any other illegal activities that an investigation might uncover. Ford said that pardoning Nixon would heal the massive wound inflicted by Watergate and put the scandal in the past instead of on trial. But he was mistaken. The pardon infuriated Americans; both Democrats and Republicans wanted to hold Nixon accountable for his actions. Ford's decision caused his popularity rating to drop significantly during his first weeks in office and badly damaged his credibility as a leader.

The U.S. economy worsened as the 1970s progressed. Rising prices and unemployment rates pushed the country into a period of **stagflation**, a time when the economy experiences both price inflation and stagnation in job growth. Critics accused Ford of doing too little to address rising unemployment rates, and he eventually asked Congress to cut taxes.

President Ford's foreign policy was largely a continuation of Nixon's détente. The Ford administration worked with Soviet officials toward the Vladivostok Accords in November 1974. This agreement was a continuation of SALT I and helped lay the groundwork for further reductions in the future SALT II. In 1975, Ford visited Beijing to further normalize relations between the United States and China. President Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger also helped bring about the Helsinki Accords, an agreement among the United States, the Soviet Union, and thirty-five European countries that addressed a wide range of issues, including border disputes, economic cooperation, and human rights. The Helsinki Accords also helped increase cooperation between western Europe and the Soviet-aligned Eastern bloc.

Think Twice



How did the American economy change during Gerald Ford's presidency, and how did he respond?

Jimmy Carter

Stagflation and his decision to pardon Richard Nixon badly hurt Gerald Ford's prospects for reelection in 1976. As former California governor Ronald Reagan mounted stiff opposition to Ford's bid for the Republican nomination, Democrat Jimmy Carter launched his own campaign for the presidency.

Jimmy Carter was born in Georgia in 1924. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy

in 1946, but his seven-year naval career ended when he returned to take over his family's peanut farm after his father passed away. Carter was elected to the Georgia State Senate in 1962, where he served two terms. After an unsuccessful bid for governor in 1966, Carter won the office in 1970. During his time in state office, he worked to end segregation, including in the state government; streamlined state agencies; and introduced budget reforms. Carter announced his candidacy for president in 1974, shortly before his time as governor ended.

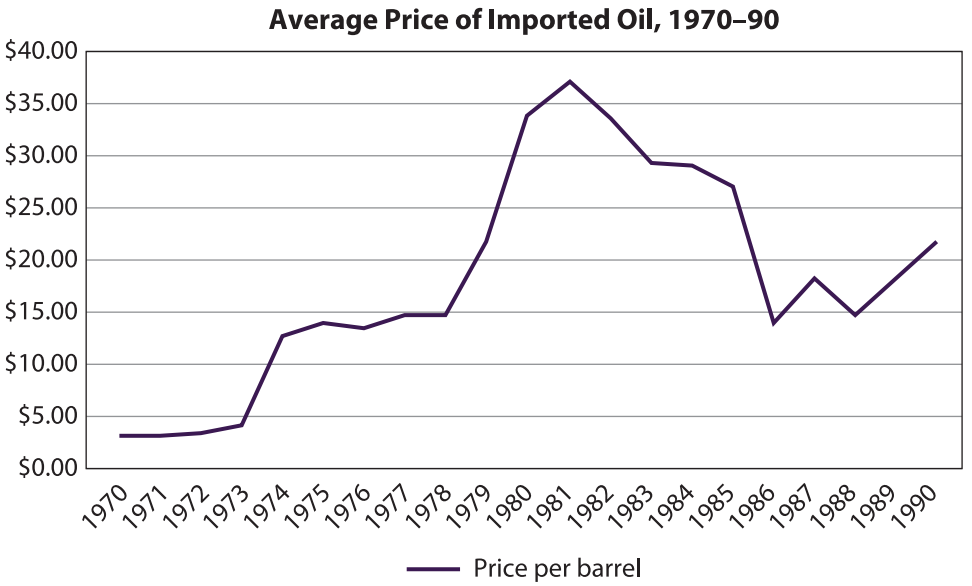
The odds were stacked against Carter as a national political candidate. He was not well known outside of his native Georgia, and he had few resources to fund a presidential campaign. But Carter's approachability and status as a political outsider helped him as he campaigned in one state after another. His lack of connection to Washington, D.C., and to the Watergate scandal proved to be major assets. Carter narrowly defeated Gerald Ford in the 1976 presidential election, securing 50.1 percent of the popular vote and 55 percent of the electoral vote.

The Energy Crisis and Domestic Policy

Carter, like his predecessor Ford, inherited a struggling American economy. In addition to persistent stagflation, the country faced a growing energy crisis. The United States was heavily dependent on foreign oil. During the Nixon administration, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—a group that coordinates the polices of its oil-exporting member nations—placed an embargo on oil shipments to the United States between 1973 and 1974 in retaliation for U.S. support for Israel during a conflict called the Yom Kippur War. The embargo caused oil and gasoline prices to rise and caused fuel shortages in the United States and around the world, the effects of which lasted for years.

In an effort to address the energy crisis, Carter expanded on the earlier efforts of President Ford by persuading Congress to create the Department of Energy in 1977. The department consolidated the functions of multiple energy agencies, regulated the country's energy suppliers, and researched alternative energy sources, including solar and wind. Carter also helped increase fuel supplies by deregulating oil and natural gas prices.

The country experienced a second energy shock in 1979 when Iran stopped exporting oil to the United States during the Iranian Revolution. President Carter addressed American concerns about gas shortages and the state of the economy during a televised speech in July of that year. In his now famous "malaise" speech—*malaise* means an indefinite sense of ill-being—Carter warned that a "crisis of confidence"



Gas prices spiked in 1973 and remained high through the latter half of the 1970s before spiking again in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This graph shows oil prices adjusted for inflation.

threatened American democracy. He urged Americans to cooperate for the collective good of the country by changing their consumption patterns and making personal sacrifices. Yet Carter did not use the momentum from the address to effect any meaningful change.

President Carter was often in conflict with Congress, which made it difficult to pass much of his domestic agenda. Still, he did experience many successes. Carter signed a higher federal minimum wage into law and helped decrease transportation costs by loosening regulations on the airline, railroad, and trucking industries. He signed legislation that empowered the EPA to clean up hazardous waste sites and created the Superfund program to fund these efforts. In 1979, Carter made good on his presidential campaign promise to establish a federal department of education to better coordinate existing federal education policies and to uphold the government's promise to ensure equal access to education for all students.



American drivers would wait in line for hours in hopes of filling up their tanks during the 1979 gas shortage.

Think Twice

Describe the challenges related to energy that President Carter faced during his term in office and how he worked to address them.

Foreign Relations

While president, Jimmy Carter focused on making human rights central to his foreign policy. He spoke out against human rights violations around the world, including in the Soviet Union, and his administration promoted the rights of all people to live free from government oppression; to have access to necessities such as education, food, and housing; and to enjoy civil and political rights. To this end, Carter withdrew support from pro-American authoritarian leaders backed by his predecessors, including in Chile, El Salvador, and Uganda, and criticized U.S. allies, such as Argentina, South Korea, and South Africa, that had committed human rights abuses. Such moves drew criticism as some of these governments were replaced by even more extreme regimes.



Anwar Sadat, Jimmy Carter, and Menachem Begin triumphantly shake hands at the signing of the Camp David Accords. The agreement takes its name from Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland, where President Carter hosted the foreign leaders as they outlined and ultimately created an agreement.

In 1978, President Carter brokered a series of agreements between Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Egypt agreed to recognize the state of Israel, and Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. The Camp David Accords marked a high point in Carter's foreign policy and signaled the potential for wider peace in the Middle East. These hopes were soon dashed by events in Iran in 1979.

Great Britain had controlled Iran, an oil-rich nation, for the first half of the twentieth century. After a shift in power in 1951, the British were expelled. A new leader, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, referred to as the Shah, was installed, but after years of increasingly authoritarian rule, widespread civil unrest forced him into exile in 1979. Muslim cleric Ayatollah Khomeini became the new leader of Iran.

President Carter permitted the Shah to come to the United States to receive cancer treatment. This decision enraged militant student followers of the ayatollah, who denounced the United States as the "Great

Satan." In November 1979, they seized control of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, the capital, and took sixty-six Americans hostage. Carter responded by initiating secret negotiations and by freezing Iranian assets in the United States, but the Iranian hostage crisis, heavily covered by the media, dragged on. In April 1980, President Carter ordered a military rescue mission. Eight American soldiers died during the failed operation when an American helicopter crashed into a transport plane. The militants responded by moving the hostages to multiple sites across the country to make a future rescue mission even more difficult.

Increasingly, Americans perceived President Carter as weak and ineffective, and his approval ratings plummeted. These factors contributed to his loss to Republican and former California governor Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential election. Carter was able to negotiate the release of the hostages in late 1980, but they were not actually released until January 20, 1981, just a few minutes after Ronald Reagan's inaugural address.

The Iran hostage crisis coincided with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Soviet Union had supported pro-communist Afghan groups since the 1950s, and after a communist regime came to power in 1978, widespread opposition led to the rise of the mujahideen, anti-communist insurgent groups that fought against the government. The United States began aiding these insurgents in mid-1979. As internal conflict worsened, the Soviets invaded, replacing Afghanistan's leader.

President Carter denounced the Soviet invasion and adopted a series of diplomatic measures in response. A few months earlier, President Carter and Soviet general secretary Leonid Brezhnev had signed the SALT II treaty. This agreement, an extension of SALT I, placed new limits on each country's nuclear arsenals and how they could deploy nuclear weapons. Following the Soviet invasion, Carter withdrew SALT II from consideration by the Senate and ordered an embargo on American grain to the Soviet Union, marking an end to détente.

Think Twice

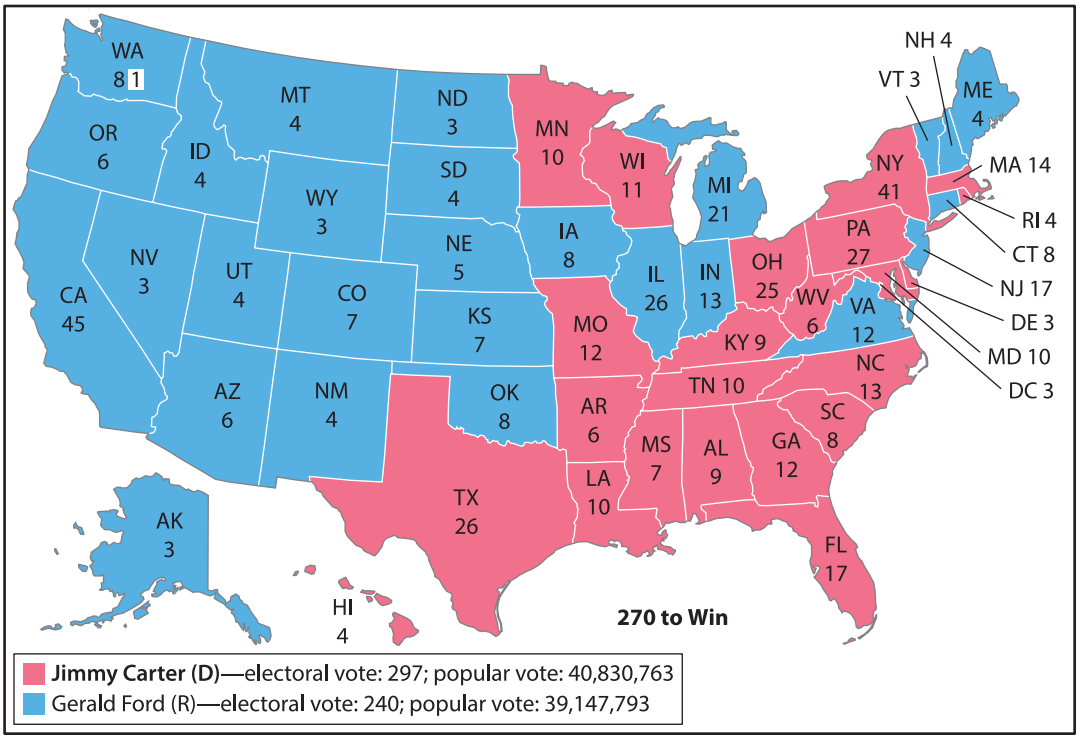


What foreign policy challenges did President Carter face?

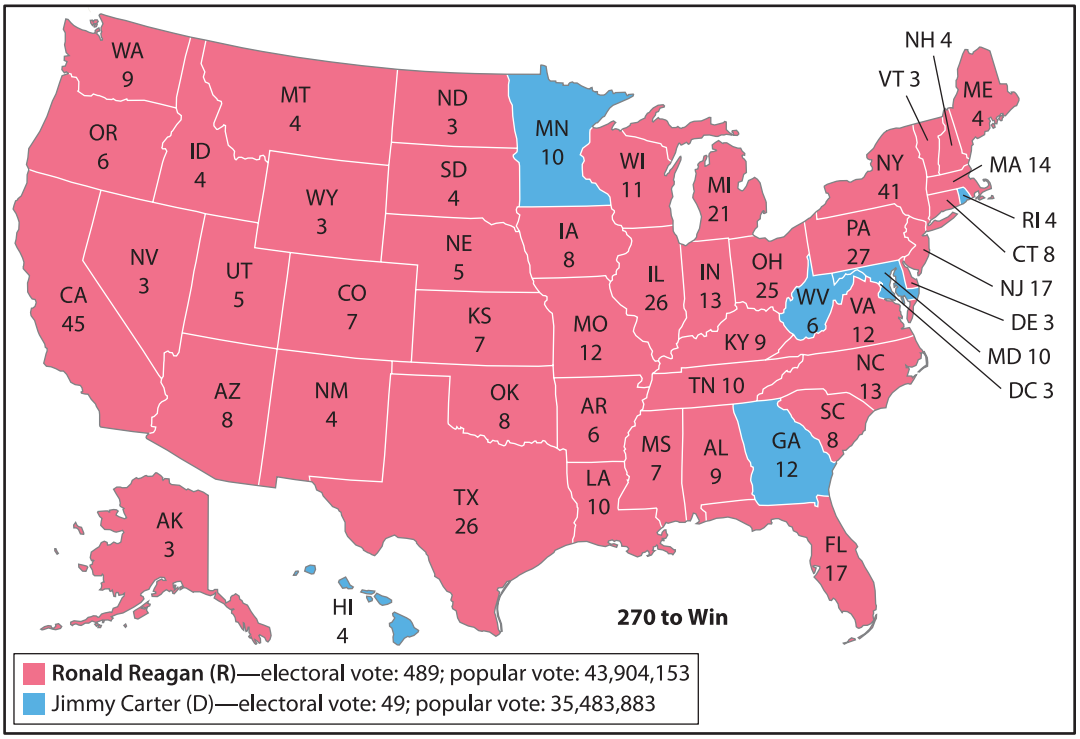
Ronald Reagan and the Cold War

Born in 1911, Ronald Reagan grew up in a poor family in Illinois. He became a Hollywood actor in 1937. Although Reagan was the president of the Screen Actors Guild, a union for Hollywood actors, he would cross picket lines during strikes. He also supported Hollywood blacklisting during the 1950s.

1976 Presidential Election



1980 Presidential Election



These maps show the degree to which Jimmy Carter's popularity suffered during his first and only term in office. American dissatisfaction with the economy and domestic and foreign policy pushed more voters to vote for Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Though Reagan supported Democratic presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, his political allegiances changed in the 1950s. He supported Eisenhower in 1952, then campaigned for Richard Nixon during the 1960 presidential election against Democrat John F. Kennedy. Reagan's own political career began in 1966 after he was elected governor of California, an office he held for two consecutive terms. He then ran against Gerald Ford for the Republican nomination in 1976; though he did not win his party's nomination, his charisma and appeal as a recognizable actor helped his national popularity. During his campaign, he openly criticized the policy of détente, arguing that it created a superficial peace with the Soviet Union.

Reagan ran for president again in 1980. The Iran hostage crisis had made President Carter and his administration appear weak, and the economy was still struggling. During the only televised debate of the election, Reagan asked Americans, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" When Carter tried to frame Reagan as a threat to social welfare programs and global peace, Reagan deflected the accusations with a smile and the simple phrase "There you go again." Reagan won the election comfortably, securing 50.7 percent of the popular vote to Carter's 41 percent and 90.9 percent of the electoral vote. (Independent candidate John B. Anderson won 7 percent of the popular vote.)

In his inaugural address, Reagan set the tone for his administration's priorities and principles and articulated his vision for the country: a more muscular approach to Cold War policy, a smaller federal government and recognition of states' rights, and a sweeping economic policy.

Think Twice



Explain the factors that contributed to Ronald Reagan's election in 1980.

Escalation Before De-Escalation

Unlike Nixon, Ford, and Carter, who mostly pursued a policy of détente, President Reagan viewed military strength as essential to ending the Cold War. Where his predecessors attempted to cool the nuclear arms race through the SALT I and SALT II agreements, Reagan characterized his military buildup as necessary to counter "the aggressive impulses of an evil empire." His statements and actions reinforced already-high Cold War tensions, though he argued they were essential to deter Soviet expansion.

In a nationally televised address in March 1983, President Reagan called upon Congress to fund the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), an antiballistic missile defense system to detect and intercept nuclear attacks by the Soviet Union or any other nuclear power. The SDI was entirely theoretical and based on technology that still needed to be researched

and developed, including the use of laser sensors based on Earth and deployed in space via satellites. This space-based component led detractors to give SDI the nickname "Star Wars." SDI's supporters believed that such an advanced defense system would deter a Soviet attack; detractors criticized it for escalating the arms race and for its lack of feasibility. Congress did pass partial funding for SDI during the mid-1980s, but the system that Reagan envisioned was never completed. Still, work on SDI led to many technological breakthroughs, including missile tracking systems and laser technology that were used in later missile defense systems. Additionally, while SDI itself was never fully realized, the strategy and psychology of its purpose—making it impossible for the Soviet Union to successfully attack the United States—may have encouraged the Soviet Union to more urgently consider an end to the Cold War.

Iran–Contra Affair

Reagan provided U.S. support to anti-communism efforts around the world, including financially backing the mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan War and using U.S. forces to overthrow the leftist government of Grenada, a small island nation in the Caribbean. While many of Reagan's anti-communist efforts flew under the radar, the Iran–Contra Affair embroiled his administration in scandal.

In the early 1970s, the Sandinistas, a Cuban-backed communist group, overthrew the government of Nicaragua. The Sandinistas then provided support to a similar movement in neighboring El Salvador. Reagan, concerned about the spread of communism and anti-U.S. sentiment in Central America, authorized military support to the Contras, an anti-Sandinista insurgent group. The Vietnam War was still fresh in Americans' minds, and the public and elected leaders did not support protracted involvement in Nicaragua. In 1982 and 1984, Congress passed laws that expressly prohibited the United States from providing military aid to the Contras, either directly or indirectly.

But President Reagan was undeterred. He told national security adviser Robert McFarlane to find a workaround, to "do whatever you have to do to help [the people of Nicaragua] keep body and soul together." McFarlane



Oliver North, shown testifying before Congress during the Iran–Contra hearings, claimed that President Reagan was aware of the plan to divert funds from the Iranian arms deal to the Contras in Nicaragua.

found a solution halfway around the world in 1985. At this time, Iran and Iraq were engaged in a bitter war, and pro-Iranian forces in Lebanon had taken seven Americans hostage. McFarlane came up with a proposal: Violate the standing U.S. embargo on arms sales to Iran by selling weapons to that country in exchange for the return of the American hostages.

This clandestine arrangement was exposed in 1986. Reagan appointed the Tower Commission—named for one of the investigators, John Tower—to investigate the National Security Council's activities. The investigation revealed that Iran had agreed to pay tens of millions of dollars for the weapons, but only some of the money made its way to the United States. Additional probing revealed that Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a member of the National Security Council, had been redirecting the funds to the Contras in Nicaragua. National security adviser Vice Admiral John Poindexter, Robert McFarlane's successor, knew about North's actions.

Congress organized bipartisan committees to investigate the Iran–Contra Affair in January 1987. The committees interviewed hundreds of witnesses, including McFarlane, North, Poindexter, and other high-ranking officials in the Reagan administration, to determine who knew what and when. There was rampant speculation about President Reagan's involvement in the Iran–Contra Affair. While the president acknowledged he knew about the sale of the weapons, he stated that he had been unaware that funds were transferred to the Contras. The Iran–Contra Affair harmed Reagan's reputation, but he still left office in 1988 with remarkably high approval ratings.

Think Twice



What was the Iran–Contra Affair, and why was it significant?

The Cold War Ends

U.S.–Soviet tensions started to ease in 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Communist Party. Active in the party since the 1970s, Gorbachev inherited a stagnant Soviet



People living in West Berlin tagged the Berlin Wall with graffiti, using a mixture of words and images to express an intense range of ideas and emotions, from political messages to the names of loved ones on the other side of the wall.

PRIMARY SOURCE: "TEAR DOWN THIS WALL," RONALD REAGAN, 1987

President Ronald Reagan delivered his "Tear Down This Wall" speech on June 12, 1987, at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin. The speech was among the most significant moments of his presidency and a defining moment of the Cold War.

In the 1950s, Khrushchev predicted: "We will bury you." But in the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history. In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind—too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself. After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.

And now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Some political prisoners have been released. Certain foreign news broadcasts are no longer being jammed. Some economic enterprises have been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control. Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? Or are they token gestures, intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it? We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace.

There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Source: Reagan, Ronald. "Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin." June 12, 1987. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/252499.

economy that was struggling to compete with capitalist countries around the world. Gorbachev's predecessor, Leonid Brezhnev, and the Communist Party's old guard believed that corruption, not the economic system, was to blame for the Soviet Union's difficulties. However, Gorbachev disagreed with this analysis to some extent. He was also friendlier to the United States and to the West than his predecessors; however, he objected to Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) during early arms control talks with his American counterpart.

Gorbachev initiated changes by introducing a handful of minor reforms, including increasing private business ownership, to spur economic growth and encourage the country to modernize its technology. When these efforts proved ineffective, Gorbachev instituted more aggressive policies—*perestroika* (economic and political restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness)—starting in 1987. Under perestroika, Gorbachev introduced some elements of free-market economies, relaxing government control over economic decision-making. He took steps toward democratization by permitting multicandidate races and the use of secret ballots in some elections. Gorbachev also gave more power to local governments. These policies ultimately weakened the Communist Party's control and influence. In addition, Gorbachev's policy of glasnost gave people in the Soviet Union greater freedom of expression and even permitted the media to share criticism of the government.



Vice President George H. W. Bush, President Ronald Reagan, and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev pose in front of the New York City skyline during a diplomatic visit in 1988.

In June 1987, President Reagan addressed the changes happening in the Soviet Union during a visit to West Berlin in 1987. As you read in Topic 1, more than two decades earlier, in 1961, the Soviet Union built the Berlin Wall—a massive structure made from concrete and barbed wire and bristling with snipers—to prevent people from escaping East Berlin and communism. As Reagan stood in front of the iconic Cold War symbol, he

implored General Secretary Gorbachev to "tear down this wall!"

In late 1987, a major step toward tearing down another "wall," that of the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, took place. That December, Reagan and Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, agreeing to eliminate both countries' inventories of land-based missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. As part of the agreement, each country agreed to let the other inspect and witness the destruction of its missiles.

At the end of Reagan's two terms in office, Vice President George H. W. Bush was elected president in 1988. During his career, Bush had served in the U.S. House of Representatives, as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and as director of the CIA. Although he served only one term as president, his administration played a crucial role in navigating the end of the Cold War.

The Soviet Union began to unravel in earnest in 1989, starting with a series of revolutions in the Eastern bloc. Poland instituted government reforms and held its first free elections in early 1989, resulting in the election of the first noncommunist prime minister in Eastern Europe. Hungary followed suit and by October had adopted a new constitution that allowed for multiple political parties—not just the Communist Party—and free elections. The following month, on November 9, the East German government, facing economic collapse, yielded to protesters and opened the border to West Germany. This included access through the Berlin Wall, which had divided West Berlin and East Berlin for nearly thirty years. German citizens streamed through the access points, and people on both sides of the wall began to tear the structure down, both literally and symbolically pulling back the "iron curtain" that Winston Churchill had first described decades earlier.

Momentum in the Eastern bloc continued to grow as Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania moved toward democratization. All former communist countries in the Eastern bloc had democratically elected governments by 1990. Gorbachev did not intervene in the 1989 revolutions, and he promised to draw down Soviet troops in the Eastern bloc. He also agreed to the reunification of West and East Germany and to allow the reunified country to join NATO.

In 1990, Gorbachev took additional action to reshape the Soviet government and weaken the Communist Party's power, including legalizing the existence of opposition political parties. Despite these massive reforms, Gorbachev was still reluctant to totally abandon the Soviet economic system, instead seeking a middle path between state control and

the free market. Unrest grew in the Soviet republics as the country continued to suffer economically. Gorbachev turned to conservatives in the Communist Party for support, but to no avail. Resentful of Gorbachev's reforms, they attempted to seize control of the government and depose him in August 1991. The coup severely weakened Gorbachev's power, and the event sparked a tidal wave of independence movements in republics across the Soviet Union. Gorbachev resigned as president of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991, and the Soviet flag lowered for the final time. The Soviet Union was now fifteen independent countries, including Russia.

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War, a decades-long economic, political, and military rivalry.

The United States was now the world's sole superpower, but with such great power comes great responsibility. Instead of declaring a U.S. victory, the Bush administration worked to stabilize central and eastern Europe by extending financial support to former Soviet republics that promised to uphold self-determination, democracy, human rights, and international law. Following the earlier success of the INF Treaty, the United States also extended funding to secure the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal and pursued additional disarmament treaties.

Think Twice



Explain three factors that contributed to the end of the Cold War between 1985 and late 1991.

Unit 6: The Modern Age and the Recent Past

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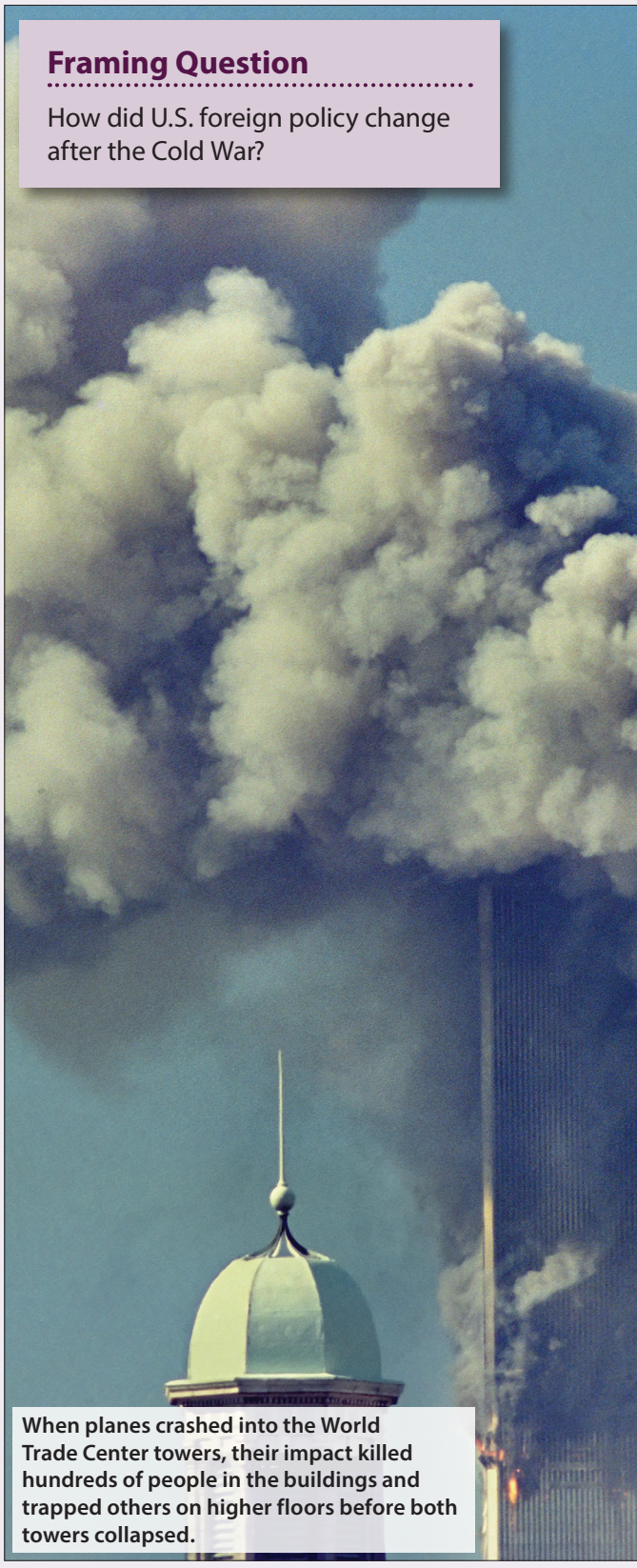
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Topic 1

Navigating the New World Order: U.S. Influence and Intervention

Framing Question

How did U.S. foreign policy change after the Cold War?



When planes crashed into the World Trade Center towers, their impact killed hundreds of people in the buildings and trapped others on higher floors before both towers collapsed.

9/11

Setting the Scene

On September 11, 2001, Benjamin Clark wakes up early in the morning to get ready for his job as a chef at a financial services company in the World Trade Center in New York City. A former marine, Clark is known for cooking delicious meatloaf and remembering everybody's name and their favorite meals. He has a reputation for always wanting to help.

His day on the upper floors of the South Tower of the World Trade Center begins like most days. Then, at 8:46 a.m., an airplane carrying ninety-two passengers and crew members crashes into the 1,368-foot (417 m) North Tower. Less than twenty minutes later, another plane, carrying sixty-five people, crashes into the 1,362-foot (415 m) South Tower.



Workers seeking safety quickly begin to exit the buildings. Clark helps ensure that the hundreds of people who work in the ninety-sixth-floor offices of his company get out. As he is making his way down a stairwell, he pauses on the eighty-eighth floor to assist a woman in a wheelchair. It is the last time he will be seen alive.

The planes that crashed into the World Trade towers were hijacked by members of international ***terrorist*** *groups targeting the United States, including al-Qaeda, a radical Islamist group based in Afghanistan. They have taken control of two other planes on this day. One crashes into the Pentagon, the headquarters building of the U.S. Department of Defense, just outside Washington, D.C. A fourth plane, which appears to be headed toward the nation's capital, crash-lands in a field in Pennsylvania.*

It is a horrifying day for all Americans. After the long and difficult Cold War, the United States emerged as the world's sole superpower, and the nation has looked forward to a promising time of prosperity and achievement. To many Americans, it seemed as if many of the world's problems were on their way to being solved and every nation would soon become a liberal democracy. The attacks have ended the United States' sense of itself as an unassailable power and will change American foreign policy and many aspects of American life.

But the many stories of heroism from this day, like the one about Benjamin Clark, will create a sense of hope that the country will remain resilient. The plane that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania did not reach its destination because some of its passengers, having learned about the other three hijacked planes, stormed the cockpit. The hijackers, realizing they might lose control, deliberately crashed the plane.

The last words from Todd Beamer, one of the passengers who fought back, were "Are you guys ready? OK. Let's roll."

A "New World Order" Emerges

A decade before the September 11 attacks, in the early 1990s, the United States was entering a new era of global leadership after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy had operated with a clear goal: containing the spread of communism around the world. When the United States intervened in foreign countries, the stated goal was to prevent communists from taking over.

The fall of the Soviet Union reoriented U.S. foreign policy away from communism and toward a new global order. The details of what that would look like and its ramifications were not clear in 1991. President George H. W. Bush addressed the United Nations (UN) General Assembly that year, describing the challenges of the post-Soviet world. He defined the United States' global interests as supporting democracy and human rights in this new world order: "People everywhere seek government of and by the people. And they want to enjoy their inalienable rights to freedom and property and person. . . . Government has failed if citizens cannot speak their minds."

Saddam Invades Kuwait

One government whose leader's actions still alarmed the international community was



Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq as a dictator for decades. His portrait was a common sight in the country, part of a cult of personality he created to maintain public support.

that of Iraq, a country in the Middle East near the Persian Gulf. Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq as a brutal dictator. He restricted the rights of Iraqi citizens, who were not allowed to vote, assemble freely, or leave the country. Aided by secret police enforcers, Saddam identified and punished anyone who opposed his rule, including government officials. Many were executed; others "disappeared" but were believed to have been killed as well. Politically, Saddam's goal was for Iraq to dominate other Persian Gulf nations and the entire Middle East. These ambitions were of international concern, including in the United States.

In the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Iraq invaded its neighbor Iran,

The Middle East and Surrounding Countries



This political map of the Middle East shows Iraq and its neighboring countries, including Iran and Kuwait, two nations Iraq invaded during the 1980s and early 1990s. It also shows the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway linking the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea. Located between the southeastern coast of Iran and the northeastern tip of Oman, the strait is one of the world's most important shipping routes for oil.

which resulted in a war between the two from 1980 to 1988. Saddam wanted to control the region's oil supplies, counter Iranian attempts to export its brand of Islamic revolution to the Arab world, and win disputed territory.

Kuwait, another of Iraq's neighbors, had rich oil resources. It also had its own territorial disputes with Iraq over a waterway to the Persian Gulf. Seeking to control Kuwait and its oil, Saddam sent thousands of troops to invade Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Iraqi military units took over the capital of Kuwait City and established a new government, and Saddam claimed Kuwait as the nineteenth province of Iraq.

PRIMARY SOURCE: ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, GEORGE H. W. BUSH, 1991

In 1991, President George H. W. Bush spoke about the shifting global order that emerged after the Cold War. He emphasized the importance of protecting basic human rights, upholding freedom of speech, and ensuring that governments remain transparent and answerable to their people.

My speech today will not sound like any you've heard from a President of the United States. I'm not going to dwell on the superpower competition that defined international politics for half a century. Instead, I will discuss the challenges of building peace and prosperity in a world leavened by the Cold War's end, the resumption of history.

Communism held history captive for years. It suspended ancient disputes, and it suppressed ethnic rivalries, nationalist aspirations, and old prejudices. As it has dissolved, suspended hatreds have sprung to life. People who for years have been denied their pasts have begun searching for their own identities, often through peaceful and constructive means, occasionally through factionalism and bloodshed.

This revival of history ushers in a new era, teeming with opportunities and perils. . . .

. . . Economic progress will play a vital role in the new world. It supplies the soil in which democracy grows best. People everywhere seek government of and by the people. And they want to enjoy their inalienable rights to freedom and property and person. . . .

. . . Government has failed if citizens cannot speak their minds, if they can't form political parties freely and elect governments without coercion, if they can't practice their religion freely, if they can't raise their families in peace, if they can't enjoy a just return from their labor, if they can't live fruitful lives and, at the end of their days, look upon their achievements and their society's progress with pride. . . .

Some nations still deny their basic rights to the people. And too many voices cry out for freedom. . . .

. . . We must expand our efforts to control nuclear proliferation. We must work to prevent the spread of chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them. . . .

The United Nations can encourage free-market development through its international lending and aid institutions. However, the United Nations should not dictate the particular forms of government that nations should adopt. But it can and should encourage the values upon which this organization was founded. Together, we should insist that nations seeking our acceptance meet standards of human decency.

Source: Bush, George H. W. "Address to the 46th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City." September 23, 1991. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/266506.

Think Twice

What were President Bush's goals for the post–Cold War world, and how did Saddam Hussein threaten those goals?

A Global Coalition Responds

After taking over Kuwait, Iraq controlled 20 percent of the world's oil reserves. This gave Saddam significant leverage over a critical global resource and raised alarm in the United States, which had an interest in the region's oil and a longtime alliance with the neighboring country of Saudi Arabia. U.S.-based oil companies had been present in Saudi Arabia since the 1930s. If Saddam moved to take over Saudi Arabia—and it seemed that he might—Iraq would control 40 percent of the world's oil reserves, giving Saddam dangerous influence over a resource vital to the U.S. economy. The Strait of Hormuz, a water channel linking the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea, was (and remains today) a key shipping route for global oil. If Iraq gained control over this shipping route as well, it could restrict the flow of oil and threaten U.S. energy security and global market stability.

President Bush announced, "This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait." Secretary of State James Baker took the lead in building a **coalition** of more than thirty countries, including U.S. allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The UN quickly condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It passed resolutions demanding withdrawal and imposed economic **sanctions** and a naval blockade on Iraq, cutting off international trade. As Saddam refused to back down, President Bush pushed for UN authorization to use military force. In November, the UN issued an ultimatum that allowed the use of force "to restore international peace and security." Saddam was given a deadline of January 15, 1991, to withdraw from Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the United States wanted to prevent Iraq from attacking Saudi Arabia and gaining access to its oil supply. In August, the United States began sending troops to Saudi Arabia in case force was needed. This deployment, called Operation Desert Shield, had Saudi Arabian support because of the two countries' friendly relationship. The buildup of U.S. forces in the Middle East was the first phase of what



U.S. soldiers deployed in Operation Desert Shield often wore NBC (nuclear, biological, and chemical) protective gear to prepare for the threat of chemical warfare and the desert environment of Saudi Arabia.

later became the Persian Gulf War, often simply called the Gulf War. The United States built up its largest deployment since World War II, with 240,000 troops in the Gulf by mid-November 1990.

Think Twice

Why did the United States send troops to Saudi Arabia?

The New World Order

A larger victory for the United States was its success in building an international coalition. The United States had taken the lead in pulling together troops and leaders from many different countries in pursuit of a common goal. Before the Gulf War began, President George H. W. Bush saw the crisis as a way to demonstrate the power of American leadership to the world. Addressing a joint session of Congress in September 1990, Bush said, "The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation." He described this period as "a new world order." Central to this idea was the role of the United States as a powerful peacekeeper and defender of democracy worldwide.

Think Twice

Why might President Bush have described the Persian Gulf crisis as an opportunity for "a new world order"?

Operation Desert Storm

Saddam had violated every UN resolution by January 1991. He had refused to withdraw, and his forces had begun looting Kuwait. Under UN Resolution 678, passed in November 1990, Iraq had been given until January 15, 1991, to leave Kuwait or face military action. Because Saddam declined to meet that deadline, the coalition was authorized to use force to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

President Bush and others argued it was important to free the people of Kuwait from Saddam's control. In his speech announcing the decision to use force, Bush gave examples of brutality against the Kuwaiti people and appealed to concerns surrounding the danger posed by nuclear weapons, saying, "While the world waited, Saddam sought to add to the chemical weapons arsenal he now possesses an infinitely more dangerous weapon of mass destruction—a nuclear weapon." The United States was shifting from simply trying to keep destructive weapons out of the hands



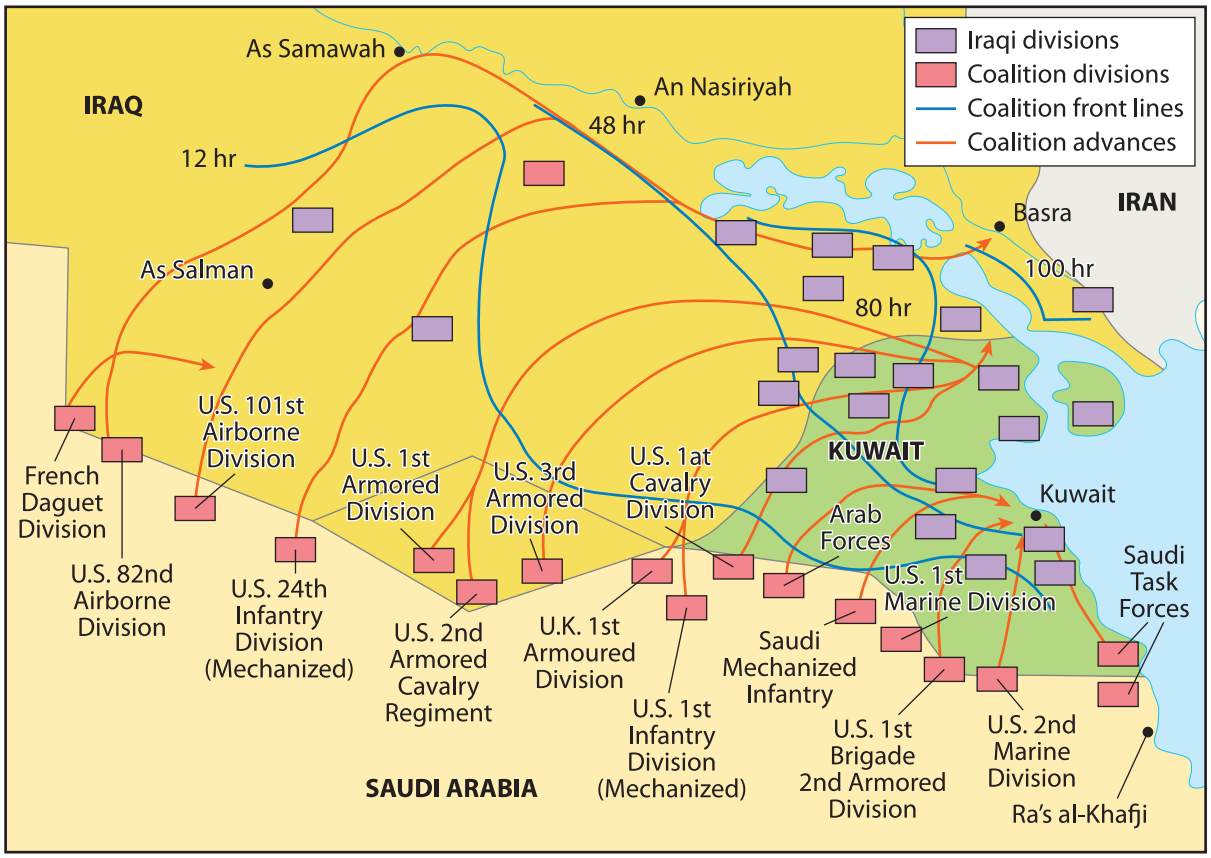
During the air campaign of Operation Desert Storm, U.S. and Saudi Arabian fighter aircraft flew missions over Kuwait, where Iraqi forces had set fire to oil wells.

of foreign dictators to taking aggressive, preemptive action against any regime it perceived as a potential threat.

On January 16, 1991, the combat phase of the Gulf War, called Operation Desert Storm, began. General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of U.S. Central Command, the branch responsible for U.S. military operations in the Middle East, led the coalition's military campaign. The attack began with weeks of air strikes aimed at crippling Iraq's defenses, including air defenses, runways, and aircraft on the ground. Iraqi air forces were quickly overwhelmed, giving coalition forces control of the skies. Coalition aircraft targeted Iraqi command centers, oil refineries, and military infrastructure as well as Saddam's palaces.

Iraq responded to the coalition air offensive by firing missiles at Israel, hoping that if Israel fought back, Arab nations, many of which had tense or hostile relationships with Israel, would withdraw from the U.S.-led coalition. Iraq's leaders believed that Arab countries would refuse to fight alongside Israel, even against a shared enemy. To prevent this, the United States pressured Israel not to respond militarily.

Ground Campaign During the Persian Gulf War, February 24–28, 1991



The ground campaign won the Persian Gulf War within four days. Pictured are the major coalition advances and the locations of Iraqi forces.

A ground campaign followed the air campaign. Over a period of one hundred hours, coalition ground forces overcame the Iraqi army and freed Kuwait from Iraqi control. President Bush declared a ceasefire, and on February 28, Saddam agreed. The Gulf War was over.

As Operation Desert Storm began, the U.S.-based Cable News Network (CNN) television channel sent reporters to the Iraqi capital against military restrictions. Reporters were in Iraq's capital of Baghdad when the bombing and explosions of the air offensive began on January 16. CNN anchor Bernard Shaw reported, "The skies over Baghdad have been illuminated." For the first time ever, television viewers were shown live video, transmitted by satellite, of bombing campaigns and ground force engagements, and cabinet members briefed reporters on war events. The constant coverage not only informed Americans but also fostered a sense of unity on the home front, as citizens across the country followed the same images and updates in real time. This twenty-four-hour news cycle shaped public opinion about the war as it was taking place in a way that was more immediate and influential than ever.

As part of the new world order, Bush also emphasized a shift in global politics. The Cold War rivalry, marked by decades of East-West confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, was giving way to new international cooperation. He described a successful meeting with Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, in which they discussed their shared goal of protecting smaller nations, such as Kuwait, from aggressive powers like Saddam's Iraq. According to Bush, dictators could no longer rely on U.S.–Soviet tensions to shield them from international consequences. This moment of global unity, embodied by the multilateral coalition that forced Iraq's withdrawal, marked a high point of post–Cold War cooperation.

Think Twice



How did events in the Middle East shape foreign policy during the early 1990s?

U.S. Foreign Policy Under Bill Clinton

The Bush administration's vision of a new world order was tested as the former Soviet republics became independent. Secretary of State James Baker outlined U.S. priorities, which included respecting borders, upholding international law, and supporting democracy. Some transitions were peaceful, but others turned violent. In 1991, Bush told the United Nations that as communism dissolved, "suspended hatreds [had] sprung to life," often leading to "factionalism and bloodshed."

One of the bloodiest conflicts arose in the Balkans. Yugoslavia, a communist state

outside the Soviet bloc, had been made up of six republics: Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia. In the early 1990s, these republics began to break apart. Slobodan Milošević, the president of Serbia, pursued a "greater Serbia," using nationalist rhetoric to inflame tensions. In 1992, Serbia and Montenegro formed a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, while Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence. Bosnian Serbs—backed by Serbia—launched a campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide against Bosniaks, the country's Muslim population, leading to war between Bosnian Serb forces and Bosnia's new government. The conflict began with the Siege of Sarajevo in April 1992 and continued until 1995, when a U.S.-led NATO peacekeeping force was sent to the region. Analysts note that U.S. involvement was only one part of a larger international effort, and some observers argued that earlier intervention might have reduced casualties.

Although President George H. W. Bush had strong public support after the Gulf War, frustration with a slowing economy and rising unemployment helped Democratic candidate Bill Clinton win the 1992 election in which Bush sought reelection. Clinton, a former governor of Arkansas, described himself as a "New Democrat" who favored a **centrist** and pragmatic approach. While best known for



When Arkansas-born Bill Clinton ran for president in 1992, he said he wanted to pay more attention to the concerns of "forgotten, middle-class Americans," not just the rich and elite.

his domestic agenda, Clinton also faced major foreign policy challenges. His administration pursued a strategy of global engagement that promoted free trade, supported humanitarian intervention, and maintained U.S. leadership in international institutions. Some critics argued that this approach sometimes prioritized international economic interests over the concerns of American workers.

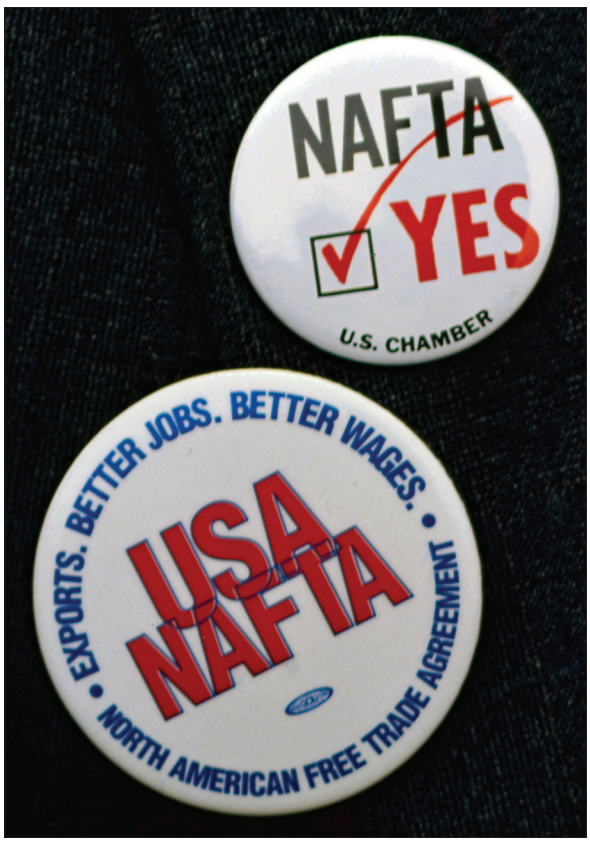
The North American Free Trade Agreement

Although President Bush finalized the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in December 1992, it was President Clinton who secured its passage through Congress and implemented it. Clinton viewed free trade as a tool for expanding capitalism abroad, a key goal of his foreign policy agenda. Clinton's detractors criticized this approach, claiming that it prioritized corporate interests over labor protections and environmental standards.

NAFTA, which Clinton signed into law in 1993, created a free-trade zone between Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Free trade eliminates tariffs, quotas, and other barriers to the flow of goods between countries. Supporters of free trade argue that removing these barriers boosts economic growth, lowers prices for consumers, and increases exports by making it easier and cheaper for companies to do business across borders.

For the United States, NAFTA promised cheaper imports, especially from Mexico, and easier access to foreign markets for U.S. exports. American companies hoped the agreement would lower costs and increase profits by allowing them to move production across borders.

However, opposition to NAFTA was strong. Many American workers feared that manufacturing jobs would move from the United States to Mexico, where wages were lower and labor protections were weaker. These concerns were heightened by existing trends of factory closures and a broader national shift toward a service-based economy. Independent presidential candidate Ross Perot,



Pro-NAFTA pins

PRIMARY SOURCE: ON NAFTA, BILL CLINTON, 1993

In 1993, President Bill Clinton delivered a televised address to announce the finalization of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), marking a pivotal shift in U.S. trade policy and launching a new phase of economic cooperation between the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

In a few moments, I will sign the North American Free Trade Act into law. NAFTA will tear down trade barriers between our three nations. It will create the world's largest trade zone and create 200,000 jobs in this country by 1995 alone. The environmental and labor side agreements negotiated by our administration will make this agreement a force for social progress as well as economic growth. Already the confidence we've displayed by ratifying NAFTA has begun to bear fruit. We are now making real progress toward a worldwide trade agreement so significant that it could make the material gains of NAFTA for our country look small by comparison. . . .

Make no mistake, the global economy with all of its promise and perils is now the central fact of life for hard-working Americans. It has enriched the lives of millions of Americans. But for too many those same winds of change have worn away at the basis of their security. For two decades, most people have worked harder for less. Seemingly secure jobs have been lost. And while America once again is the most productive nation on Earth, this productivity itself holds the seeds of further insecurity. After all, productivity means the same people can produce more or, very often, that fewer people can produce more. This is the world we face.

We cannot stop global change. We cannot repeal the international economic competition that is everywhere. We can only harness the energy to our benefit. Now we must recognize that the only way for a wealthy nation to grow richer is to export, to simply find new customers for the products and services it makes. That, my fellow Americans, is the decision the Congress made when they voted to ratify NAFTA. . . .

. . . Today, as I sign the North American Free Trade Agreement into law and call for further progress on GATT [the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade], I believe we have found our footing. And I ask all of you to be steady, to recognize that there is no turning back from the world of today and tomorrow. We must face the challenges, embrace them with confidence, deal with the problems honestly and openly, and make this world work for all of us. America is where it should be, in the lead, setting the pace, showing the confidence that all of us need to face tomorrow. We are ready to compete, and we can win.

Source: Clinton, William J. "Remarks on Signing the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act." December 8, 1993. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/219946.



Many labor unions in the United States protested NAFTA, worried that a trade agreement with Mexico, where labor costs were lower, would lead to job losses in the United States.

who had run against Clinton and Bush in 1992 and openly opposed NAFTA, famously warned of "a giant sucking sound of jobs being pulled out of this country." Environmentalists also cautioned that increased industrial activity could worsen pollution. In his speech announcing the signing of NAFTA, Clinton sought to address these concerns, assuring Americans that the agreement would create thousands of U.S. jobs. He argued that in a globally connected economy, "the only way for a wealthy nation to grow richer is to export, to simply find new customers for the products and services it makes."

In the decade following NAFTA's implementation in 1994, trade among the United States, Mexico, and Canada increased significantly, particularly in manufactured goods. Factories just across the U.S. border in Mexico grew in number as companies from the United States, Mexico, and parts of Asia used them to produce goods at lower costs for the U.S. market. However, while cross-border trade expanded, many U.S. factory towns experienced job losses as manufacturers relocated production to Mexico, just as critics of NAFTA had warned, highlighting that economic gains were unevenly distributed. Decades later, economists remain divided about the success of NAFTA. Some point to gains in trade and efficiency, while others emphasize long-term job losses in certain U.S. industries and widening income inequality.

Think Twice



What were the positive and negative effects of NAFTA for the United States?

Intervention Around the World

Clinton's approach to foreign policy after the Cold War showed how the United States exercised global leadership in a world where it occupied a dominant position both politically and economically. This position of power allowed the president to use a wide range of tools, such as diplomatic pressure, economic incentives and sanctions, military aid, coalition building, and, when necessary, the use or threat of military force, to shape international relationships. While his administration sometimes relied on military force, Clinton emphasized working with allies and using "soft power" when possible.

For example, in 1994, when the value of Mexico's peso collapsed and triggered

American Humanitarian Aid and Soft Power

One way that the United States grew as a superpower was by providing financial aid and other forms of support to nations around the world. Aid became a tool for diplomacy by helping the United States build friendly relationships with other countries.

In 1961, during the Cold War, President John F. Kennedy formed an independent federal agency called the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The agency promoted programs that reduced poverty and supported economic growth and democracy around the world, such as education programs, disaster relief, and food security. That same year, Kennedy also established the Peace Corps, which sent American volunteers abroad to support education, public health, and community development efforts. These humanitarian initiatives also supported American foreign policy goals; the idea behind USAID was that economic and political stability in other countries would help keep the United States secure. Together, USAID and the Peace Corps became key instruments of Cold War diplomacy, using service and development to build goodwill and strengthen alliances.

In the 1990s and 2000s, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), a disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), became an increasingly visible global problem. In 2003, George W. Bush, who became president in 2001 and is the son of George H. W. Bush, formed the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), pledging $15 billion to the program over five years to provide HIV and AIDS treatment around the world. PEPFAR received support from both political parties. The program has since committed more than $100 billion to the cause—the largest commitment in history by any nation to treat a single disease. Its programs are credited with preventing infections and saving many lives.

Programs such as USAID and PEPFAR are examples of what U.S. political scientist Joseph Nye called "soft power." Unlike "hard power," which relies on military force, soft power uses nonmilitary tools such as diplomacy, development aid, and cultural influence to achieve foreign policy goals. These programs help other nations address urgent humanitarian challenges, like fighting diseases or improving access to education. While rooted in altruism, they also strengthen international relationships and promote stability in ways that can ultimately benefit the United States.

a severe financial crisis, the United States responded with economic tools. Fearing that the crisis could destabilize international markets and harm U.S. trade and investment in the region, the Clinton administration helped lead a global financial rescue to restore confidence and contain the damage. Clinton arranged a $20 billion loan package and worked with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a global lending institution backed by major economies, to secure further aid. This move helped stabilize Mexico's economy and was cited by some observers as an example of U.S. influence through economic leadership, though critics argued it primarily protected financial institutions and U.S. investors.

Elsewhere, Clinton used diplomacy and U.S. credibility to promote peace. In Northern Ireland, the United States helped broker an agreement to end decades of sectarian violence known as the Troubles. Former senator George Mitchell was appointed as a neutral mediator, and in 1998, his efforts helped produce the Good Friday Agreement—a lasting example of U.S. soft power and international trust in American diplomacy.

Think Twice

How did the Clinton administration approach foreign policy after the Cold War?

The Former Soviet Republics

After the Soviet Union collapsed, some of its newly independent states formed a new government called the Russian Federation. Its first president was Boris Yeltsin, who served in that role from 1991 to 1999. Despite goals of transitioning to democracy and a market economy, the nations of the Russian Federation lacked a clear policy plan to move forward.

The United States stepped in to help. When Yeltsin visited the United States to meet with President George H. W. Bush in early 1992, the two leaders released a statement that their countries regarded each other no longer as



Missiles that deliver nuclear warheads, shown in this image, were a focus of talks between the United States and Russia in the 1990s. In May 1994, in an agreement known as the Moscow Declaration, Clinton and Yeltsin agreed that their countries would no longer aim nuclear missiles at each other.

adversaries but as friends. Bush promised to support Russia's entry to the IMF and World Bank and give the country financial aid. After Bill Clinton became president in 1992, his administration continued Bush's attempts to work with Russia as a supportive partner.

One major focus of the United States–Russia talks was the "thawing" of the Cold War legacy. The United States still had concerns about the former Soviet Union's nuclear weapons, which were now distributed among several newly independent republics rather than controlled by a single central government. Although these weapons remained under state control, many feared that political instability or the collapse of one of these new governments could put nuclear weapons at risk of falling into the "wrong" hands. The two countries developed agreements designed to limit threats such as nuclear weapons stockpiles, nuclear testing, and missile defenses. One goal was **nonproliferation**, or controlling the amount and spread of nuclear weapons. For instance, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan held former Soviet nuclear weapons, and by the early 1990s agreements were reached to reduce these arsenals. Russia also agreed to convert its weapons-grade uranium—a necessary resource for creating nuclear weapons—into low-enriched uranium, which the United States would then buy to power its nuclear power plants. The United States founded the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program for former Soviet states in 1991, a program designed to consolidate nuclear arsenals spread through Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan as well as Russia.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) led to agreements to limit stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The resulting Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) in June 1992 committed both the United States and Russia to limiting their nuclear arsenals by 2003. Independent former Soviet republics with nuclear warheads agreed to destroy or secure them as part of START I. START II, in January 1993, called for further reductions of each country's nuclear weapons arsenals. However, because of slow progress within the new Russian government and Russia's difficulty replacing its weapons system, START II was not enforced.

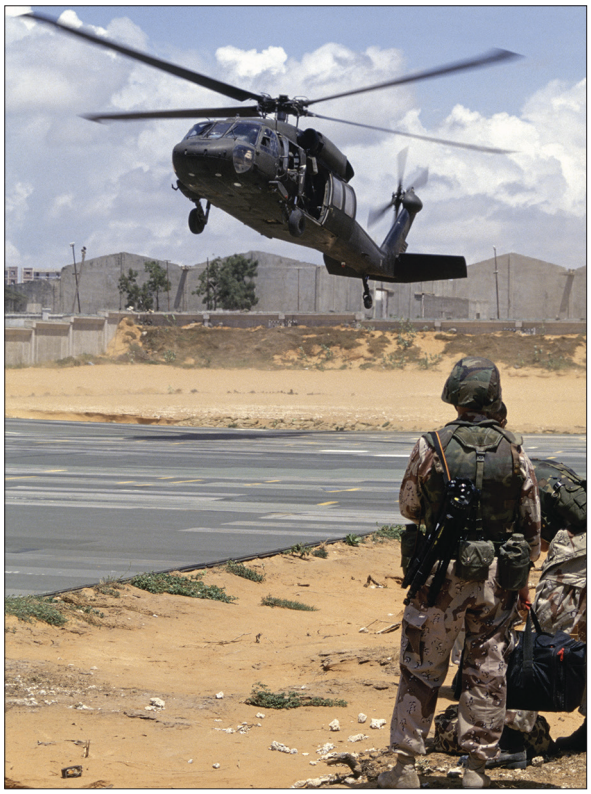
Think Twice



How did U.S. presidents Bush and Clinton approach relations with Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed?

Human Rights Under Attack in Somalia and Genocide in Rwanda

During President Bill Clinton's administration, the United States faced two major humanitarian crises in Africa: conflict in Somalia and genocide in Rwanda. In Somalia, U.S. troops were first sent under President George H. W. Bush in 1992 to deliver food aid during a civil war and famine, but warlord resistance and extremist militia raids on supplies hindered relief efforts. The mission





On the left, a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter lands at a United Nations compound in Mogadishu, Somalia. On the right, Rwandan refugees gather in a camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the 1994 genocide.

expanded to include combat operations, and under Clinton, U.S. forces took part in the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu, where eighteen Americans were killed. The deaths were broadcast on television, turning public opinion sharply against the mission. Clinton soon ordered a withdrawal of U.S. forces, though humanitarian aid continued; the retreat was seen by some **extremist** groups, including Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, as proof that the United States would back down under pressure.

In Rwanda in 1994, a genocide unfolded as ethnic Hutu extremists massacred about eight hundred thousand Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Guided by new, restrictive peacekeeping criteria in Presidential Decision Directive 25 and facing little public pressure to act, Clinton chose not to send U.S. troops to Rwanda, a decision he later called one of his greatest regrets.

The events in Somalia and Rwanda indicated an increase in U.S. caution in international affairs. Specifically, they signaled a change in attitude toward foreign military intervention in humanitarian crises, especially where vital American interests were not directly at stake.

Think Twice

How did humanitarian issues in Africa impact the United States during the 1990s?

The United States Intervenes in Bosnia

Earlier in this topic, you read about conflict in Bosnia. Bosnian Serbs, who were Orthodox Christians, continued to drive Muslims, as well as Croatians, from the state with mass executions, rape, and imprisonment on a scale Europe had not seen since World War II. The United Nations was monitoring the region but had decided not to use force. Leaders from the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and other European countries had tried and failed to get Bosnian Serb leadership to accept a diplomatic solution. President Clinton did not want to send troops to Bosnia unless it was to enforce a peace agreement.

Although the American media aired footage of the bombing of Sarajevo and other scenes from the war, there was little public pressure on the Clinton administration to act. Coverage often downplayed the conflict's severity, with the term *ethnic cleansing* used in place of more direct words like *rape*, *murder*, *torture*, and *genocide*. Many Americans did not fully understand why the war had begun or who the aggressors were, seeing it simply as a conflict between opposing groups in Europe. Because the administration had no desire to intervene, it did not make clarifying the war's nature a priority.

However, in 1995, Clinton decided to pursue a more aggressive policy in Bosnia. Clinton and his advisers drafted a peace deal and committed to military intervention if the peace agreement failed. The United States led NATO's Operation Deliberate Force in August 1995, which involved three weeks of precise air strikes aimed at targets in Bosnia. The goal of Operation Deliberate Force was to remind the Bosnian Serb aggressors of NATO's power and urge them to agree to peace talks. In November 1995, a U.S.-led negotiation in Dayton, Ohio, known as the Dayton Peace Accords, officially ended the war in Bosnia. The negotiation redrew the boundaries of Bosnia and Herzegovina to create both a Croat-Bosniak area and a Serbian area. U.S. and NATO forces were dispatched to maintain peace in the region.

After President Clinton was reelected in 1996, his administration took more assertive actions in the Middle East and the Balkans, demonstrating a continued willingness to use military force when diplomatic pressure failed. These interventions aligned with Clinton's broader foreign policy goals of promoting global stability, protecting human rights, and defending international law, but they were influenced by strategic and political considerations as much as by humanitarian concerns.

In 1998–99, violence erupted in the Serbian province of Kosovo, where ethnic Albanians—most of them Muslim—sought independence from Serbia. This crisis bore similarities to the earlier conflict in Bosnia, and as it had opted to

do with Operation Deliberate Force, the Clinton administration chose to intervene militarily. The United States led NATO air strikes against Serbian forces in an effort to halt the violence. This decision reflected Clinton's evolving approach: While humanitarian concerns alone had not justified action in Rwanda, the strategic importance of Europe and the precedent of earlier Balkan involvement made intervention in Kosovo more likely.

Think Twice

How did the U.S. response to the Bosnian crisis compare to the U.S. response in Somalia and Rwanda?

Into the New Millennium

In the 2000 election, Republican nominee George W. Bush—the son of former president George H. W. Bush—won the presidency, defeating Democratic nominee Al Gore in a close election.

As a foreign policy leader, George W. Bush wanted to "reject the blinders of isolationism" and befriend other superpowers, particularly Russia and China. He developed a friendly rapport with the Russian Federation's new president, Vladimir Putin, who took office in 2000 after Boris Yeltsin's resignation. Putin had previously led Russia's security services and was a former officer in the Soviet Union's KGB, the state intelligence agency. His



President George W. Bush wanted to continue building strong relationships with allies around the world, including Russia and its new president, Vladimir Putin. "I am convinced that he and I can build a relationship of mutual respect and candor," Bush said of Putin. "And I'm convinced that it's important for the world that we do so."

background signaled a more assertive and strategic approach to leadership than that of his predecessor. Early in his presidency, Putin made it a priority to establish respectful diplomatic ties with Western leaders. He and Bush held several meetings in which they discussed new strategies for international security and defense. Putin acknowledged that the United States and Russia disagreed on some regional issues, such as U.S.- and NATO-led military interventions in the Balkans during the 1990s, which Russia viewed with skepticism, but emphasized that the two nations were united in pursuing broader global goals. However, early cordial relations did not necessarily resolve underlying tensions or differing strategic interests between the two countries.

President George W. Bush was skeptical of long-term U.S. troop deployments abroad and expressed a desire to bring American



The pile of debris where the World Trade Center's towers once stood came to be known as "Ground Zero." Rescue workers searched Ground Zero for survivors and the remains of the dead, risking their own health due to the pollutants in the air.

peacekeeping forces home from the conflict-ridden Balkans. His foreign policy adviser, Condoleezza Rice, argued that peacekeeping missions risked stretching military resources too thin and could distract from preventing larger global crises. Less than a year into Bush's presidency, an event would occur that would reshape American foreign policy for a generation.



Think Twice

What challenges did George W. Bush face when he took office as president?

The September 11 Attacks

As you read at the start of this chapter, on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, hijackers linked to a radical Islamist extremist group boarded four flights departing from the East Coast of the United States and took control of the planes. Three planes then crashed into buildings that had been selected as targets. American Airlines Flight 11 hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46 a.m., and United Airlines Flight 175 hit the South Tower

at 9:03 a.m. All passengers died, including the hijackers. The towers collapsed within hours, leaving clouds of smoke and burning debris behind. The fires in lower Manhattan would burn for more than three months.

American Airlines Flight 77, leaving from Washington, D.C., en route to Los Angeles, crashed into the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. All passengers died, as did 125 people in the building. United Airlines Flight 93, leaving from Newark for San Francisco, also had hijackers on board. During the flight, passengers learned about the earlier attacks through phone calls made from the plane. When terrorists took control of the plane, the passengers and crew fought back and rushed the cockpit. The hijackers may have been targeting Washington, D.C.; however, the plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

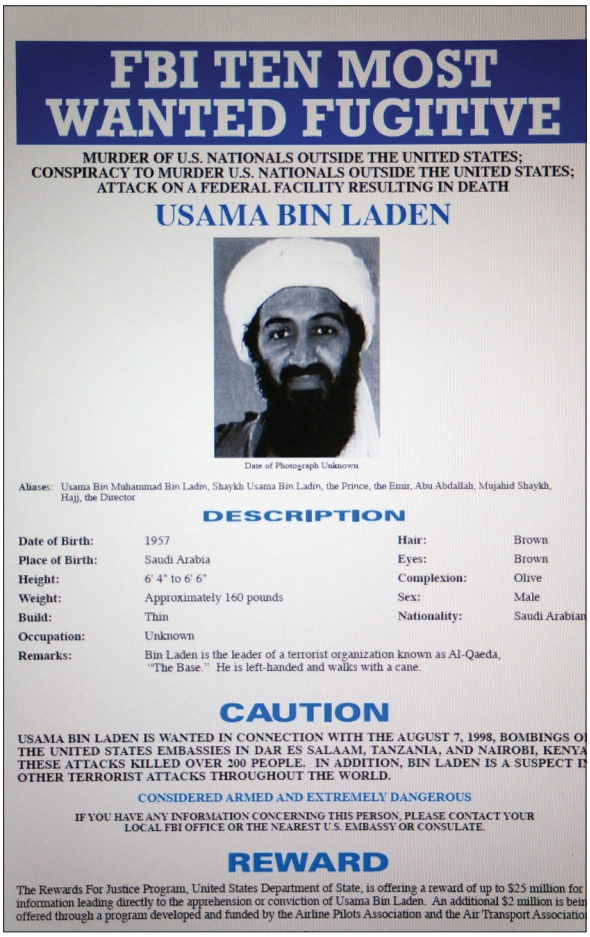
News cameras captured the attacks as they happened and broadcast the images live across the country and around the world. Networks in the United States provided continuous coverage throughout the week, with no commercials. All of the United States was seeing the same images at once, a phenomenon that would be increasingly rare as the Internet became Americans' primary news medium.

A New Level of Terrorism

The attacks' death toll extended to nearly three thousand, including many police officers and firefighters who worked to evacuate the targeted buildings. Speaking at Louisiana's Barksdale Air Force Base on the afternoon of September 11, President Bush said, "Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward, and freedom will be defended." He assured Americans that the United States would "hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts."

It was soon determined that the parties responsible were supported by an Islamist militant organization called al-Qaeda, whose leaders were in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden, born in Saudi Arabia, was al-Qaeda's founder and leader. In the years leading up to the attacks, bin Laden had become convinced of what he perceived as the weakness and evil of the United States. He had called Americans "the worst thieves in the world today" and, along with al-Qaeda, declared a holy war—a war fought for a religious purpose—on the country. Al-Qaeda was one of several extremist groups based in the Middle East and parts of North Africa that were often motivated by anti-Western beliefs, religious fundamentalism, or militant nationalism.

Further investigation revealed that the September 11 attacks were the result of nearly a decade of effort and planning. The hijackers had even taken flight lessons at commercial schools in the United States. Al-Qaeda had established training camps in Afghanistan for Islamist militants, bringing together young men around a shared sense of mission. Many of these recruits were shaped by recent U.S. interventions in



FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

MURDER OF U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES;
CONSPIRACY TO MURDER U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES;
ATTACK ON A FEDERAL FACILITY RESULTING IN DEATH

USAMA BIN LADEN

Date of Photograph Unknown

Aliases: Usama Bin Muhammad Bin Ladin, Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, the Prince, the Emir, Abu Abdallah, Mujahid Shaykh, Hajj, the Director

DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth:	1957	Hair:	Brown
Place of Birth:	Saudi Arabia	Eyes:	Brown
Height:	6' 4" to 6' 6"	Complexion:	Olive
Weight:	Approximately 160 pounds	Sex:	Male
Build:	Thin	Nationality:	Saudi Arabian
Occupation:	Unknown		
Remarks:	Bin Laden is the leader of a terrorist organization known as Al-Qaeda, "The Base." He is left-handed and walks with a cane.		

CAUTION

USAMA BIN LADEN IS WANTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE AUGUST 7, 1998, BOMBINGS O
THE UNITED STATES EMBASSIES IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, AND NAIROBI, KENYA
THESE ATTACKS KILLED OVER 200 PEOPLE. IN ADDITION, BIN LADEN IS A SUSPECT I
OTHER TERRORIST ATTACKS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE OR THE NEAREST U.S. EMBASSY OR CONSULATE.

REWARD

The Rewards For Justice Program, United States Department of State, is offering a reward of up to $25 million for information leading directly to the apprehension or conviction of Usama Bin Laden. An additional $2 million is bein offered through a program developed and funded by the Airline Pilots Association and the Air Transport Associatio

Even before it was discovered that bin Laden orchestrated the terrorist attacks of September 2001, he was one of the most wanted men in the world.

the Muslim world, including Somalia, which became a rallying point for anti-American sentiment. The hijackers came from Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations, with fifteen of the nineteen identified as Saudi nationals, a fact that later raised questions about the U.S.–Saudi alliance. Some had been living in the United States for months as part of a sleeper cell, and several were trained to fly planes at flight schools in Florida. Al-Qaeda framed its actions as resistance to the U.S. military presence in the Middle East, but the attacks led to heightened fears of hidden terrorist networks within the country and were a key factor behind the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, which you will read about later in the topic.

Congress commisioned an investigation into the attacks and how such events might be prevented in future. The 9/11 Commission Report, released in 2004, explained that al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's message resonated with disaffected young men in unstable regions, especially where political repression and lack of opportunity left few alternatives. "The resentment of America and the West is deep," the report concluded, underscoring how post–Cold War conflicts, foreign interventions, and failed states had created fertile ground for extremism.

Moreover, investigators discovered that al-Qaeda had a global reach and had been responsible for previous terrorist attacks. Forces associated with al-Qaeda had destroyed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and bombed a U.S. warship in Yemen in 2000. In 1999, al-Qaeda had been designated by the United States as a foreign terrorist organization. Still, the September 11 attacks represented a new kind of threat—a large-scale attack designed to get the world's attention. U.S. intelligence agencies were unprepared to deal with such a highly developed terrorist network.

The United States prepared to fight back, not just against al-Qaeda, but against any

PRIMARY SOURCE: ADDRESS BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON THE RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS, GEORGE W. BUSH, 2001

President George W. Bush spoke before a joint session of Congress nine days after the September 11 attacks. His address aimed to unify the American people, build support for decisive action against terrorism, and outline the United States' future plans.

Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done. . . .

On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars, but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war, but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks, but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

. . . Americans are asking, who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as Al Qaida. . . . Its goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere. . . .

Our war on terror begins with Al Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated. . . .

Americans are asking, how will we fight and win this war? We will direct every resource at our command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war—to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network. . . .

The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.

Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.

Source: Bush, George W. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11." September 20, 2001. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/213749.

other terrorist threat that planned to attack on this new scale. President Bush told the nation, "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." On September 20, Bush, setting a new course for American foreign policy, told a joint session of Congress, "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated." The 9/11 Commission Report later agreed that the country's goals reached beyond al-Qaeda: "Our enemy is twofold: al Qaeda, a stateless network of terrorists that struck us on 9/11; and a radical ideological movement in the Islamic world, inspired in part by al Qaeda, which has spawned terrorist groups and violence across the globe." The report clarified that the Muslim faith itself and people who practiced Islam were not a threat and that the danger lay in groups that used terrorist violence. Despite this clarification, anti-Muslim sentiment surged across the United States, and many Muslim Americans faced Islamophobic backlash, including hate crimes, discrimination, and suspicion in their communities.



These memorial tiles made by schoolchildren include messages of national unity and support for New York, including support for the New York Police Department (NYPD), which was active in the first response and rescue efforts.

Think Twice

Why did al-Qaeda represent a new type of threat to the United States?

The Country Unites

President Bush visited Ground Zero on September 14, 2001, as rescue workers continued searching for survivors. When he addressed the crowd through a bullhorn, a worker said he couldn't hear what the president was saying. Bush's reply became well-known: "I can hear you. The rest of the world hears you. And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon." In the aftermath of the disaster, the American people responded to a voice of strong leadership, and Bush's approval rating surged. He proclaimed a new "war on terror," telling the joint session of Congress on September 20, "We will direct every resource at our command . . . to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network." His presidency had a new purpose and vision.

The American public came together in a show of national unity. Memorial sites appeared across the country. People flew or wore pins with the American flag as a show of patriotism. Volunteers traveled to lower Manhattan to aid in the rescue effort, and cities sent first responders. Charities raised money for victims' families; the Red Cross raised $3 million in only two days. International communities also built memorials and sent an outpouring of support. The French newspaper *Le Monde* wrote, "We are all Americans now." U.S. embassies received condolence letters from people, organizations, and governments representing more than one hundred countries.

Think Twice

How did the September 11, 2001, attacks give the nation a common purpose?

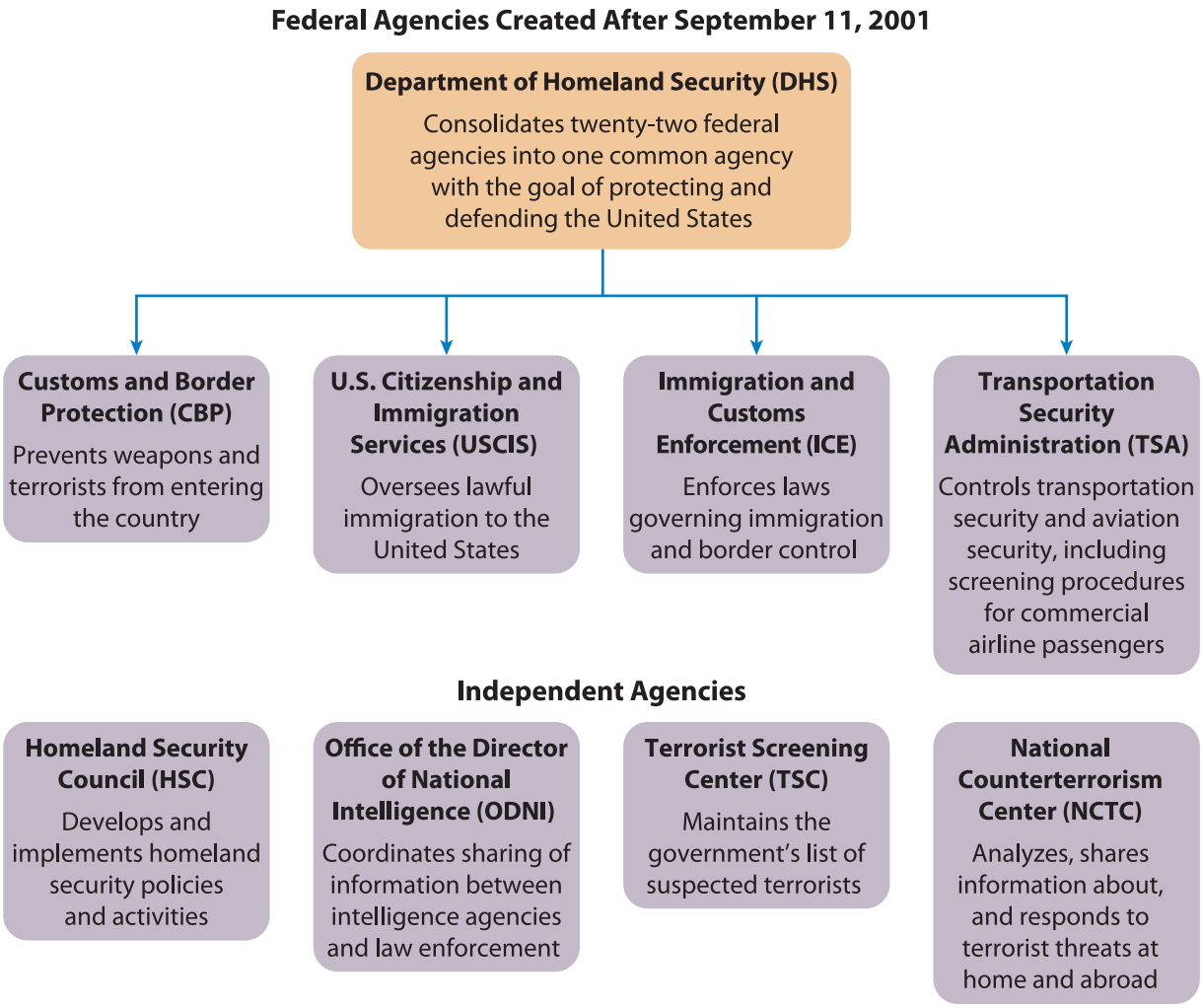
Reforms in the Federal Government

In the aftermath of 9/11, it became clear that several intelligence and law enforcement agencies had possessed fragments of information that, if shared or analyzed together, might have prevented the attacks. The failure to connect these pieces highlighted serious problems in interagency communication and oversight. In response, the federal government undertook a sweeping effort to strengthen national security, starting with expanded surveillance powers.

The administration's first major legislative action was the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act in October 2001. The full name of the law—the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act—revealed its intent: to give law enforcement

and intelligence agencies greater authority to investigate and prevent terrorism. The law enhanced banking regulations to disrupt terrorist financing, established new penalties for the possession of biological weapons, and allowed for more extensive government surveillance of digital communications, such as emails, phone calls, and Internet use. President Bush said the USA PATRIOT Act gave officials "better tools to put an end to financial counterfeiting, smuggling, and money laundering."

However, many civil liberties advocates raised concerns that the new surveillance powers violated the Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures. Critics feared the government could now monitor Americans' communications without



The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) consolidated twenty-two federal agencies into one common agency with the goal of protecting and defending the United States. Some of these agencies, such as those focused on border protection and immigration, had existed in other forms and under different names prior to 2001.

adequate oversight or probable cause. Although there was strong public support for preventing further attacks, debates over privacy rights and government overreach quickly emerged.

The government also moved to improve physical security, especially in air travel. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was created to enforce new procedures for airline passengers, including luggage screening, body scanners, and reinforced cockpit doors. These measures were widely supported but also criticized for potentially encouraging ethnic and racial profiling—particularly of passengers perceived to be of Middle Eastern descent. Beyond airports, security was increased at government buildings and public venues across the country.



The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) created a color-coded advisory system to quickly inform the public about the risk of potential terrorist threats.

To further address the lack of coordination among federal agencies, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002. The Homeland Security Act consolidated twenty-two agencies, including the Coast Guard, the Secret Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), into a single department with more than 180,000 employees, making it the largest government restructuring since 1947. The DHS was tasked with managing emergency preparedness, sharing intelligence with local and private entities, overseeing border security, and protecting infrastructure.

Additional efforts to streamline and improve intelligence sharing included the creation of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which was established to coordinate the work of various intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Existing agencies were also granted expanded powers; the CIA, for example, was authorized to capture and detain individuals deemed a threat to U.S. national security.

Think Twice

How did new federal agencies raise concerns about civil liberties?



Going to War in Afghanistan

The September 11, 2001, attacks also transformed American foreign policy. Military intervention abroad took on a new goal—to prevent terrorism. The United States invaded Afghanistan, and later Iraq, with this goal in mind. What began as war missions evolved into longer-term occupations aimed at supporting democratic governments and stabilizing those countries to prevent extremist groups, which were often motivated by anti-Western, religiously fundamentalist, or militant nationalist ideologies, from gaining influence or control.

President Bush considered the terrorist attacks an act of war. Just one week after the attack, on September 18, 2001, Congress quickly passed a joint resolution authorizing the president to use "all necessary and appropriate force" against those responsible. Bush soon put this authorization into action, targeting Afghanistan, believed to be the location of al-Qaeda's headquarters.

Afghanistan, like many countries in Europe and Asia, had faced turmoil and instability after the breakup of the Soviet Union. From December 1979 to February 1989, Soviet troops had occupied Afghanistan and established a communist government. From 1979 to 1982, the Soviets fought anti-communist Muslim forces in Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan War. Al-Qaeda developed as a logistical network to aid the Muslim forces and soon spread through the Muslim world. In the mid-1990s, another distinct conservative, extremist Islamic group called the Taliban emerged in Afghanistan. Beginning as a group of religious scholars, the Taliban offered security and purpose to many people in a country in chaos after the war. By 1996, the Taliban controlled the country and enforced a repressive regime based on its strict interpretation of the Quran. The Taliban militia developed a close relationship with al-Qaeda. When Bush demanded that Taliban leaders deliver bin Laden and his associates to U.S. authorities, the Taliban refused.

As a result of the Taliban's refusal to hand over bin Laden and his associates, the United States initiated a military attack on Afghanistan. Named Operation Enduring Freedom, the mission included troops from twenty-seven coalition countries. A group of anti-Taliban rebel forces from Afghanistan called the Northern Alliance also joined the military operation. In September 2001, the CIA team "Jawbreaker" traveled to Afghanistan and worked with anti-Taliban leaders to strategize how to overthrow the Taliban.

The first phase of the war was over within months. In October 2001, U.S. and U.K. air strikes on Afghanistan began. Ground forces soon followed. In November, the Taliban



Afghan presidential election workers count ballots in the 2004 election. More than ten million Afghans registered to vote in the first-ever election of an Afghan president.

retreated from Kabul, Afghanistan's capital city. Taliban control in the country collapsed in December, and Taliban and al-Qaeda forces went into hiding. U.S. Special Forces pursued but were unable to locate Osama bin Laden.

The second phase of the operation aimed to stabilize the country and rebuild Afghan institutions. This phase lasted for two decades. A new transitional government was formed, and Hamid Karzai was elected Afghanistan's new president in 2004. Overall quality of life improved for most Afghans, with more options for health care, education, and work.

However, many Afghans were unhappy with the long American occupation. After removing the Taliban from power in 2001, U.S. and NATO forces remained in Afghanistan to train the Afghan military, support the new government, and continue counterterrorism operations against the Taliban and other extremist groups. While some Afghans welcomed this support, others viewed the continued foreign military presence as an occupation that brought instability and civilian casualties. Frustration grew over issues such as air strikes that killed civilians, corruption in the new Afghan government, and the lack of security in many regions. Meanwhile, the Taliban regrouped and launched a violent insurgency aimed at undermining the Afghan government and driving out foreign troops. The prolonged U.S. presence contributed to both short-term security gains and long-term local resentment, highlighting the complexity of nation building in conflict zones.

Think Twice

How was the war in Afghanistan reflective of U.S. foreign policy after September 11, 2001?

The Second Gulf War

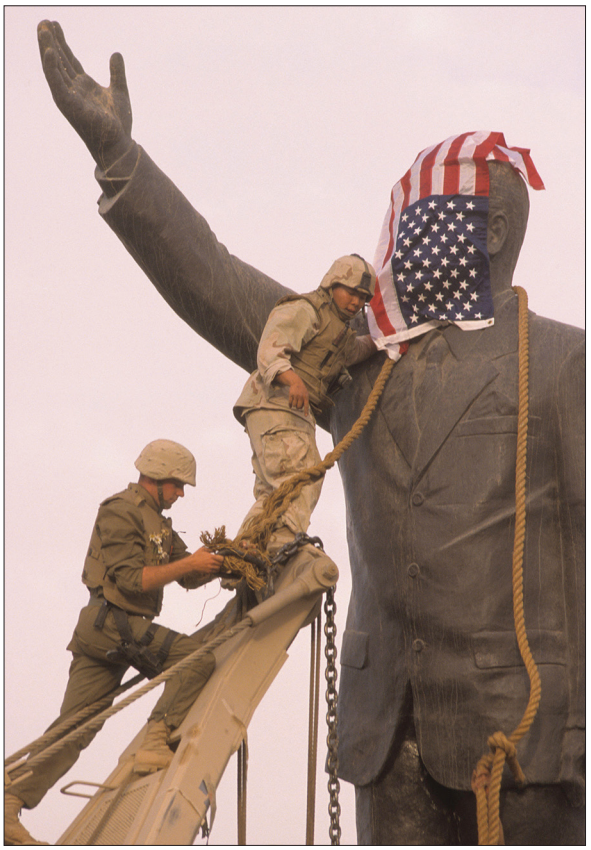
While U.S. forces remained in Afghanistan, the Bush administration began planning to invade Iraq as well. This invasion was partially motivated by Saddam's persistent refusal to cooperate with weapons inspectors since the Gulf War ended. Saddam had been ordered to destroy any weapons of mass

destruction, such as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and long-range missiles. After President Clinton conducted a bombing campaign in the 1990s to get him to comply, Saddam refused to allow weapons inspectors into the country. The United Nations passed another resolution in 2002 that demanded that Saddam readmit the inspectors and allow an investigation.

In 2002, President Bush and his leadership team strongly believed that Saddam was still stockpiling weapons of mass destruction and needed to be stopped as soon as possible. Bush claimed Iraq was part of an "axis of evil" along with Iran and North Korea. Secretary of State Colin Powell was critical of the UN decision to give Saddam more time to comply, saying, "Leaving Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years is not an option, not in a post–September 11 world." The administration also claimed that Saddam supported or had close ties to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda. Later investigations, including the findings of the 9/11 Commission, found no links between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 attacks.

The United States Invades Iraq

Congress authorized the use of military force against Iraq in October 2002. The majority of the American public supported this decision at the time. However, the



Three weeks after the invasion of Iraq, U.S. soldiers lead Iraqi civilians in pulling down a statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, Iraq.

decision was unpopular in the international diplomacy community. While the United Nations and other national leaders had largely supported the decision to invade Iraq during the Gulf War, the 2003 invasion did not receive backing from the UN Security Council. Council members were skeptical of U.S. claims about Iraq's mobile laboratories for producing biological weapons and preferred to extend the weapons inspections. Despite lacking Security Council approval, which would have provided international legal authority for military action under the

UN Charter, President Bush decided to move forward. He believed that decisive action was necessary to address the threat he perceived and issued an ultimatum to Saddam on March 17, 2003, to leave Iraq within forty-eight hours or face military action.

When the deadline passed, the military offensive Operation Iraqi Freedom began. The United States was joined by a "coalition of the willing" that included thirty countries, most prominently the United Kingdom, and 250,000 troops. Other allies of the United States, including Canada, Mexico, Germany, France, and Russia, refused to support the offensive.

As with Afghanistan, the combat phase of the Iraq War was relatively short: It lasted less than a month. It started with an elaborate display of force, including precision-guided bombs over a building where Saddam was believed to be meeting and air strikes over Iraqi government installations. The initial air campaign used the military tactic of "shock and awe," intended to show dominance by immediately overwhelming the enemy with force such as firepower.

After weeks of air strikes and a ground campaign, the Iraqi army was defeated, and on May 1, President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq were over. In December 2003, Saddam was captured, and he was tried for major crimes by the Iraqi judicial system and executed in 2006. In December 2005, Iraqis voted in national elections and chose members of a new parliament. The majority of seats were won by the United Iraqi Alliance, a political group supported mainly by Shiite Muslims, who made up the largest religious group in Iraq.

Think Twice



Why did the United States invade Iraq?

Controversy over the Iraq Occupation

As the U.S. occupation continued with the goal of rebuilding Iraq, local resentment toward the occupation grew. **Insurgent** groups began to fight U.S. forces. One especially deadly fight took place in September 2004 in Fallujah, Iraq; the deaths included many Iraqi civilians. The death toll among U.S. soldiers also soared during this second phase of the campaign.

U.S. forces continued to search for the chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons that the administration alleged Saddam possessed until January 2004; no such weapons were ever found. The Bush administration and U.S. weapons inspectors admitted they were most likely wrong in their previous claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Colin Powell admitted

he lacked solid evidence that Saddam had mobile weapons labs. Numerous government and independent investigations, including the 9/11 Commission, confirmed there were no such weapons in Iraq. Many of these investigations also revealed that Saddam did not have links to al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups. Observers note that the administration's two main justifications for going to war were later disproven, though debates continue about whether these errors resulted from faulty intelligence, misinterpretation, or deliberate exaggeration. The Robb–Silberman Commission found no evidence of political pressure to change intelligence findings but did not address whether the administration misused the evidence it received.

The longer the Iraq War went on, the more divided the American public became in its opinions about the conflict. Many who initially supported the invasion now believed the occupation had been mishandled and questioned the legitimacy of the war.

The year 2007 turned out to be the deadliest of the occupation, with at least two thousand casualties. This resulted from the growing threat of insurgents. In response, Bush committed to sending twenty thousand more troops to Iraq, a decision known as "the surge." The decision was widely unpopular. Many who opposed the war felt it had gone on for too long. Overall, more than four thousand U.S. service members died in the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and more than thirty thousand were wounded; estimates suggest as many as two hundred thousand Iraqi civilians may have died, though figures vary depending on source and methodology.

By 2008, the administration was rethinking its goals in Iraq. In November of that year, the Iraqi parliament approved a U.S.–Iraqi agreement that set a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. The decision to withdraw marked a turning point after years of war, raising questions among scholars and policymakers about the long-term effectiveness and consequences of U.S. foreign policy and military intervention in Iraq. The last U.S. troops left Iraq on December 18, 2011, in accordance with the agreement.

Think Twice



Why did public opinion in the United States change about the war in Iraq?

Topic 2
Domestic Affairs: New Challenges and Polarization

Framing Question

What impact did the presidents of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have on U.S. domestic policy?



People watch the presidential debate between Republican candidate George W. Bush and Democratic candidate Al Gore in October 2000.

Election Night 2000

Setting the Scene

On the evening of the presidential election on Tuesday, November 7, 2000, as polling locations start to close, news divisions of television networks begin announcing the winners of various states. Although only a fraction of the votes have been counted, these news organizations are following a long-established practice of using exit polls and statistical models to project the eventual winner. It is virtually unheard of for a call to be wrong.

At approximately 7:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, networks announce that Al Gore, the nominee for the Democratic Party, has won the pivotal state of Florida. It is widely understood that the winner of Florida will win the entire election and become the next president of the United States.

As the actual votes are counted, however, the networks realize the race is much closer than their models predicted. They retract their projection for Gore, reclassifying



Florida as "too close to call." His opponent, Republican nominee George W. Bush, is back in the race for president.

Votes continue to be counted in Florida, and by around 2:00 a.m., the official state vote tally gives Bush a lead of twenty-nine thousand votes. The statistical models suggest that the lead will grow to more than fifty thousand votes, leading the networks to now declare Bush the winner of Florida and therefore the presidency. At approximately 2:30 a.m., Gore calls Bush to concede the election.

But the models failed to account for the fact that the remaining uncounted votes are disproportionately located in heavily Democratic counties. As the count continues, it becomes clear that errors in ballot design and vote counting in several counties have led to misallocated or disputed votes, particularly in those areas. When it becomes apparent that the margin will be slim enough to trigger an automatic recount, at around 3:00 a.m., Gore calls Bush again—this time to retract his concession. About a half hour later, the networks once again retract their projection.

It has been nearly a century since Americans did not know the winner of a presidential election the following day. In 1916, the winner wasn't known for three days. In 2000, it takes more than a month, following a series of recounts and court challenges that eventually reach the Supreme Court.

On December 12, 2000, the Supreme Court rules that the recount, performed using inconsistent recount standards from county to county, violates the Constitution's equal protection clause. The next day, Gore issues his final concession. He says, "Tonight, for the sake of our unity as a people and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession. I also accept my responsibility, which I will discharge unconditionally, to honor the new president-elect and do everything possible to help him bring Americans together in fulfillment of the great vision that our Declaration of Independence defines and that our Constitution affirms and defends."

Reagan's Plans for the Economy

By the 1960s, Ronald Reagan had already gained national attention as an actor and charismatic public speaker. Because of his rhetorical skills, Reagan was asked to speak on behalf of Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964.

In the address, called "A Time for Choosing," Reagan foreshadowed the economic philosophies that would later guide his two terms as president of the United States, from 1981 to 1989. He described how he was once a Democrat but had since changed his political affiliation to Republican. He explained how he had come to conclude that Americans were capable of self-governance and did not need to be governed by "a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capital."

Reagan argued against government control of the economy and claimed that many federal programs had failed to strengthen American industries or improve individual economic outcomes. He said that social programs such as welfare only encouraged people to depend on government aid and did not solve the underlying problem of poverty. Reagan asked:

> If government planning and welfare had the answer—and they've had almost thirty years of it—shouldn't we expect government to almost read the score to us once in a while? Shouldn't they be telling us about the decline each year in the number of people needing help? The reduction in the need for public housing? But the reverse is true. Each year the need grows greater; the program grows greater.

At the core of Reagan's 1964 worldview, and later his presidency, was a deep belief that the federal government had grown too large, too intrusive, too wasteful, and too expensive. Reducing the size and influence of the federal government was not just one policy goal among many; it was the foundational idea that shaped his economic, social, and foreign policy decisions. To Reagan, lowering taxes, reducing regulations, and cutting social programs were all connected steps toward this larger aim of shrinking federal power, limiting government's



In 1964, a speech by Ronald Reagan (right) supporting Barry Goldwater (left) for president inspired donors to contribute $1 million to Republican candidates, at the time the greatest total attributed to a single political speech in American history.

role in people's lives, and returning more decision-making to individuals, businesses, and state governments.

The government needed a new approach, Reagan concluded in his speech, and Goldwater and the Republicans would deliver it. Reagan promised that Goldwater would allow the American people to "make our own decisions and determine our own destiny." The speech inspired many people to donate to Goldwater and announced Reagan's arrival on the political scene. In 1966, Reagan would become governor of California. In 1980, Reagan accomplished what Goldwater had not: winning the presidency.



Think Twice

How did Reagan's 1964 speech suggest the way he would reform the economy as president?

The Four Pillars of Reaganomics

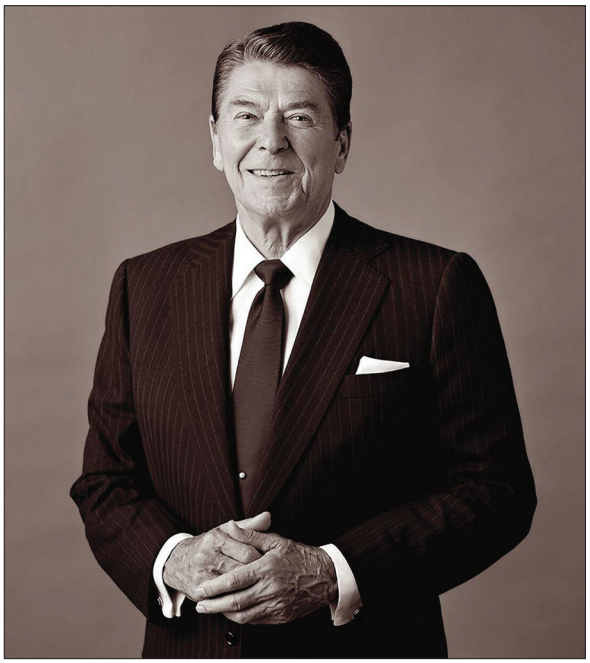
When Ronald Reagan took office as president in 1981, the economy was still suffering from a combination of high inflation and high unemployment known as stagflation, which you read about in the previous unit. Reagan introduced an ambitious set of policies aimed at addressing the country's economic condition. The economic ideas Reagan first voiced in 1964 would later evolve into what became known as Reaganomics—a strategy of lowering taxes, reducing government regulation, and promoting private enterprise as the path to economic growth.

Reagan's approach assumed that individuals and corporations would increase their spending and investing if they paid less tax. As people spent and invested more, businesses would grow and be able to provide more and better jobs, and business owners would have more resources to create a greater variety of cheaper goods and services. Reagan also wanted to aid business profits by reducing federal regulations that limited production. These economic policies are known as *supply-side economics* because they aim to stimulate the economy by improving the supply of goods and services. Critics of this approach have used the term "trickle-down economics" to suggest that because the immediate benefits went to corporations and wealthy Americans, everyone else would only benefit indirectly, if at all—in theory, through more jobs and higher wages.

Reaganomics had four pillars, or principles. The first was reducing the federal income tax. In his first year as president, Reagan signed the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. The act lowered tax rates across the board but especially for top earners, whose highest marginal tax rate dropped from 70 percent to 50 percent. At the time, the act constituted one of the largest across-the-board tax cuts in American history and was credited with adding more than sixteen million jobs and putting more money in the pockets of American people.

The second pillar was cutting federal spending. Reagan targeted social welfare programs for these cuts because he believed such programs encouraged people to remain reliant on government aid instead of working and becoming self-sufficient. "Our welfare system itself has become a poverty trap—a creator and reinforcer of dependency," he said in a radio address in 1987. Reagan cut the federal budget for food stamps, childcare subsidies for low-income Americans, and other forms of welfare assistance. In addition to discouraging personal reliance on federal aid, the social program cuts were intended to help make up for the loss of tax revenue. The cuts did not fully offset the lost tax revenue. Reagan's tax cuts, combined with dramatic increases in military and defense spending to fight the ongoing Cold War, led to a significant increase in the federal budget deficit. During Reagan's two terms, the deficit increased by $1.5 trillion.

The third pillar involved the **deregulation** of private businesses and industries. According to Reagan, government regulations held businesses back from making large profits. If these regulations were lifted, he argued, businesses could operate more efficiently and offer goods and services at lower prices and in greater variety, benefiting the overall economy. Reagan also believed deregulation would



President Ronald Reagan

stimulate free-market competition, encouraging innovation, efficiency, and better-quality products as companies worked to win customers. Competition drives down prices and expands the amount of choices consumers can make when purchasing. Reagan relaxed regulations in communications industries like cable and telephone services as well as transportation and shipping services, among other industries. He reduced price controls in the oil, gas, and airline industries. Additionally, he allowed some federally protected land to be opened to private development. Some environmental and consumer advocacy groups expressed concern that these changes could reduce certain public health and environmental protections. For example, the Reagan-appointed leader

of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Anne Gorsuch, implemented budget adjustments that affected EPA programs, including initiatives related to toxic waste and water cleanup.

The fourth pillar involved managing the growth of the money supply, or the total amount of money in circulation (including paper currency and savings accounts). Unlike the other pillars, this action aimed to influence spending and borrowing in order to address inflation and high prices. A reduced money supply raises interest rates, making borrowing more expensive. This slows consumer and business spending, reducing overall demand in the economy. With lower demand, upward pressure on prices decreases, helping control inflation over time. This policy was put into action by Paul Volcker, the chair of the Federal Reserve, which is the nation's central bank. The reduced money supply contributed to a brief economic recession in 1981–82. Volcker anticipated that a short-term downturn could be followed by long-term economic gains, and he was right. Economic recovery began in 1983, and by 1984, inflation had fallen from its 1980 high, and the economy was growing. The growth would continue through the decade. Supporters of Reaganomics saw this as evidence that tax cuts gave Americans incentives to invest and start businesses, contributing to the broader economic growth of the late 1980s.

Think Twice



What economic goals did Reagan hope to achieve with his four pillars, and how did he expect his policies to affect businesses, workers, and consumers?

The Social Impact of Reaganomics

Supporters of Reaganomics pointed to improved economic growth, recovery from stagflation, lower inflation rates, increased investment, and a stock market boom. Critics of Reaganomics argued that the economic growth of the 1980s did not affect all income groups equally, tending to benefit wealthier Americans more than middle- and lower-income Americans. For instance, between 1977 and 1989, the richest 20 percent of Americans saw a roughly 29 percent increase in their pretax income. Meanwhile, middle-class income rose only modestly, and the lowest-income households saw their earnings remain flat or decline by about 9 percent, depending on the measure used. This drop was partly due to inflation outpacing wage growth and cuts to certain social programs, which reduced the support available to lower-income Americans. The sweeping tax cuts coincided with an increase in **economic inequality**. The gap between the wealthiest and poorest households widened more rapidly than at any other time since the 1920s. Unemployment rates increased during the brief recession of 1981–82, rising to more than 10 percent—the highest rates

since the Great Depression. Although the economy rebounded beginning in 1983, the benefits of recovery were uneven. Wealthy Americans regained lost ground more quickly and fully than those in the middle- and lower-income brackets.

The effects of Reaganomics were also uneven across racial lines. African American and Latino communities, which had higher overall poverty and unemployment rates prior to Reagan's presidency, were among those most affected by reductions in social welfare programs and the broader trends in economic inequality that followed. Critics of Reaganomics also argued that cuts to housing, education, and public assistance weakened the social safety net, with potential long-term consequences for vulnerable populations.

Reagan's domestic agenda significantly reshaped American economic policy and political discourse. Supporters highlight its role in stimulating economic growth and encouraging free enterprise, while critics contend that it contributed to greater economic inequality and reduced some social welfare programs. Its legacy remains a point of discussion in debates.



Think Twice

Considering the arguments of supporters and critics, how would you describe the overall effects of Reaganomics on different Americans and the economy?

Reagan's Domestic Policies

Early in his presidency, on March 30, 1981, Reagan was shot and seriously wounded by John Hinckley Jr. outside a Washington, D.C., hotel. A bullet lodged just an inch from his heart, and he underwent emergency surgery. Reagan's quick recovery boosted his popularity and reinforced his public image as strong and resilient.

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan pursued a domestic agenda that went beyond economic reform. While his approach to taxes and government spending shaped much of the national conversation, his administration also focused on reducing the size and influence of the federal government in daily life. This included efforts to cut social welfare programs, shift responsibilities to state and local governments, and appoint conservative judges who could influence public policy for decades to come. Reagan also promoted a tough-on-crime stance and emphasized policies reflecting traditional values in education and family life. Together, these domestic policies reflected a broader conservative vision that would leave a lasting mark on American society and politics.

The HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Recall from Topic 1 that acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS,

is the disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV can be spread through sexual contact, intravenous drug use, and blood transfusions. If HIV develops into AIDS, it destroys the body's ability to mount an immune response to other diseases. While treatments for HIV and AIDS are available today, there were no known treatments in the 1980s. For most, AIDS was fatal.

Scientists believe that the virus originated in Central Africa and spread globally via international travel and migration, reaching the United States by the late 1970s. In the summer of 1981, U.S. health officials first recognized the disease as a new health threat. It spread rapidly and killed thousands; more than seven thousand Americans had been diagnosed by 1984, and three thousand had died.

A Growing Crisis

In the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States, the disease was most commonly identified among gay men. Social stigma against gay people and widespread misunderstandings created serious challenges in treating the disease. Some individuals worried not only about their health but also about the social consequences of being diagnosed, especially if it might reveal private aspects of their lives. During the 1980s, major media outlets gave limited attention



Activists began the AIDS Memorial Quilt in 1987 with fabric squares bearing the names of people who died of AIDS. Thousands of panels were added over the years; the quilt is one of the largest community art projects in the world.

to the epidemic, and public education efforts were slow to develop. Without clear and widespread information, myths and misinformation about HIV/AIDS spread easily. While gay men were disproportionately affected, the epidemic also spread among intravenous drug users, transfusion recipients, and heterosexual partners, underscoring the need for a comprehensive public health response.

The Reagan administration received criticism for acting slowly in response to the epidemic. While some advisers pushed for more aggressive federal action, the administration initially relied primarily on public health agencies, and early awareness of the scale of the crisis was limited.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, surgeon general under President Reagan, recommended a national public awareness campaign about AIDS that would provide honest, science-based information. He emphasized education over fear, calling for clear communication on how HIV is transmitted and how people—especially young people—could protect themselves. Koop advocated for including guidance in schools and public messaging on safe sex, abstinence, and the risks of drug use, aiming to reduce stigma and enable people to make informed choices to stop the disease's spread. By 1987, more than seventy thousand Americans had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, and more than forty thousand had died.

Think Twice



What factors made it difficult to respond effectively to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s, and what were the consequences of the federal government's slow response?

Activism and Awareness

In 1988, Koop's findings were mailed to U.S. households in the form of an informational pamphlet, and in 1989, $2 billion a year was set aside for federal AIDS funding. While these actions represented federal efforts to address the crisis, many Americans and advocacy groups felt the response was delayed and insufficient.

Activist groups had formed to fight the disease in the absence of a federal response. One of the first and most influential was the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP. ACT UP members pushed for faster research, better access to treatment, and increased visibility of the crisis, using protests and public demonstrations to draw national attention to the urgency of the epidemic.

ACT UP advocated for a patient-centered approach to AIDS treatment, prioritizing access to affordable medication, informed consent, and equitable clinical trials. The group lobbied pharmaceutical companies and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to speed up drug approval and make AIDS medications more affordable. They spoke out against news reports that gave misinformation about AIDS. One of ACT UP's



When Magic Johnson went public with his HIV diagnosis, he helped decrease the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS.

most impactful actions came in 1988, when hundreds of activists temporarily shut down the FDA headquarters to highlight delays in drug approval.

Public perception of AIDS began to shift in the late 1980s and early 1990s, thanks in part to the courage of individuals who shared their stories. One was Ryan White, a teenager from Indiana who contracted HIV through a blood transfusion and became a national symbol for compassion and education around the disease. White faced intense discrimination from his school and community, but his decision to speak out publicly helped increase awareness and humanize the AIDS crisis, challenging misconceptions. His death in 1990 at age eighteen drew widespread attention and sympathy.

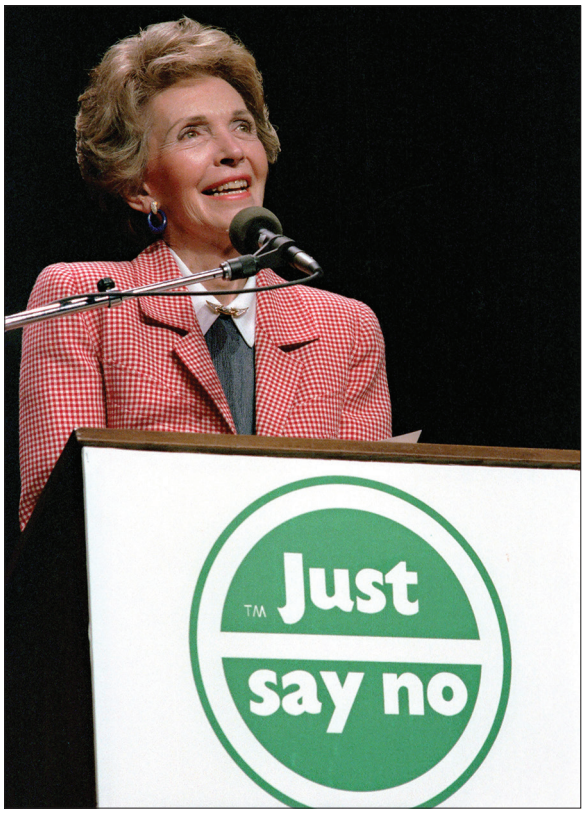
In 1991, Magic Johnson, a Hall of Fame basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers, became one of the first major celebrities to publicly announce he had HIV. Though Johnson had not developed AIDS, he carried the virus that causes the disease. He emphasized that HIV could affect anyone, regardless of background, and that survival was possible with early testing and access to treatment. After Johnson's announcement, many more Americans got tested for HIV, marking a turning point in public awareness and engagement.

Think Twice

How did activists and public figures together respond to the AIDS epidemic in the United States?

The War on Drugs Expands

Another aspect of Reagan's domestic policy was his increased focus on the War on Drugs, a federal initiative that began under President Nixon, which you learned about in Unit 5. The Reagan administration targeted young people with the Just Say No campaign, led by First Lady Nancy Reagan. This campaign urged youth to resist the pressures and temptations of drug use. Nancy Reagan traveled to schools and rehabilitation centers across



First Lady Nancy Reagan became the face of the federal Just Say No campaign, which lasted for more than a decade.

the country, speaking to students and people recovering from drug addiction, and appeared on TV and the radio. Despite its wide profile, studies indicate the campaign did not significantly reduce overall drug consumption, and some critics argued that it offered a simplistic solution (the word *no*) to a problem with complex social and economic factors.

Much more consequential was the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, signed into law by President Reagan in 1986. The legislation was passed to address rising drug use and related violence, especially in inner-city communities affected by the crack cocaine epidemic. A key motivation was the surge in drug-related violence in urban areas, where crack cocaine markets were often linked to gang conflicts and community instability. Policymakers sought to make neighborhoods safer by targeting drug dealers with tougher mandatory minimum sentences and increasing funding for law enforcement and drug prevention programs, hoping to curb both drug use and the associated violence.

While the legislation aimed to reduce drug-related crime, it has been widely criticized for creating racial disparities in the criminal justice system. The law imposed much harsher penalties for crack cocaine—more prevalent in low-income African American communities—than for powdered cocaine, which was more common among wealthier, often white users. This sentencing disparity contributed to disproportionate incarceration rates among people of color and had long-term social and economic consequences in affected communities. While the campaign had a limited measurable effect on national drug use statistics, it did raise public awareness and shaped anti-drug messaging for decades.

Think Twice



What were the main goals of Reagan's War on Drugs initiatives, and how did the Just Say No campaign and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act attempt to achieve them?

Evangelical Christian Leaders Gain Influence

President Reagan benefited from the new American movement of evangelicalism, a branch of Protestant Christianity that gained significant political influence during Jimmy Carter's presidency. Americans who identified as evangelicals came to increasingly align with the Republican Party during the late 1970s and 1980s, valuing ideals such as self-reliance, law and order, and family values. In this context, *family values* generally referred to support for traditional marriage and gender roles, as well as for prayer and religious teachings in schools. Politically, most evangelicals opposed the legalization of abortion and government regulation of private religious schools. Reagan personally shared many of these positions, though he did not align with the movement on every issue. Evangelicals also responded positively to Reagan's calls for limited government and often supported his economic policies. By 1984, 76 percent of self-identified U.S. evangelicals supported Reagan.



The "pro-life" movement, which opposed abortion, was strongly connected to the rise of evangelical Christianity in the 1970s and 1980s. Members generally supported Ronald Reagan and other Republicans.

Reagan's support gave evangelicals a chance they had never had to be involved in public policy at a federal level. Although Reagan had signed an abortion rights bill in the 1960s as governor of California, he later shifted his position. In 1988, he signed a law restricting the use of federal funds for abortion.

Think Twice

What about Reagan's domestic policies appealed to evangelicals, and how did Reagan respond to evangelicals' support?

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is designed to be nonpartisan; justices are appointed for life to shield them from outside influences such as money and politics. However, justices' views typically reflect, but do not universally mirror, the perspectives of the president who nominates them. Each justice has their own way of interpreting the Constitution and deciding how the law applies in specific situations. For instance, one judge may decide a law means exactly what the words say; another judge may examine the lawmakers' intentions and decide that as American society has changed, the application of the law has changed too.

The *Challenger* Disaster of 1986

On January 28, 1986, the U.S. space shuttle *Challenger* took flight with many Americans watching from home. This shuttle flight had more public attention than usual because a teacher, Christa McAuliffe, was on board. She was going to teach two lessons from orbit with the goal of getting students interested in scientific careers. As the first civilian selected for spaceflight, McAuliffe symbolized a new era of public engagement in science and space exploration.

About seventy-three seconds after liftoff, at an altitude of forty-six thousand feet (14,021 m), the shuttle exploded. The explosion was broadcast live on television—one of the first times a national audience witnessed a tragedy live on TV as it happened. All seven astronauts on board were killed. Astronauts had died on NASA missions before; in 1967, three astronauts on the Apollo 1 spacecraft died on the launchpad when a fire broke out during preflight testing. However, the *Challenger* explosion was the first time the United States had lost astronauts in flight.

Scientists, politicians, and members of the public were all shocked. The space shuttle program had represented the triumph of American technological progress. Reagan postponed his scheduled State of the Union speech that night to speak about the disaster. He specifically addressed the schoolchildren watching, saying, "Sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery."

Both NASA and a Reagan-appointed commission investigated the explosion. The investigations found that rubber rings called O-rings had not sealed the rocket boosters correctly. The seals were designed to prevent exhaust gas from escaping. The day of the launch was cold, and the O-rings had frozen and failed to seal, creating a leak that allowed hot gas to escape. More concerning was the fact that engineers had previously expressed concerns about the seals and warned about potential failures, but NASA officials in charge of the shuttle project had disregarded their warnings.

The investigations led to public criticism of NASA's management, accountability, and quality control. Additionally, the commissions concluded that NASA had been pushing too hard to meet its goal of twenty-four missions a year without the resources to accomplish this safely. In response, NASA created new safety offices, upgraded its equipment, and took actions to increase accountability. Still, the disaster shook many Americans' faith in the capabilities of government-run scientific institutions.

In the decades before Reagan's presidency, the Warren court, named for Chief Justice Earl Warren (1953–69), was known for an expansive view of constitutional rights, issuing landmark rulings that advanced civil rights, civil liberties, and the rights of the accused. The Burger court, named for Chief Justice Warren Burger (1969–86), tended to adopt a more conservative approach in certain cases, emphasizing limits on federal power while still upholding major precedents of the Warren era. As the combination of justices changes over time, the court's interpretation of the Constitution changes as well. Because appointments to the Supreme Court are lifelong, new vacancies are relatively rare. However, during his two terms, President Reagan had more than the typical number of opportunities to appoint justices, ultimately nominating four and reshaping the court.

President Reagan nominated Antonin Scalia to the Supreme Court in 1986. Scalia was known for advocating textualism, or the belief that judges should interpret a law according to the plain meaning of its words, and originalism, or the idea that the Constitution should be interpreted based on how it was understood at the time it was written. He often argued that the Constitution was "not living but dead, or as I prefer to call it, enduring." These ideas became central to the conservative legal movement. Scalia's vocal support for these theories helped shape legal debates and influenced a generation of conservative judges and scholars.



Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia said that the Constitution "means today not what current society, much less the courts, thinks it ought to mean, but what it meant when it was adopted."

Scalia also believed in enforcing limits on the federal government's power. In the 1988 case *Morrison v. Olson*, he was the sole dissenter in a decision that upheld the constitutionality of the Independent Counsel Act, a law that allowed a special prosecutor, appointed by a panel of judges rather than the president, to investigate government officials for wrongdoing. Scalia argued that this arrangement violated the Constitution's separation of powers by weakening the president's authority over the executive



As the first woman on the Supreme Court, Justice O'Connor resisted letting this distinction define her professional life. "The power I exert on the court depends on the power of my arguments, not on my gender," she said.

branch. His lone dissent reflected his philosophy of interpreting the Constitution according to its original meaning and maintaining clear boundaries between the branches of government.

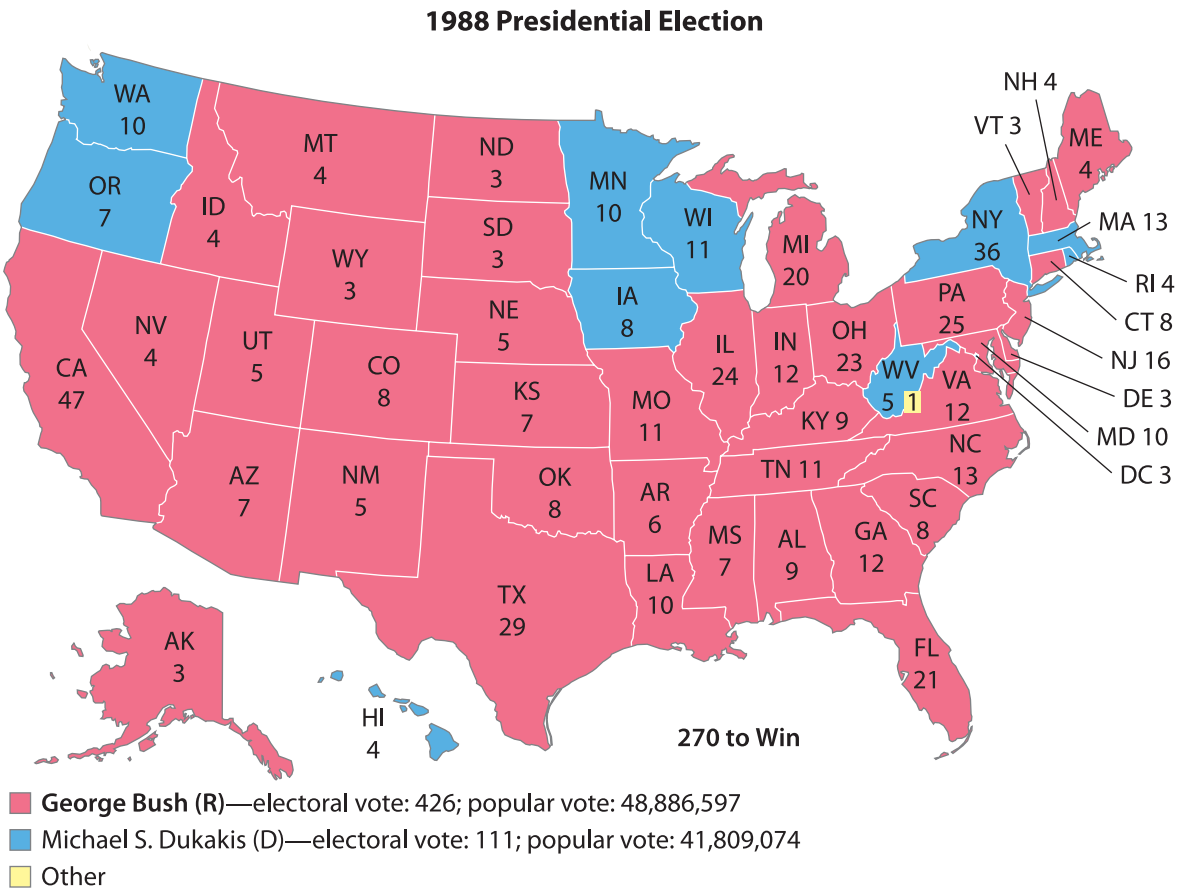
Reagan had promised during his 1980 presidential campaign to nominate the most qualified woman he could find to the country's highest court, which previously had only male justices. Sandra Day O'Connor, whom Reagan nominated in 1981, made history as the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court. During O'Connor's time on the court, she was part of several major decisions. In *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan* (1982), O'Connor wrote the majority opinion striking down a state policy that barred men from enrolling in a publicly funded nursing school that admitted only women. She ruled that the policy violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, emphasizing that laws based on gender must meet a high standard of justification. In *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), O'Connor's deciding vote upheld the right of colleges and universities to use affirmative action in admissions policies.

Think Twice

How did Reagan's appointments shape the Supreme Court during his presidency?

New Leadership in the Early 1990s

Reagan's second term came to an end on January 20, 1989. His vice president, George H. W. Bush, soundly defeated Democratic contender Michael Dukakis. Bush's campaign emphasized continuity with Reagan's policies, low taxes, and a tough stance on crime. The campaign also used aggressive political ads that criticized Dukakis's record on crime. Dukakis struggled to respond effectively, and Bush's experience as a vice president, diplomat, and former CIA director helped reassure voters. Bush won decisively, carrying



In the 1988 presidential election, Bush earned 426 electoral votes, carrying all but ten states and the District of Columbia.

forty states and securing 426 electoral votes to Dukakis's 111.

When Bush took office in 1989, he faced a fragile economy and growing public concern about political and economic stability. The stock market had experienced a global crash in 1987 that included the largest single-day decline in history, and the country entered a brief recession after a long period of growth in the late 1980s. By the early 1990s, unemployment had begun to rise while wages remained stagnant, fueling concerns about job security and the nation's economic future.

"No New Taxes"

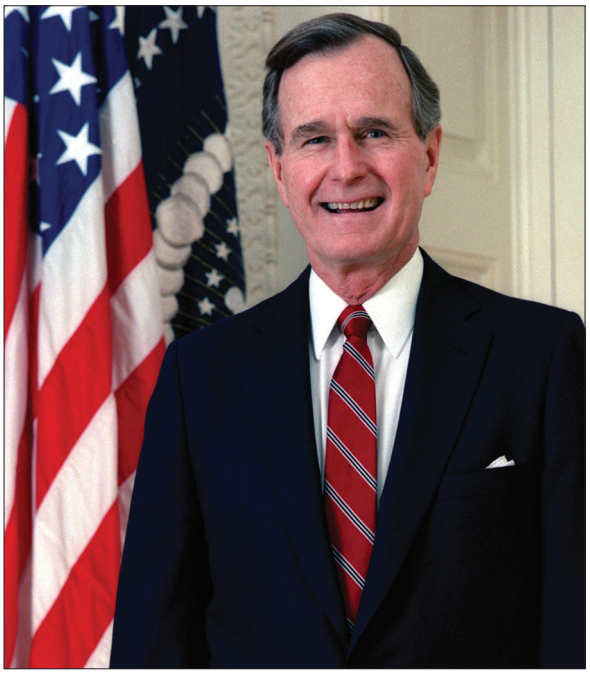
The legacy of Reaganomics meant that the public expected the new president to continue limiting taxes and reducing government involvement in the economy. In 1988, when the race with Dukakis had been close, Bush's campaign managers saw an opportunity when Dukakis mentioned the possibility of raising taxes as a last resort. They anticipated that the public might respond negatively to any discussion of potential tax increases. During his 1988 Republican National Convention speech accepting the party's nomination, Bush

delivered the line "Read my lips: no new taxes." The speech was televised and captured the attention of many Americans who believed Bush's statement. The promise contributed to his victory, and it was especially well-received by Republican voters.

However, Bush inherited a federal debt of $2.8 trillion from the Reagan administration, which contributed to a large federal deficit. Laws required spending reductions in parts of the federal budget if deficit targets were not met, potentially affecting social welfare programs. Additionally, Congress was controlled by Democrats at the time, who supported tax increases. To deal with the budget crisis and compromise with Congress, Bush realized he might have no choice but to raise taxes after all. He signed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, which raised the top individual income tax rate, among other tax increases. Bush's reversal on taxes became a central issue for voters, eroding public trust and damaging his image as a principled leader. Newspaper headlines and comedians adopted the line "Read my lips . . . I lied!" Bush's reputation never fully recovered.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Another of Bush's policy decisions had much more lasting popularity: his support for protecting and guaranteeing the rights of Americans with disabilities. Activists had long argued that people with disabilities faced discrimination in daily life. Public spaces were not always **accessible**, and employment opportunities were often limited. In March 1990, a group of activists, many of whom had physical disabilities that affected their mobility, participated in an event called the Capitol Crawl, in which they ascended all one hundred steps of the U.S. Capitol. Their goal was to draw attention to the building's inaccessibility and to urge Bush to sign new legislation protecting their rights.



President George H. W. Bush

Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990. The bill, which built upon the legacy of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, had bipartisan support. It guaranteed people with disabilities equal access to public spaces, transportation, and communications. It also outlawed employment discrimination against people with disabilities. At the



The activist group American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT) traveled to Washington in March 1990 to urge Bush to sign the Americans with Disabilities Act.

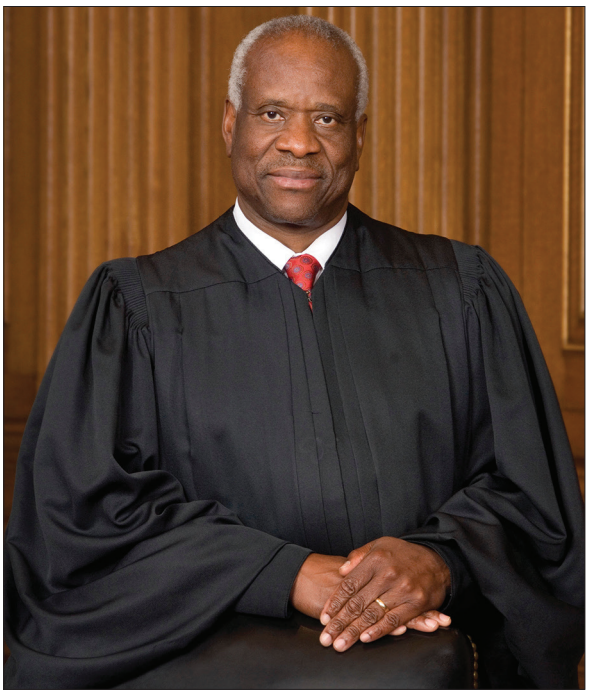
time, no other federal legislation had affirmed the equal rights of people with disabilities so strongly. ADA-based changes included a wide expansion of accessibility infrastructure in public buildings and public transportation, such as wheelchair ramps, elevators, and wheelchair-accessible bathrooms. Employers were also required to offer accommodations that helped employees with disabilities perform their jobs.

Clarence Thomas

Bush was in office for four years and had the opportunity to nominate one Supreme Court justice. His nominee was Clarence Thomas, then the chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

After Thomas's former colleague Anita Hill accused him of sexual harassment, women's rights groups protested his nomination. Thomas denied the accusations, describing them as "a high-tech lynching." He suggested that opposition to his nomination arose from disagreement with his conservative judicial philosophy and his race-neutral interpretation of the Constitution because he was an African American man who "deign[ed] to think for [himself]" and "have different ideas." He was confirmed by a slim majority of 52 to 48 votes in the Senate, one of the closest justice confirmation votes in more than a century.

Thomas expressed opposition to affirmative action, arguing that it was patronizing and could unintentionally harm its intended beneficiaries by casting doubt on their individual achievements. In the 2003 case *Grutter v. Bollinger*, he wrote in his



U.S. Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas wrote that "all forms of discrimination based on race—including so-called affirmative action—are prohibited under the Constitution."

concurring opinion, "The Constitution abhors classifications based on race. . . . Every time the government places citizens on racial registers and makes race relevant to the provision of burdens or benefits, it demeans us all." Thomas believed affirmative action could create a stigma that suggested beneficiaries were unable to succeed on their own merits. Like Antonin Scalia, he generally took a conservative approach to the Constitution and was known to oppose abortion rights.



The name of the town where Clinton was born—Hope, Arkansas—provided a way for voters to associate optimism with his campaign. When Clinton accepted the Democratic Party's nomination for president in 1992, he ended his speech by saying, "I still believe in a place called Hope."

Think Twice

What lasting effects did Bush's presidency have on American society?

The Clinton Era: Changes in the 1990s

The recession of the early 1990s, marked by rising unemployment and slowed economic growth, was a factor in falling approval ratings for President Bush. During this period, Bush vetoed the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 1991, a bill that would have extended the benefit duration for unemployed Americans. Bush argued that the bill would have been costly for the federal budget and could have affected overall economic recovery. However, the veto contributed to the public perception that Bush and other elite figures in Washington did not understand ordinary Americans' struggles.

Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas and Bush's Democratic challenger in the 1992 election, presented a centrist platform aimed at appealing to a broad range of voters. He supported business and job growth while also advocating for reforms in health care. He chose as his running mate Democratic senator Al Gore, who also tended to favor centrist policies—Gore was one of the few Democrats who voted in favor of using force during the Gulf War.

Clinton, who campaigned using the phrase "I feel your pain," positioned himself as attentive to citizens' concerns, particularly regarding the economy. In a series of speeches, Clinton promised to restore trust between the government and the people.

Some voters were dissatisfied with the two major parties, contributing to strong support for third-party candidate Ross Perot. Perot's business background and focus on straightforward solutions to national issues helped broaden his appeal.

Bush's foreign policy record was generally viewed positively; voters approved of his leadership during the Cold War, the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, and the Gulf War. However, these accomplishments were overshadowed by a seemingly failing economy and his broken "no new taxes" pledge, which disappointed many voters. Clinton, whose charismatic appeal and campaign messaging resonated with many Americans, won the election with 43 percent of the popular vote and 370 electoral votes.



Think Twice

Why did Clinton and Perot appeal to voters in 1992?

Clinton's Economic Policies

As president, Clinton promised to focus on key domestic issues, including the budget deficit and unemployment. He persuaded Congress to increase taxes during his first year, primarily targeting higher-income Americans, which was opposed by many Republican lawmakers and voters. Along with these tax increases, a strong technology boom in the 1990s and spending cuts tied to the Republican-led "Contract with America," which you will read about next, also contributed to a turnaround in the federal budget. As you learned in Topic 1, Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993, which expanded trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico and played a role in the decade's economic growth. By 1998, the budget recorded a surplus of $124 billion, with more gains projected in the following years. This marked the first federal budget surplus since 1969. The economy improved steadily, and employment opportunities increased.

Newt Gingrich and the Contract with America

As the 1994 midterm elections approached, Republicans published a policy agenda that described their plans for the first one hundred days after the election, which they called the Contract with America. In drafting the document, Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia and his team conducted polling and consulted with Republican candidates to identify key issues that would resonate with voters. The Contract with America promised "the end of government that is too big, too intrusive, and too easy with the public's money." It included big-picture issues that voters could easily understand, though it did not provide detailed cost estimates for the proposals. In the November election, Republicans won control of Congress, gaining

PRIMARY SOURCE: HOUSE REPUBLICANS' CONTRACT WITH AMERICA, 1994

As Republican Members of the House of Representatives and as citizens seeking to join that body we propose not just to change its policies, but even more important, to restore the bonds of trust between the people and their elected representatives.

. . . We offer . . . a detailed agenda for national renewal, a written commitment with no fine print.

This year's election offers the chance, after four decades of one-party control, to bring to the House a new majority that will transform the way Congress works. That historic change would be the end of government that is too big, too intrusive, and too easy with the public's money. It can be the beginning of a Congress that respects the values and shares the faith of the American family. . . .

. . . Within the first 100 days of the 104th Congress, we shall bring to the House Floor the following bills. . . .

1. THE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT: A balanced budget/tax limitation amendment and a legislative line-item veto to restore fiscal responsibility to an out-of-control Congress, requiring them to live under the same budget constraints as families and businesses. . . .

3. THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT: Discourage illegitimacy and teen pregnancy by prohibiting welfare to minor mothers and denying increased AFDC for additional children while on welfare, cut spending for welfare programs, and enact a tough two-years-and-out provision with work requirements to promote individual responsibility.

4. THE FAMILY REINFORCEMENT ACT: Child support enforcement, tax incentives for adoption, strengthening rights of parents in their children's education, stronger child pornography laws, and an elderly dependent care tax credit to reinforce the central role of families in American society. . . .

6. THE NATIONAL SECURITY RESTORATION ACT: No U.S. troops under U.N. command and restoration of the essential parts of our national security funding to strengthen our national defense and maintain our credibility around the world. . . .

Further, we will instruct the House Budget Committee to report to the floor and we will work to enact additional budget savings, beyond the budget cuts specifically included in the legislation described above, to ensure that the Federal budget deficit will be less than it would have been without the enactment of these bills.

Source: "Republican Contract with America." September 27, 1994. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/347735.

fifty-four seats in the House and nine in the Senate, and Gingrich was subsequently elected Speaker of the House. For the first time in forty years, Republicans controlled both houses of Congress.

In the Contract for America, Republicans pledged to reduce federal spending, balance the federal budget, and "restore fiscal responsibility to an out-of-control Congress." At the same time, they supported an amendment aimed at limiting tax increases. Another goal was welfare reform via additional regulations to limit Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a grant program that provided welfare payments to support children with one or more absent parents. Supporters of these reforms argued that the existing system created a cycle of dependency and discouraged recipients from seeking work or improving their circumstances. They proposed adjusting benefits for families that had additional children while already receiving aid and sought to limit benefits for teenage mothers, with the goal of encouraging personal responsibility and reducing long-term reliance on government assistance. Republicans also proposed the Taking Back Our Streets Act, which would increase prison sentences and limit the right of anyone who had received the death penalty to appeal. Although this proposal did not pass Congress, many of its ideas were later reflected in the Violent Crime Control and



In 1995, House Speaker Newt Gingrich promoted the Contract with America.

Law Enforcement Act of 1994—commonly called the 1994 Crime Bill—which included provisions for expanding prisons, funding more police officers, and increasing penalties for certain offenses. You will read more about the 1994 Crime Bill later in the topic.

As Republicans were now in control of both chambers of Congress, President Clinton faced significant opposition from the Republican majority. Pressured by Republicans, he worked to reduce the deficit and make changes to welfare. However, he opposed many cuts to social programs and ultimately vetoed numerous Republican proposals. The president and Congress had major disagreements across a wide range of issues and sometimes struggled to reach compromises.

Think Twice

What did the Contract with America have in common with Reagan's domestic policies?

Shutting Down the Government

In late 1995 and early 1996, tensions between President Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress reached a peak when the federal government was shut down twice. Led by House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Republicans sought significant cuts to federal spending, particularly in programs such as Medicare, education, and environmental protection. Clinton did not accept the proposed budget, arguing that the cuts would harm vulnerable Americans. As negotiations stalled and Congress and Clinton were unable to agree on a spending bill to fund the government, it shut down for five days in November 1995 and again for twenty-one days beginning in mid-December—the longest shutdown in U.S. history up to that point. Public opinion largely viewed Republicans as responsible for the crisis, and Clinton's approval ratings rose during the standoff.

In 1996, voters reelected Clinton to a second term. In that race, he defeated Republican candidate Bob Dole with 379 electoral votes to Dole's 159. Clinton became the first Democrat to win and serve two full terms since Harry S. Truman. The election outcome reflected not only Clinton's ability to present himself as a moderate but also the political fallout from the government shutdowns. The confrontational approach used by congressional Republicans had alienated many voters, helping Clinton secure a decisive victory.

Think Twice

Why did the government shut down in 1995–96?

Health Care

One issue President Clinton knew the American public cared about was health care reform, as rising medical costs and lack of coverage left many people uninsured. He created a task force, with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton as its chair, to figure out a plan for a health care reform bill. In November 1993, President Clinton submitted the Health Security Act to Congress.

The act proposed broad health care coverage that required every American citizen to enroll. Employers would pay approximately 80 percent of the cost of employees' health plans, and the government would provide



As this image from the 1992 Democratic Convention shows, affordable health care was an important issue to the public.

extra funds for anyone without employer coverage. A financing system of "health alliances" would collect insurance premiums and pay them to health care providers.

Congress debated the act until 1994. Some insurance companies and doctors criticized the bill for giving the federal government too much control over the health care system and potentially reducing the role of private insurers. Even some Democrats who supported the overall goals of the legislation found its length (1,342 pages) and complexity difficult to manage and explain to the public. The Health Insurance Association of America, which was against the act, funded advertisements featuring a fictional couple, Harry and Louise, expressing concern about the plan. The ads made it seem as if the act would charge Americans more for less health care. In September 1994, facing limited public support and insufficient bipartisan backing in Congress, the bill failed to advance further.

Crime

During Clinton's first term, the violent crime rate in the United States was high after a steady increase in the 1980s. Both the government and the public favored strong action against crime. In 1994, Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, which introduced multiple changes to law enforcement policies and programs.

The bill created the Office of Violence Against Women; it was the first federal legislation that specifically discussed and aimed to end gender-based violence. It also expanded local police forces through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. This program aimed to establish officers as a positive presence in communities, build trust with residents, and help prevent crime before it occurred. The COPS program also set a precedent for government funding of police officers in schools. Additionally, the bill banned several types of assault weapons, expanded the use of the death penalty, and introduced a "three strikes" rule for repeat offenders. Violent crime rates fell almost 30 percent between 1994 and 2000; although multiple factors contributed to the decline, increased policing in communities is often cited as one contributing factor.

However, parts of the law were heavily criticized for contributing to mass incarceration and racial inequities. Schools with more students in racial minority groups typically were assigned more officers, so minority groups were subject to more arrests. The bill also gave states incentives to keep people in prison for longer periods of time. As a result, imprisonment rates increased, but the impact on overall crime rates is debated.

Think Twice

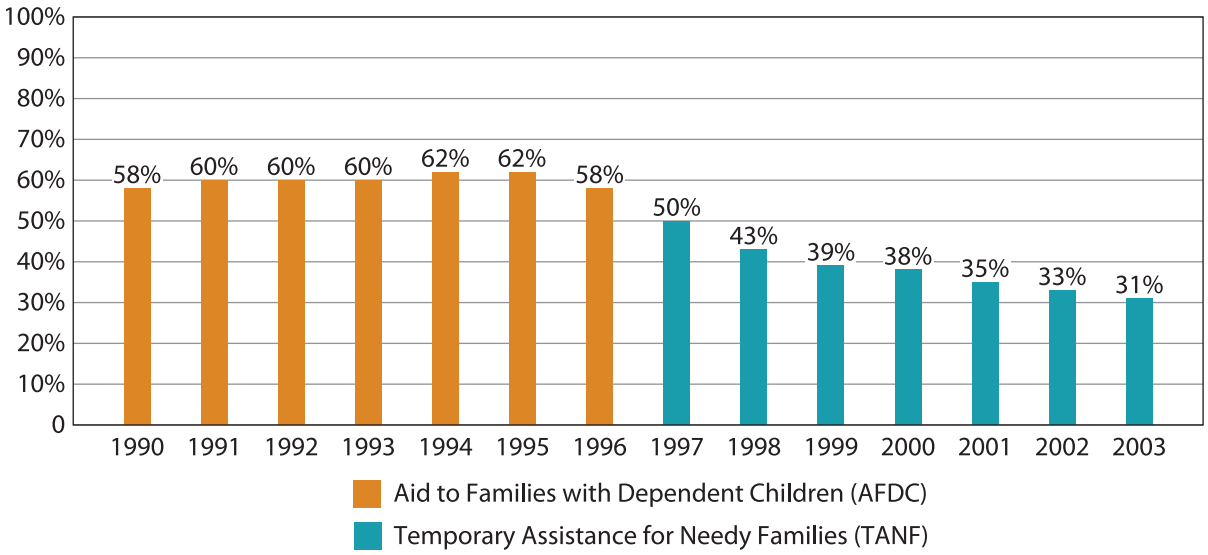


What did Clinton hope to achieve in the areas of health care and crime reduction?

Welfare Reform

In his campaign, Clinton had promised to "end welfare as we have come to know it." This was one goal that Republicans and the president shared. As you read earlier, policymakers believed that the existing welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), could discourage work and keep families dependent on government support across generations, a pattern they called the "cycle of poverty." They argued that without work requirements or time limits, recipients had little incentive to become financially independent, and children raised in households reliant on welfare might come to expect the same for themselves. After several years of debate and negotiations, Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This legislation replaced AFDC with a new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which emphasized ending long-term dependence and promoting employment. TANF would be controlled by the states; each state was given a federal grant to provide welfare to residents. But the program had nationwide requirements. It made aid contingent on meeting increased work requirements, and it limited how much aid a household could receive and for how long, emphasizing the temporary nature of the program. The hope was that people dependent on welfare would find jobs and become self-sufficient. After TANF

Percentage of U.S. Children in Poverty Whose Households Received AFDC or TANF, 1990–2003



This chart shows the percentage of U.S. children living in poverty whose households received government assistance both before and after Clinton's 1996 welfare reform bill.

was enacted, the number of families on welfare declined significantly. However, the percentage of former recipients reporting employment earnings also fell, suggesting that many were not finding stable work—an outcome contrary to the program's stated goals. Critics note that because TANF reduced the government aid many families received, Clinton's welfare reforms disproportionately harmed households with single mothers, especially those from minority communities.

Think Twice

How did Clinton's welfare reforms reflect the goals of the Contract with America?

Supreme Court Appointment of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

The Supreme Court underwent another major change with Clinton's 1993 nomination of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Since the 1970s, Ginsburg had been a champion of women's civil rights, arguing several key gender discrimination cases before the Supreme Court as director of the ACLU Women's Rights Project.

In her twenty-seven years on the Supreme Court, Ginsburg became known for her view that the Constitution is a "living" document, one whose principles must be applied in light of contemporary realities. She explained that while the Framers could not have anticipated every circumstance, constitutional change has occurred through amendments, new laws, and evolving judicial interpretation. For example, she often noted that when the Constitution was written, the phrase "We the People" did not include women or enslaved African Americans, but over time, through both constitutional and legal progress, that promise had come to include all Americans. Ginsburg's views were in contrast to those of justices such as Antonin Scalia, who, as you have read, argued that interpreting the Constitution according to contemporary social trends could undermine its role as a stable legal foundation.



Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg became known for using distinctive collars to symbolically express disagreement with majority opinions.

The contrast between their philosophies were dramatized in *Scalia/Ginsburg*, a 2015 opera composed by Derrick Wang. In one line that Ginsburg herself often cited from the opera, Ginsburg's character criticizes Scalia's character for "searching for bright-line solutions to problems that don't have easy answers. But the great thing about our Constitution is that like our society, it can evolve."

Ginsburg's views and commitment to gender equality and equal protection under the law were demonstrated in the 1996 Supreme Court case *United States v. Virginia*. The case concerned the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), a military-focused undergraduate learning program that at the time admitted only men. After the U.S. government sued VMI to admit women, on the grounds that the male-only admissions policy violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, VMI proposed to create a similar program for women. The government was not satisfied, and the lawsuit continued. When the case reached the Supreme Court, the justices had to determine if the proposed women's program satisfied the equal protection clause.

The court voted that it did not. The justices determined that the new women's program lacked the prestige and opportunities of the well-established VMI men's program. It also did not provide the same high level of education and training. Ginsburg, who wrote the majority opinion, argued that the school had made unfair generalizations about women as a group. Women must be judged by the same standards as men, she concluded, emphasizing that admission criteria should be applied equally regardless of gender.

Think Twice



Do you think it is important to have multiple judicial philosophies represented on the Supreme Court? Why or why not?

A New Era in the Media

Telecommunications technologies advanced at a rapid pace in the 1980s and 1990s, changing American culture. In the mid-twentieth century, many Americans had a relatively shared media experience. The early TV industry was controlled by three companies—NBC, CBS, and ABC—that offered free broadcasts. For the most part, large portions of the population often consumed the same news, radio programs, and television shows, though regional differences and local media outlets also existed.

Changes in News Reporting

Beginning in the late 1970s, paid cable TV emerged and fundamentally changed how Americans consumed media. Many small

areas of the country were served by local coaxial and fiber-optic cable systems, which were originally developed to bring TV to remote areas. Now, TV channels began to use satellites to distribute programs to multiple local cable networks across the country. Early cable offerings included Home Box Office (HBO), launched in 1972, and Cable News Network (CNN), founded in 1980 as the world's first twenty-four-hour news source. CNN's around-the-clock coverage of the 1991 Gulf War raised its national and international profile, establishing it as a global news leader. Competition soon followed, with MSNBC, Fox News, and CNBC providing twenty-four-hour news via satellite and cable in the 1990s. By the end of the decade, nearly 80 percent of U.S. households had access to cable programming, with more than a thousand channels to choose from.

Cable channels began to target specific audiences, such as youth, families, or sports fans, with specialized content. News channels offered political commentary that represented a variety of viewpoints. Over time, some viewers increasingly selected channels that aligned with their political perspectives.

The rise in twenty-four-hour news changed how the news was produced. Networks had longer news cycles they needed to fill with content, and competition for ratings and advertising led to more coverage of dramatic stories, scandals, and high-interest events alongside ongoing investigative and policy reporting.

Think Twice



In what ways did the rise of twenty-four-hour news channels influence how news was reported and consumed by the public?

The Rise of the Internet

Building on the rise of twenty-four-hour cable news in the 1990s, the United States entered a new era at the turn of the twenty-first century, one defined by rapid technological change and an evolving media landscape that transformed how Americans consumed and responded to news.

Online networks, systems that allow computers to share information, began in the 1960s with ARPANET, an early form of electronic communication developed by the U.S. Department of Defense. ARPANET allowed users in different locations to send messages and share files through connected computers. In the decades that followed, versions of these networks became accessible to the public through web browsers such as Netscape. These interconnected computer systems came to be known as the Internet.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Americans grew more skilled at navigating the stream of online information. Personal computers became more common household



This 1998 image shows the Internet search engine Google in its early stages. Web browsing was still a new and interesting phenomenon.

fixtures, and new Internet users were added every year. Much of this growth was made possible by the World Wide Web (WWW), created in 1989 by British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee. The WWW made it easier for people to access and share information using web browsers, helping the Internet become a widely used tool for everyday life. In 2003, only 43 percent of Americans reported being "online" or using the Internet; by 2007, 75 percent of Americans were online. Not only did Americans communicate through the Internet via email and instant messaging, but they also browsed, consumed, and discussed the news. Various online newsgroups arose to focus on different topics.

By the early 2000s, the wealth of content on television and the Internet meant that for the first time, Americans were not necessarily seeing the same news stories covered in similar ways. Instead, they were sorting through multiple sources of content and often gravitating toward news sources and online communities that agreed with their own views. It has been argued that this phenomenon caused the Internet to contribute to a **polarized**, or divided, political atmosphere in which differences between groups' beliefs became more extreme.

The global forum of the Internet also changed the way information was created and distributed to the public. In the past, people got news from newspapers and television news channels that typically shared information provided by professional journalists, who were trained to follow standards of accuracy, verification, and accountability. On the Internet, individuals could create and share content through personal websites or web logs—commonly called *blogs*—and potentially reach large audiences. This allowed more people to participate in reporting and discussing news.

This new media environment was often driven by advertising. Bloggers and independent websites could earn money through ad clicks and page views, which sometimes encouraged the creation of sensational or misleading content to attract attention. This stood in contrast

to traditional news organizations, which generally relied on subscriptions and long-term credibility to maintain their readership. As a result, information—and misinformation—could spread more quickly than before, and established media adapted to this faster-paced, more decentralized distribution system.



Think Twice

What are some potential positive and negative effects of the Internet on information consumption?



On February 12, 1999, President Bill Clinton spoke in the White House Rose Garden shortly after the Senate voted to acquit him in his impeachment trial, marking the end of a highly publicized political battle. Despite the acquittal, Clinton could not fully escape the shadow of the Lewinsky allegations, which continued to shape public perception of his presidency.

Clinton's Impeachment and a New Media Culture

President Clinton's second term as president was marked by a scandal that quickly became national news, following earlier controversies such as the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit and the Whitewater real estate investigation. Paula Jones, a former Arkansas state employee, alleged that Clinton had sexually harassed her in 1991 while he was governor of Arkansas, leading to a lengthy court battle. The Whitewater investigation examined Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in a failed 1970s real estate venture in Arkansas; although neither Clinton was charged with wrongdoing, the probe drew significant media attention and uncovered other matters that fueled political opposition. In early 1998, evidence emerged that Clinton, who was in his fifties, had engaged in a sexual affair with a twenty-two-year-old White House intern named Monica Lewinsky.

At first, both Clinton and Lewinsky denied the affair, Clinton during a sworn deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit and Lewinsky in an affidavit. Lewinsky was granted immunity in exchange for her testimony. But the FBI later recorded a private conversation in which Lewinsky discussed the affair. Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel appointed by the attorney general to investigate Bill and Hillary Clinton's business dealings in Arkansas, expanded his investigation to examine whether Clinton had lied under oath or instructed others to do so.

In August 1998, Clinton publicly admitted to misconduct, including lying under oath and attempting to interfere with an official investigation. In September, the House began an impeachment trial. Starr sent a report to the House of Representatives that charged Clinton with perjury, or lying under oath; abuse of power; and obstruction of justice, or taking illegal actions to interfere with a government proceeding, among other crimes. The impeachment hearings were televised, and public opinion was deeply divided. Some argued that the process was driven by political animosity, while others believed Clinton had violated both legal and ethical presidential norms and mores.

In December 1998, the House approved two articles of impeachment: perjury and obstruction of justice. These charges were related to Clinton's testimony about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. The Senate acquitted Clinton in February 1999. Senators who voted against conviction argued that Clinton's private actions did not constitute crimes against the state. Despite the scandal and legal proceedings, Clinton maintained relatively high public approval ratings.



Think Twice

How did President Clinton's impeachment illustrate the tension between addressing personal misconduct and ensuring political accountability?



Tension and Tragedy

In the 1990s, several highly publicized and tragic events drew national attention and deepened debate about government authority, individual rights, and public safety. Ruby Ridge, Waco, and Columbine became flashpoints in broader discussions about the role of government, the limits of personal freedom, and the causes of violence in American society.

The Ruby Ridge Standoff

One event that drew national attention was a 1992 confrontation between federal agents and a family in Ruby Ridge, Idaho. Randy Weaver, an American involved in separatist activities, lived with his family in an Idaho cabin close to the Canadian border. In the late 1980s, Weaver sold unregistered shotguns to an individual, unaware that he was an undercover informant for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). Soon, Weaver was arrested and charged with firearms violations. After Weaver failed to appear for his court date, federal authorities sought to arrest him and bring him into custody. The U.S. Marshals Service sent a team of federal marshals to his cabin in August. They chose to confront Weaver secretly, believing he might otherwise react with violence.

When Weaver, his fourteen-year-old son Sammy, and a friend named Kevin Harris discovered armed federal agents near the

cabin, a shootout ensued. Sammy was killed, and Harris killed a marshal named William Degan. Hoping to compel Weaver to surrender, the FBI sent a hostage rescue team to the area to join federal and local officials. During the confrontation, a member of the FBI opened fire on Harris but instead shot and killed Weaver's wife, Vicki, who had not been charged with any crime and was holding the couple's infant child. Weaver and Harris surrendered about a week later.

The standoff at Ruby Ridge became a rallying point for anti-government extremists. While only a small fraction of the population joined extreme right-wing militia groups, the incident was widely cited in far-right circles to justify stockpiling weapons and rejecting federal authority. Militia leaders portrayed the deadly encounter with Randy Weaver's family as proof that the federal government posed a threat to individual freedoms, and they used the story to recruit sympathizers. By the mid-1990s, watchdog groups estimated that militia membership had peaked at around twenty-five thousand to sixty thousand people nationwide—a relatively small number, but one with an outsized presence in public discourse due to their rhetoric and heavily armed demonstrations.



While investigating Randy Weaver, U.S. marshals took surveillance photographs like this one outside of Weaver's cabin in Ruby Ridge, Idaho.

The standoff also led to widespread criticism of the FBI's and ATF's handling of the situation, which many viewed as an excessive use of force that undermined public trust in federal law enforcement. A subsequent Department of Justice investigation found serious faults in how the operation was managed, concluding that the rule allowing agents to shoot armed adults without warning was unconstitutional and that the agent's decision to fire the shot that killed Vicki Weaver was reckless and unjustified, placing others in danger.

Think Twice

How did the Ruby Ridge standoff impact views on government and fuel 1990s militia movements?

The Waco Siege

Less than a year after the events at Ruby Ridge, another standoff between federal forces and armed Americans made national news. Waco, Texas, was home to a religious **sect** called the Branch Davidians, an offshoot of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. While the Branch Davidians lived peacefully in the Mount Carmel Center compound in Waco, the activities of their leader, David Koresh, drew the attention

of the ATF. Koresh ran a retail gun business and was accused of illegally stockpiling weapons and taking multiple wives, some of whom were underage. While the latter allegations were not part of the federal firearms investigation, they contributed to growing concern about the group's activities.

After securing an arrest warrant, ATF agents raided Mount Carmel. A gunfight broke out, leaving four federal agents and several Branch Davidians dead. When Koresh refused to surrender, the FBI took over the operation, bringing in hostage negotiators and surrounding the compound with hundreds of law enforcement officials. The standoff lasted fifty-one days.

Authorities grew increasingly concerned about Koresh's erratic behavior. At one point, he demanded to broadcast a long, rambling sermon. The FBI initially allowed him to record and send out a message in hopes that it would lead to a peaceful surrender, but he did not come out of the compound. The presence of women and children inside the compound further complicated the situation. As the standoff dragged on, agents used more aggressive tactics—including shining bright spotlights and blasting loud noises over loudspeakers—to pressure the group to surrender. Eventually, the FBI requested and received authorization from Attorney General Janet Reno to escalate the use of force.

With Reno's approval, FBI agents began pumping tear gas throughout the building on April 19. Soon afterward, Mount Carmel caught on fire. The fire killed almost everyone inside; seventy-five bodies were later found, including the bodies of twenty-five children. Debate ensued about the government's role in their deaths. While government agents claimed their actions did not start or spread the fire, tear gas is flammable, and many experts on





On the left, a U.S. Army helicopter and an agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms observe the Branch Davidians' compound in Waco, Texas, on April 3, 1993. On the right, television network satellite trucks cover the unfolding Waco story as it happens.

terrorism believed its use was a mistake. Reno later regretted approving the use of force. To members of militias, and even to some members of the general public, the events were another sign that the federal government might have too much power over citizens' lives.

The Oklahoma City Bombing

April 19, 1995, was the two-year anniversary of the day the Waco siege turned deadly. It also happened to be the 120th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, when American Patriots took up arms in rebellion against the British Empire, whose army was on a mission to confiscate the Patriots' weapons. And it would become the date of the United States' deadliest act of domestic terrorism. A truck parked outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, held a homemade bomb. When the bomb exploded, it killed 168 people, including nineteen children, and injured hundreds more.

The responsible parties were identified as Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. Both Gulf War veterans, McVeigh and Nichols viewed the bombing as an attack on a government they believed was abusing its authority. The date was chosen intentionally; McVeigh claimed he wanted to avenge the deaths of the Branch Davidians. Both men were convicted of using a weapon of mass destruction, among other charges. McVeigh was later executed, and Nichols received multiple life sentences.



This memorial in Oklahoma City includes a field of 168 empty chairs, representing the 168 victims of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

Media coverage of the tragedy made Americans aware of the reach and power of militia movements in the country. The FBI significantly expanded its efforts to fight domestic, or "homegrown," terrorism across the nation. Arrests of militia members increased, and many were found guilty of possessing explosive weapons. Partly due to the rise in enforcement and arrests, the militia movement began to lose members and strength in late 1996.

Think Twice



What did Ruby Ridge, Waco, and the Oklahoma City bombing have in common?

The Columbine Shooting

A different kind of domestic attack received national attention in 1999. On April 20, two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, opened fire on

their classmates with semiautomatic rifles. Thirteen students and one teacher were killed, and twenty-two students were wounded. The perpetrators carried out the killings in a matter of minutes. Soon afterward, they took their own lives.

At the time, the Columbine massacre was the largest school shooting in history. It was also one of the first to be covered live on national news. The public soon learned that the shooters had filmed home videos in which they described their planned attack. Additionally, in 1998, one shooter had made death threats on the Internet toward another Columbine student, which the student's parents reported to the local sheriff. Debate ensued about whether and how the attack could have been prevented.

Many schools reacted by investing in metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and other security devices, and school lockdown drills became common.



The 2000 Election

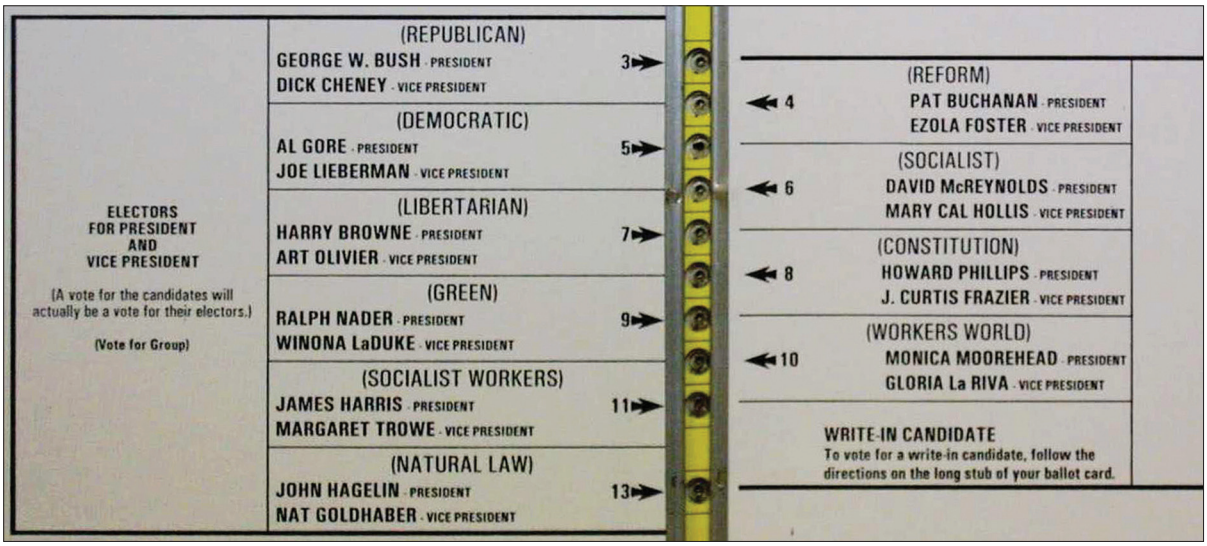
In 2000, another presidential election approached. After the widespread coverage of Clinton's impeachment trial, questions of presidential ethics were on people's minds. Then the election raised questions about the U.S. voting process.

Florida: Too Close to Call

George W. Bush ran as the Republican candidate, and Clinton's vice president, Al Gore, ran on the Democratic ticket. A third-party candidate, Ralph Nader, entered the race, representing the progressive, environmentally focused Green Party. Nader, whose campaign focused on issues like environmental protections, labor rights, and health care, knew he would likely not win. However, if he won 5 percent of the popular vote, he would receive matching federal funds to run in the next election. Nader did not meet this goal; he received less than 3 percent of the vote and no electoral votes. However, his 2000 run was significant because the 2,882,728 votes Nader received might otherwise have gone to another candidate, which some analysts argue could have influenced the outcome in the close race between Bush and Gore.

The race between Bush and Gore ended up being so close that no one knew the outcome for sure on election night. It was eventually determined that Gore had won the popular vote by about five hundred thousand votes, but the outcome depended on the Electoral College.

As election night went on and vote totals rolled in from each state, it became clear that the outcome would be determined by Florida and its twenty-five electoral votes.



The controversial "butterfly" ballot from Palm Beach County led to undervotes, or ballots recorded as not expressing a vote even though the voter had marked a choice.

Around 8:00 p.m., several TV news networks claimed Gore won Florida. By 10:00 p.m., vote totals in Florida seemed to favor Bush, and networks updated their predictions. Late that night, Gore called Bush to concede. However, once it became clear that the margin of votes in Florida was so narrow that it would trigger an automatic recount under state law, Gore retracted his concession and remained a candidate in the race.

Think Twice

How did the Electoral College process shape the 2000 election?

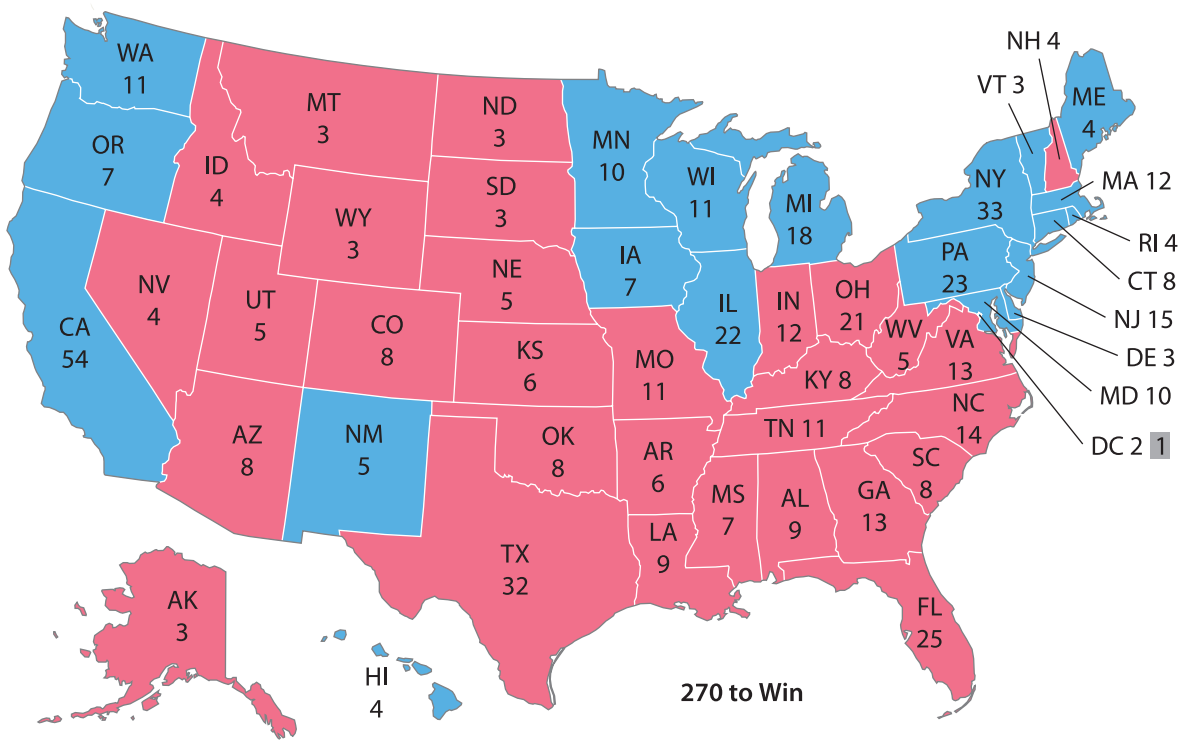
The Florida Recount

Under Florida law, an automatic machine recount was required if the margin between candidates was less than 0.5 percent. In the 2000 presidential election, it was. A recount was completed quickly by machine, and the outcome favored Bush. However, officials in four heavily Democratic Florida counties requested a manual hand count of all ballots, arguing that machine counts may not have accurately reflected voter intent.

The ballots required voters to punch a hole beside the name of the candidate they chose. County representatives argued that the design of the ballots may have caused voters to punch the wrong hole when they meant to vote for Gore or to partially punch the hole, creating a "hanging chad" that a machine would not catch. The Florida Supreme Court ordered that manual recounts be allowed and extended the certification deadline, aiming to ensure that all legally cast votes were counted.

Bush's campaign filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that the Florida court did not have the authority to order this recount. The case became known as *Bush v. Gore*. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case and ordered the manual recounts halted while it considered whether Florida's election process violated the Constitution's equal protection clause. The court found that the recount did not have uniform standards across counties, meaning ballots might be evaluated differently depending on where they were cast. The justices reasoned that if a recount were to be done in some counties, fairness required that all ballots statewide be recounted under the same rules—something that was not possible before the legal deadlines. On December 12, the Supreme Court, in a close 5–4 vote, determined that the recount should stop. The result was that Florida's twenty-five electoral votes went to Bush, giving him the presidency. The court's majority ruled that the recount could not meet federal deadlines and that differences in county standards violated the Fourteenth

2000 Presidential Election



George W. Bush (R) —electoral vote: 271; popular vote: 50,456,062
Albert Gore Jr. (D)—electoral vote: 266; popular vote: 50,999,897
Other—elector who did not cast a vote

This map shows the final outcome of the 2000 presidential election—one of only five in American history in which the winner of the popular vote (Gore) was defeated.

Amendment's equal protection clause. Gore conceded the following day. The close election and the legal process surrounding Florida's results drew attention to the procedures used in the Electoral College and the vote-counting process in some states.

Given the extended uncertainty that had surrounded the election and recount results, George W. Bush assumed the presidency while some Americans continued to debate his political legitimacy. This changed when, nine months into his first term, the nation was jolted by the September 11 terrorist attacks, which drastically reshaped his presidency. Despite the initial controversy surrounding his election, Bush won reelection in 2004, solidifying his administration's legitimacy and reflecting the public's support for his leadership during a time of crisis.



Think Twice

What role did the U.S. Supreme Court play in settling the 2000 presidential election dispute?

Hurricane Katrina

Less than a year into George W. Bush's second term, he faced one of the greatest domestic challenges of his presidency, a challenge many believe was mishandled by him and other government officials.

In late August 2005, a hurricane began over the Bahamas and gathered strength as it moved toward the Gulf of Mexico. By August 27, the hurricane had become one of the most powerful Atlantic Ocean storms on record, with winds blowing faster than 115 miles (185 km) per hour. On the same day, officials in many areas of Louisiana, including Plaquemines and St. Charles Parishes and the city of New Orleans, ordered residents to evacuate. Many residents, particularly those without access to transportation or the means to afford temporary relocation, were unable to evacuate.

Two days later, the hurricane known as Hurricane Katrina came ashore and caused severe destruction to the Gulf Coast. New Orleans was one of the hardest-hit major cities. Residents who had not evacuated faced the destruction of their homes and needed to seek shelter. Thousands of people filled the New Orleans Superdome and a nearby convention center. These spaces



By August 30, 2005, the city of New Orleans was 80 percent underwater. Many local agencies were flooded and unable to provide help to residents.

lacked food, water, and essential facilities to meet everyone's needs, and the crowded environment in the shelters soon rose to the level of a public health emergency. The Superdome and convention center were not safely evacuated until early September, after conditions had deteriorated into a public health and humanitarian crisis.

Federal and local officials were widely criticized for the delay of an adequate and comprehensive response to the destruction and aftereffects of the hurricane. Hundreds of individuals who had not been able to evacuate died in its catastrophic floods. Low-income neighborhoods were disproportionately affected by the flooding, due in part to their proximity to under-maintained infrastructure. A 2006 report by the U.S. House of Representatives concluded that the federal government lacked a clear and coordinated emergency response plan, contributing to the slow delivery of aid and services.



This view shows the flooding in a New Orleans neighborhood from above. The city was filled with water for more than forty days. The U.S. Army did not finish pumping floodwater out of the city until October.

Overall, about 1,400 people died due to the hurricane, the majority of them in Louisiana. Hurricane Katrina triggered one of the largest internal displacements in modern U.S. history. Tens of thousands of people were forced to relocate, and New Orleans's population dropped by more than half. Many residents did not return for years; some never have.

Think Twice



What challenges did New Orleans's residents face during and immediately after Hurricane Katrina?

The Failure of the Levees

New Orleans depended on a complex system of drainage canals and levees to shield the city from flooding—an especially critical need given that much of the city lies below sea level. These flood defenses, jointly overseen by local levee boards and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, were among the city's most important infrastructure. Yet early on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed this system. Two major canal levees—the Seventeenth Street Canal and the London Avenue Canal—broke, allowing floodwaters to surge into residential neighborhoods and submerge large portions of the city.

In the aftermath, public scrutiny quickly focused on how such a catastrophic failure could occur. A 2006 report by the Corps of Engineers acknowledged that serious design flaws had compromised the levees' ability to withstand the storm. In some areas, levees had been built with inadequate height or substandard materials. In others, floodgates failed to seal properly, allowing water to bypass defenses. Additionally, long-standing jurisdictional confusion among local, state, and federal agencies meant that necessary maintenance and upgrades were delayed or inconsistently performed.

Environmental experts also pointed to the earlier loss of Louisiana's coastal wetlands, which had been eroding for decades before Hurricane Katrina and had once served as natural storm buffers. Their erosion left New Orleans more vulnerable to flooding.

State, local, and federal officials were criticized for what many felt was a slow or underprepared response to Hurricane Katrina. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) faced especially harsh criticism. It was later discovered that FEMA officials did not coordinate well enough with state and local agencies and that FEMA lacked the tools to trace the status of vital aid shipments to the Gulf Coast, resulting in delays and confusion. Reports also concluded that FEMA and the Department of Homeland



The flooding from Hurricane Katrina broke through the levees designed to keep the city safe. The federal government allocated $15 billion to upgrade New Orleans's flood protection structures after the storm. However, questions remained about the responsibility of federal agencies to protect Americans from environmental disasters.

Security were slow to respond in a rapidly developing emergency; by the time troops and equipment arrived in New Orleans, much of the damage had already been done.



A Housing Crisis Shakes the Economy

In 2007, the United States faced an economic downturn that began in the housing market. The ripple effects soon spread across the country and around the world.

Beginning in the late 1990s, U.S. lenders increasingly issued subprime mortgages, or home loans with high interest rates designed for borrowers with poor credit scores or limited credit histories. These loans carried greater risk for both the lender and the borrower, as recipients were more likely to fall behind on payments or default entirely. This growth in risky lending was partly encouraged by Clinton-era policies aimed at expanding homeownership as well as the repeal of the Glass–Steagall Act in 1999, which removed the separation between commercial and investment banking and allowed financial institutions to take on greater risks. Many prospective homebuyers, unable to qualify for traditional loans, turned to subprime mortgages as their only path to homeownership. These mortgages often included features such as adjustable interest rates that started low and later rose sharply or balloon payments that required large sums after a few years—terms that made long-term repayment difficult for many borrowers. To keep their homes, borrowers had to make regular payments that often became more difficult as interest rates rose or as hidden fees and adjustable terms took effect.

Lenders charged higher interest rates on subprime mortgages to offset the greater risk of borrower default—an outcome that could leave banks without payments for months, facing legal costs and holding foreclosed properties they struggled to sell. To further protect themselves, many lenders bundled thousands of these risky loans together into mortgage-backed securities, which they sold to investors such as securities firms, pension funds, and government-sponsored enterprises. These complex financial products were designed to spread out risk across many loans. However, they also masked the true danger of widespread defaults, especially as many investors purchased them without fully understanding how vulnerable the underlying mortgages were. As housing prices stopped rising, these weaknesses were exposed, and the financial system—flooded with high-risk mortgages—became increasingly unstable.

Despite these growing risks, government regulators did not intervene effectively. In the years leading up to what would become an economic crisis, lending standards eroded, and banks approved loans without

verifying income, employment, or even the ability to repay. These practices became more widespread as financial institutions took advantage of a relaxed regulatory environment, the result of decades of deregulation that allowed investment banks, mortgage lenders, and traditional banks to operate with fewer restrictions. Together, these trends helped inflate a housing bubble, one built on fragile financial foundations.

The crisis began in 2007, after years of rapidly rising housing prices throughout the early and mid-2000s. As home prices climbed, subprime mortgages became riskier, not only for borrowers, but also for lenders and investors, because buyers were taking on debt they increasingly could not afford. Eventually, lenders began to tighten their standards and issue fewer subprime loans. As lenders began issuing fewer new loans and risky borrowers were shut out of the market, demand for homes slowed. Homeowners who could no longer afford rising payments tried to sell but found fewer buyers. Defaults and foreclosures increased, flooding the market with unsold homes and driving housing prices down sharply. When homeowners who had taken on subprime mortgages found they could not make their mortgage payments, they realized they needed to sell the home but then found they could not afford to; because prices had dropped, selling the home would not bring in enough cash to repay the loan. As a result, millions of Americans lost their homes.

Without homeowners making steady payments, mortgage-backed securities lost value. This trend affected banks across the country as large amounts of their investments rapidly dropped in value. Because these risky mortgage investments had been widely spread throughout the financial system, the effects were catastrophic. The global economy was so integrated by 2007 that a financial crisis for a wealthy country like the United States contributed to financial crises worldwide. When major U.S. bank Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy in September 2008, the shocks were felt in financial markets everywhere, including in global banks that had made loans to Lehman Brothers. Investors pulled their money out of banks and funds, fearing more banks would go bankrupt. As the international financial system reached the brink of collapse, the U.S. economy—along with economies worldwide—spiraled into recession.

Think Twice



What factors contributed to the economic crisis of 2007–8?

The Great Recession

The economic decline worsened through 2008, turning into an eighteen-month period known as the Great Recession—the longest, deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. While the

The Supreme Court in the Twenty-First Century

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Supreme Court appointments became increasingly controversial. As you have read, justices' differing judicial philosophies—how they interpret and apply the Constitution—can shape the court's direction for decades.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed Justice Stephen Breyer, who generally aligned with a more flexible interpretation of the Constitution and favored pragmatic, consensus-driven decisions. In 2005, President George W. Bush appointed Chief Justice John Roberts, known for his incremental approach to the law and preference for narrow, carefully reasoned rulings that avoided sweeping constitutional changes when possible. Roberts often emphasized judicial restraint, respect for precedent, and maintaining the institutional reputation of the court, generally leaning toward a conservative interpretation. Later in 2005, Bush appointed Justice Samuel Alito, who was known for making judgments on a case-by-case basis rather than according to a strict ideology.

Although this book's coverage ends in 2008, the makeup of the Supreme Court has continued to change and will keep evolving in the future, reflecting the shifting political, social, and legal landscape of the United States.



George W. Bush appointed Samuel Alito to fill the vacancy left by Sandra Day O'Connor when she retired.

effects were felt around the world, they were most severe in the United States and western Europe. Unemployment rates in the United States doubled, from 5 percent to 10 percent. Foreclosures increased, and millions of Americans lost their homes. Banks stopped extending credit to one another, fearing widespread bank failures. As a result, they had less capital to loan to businesses, and businesses had to reduce expenses. Often, they did so by laying off workers, leading to job losses across the country. The percentage of Americans living in poverty rose. While many wealthy households and investors experienced financial losses, they tended to recover more quickly than lower-income households as the recession eased, which led to greater economic inequality in the country.

Think Twice

What were some of the major challenges of the Bush presidency?

Barack Obama and the 2008 Election

The 2008 presidential election took place in the shadow of economic collapse. The economy was a significant issue for voters, as was affordable access to health care. Many voters also remained concerned about international terrorism and the ongoing presence of American troops in Iraq.

When Barack Obama accepted the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008, he became the first African American nominee from either major party. If elected, he would be the nation's first African American president. Before entering politics, Obama worked as a community organizer and directed voter registration efforts in Chicago in 1992 that helped register tens of thousands of new African American voters, contributing to



The message of hope that Barack Obama communicated at the 2004 Democratic Convention became a core theme of his 2008 campaign for president.

higher turnout in that year's election. However, some voters were skeptical of Obama's limited national experience and policy proposals, as he had served only a few years in the U.S. Senate before seeking the presidency. His keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention had marked his arrival on the national political stage. During a time of **partisan** divides and polarization, Obama had emphasized Americans' connections and similarities. Obama's speech resonated with voters, and he was elected to the U.S. Senate in November of that year.

Obama's Grassroots Campaign

Obama ran on a platform that emphasized change. His proposals included health care system reforms, such as a government-run insurance program that would offer

From Broadcast to Broadband: Media's Growing Influence on Policy

By the late twentieth century, new forms of media were reshaping how Americans learned about and responded to world events. Decades earlier, radio had brought news into homes during the Great Depression and World War II, and television had delivered live images from the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War, influencing public opinion in real time.

In the 1990s, the "CNN effect" emerged as twenty-four-hour cable news coverage began to potentially shape foreign policy decisions. During the Gulf War, CNN reporter Wolf Blitzer broadcast the location of an Iraqi missile strike on Israel. Soon afterward, U.S. military leaders contacted him, concerned that such reporting might help Iraqi forces adjust their targeting. Policymakers themselves sometimes learned about unfolding events by watching news coverage. Repeated footage of Kuwaiti refugees fleeing Saddam's forces stirred public sympathy and may have influenced officials to respond. In Somalia, televised images of starving children helped build support for U.S. humanitarian intervention, while later coverage of Somali fighters dragging an American soldier's body through the streets after the Battle of Mogadishu contributed to the decision to withdraw U.S. troops.

By the early 2000s, the Internet had added a new layer to this dynamic. Online news outlets, political blogs, and eventually social media allowed information to spread instantly and widely, amplifying voices outside traditional newsrooms. Over time, radio, television, and the Internet all transformed how Americans engaged with current events, how quickly public opinion could shift, and how policymakers set their agendas.

PRIMARY SOURCE: DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION KEYNOTE ADDRESS, BARACK OBAMA, 2004

Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." . . .

. . . The people I meet in small towns and big cities, in diners and office parks, they don't expect government to solve all their problems. They know they have to work hard to get ahead and they want to. Go into the collar counties around Chicago, and people will tell you they don't want their tax money wasted by a welfare agency or the Pentagon. Go into any inner city neighborhood, and folks will tell you that government alone can't teach kids to learn. They know that parents have to parent, that children can't achieve unless we raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white. No, people don't expect government to solve all their problems. But they sense, deep in their bones, that with just a change in priorities, we can make sure that every child in America has a decent shot at life, and that the doors of opportunity remain open to all. They know we can do better. And they want that choice. . . .

. . . There's not a liberal America and a conservative America—there's the United States of America. There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America. The pundits like to slice-and-dice our country into Red States and Blue States; Red States for Republicans, Blue States for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too. We worship an awesome God in the Blue States, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the Red States. We coach Little League in the Blue States and have gay friends in the Red States. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and patriots who supported it. We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.

In the end, that's what this election is about. . . . The audacity of hope!

Source: Obama, Barack. "Keynote Address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention." July 27, 2004. The American Presidency Project, edited by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. University of California, Santa Barbara. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/277378.

reasonably priced health insurance to uninsured Americans. He also vowed to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and to withdraw American troops from Iraq. Young voters and voters in racial minority groups tended to support Obama's platform. Because Obama was relatively inexperienced compared to his Republican opponent, John McCain, he chose an older, more experienced running mate: Joe Biden, a U.S. senator from Delaware.

Despite being a relatively new figure on the national stage, Obama received notable popular support. Unlike McCain, Obama chose not to accept federal funding for his campaign—an unusual decision at the time, as most major candidates had relied on that system in previous elections. Instead, he raised money directly from donors, many of whom contributed online. This decision gave him a financial advantage; federal funding would have imposed strict spending limits, while privately raised funds allowed his campaign to raise and spend far more overall. Obama's campaign ultimately raised more money than any previous U.S. presidential campaign.

As a former community organizer, Obama wanted to build a grassroots movement. Starting from the bottom up—the way grass grows—such movements typically do not start with much funding or resources but raise money as they go along. They are also motivated by the shared goals and commitment of volunteers.

Obama's campaign relied heavily on volunteers and donors across America who organized via the Internet. While Obama was not the first politician to use social media, he was the first presidential candidate to use social media as a campaign strategy. Obama had an online presence on social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, and the video-sharing site YouTube. Supporters could easily forward videos about Obama's campaign to potential voters. On the campaign's official home page, MyBarackObama.com, supporters could connect and organize online from across the country, such as by organizing virtual phone bank rallies. They could also plan to meet locally offline to register voters in person.

By reflecting the changing media landscape, Obama's Internet presence helped him reach and mobilize young voters, who were a large part of his base. Compared to older voters, younger voters were online more frequently and more likely to open campaign emails or post about the election. Through emails to supporters, Obama and his staff could connect with them on a more conversational basis. Many were first-time voters excited to support a candidate they believed in. Mobilizing African American voters was a large focus of the campaign.

Think Twice



How did Obama use the Internet and social media in his campaign?

A Milestone Victory

Obama won the presidency with nearly seventy million votes. His 365 electoral votes included the votes of many states that typically leaned Republican, such as Colorado, Florida, Ohio, Virginia, and Nevada. Overall, the 2008 election brought the highest voter turnout in four decades. When McCain conceded, he acknowledged the importance of the United States electing its first African American president: "This is an historic election, and I recognize the special significance it has for African Americans and for the special pride that must be theirs tonight."

After Obama was declared the winner, he addressed a crowd of cheering supporters in Chicago's Grant Park. In his victory speech, he recognized the work of campaign volunteers and voters who participated in the election. "Tonight," said Obama, "we proved once more that the true strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth, but from the enduring power of our ideals: democracy, liberty, opportunity, and unyielding hope. For that is the true genius of America—that America can change." He commended Americans for coming together, not as "red states and blue states," but as a united nation.

Think Twice



What factors contributed to Obama's victory in the 2008 presidential election?



From left to right: President-elect Barack Obama, soon-to-be First Lady Michelle Obama, soon-to-be Second Lady Jill Biden, and Vice President–elect Joe Biden celebrate their election victory in 2008.

Glossary

A

accessible, adj. capable of being reached, used, seen, or understood **(6–2)**

anti-Semitism, n. hostility toward or discrimination against Jewish people and institutions **(4–3)**

appeasement, n. agreeing or making concessions, often reluctantly, to an enemy's or opponent's demands to avoid an escalation of conflict **(4–3)**

B

"bank run" (phrase) a sudden surge in attempted withdrawals from a bank **(4–2)**

bipartisan, adj. involving two political parties **(5–2)**

blacklist, n. a list of people or groups to be avoided or excluded **(5–1)**

bloc, n. a group of nations or other entities united by political agreement or a common interest **(5–1)**

bootlegging, n. the smuggling of alcoholic beverages, also called *rum-running* **(4–1)**

brinksmanship, n. the practice of pushing a dangerous situation or confrontation to the limit of safety to force a desired outcome **(5–1)**

"buying on margin" (phrase) using one's own money to buy a fraction of an asset's value and borrowing the rest **(4–1)**

C

centrist, n. someone who has moderate political views in the center of the political spectrum **(6–1)**

civil disobedience, n. refusal to obey governmental demands or laws, especially as a nonviolent and usually group-based means of effecting governmental change; an act of protest **(5–2)**

coalition, n. a group of people or countries that join together for a common purpose, such as a political mission **(6–1)**

collateral, n. property pledged to guarantee a loan that can be taken by the lender and sold if the borrower does not repay the debt **(4–2)**

concentration camp, n. a place where large numbers of political prisoners or other detainees are held without trial on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, or political affiliation rather than for crimes committed **(4–3)**

containment, n. the act or process of keeping something within certain limits, such as the spread of communism during the Cold War **(5–1)**

cosmonaut, n. an astronaut who is part of the Soviet, and later Russian, space program **(5–1)**

D

deficit, n. the shortfall when spending exceeds the amount of money brought in **(4–2)**

deregulation, n. the removal of some or all government controls or rules from a business or industry **(6–2)**

détente, n. a policy that relaxes tensions between nations **(5–3)**

E

economic inequality, n. unequal distribution of wealth and income within a society **(6–2)**

embargo, n. a legal prohibition on buying and selling **(4–3)**

executive privilege, n. the power of the president and other members of the executive branch to withhold certain confidential information from the other two branches of government **(5–3)**

expatriate, n. a person who lives outside their country of citizenship, colloquially called an *expat* **(4–1)**

extremist, n. someone who holds extreme political or religious beliefs outside of what society finds acceptable; often someone who uses intimidation or violence to support these beliefs **(6–1)**

F

fascism, n. a form of authoritarian government characterized by dictatorship, political oppression, extreme nationalism, and bigotry against minority groups **(4–3)**

feminism, n. the belief that the sexes should have economic, political, and social equality **(5–2)**

fiscal policy, n. economic policy concerned with raising and spending public funds **(4–2)**

foreclosure, n. a legal process in which a lender takes back ownership of a property to recover the amount owed on a loan **(4–2)**

G

genocide, n. the deliberate destruction of an ethnic, racial, national, or religious group **(4–3)**

graft, n. corrupt political practices, especially bribery of public officials **(4–1)**

grassroots, adj. arising from or operating at the most basic or fundamental level, such as individuals in a local community **(5–2)**

guerilla, n. a soldier who uses irregular ways of fighting **(5–3)**

I

ideology, n. a set of beliefs that support a political system, party, or group **(5–1)**

insolvent, adj. unable to meet ongoing financial obligations **(4–2)**

insurgent, adj. fighting or rebelling against the government of one's own country **(6–1)**

internment, n. confinement as a prisoner for political or military reasons rather than as punishment for a crime **(4–3)**

"island-hopping campaign" (phrase) a World War II Allied strategy in the Pacific that focused on capturing strategically important islands while bypassing heavily fortified ones, enabling a gradual advance toward Japan **(4–3)**

M

monetary policy, n. economic policy concerned with the supply of money and the availability of credit **(4–2)**

mortgage, n. a loan, typically from a financial institution, used to buy property or real estate **(4–1)**

N

nonproliferation, n. the act of preventing the spread of something, particularly nuclear weapons **(6–1)**

P

partisan, adj. rooted in strong support for a certain political party or cause **(6–2)**

plaintiff, n. a person who begins a legal action **(5–2)**

polarized, adj. divided or separated into opposing groups **(6–2)**

protectionism, n. a policy of protecting a country's domestic industries and producers by restricting foreign competition **(4–1)**

proxy war, n. a military conflict in which nonparticipating countries support those involved in the conflict, such as with supplies or money, in order to influence its outcome without being directly involved **(5–1)**

R

refugee, n. a person fleeing, usually internationally, from persecution, war, or disaster **(4–3)**

S

sanction, n. a restriction on trade with a government in response to that government's behavior **(6–1)**

sect, n. a religious group with dissenting, often extreme beliefs that has separated from a larger group **(6–2)**

separatist, n. someone who believes a group of people with common traits (such as ethnic ancestry or political or religious beliefs) should seek independence from their country **(4–1)**

social welfare, n. programs and support focused on helping people meet basic needs, such as securing food, housing, and health care **(4–2)**

speculation, n. trading with substantial risk of loss but also the potential for significant gain **(4–1)**

stagflation, n. an economic period of both price inflation and stagnation in job growth **(5–3)**

subpoena, v. to issue a legal document that compels individuals to give testimony or provide evidence **(5–3)**

T

terrorist, n. someone who uses violence or the threat of violence to create widespread fear in order to pursue political goals **(6–1)**

theater, n. in war, a major geographic area of military activity **(4–3)**

totalitarian, adj. marked by total control of a country's political system and a suppression of individual liberties **(4–3)**

W

warhead, n. the part of a weapon that contains the explosives or other materials intended to do damage **(5–1)**

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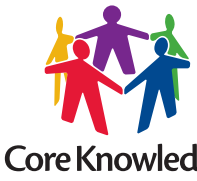
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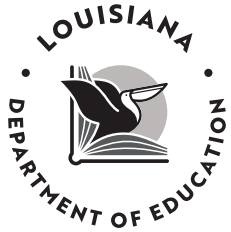
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