Acknowledgments

The U.S. Role in a Changing World was developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program with the assistance of the research staff of the Watson Institute for International Studies, scholars at Brown University, and other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following researchers for their invaluable input to this and previous editions:

Thomas Biersteker  
Professor of Political Science  
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

James G. Blight  
CIGI Chair in Foreign Policy Development, Professor at Balsillie School of International Affairs, University of Waterloo

Neta Crawford  
Professor of Political Science and African American Studies  
Boston University

P. Terrence Hopmann  
Professor of International Relations  
Johns Hopkins University

janet Lang  
Research Professor at Balsillie School of International Affairs  
University of Waterloo

Linda B. Miller  
Professor of Political Science, Emerita, Wellesley College  
Visiting Fellow, Watson Institute for International Studies  
Brown University

Charles Neu  
Professor Emeritus of History  
Brown University

Janet Sturgeon  
Professor, Department of Geography  
Simon Fraser University

Kay Warren  
Tillinghast Professor in International Studies and Professor of Anthropology  
Brown University

We wish to thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York for its generous support of this unit. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the author.

The U.S. Role in a Changing World is part of a continuing series on public policy issues. New units are published each academic year, and all units are updated regularly.

Visit us on the World Wide Web — www.choices.edu
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: A Changing World</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I: Considering the United States’ Changing Role</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spanish-American War: Coming to Grips with Empire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War I: Making the World Safe for Democracy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-World War II: Confronting the Soviet Challenge</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II: A Changing World</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Health and the Environment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Values</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part III: Conflict and Military Security</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the Cold War</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bush Doctrine</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Security Issues</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options in Brief</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 1: Lead the World to Democracy</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2: Protect U.S. Global Interests</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3: Build a More Cooperative World</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4: Protect the U.S. Homeland</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Resources</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Program is a program of the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Choices was established to help citizens think constructively about foreign policy issues, to improve participatory citizenship skills, and to encourage public judgement on policy issues.

The Watson Institute for International Studies was established at Brown University in 1986 to serve as a forum for students, faculty, visiting scholars, and policy practitioners who are committed to analyzing contemporary global problems and developing initiatives to address them.

Four Questions about the U.S. Role in the World

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians protest for democracy and against their authoritarian government in June 2011. Protests have taken place throughout the Middle East and have led to instability in a region important to the United States, particularly for its oil. Should the United States support the protest movements for democratic governance even if it risks instability?

In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq after claiming that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction—a claim that proved to be false. In December 2011, the U.S. military withdrew from Iraq ending an eight year occupation. Today, the United States is worried that Iran is trying to develop the ultimate weapon of mass destruction—a nuclear weapon. Should the U.S. experience in Iraq affect how the United States deals with the Iranian nuclear issue?

In May 2011, U.S. military forces killed Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden led the terrorist group al Qaeda that attacked the United States on September 11, 2001. The attacks had profound effects that rippled around the world. In the United States, disbelief, patriotism, and anger were followed by sharp changes in U.S. laws and foreign policy. With bin Laden dead, should the United States rethink its approach to security?

Women in Darfur, Sudan on their way to gather water. Scarce resources, poverty, and violence have made their lives difficult. These problems are not unique to Sudan. About 2.5 billion people around the world live on less than two dollars a day. Should reducing poverty, disease, and protecting the environment be an important part of U.S. foreign policy?
It is clear that not all the people of the world have entered the twenty-first century on the same path. On the one hand, much of the planet seems increasingly connected by a web of trade, technology, and common political values. In this age of globalization, traditional dividing lines based on borders and cultures have blurred. On the other hand, the problems that have haunted humanity throughout history have not disappeared. Violence continues to erupt over questions of land, power, and identity. Billions of people live in grinding poverty. Tyrannical governments use fear and intimidation to maintain their authority. The United States plays an important part role in this complex world.

From the first days of the republic, U.S. citizens have debated how to balance their priorities at home with their involvement in international affairs. In his farewell address of 1796, President George Washington warned his fellow citizens to “steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.” Yet Washington also recognized that the United States would need to be connected to the larger world in order to prosper.

Today the United States wrestles with the task of balancing domestic needs and international relationships. The world also presents an array of economic, political, cultural, and social concerns and problems. Consensus about how to address these problems is hard to achieve. Nevertheless, a healthy democracy requires debate and discussion about the values and policies that shape the United States’ place in the world.

The readings in this text discuss the forces that shape the U.S. role in the world. Part I reviews three critical turning points in the history of U.S. foreign policy. Part II examines several pressing issues facing the United States and the world today: economy, human health and the environment, international relations, and culture and values. Part III explores security concerns of the United States and how they connect to the issues presented in Part II.

After the readings, you will consider four distinct alternatives for the U.S. role in the world. Finally, you will be asked to create an option that reflects your own beliefs and opinions about where U.S. policy should be heading. You will need to weigh the risks and trade-offs of whatever you decide.
Over the past two centuries, the United States has evolved into a country far more sophisticated and influential than George Washington could have possibly imagined. Time and again, the people of the United States have been compelled to rethink the U.S. role in the world. Changes in the United States—unmatched economic growth, increasing global power, waves of immigration, and startling social transformations—have caused generations of U.S. citizens to wrestle with conflicting foreign policy ideas. Citizens have argued about what interests and values, if any, are at stake outside the country, and how the United States should act internationally. They have disagreed about whether the major source of U.S. influence in the world should be its moral example or its active involvement.

This section explores three historical turning points in U.S. foreign policy. At each of these junctures, U.S. citizens and policy makers debated alternative proposals and made critical decisions. As you examine each of the historical events, focus on the policy choices put forward and the values they represent. Identify the most influential hopes and fears framing the debate. Finally, ask yourself which lessons from the past, if any, should be applied to U.S. foreign policy today.

The Spanish-American War: Coming to Grips with Empire

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the United States found itself entering a world it had cautiously avoided. In its first century as a nation the country expanded westward across the continent and began to emerge as a leading economic power. Shielded by two great oceans, the United States tried to insulate itself from the conflicts of the Old World. As the United States changed and its economic strength grew, so did expectations about U.S. foreign policy. Many were beginning to believe that the United States should take a more active role in world affairs. The Caribbean region, particularly the island of Cuba, held special interest.

Why did the Cuban struggle for independence attract U.S. attention?

The Caribbean drew U.S. attention for a number of reasons. First, Cuba is only ninety miles away from the southern tip of Florida. As the importance of naval power increased in the 1800s, many U.S. leaders became convinced that the United States needed to control the Caribbean to protect its own shores and shipping routes.

Second, the United States and the Caribbean region were linked economically. U.S. companies invested heavily in the sugar, coffee, and banana plantations of the Caribbean, especially as plans to build a canal across the isthmus of Central America advanced in the late 1800s.

Finally, the Cuban people’s struggle for independence attracted widespread U.S. sympathy. Since the sixteenth century, Cuba had been ruled by Spain. Most U.S. citizens in the 1800s resented the colonial powers of Europe, and were particularly outraged by Spain’s brutal attempts to crush the Cuban independence movement. In 1898, the United States declared war on Spain.

What questions arose in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War?

The Spanish-American War lasted only four months and ended with a decisive U.S. victory. But military triumph raised new questions for the United States. As a result of the war, the fate of Spain’s colonial empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific rested in U.S. hands. These areas included not only Cuba and Puerto Rico, but also the distant islands of the Philippines and Guam.

Suddenly, U.S. citizens were faced with a critical choice. Since the war of independence against Britain, Americans considered their country to be a foe of imperialism.
Most viewed the Spanish-American War as a struggle against the forces of European colonialism. But while opposition to imperialism was strong, so was support for a more prominent U.S. presence in world affairs. A new generation of policy makers felt that the United States was obliged to establish an overseas empire as British, French, and other European powers had done before them. They argued that U.S. control over the colonies of Spain would serve military and commercial interests, and also allow the United States to promote its democratic values in foreign lands.

“Americans must now look outward. The growing production of the country demands it. An increasing volume of public sentiment demands it. The position of the United States, between the two Old Worlds [Asia and Europe] and the two great oceans, makes the same claim.”
—Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, 1890

Many public figures, including writer Mark Twain and Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, opposed U.S. rule over Spain’s colonies, but President William McKinley led the campaign for annexation of the Spanish possessions. He and his supporters argued that the United States had a responsibility to advance its ideals.

Why did the United States lose its appetite for empire?
In 1899, the U.S. Senate narrowly approved the treaty sought by McKinley. But the annexation of Spain’s colonies did not put an end to debate over the U.S. role in the world. In the Philippines, U.S. troops fought to suppress Filipino nationalists from 1899 to 1902. The conflict resulted in the deaths of forty-two hundred U.S. soldiers and one hundred to two hundred thousand Filipinos. It also spurred protest at home. In both Cuba and the United States, advocates of full independence for Cuba organized demonstrations against measures the U.S. government took to limit self-rule.

“...We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty and tends toward militarism.... We insist that the subjugation of any people is ‘criminal aggression’ and open disloyalty to the distinctive principles of our government.”
—Platform of the Anti-Imperialist League, 1898

Despite the lack of public support for imperial expansion, the United States established a protectorate over Panama in 1903 to pave the way for building the Panama Canal, and acquired several small Pacific island groups after World War I. In the Philippines, U.S. officials turned over much of the responsibility for governing the islands to Filipinos. In 1946, the Philippines gained full independence.

In the Caribbean as well, the United States wanted to avoid the administrative costs and military commitment associated with controlling an empire. Rather, the chief goal of U.S. policy in the region was to safeguard U.S. business and security interests. U.S. leaders retained the right to oversee Cuba’s economic policies and foreign relations until 1934.
World War I: Making the World Safe for Democracy

When war broke out in Europe in August 1914, the overwhelming majority of U.S. citizens felt that the United States should stay out of the fighting. President Woodrow Wilson, who mistrusted the great powers of Europe, shared this view. He established a policy of strict neutrality to avoid U.S. involvement in the war. Wilson believed that the United States should occupy a special place in the world as a beacon of democracy, freedom, and justice. In 1914, this belief lay at the foundation of his policy on neutrality. In April 1917, Wilson evoked the same ideals when he called on Congress to declare war against Germany.

How did the Allied victory open new opportunities in international relations?

Like the Spanish-American War, World War I was a military success for the United States. Fresh U.S. troops helped tip the balance in Europe against Germany, leading to an Allied victory in 1918. The United States’ vital role in the defeat of Germany brought with it new questions about the country’s role in the post-war world.

Wilson’s peace proposal, known as the Fourteen Points, called for international cooperation to maintain world peace. Wilson envisioned an association of nations that would protect the political independence and territorial integrity of both large and small countries. He imagined that the United States would join this proposed League of Nations and play a prominent part in safeguarding the peace of the new international order. A national debate about whether to join ensued with President Wilson at its center. Wilson found that he had underestimated the concerns that U.S. citizens had about his ideas for international cooperation.

“For the first time in history the counsels of mankind are to be drawn together and concerted for the purpose of defending the rights and improving the conditions of working people—men, women, and children—all over the world. Such a thing as that was never dreamed of before, and what you are asked to discuss in discussing the League of Nations is the matter of seeing that this thing is not interfered with. There is no other way to do it than by a universal League of Nations....”

—Woodrow Wilson, September 1919

Why did the Senate oppose Wilson’s proposals?

The national debate began with consideration of the League of Nations in the U.S. Senate. Republican senators, the leading opponents of Wilson’s proposals, argued that the treaty would require League members to come to the defense of any member under attack. They were concerned that the United States might be compelled to fight to preserve the borders of a French colony in Africa or protect British imperial interests in India.

“I am anxious as any human being can be to have the United States render every possible service to the civilization and the peace of mankind, but I am certain we can do it best by not putting ourselves in leading strings or subjecting our policies and our sovereignty to other nations.”

—Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, August 1919

Rather than negotiate with his opponents in the Senate, Wilson decided to take his case to the people, hoping to rally public opinion behind his vision for U.S. foreign policy. In September 1919, he traveled eight thousand miles by rail, giving forty speeches in twenty-nine cities during the course of a three-week speaking tour. Wilson’s pleas were communicated nationally through the twenty-one journalists who traveled with him on the train and ran daily stories on the trip. The pace of the trip coupled with preexisting medical problems proved to be too much for Wilson physically. On September 25, Wilson gave his
last speech before collapsing from physical exhaustion. Upon his return to Washington, a crippling stroke silenced Wilson’s voice. Partially paralyzed, the president in 1920 watched as the Senate rejected U.S. membership in the League of Nations by a vote of 38-53, far short of the two-thirds majority needed to approve the treaty. One of the treaty’s foes, Republican Warren G. Harding, went on to win the 1920 presidential election by pledging to return the country to “normalcy.”

What were U.S. attitudes toward foreign affairs in the 1920s and 1930s?

As the prosperity of the 1920s gave way to the depression of the 1930s, many U.S. citizens sought to shield their country from the turmoil in Europe. The establishment of communism in the Soviet Union and the emergence of fascism in Europe added to the desire to steer clear of troubles overseas.

The League of Nations proved weak and ineffective without U.S. involvement. In the 1930s, the League failed to stop Japanese, Italian, and German aggression. The overseas conflicts from which U.S. citizens hoped to isolate themselves were becoming a mounting threat to world peace.

When fighting broke out in Europe in September 1939, most in the United States sympathized with Britain and France in their struggle against Nazi Germany, but viewed the war as a European matter. Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 instantly changed their attitudes. The United States entered World War II with firm resolve and mobilized its vast resources. By 1945, the Allies were victorious in Europe and the Pacific.

Post-World War II: Confronting the Soviet Challenge

When World War II ended in 1945, the United States stood unrivaled as the strongest nation on earth. Unlike the countries of Europe and Asia, the United States mainland had escaped the devastation of war. U.S. industry reached new levels of productivity during the war years, supplying much of the equipment for the Allied victory. Moreover, in 1945 the United States was the only country to possess nuclear weapons.

For many in the United States, peace represented an opportunity to withdraw again from the center stage of world affairs. With Japan’s surrender in August 1945, President Harry S. Truman moved quickly to bring U.S. troops home and to allow the country’s twelve million soldiers to return to civilian life. By 1947, the government had cut the military to 1.4 million personnel.

But even as U.S. citizens were enjoying the benefits of peace, many U.S. policy makers recognized that World War II had fundamentally changed the international order. Britain, after dominating much of the globe for two centuries, was no longer able to maintain its vast empire. Likewise, the other leading European powers—France, Germany, and Italy—were in no position to assert themselves internationally. Although more than twenty millions Soviets died during the war, the war...
strengthened the hand of the Soviet Union.

In defeating Nazi Germany, Soviet forces had swept over Eastern Europe. After the war, they remained in place and provided the muscle behind Moscow’s political control of the region. At the same time, the Soviets sought to extend their influence to Iran, Turkey, and Greece. In 1946, Winston Churchill, the British prime minister during the war, said that the Soviets had cut off Eastern Europe from its western neighbors by drawing an “iron curtain” across the continent. The United States began to see the Soviet Union as a threat to the United States.

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste 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. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in some cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.” —Winston Churchill, 1946

What role did the United States take in postwar Europe?

Discussion about how the United States fit into the new international order gained the attention of the U.S. public in 1947 and 1948. In March 1947, President Truman unveiled an extensive aid package for Greece and Turkey. In what came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, he pledged U.S. support for governments everywhere fighting against communist uprisings.

At the same time, U.S. strategists were designing a far-reaching economic assistance effort to rebuild Europe. Known as the Marshall Plan, the foreign aid program called for the United States to spend billions of dollars on the reconstruction of Europe. The Marshall Plan was based on the belief that the United States should try to contain the expansion of Soviet communism and that the best way to do so would be the rehabilitation of the economic structure of Europe.

Socialism, Communism, and Capitalism

Socialism is an economic system in which the community or the state controls the production and distribution of resources in order to increase social and economic equality. Generally in socialist systems, the state or community—rather than individuals—owns resources such as land and businesses. Communism is a political stage after socialism without social classes, property ownership, or even government. Although communism has never been achieved by any state in the modern world, people in the United States usually refer to the Soviet Union as a communist country.

Capitalism is an economic system in which resources are all or mostly owned by individuals and operated for profit. Production and distribution of goods is left up to individuals or market forces such as supply and demand.

For much of the twentieth century, the United States acted on the belief that the world was divided into two camps: governments supportive of communism and those supportive of capitalism. For a while, it believed that all communists took orders from and acted on behalf of the Soviet Union, which was seen as a mortal enemy to the United States. During this period both the Soviet Union and the United States devoted vast resources to their militaries, and competed for power and influence all around the world. Many within capitalist countries were also opposed to socialism because the property rights of individuals who owned land or businesses in socialist countries were threatened by the socialist system.
Many policy makers in the administration of President Truman had come to view conflict with the Soviet Union as inevitable. They argued that the United States should stand firm against Soviet ambition. Reconstruction in Europe, they argued, would be a significant part of this effort. Truman was particularly concerned that the Soviets would promote the spread of communism in the war-ravaged countries of Western Europe.

Congress considered the Marshall Plan for ten months. At the same time, U.S. citizens considered the future of U.S. foreign policy. Truman’s approach encountered opposition from a variety of perspectives. Traditional conservatives feared that making new commitments abroad would inflate the budget and give the military too much power. Meanwhile, many liberals believed that the Marshall Plan would divide Europe into two hostile camps and would undermine the cooperative mission of the newly formed United Nations (UN).

How did the United States respond to the Soviet threat?

Criticism of Truman’s policies was undercut by events. In 1948, the Soviets sponsored a coup to topple the government in Czechoslovakia and imposed a blockade of West Berlin to force the Allies out of the city. Although many in the United States were wary of becoming entangled in international affairs, they also remembered how Nazi Germany expanded its power in the 1930s through threats and intimidation while the United States watched from the sidelines. They believed that the experience of the 1930s justified a determined stance against Soviet communism.

“It is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”
—U.S. Diplomat George Kennan, July 1947

By the end of the 1940s, the United States had set a course for an active role in international affairs. The declaration of the Truman Doctrine and the passage of the Marshall Plan in 1948 signaled that the United States was willing to make a long-term investment in the future of Europe. Equally important was the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. Under the provisions of NATO, the United States, Canada, and ten countries of Western Europe pledged to come to one another’s defense if any member were attacked.
Why did containment of the Soviet Union in Europe expand into a global contest?

At the time, most supporters of Truman’s policies imagined that the division of Europe into U.S. and Soviet spheres would last no more than ten or fifteen years. Instead, the Cold War between Washington and Moscow deepened in the 1950s, extended to virtually every area of the globe, and endured for nearly half a century.

In September 1949, the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb. The next month, communists led by Mao Zedong won control of mainland China and joined Moscow in pressing for the spread of communism worldwide. In June 1950, communist North Korean forces invaded South Korea, drawing the United States and the UN into a three-year conflict that ended in a stalemate.

Moscow’s development of nuclear weapons forced U.S. defense planners to devise a new national security strategy to counter the Soviet threat. Presidents Truman and Eisenhower bolstered the U.S. presence in Western Europe to deter Soviet aggression. The United States increased its conventional, or non-nuclear, forces. U.S. policy makers also hoped to maintain their head start in the arms race. In 1947, Truman ordered that four hundred nuclear weapons be ready by 1953. Under Eisenhower, the doctrine of “massive retaliation” committed the United States to use nuclear weapons to counter a Soviet attack on Western Europe. The purpose of the policy was to deter an attack from ever taking place. This policy of deterrence would form the cornerstone of U.S. security policy for nearly fifty years. The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 reduced the threat of nuclear war and marked the beginning of new era in international relations.

In Part I, you have read about three critical turning points in the U.S. relationship to the world in the last century. The challenge for U.S. citizens today is to define the role that the nation will have in the twenty-first century. As you read the next two sections on changes in the global environment and U.S. security, think about the turning points of the past. How were ordinary U.S. citizens involved in the foreign policy decisions of the last century, and how might they be involved today? How has the world changed in recent years? Which challenges from the twentieth century persist today? Have U.S. values changed? As you read the following sections, use your knowledge of previous turning points to evaluate the choices available for the United States today.
Part II: A Changing World

The end of the Cold War left many experts arguing about what the future of U.S. foreign policy would be like. Confrontation with the Soviet Union would be replaced by something—but what? Some hoped for a “new world order” of cooperation to solve the world’s problems. Others wondered if ideological conflict had ended and if all the world would adopt the Western ideas of democracy and free-market capitalism. Still others speculated that the principal disagreements in international politics would be a “clash of civilizations” between Western cultures and others with different values and beliefs. What has become clear to many is that the world is changing quickly through a process called globalization.

What is globalization?
Globalization is an umbrella term that refers to the economic, political, cultural, and social transformations occurring throughout the world. It reflects the increased interdependence of various countries and people today. The migration of large numbers of people and the growth of the internet has helped spread ideas and establish connections between cultures that did not exist before. Many periods in history have seen globalization of varying forms. Globalization today distinguishes itself by its speed and magnitude. Though the seeds of transformation were sown long before, the end of World War II marked the beginning of a new global era. The wave of globalization since 1945 has fundamentally changed the face of the international system and has dramatically altered the lives of people around the world.

What has been the role of the United States in globalization?
What may be most striking about globalization today is that the process is so strongly influenced by one country—the United States. While some praise globalization with a U.S. face, others are concerned that U.S. dominance will cause conflict with other societies.

In the past half-century, countries have faced the challenge of navigating through a rapidly changing world. Today, the United States must reflect upon its leadership role—past, present, and future. The principles of democracy and free-market capitalism promoted by the United States have never been so widely accepted.

Yet, the dominance of the United States has another side. The United States’ combination of economic, military, and technological strength has put it far ahead of potential rivals. As the most powerful nation in the world, the United States maintains a military presence around the world. The United States has more than nine hundred military bases in forty-six countries, not including Afghanistan.

U.S. dominance comes from more than just military might. The ability of U.S. companies and ideas to expand throughout the world has influenced the cultures of countries.

“On top of it all, globalization has a distinctly American face: It wears Mickey Mouse ears, it eats Big Macs, it drinks Coke or Pepsi and it does its computing on an IBM or Apple laptop, using Windows...and a network link from Cisco Systems. Therefore, while the distinction between what is globalization and what is Americanization may be clear to most Americans, it is not to many others around the world. In most societies people cannot distinguish anymore between American power, American exports, American cultural exports and plain vanilla globalization. They are now all wrapped into one.”

—Author Thomas L. Friedman, 1999
While U.S. culture and products are often embraced, some fear that the cultures and traditions of their countries will be overwhelmed by the values, popular culture, technologies, and lifestyles of the United States. Globalization has led to changing cultural, political, and economic landscapes for many people around the world.

The four sections that follow—economy, health and environment, international relations, and culture and values—provide a structure for looking at some aspects of globalization and how they play out in the world today. Each section also looks at the U.S. role in these areas, and asks you to consider how the United States should act in the future.

Economy

With globalization, the world economy has grown increasingly interdependent. The production of goods now takes place on a global scale. For example, a good that used to be produced by a single company within one country may now be produced by people from many companies located all around the world. Additionally, an expanding international commitment to free trade among countries has internationalized the market for goods; people have access to goods that were previously out of reach. Finally, in addition to the exchange of goods across borders, global financial markets move billions of dollars daily with the click of a mouse and have profound effects on the global economy.

What has been the effect of economic globalization?

Economic globalization has had mixed and unequal effects. Some countries have been helped because they have the resources to expand production worldwide and to create goods that are in demand internationally. Individuals and small businesses have access to much larger markets and to buyers they did not have access to before. On the other hand, some countries and individuals have been hurt because they are not able to compete with the strongest producers internationally.

Today, the U.S. economy is the world’s largest. The U.S. dollar serves as the most accepted currency of international trade. The United States is one of the world’s leading exporters and maintains a lead in many of the most promising industries, including biotechnology, space technology, and computer software. U.S. corporations have sought a competitive edge by taking advantage of cheap labor in Latin America and Asia. Meanwhile, Japanese and Western European companies have invested in the United States, hoping to tap into U.S. markets.

How has the United States responded to economic globalization?

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the U.S. economy was cruising in high gear. The United States was benefiting from having played a central role in building the global economy. The gross domestic product (GDP) was growing at an impressive clip.

At the same time, the East Asian economic crisis in the late 1990s and the international economic downturn that began in 2008 unsettled the lives of millions of U.S. citizens and other people around the world, drawing
attention to the insecurities of the global economy.

Globalization has swept away the employment security of the past. Businesses large and small must learn to compete on a global scale or be left by the wayside. Economists have noted that the United States has been more successful than much of the world in adjusting to these demands. The United States has, for the most part, turned the forces of change to its advantage. Yet while the U.S. economy remains the world’s largest, a high rate of unemployment has policy makers looking for ways to stimulate growth.

**How have U.S. leaders used trade policy to stimulate economic growth?**

One way U.S. leaders have attempted to stimulate economic growth is by actively promoting new trade agreements. Some of their most notable achievements have been the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The WTO and NAFTA are both designed to reduce barriers to international trade. The scope of the WTO is worldwide, with a membership of 153 nations, while NAFTA is limited to the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The United States has also established bilateral Free Trade Agreements with fifteen other countries. Negotiations are currently underway for an additional bilateral agreements.

In 2011, South Korea and the United States ratified the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. The FTA has been a topic of controversy within both countries since negotiations began in 2006. For example, many South Korean farmers believe that the increase of imported agricultural goods from the United States will threaten their livelihood. Above, South Koreans protest after their government lifted a ban on U.S. beef imports in 2008. The South Korean government banned U.S. beef after a case of mad cow disease was discovered in the United States in 2003.

**What do supporters of free trade say?**

Supporters of more open trade argue that everyone has the potential to be better off when developing economies join the global marketplace. They contend that countries with free trade systems support the growth of democracy. New industries geared toward exports spring up in developing countries, while consumers benefit from a wider selection of competitively priced products. Investors
benefit from opportunities for higher returns. Likewise, they argue that removing restrictions on financial markets fuels growth in developing economies in the long run.

What do critics of free trade say?

Many critics warn that U.S. trade agreements favor big business and ignore the interests of workers. Some people want the United States to withdraw from the WTO and other trade organizations in order to protect U.S. jobs. Others argue for reform of the trade system as a whole.

Critics of free trade maintain that losers outnumber winners in the global economy. Among the losers are hundreds of thousands of U.S. workers who have lost manufacturing jobs in recent years and tens of millions of people around the world who have lost their jobs or businesses. According to the critics, the winners are mainly rich investors who shift their money from one market to another and big corporations that relocate factories to poorer countries to take advantage of low-wage labor. The losers, free trade opponents assert, are typically found among the working class and the poor.

Continuing large protests at WTO meetings highlight the unease generated by the evolving international economic system and capture the at-
tention of world media and the public. A broad coalition of organized labor, environmentalists, human rights activists, and nongovernmental organizations continues to protest the free trade policies favored by the United States and other governments. Many of these protesters also argue that free trade and democracy are not linked, citing the case of China, which is becoming more open in trade policies but not becoming more democratic. Demonstrations against “globalization without representation” continue whenever the WTO convenes a meeting. These protestors say that globalization does not represent the interests of ordinary people.

“Undoubtedly trade creates winners and losers. A good case can be made that the winners win more often than the losers lose, so the overall effects of trade are positive. But the distributional impacts can’t be ignored. The political reality is that winners don’t compensate losers. The only way those who lose from free trade can hope to be compensated is if they actively oppose it.”

—Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, 1999

Why are inequality and poverty important concerns?

In recent years, inequality between the highest incomes in the richest countries and the lowest incomes in the poorest countries continues to grow. Inequality within many countries has also increased. In the United States, for example, the gap between the rich and the poor has grown since the 1980s. The Congressional Budget Office reports that in 1979, the 1% of the population in households with the highest income in the United States received about the same share of income after taxes as the bottom 20% of the population combined. By 2007, the top 1% earned more than the bottom 40%.

Per capita income in the United States and other wealthy societies is forty times greater than per capita income in the world’s poorest countries. The United States and other rich countries continue to dominate international markets, and poorer countries struggle to compete, with varying degrees of success. The World Bank estimates that 1.3 billion people are forced to get by on $1.25 or less a day.

While the levels of poverty are declining around the world, poverty continues to be a concern for billions of people. For many people, questions about the future of international economic policy remain. Should the United States continue to focus on expanding international trade? Should it address increasing economic inequality at home and abroad?

Human Health and the Environment

A second set of major issues revolves around human health and the environment. Since the earliest days of international diplomacy, states have generally come together to discuss matters of war and trade. The health of the world population or of the world environment, if considered at all, were thought of strictly as local, not global problems. Recent years have seen an important shift in thinking.

Environmental and health-related problems are increasingly global in scope, and scientists and policy makers now see a coor-
ordinated international approach as necessary. For example, because greenhouse gases are dispersed throughout the atmosphere, more countries recognize that climate change, and the resulting environmental destruction, needs to be addressed in the international arena. Likewise, diseases do not respect national borders. Epidemics, like HIV/AIDS, have become worldwide health crises.

**What are some current health concerns?**

While there are a number of health concerns facing the world today, three are particularly widespread and deadly: HIV/AIDS, malaria, and malnutrition.

**HIV/AIDS:** In 2010, an estimated thirty-four million people were living with HIV/AIDS. The impact of HIV/AIDS has not been felt equally the world over: incidence of HIV/AIDS is highly concentrated in poorer countries. Sub-Saharan Africa, home to just 12 percent of the world’s population, has 68 percent of the world’s cases of HIV/AIDS. In Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, more than 20 percent of the adult population is HIV positive or suffering from AIDS.

The fight against HIV/AIDS requires resources and infrastructure to educate people about causes and prevention and to provide treatment for those who are infected. While there have been many success stories, some countries have struggled to address the crisis effectively. Furthermore, political instability, poverty, and war can worsen the epidemic. At the same time, the prevalence of the disease makes economic development more difficult.

The United States donates more than any other nation to international HIV/AIDS research and assistance programs, though critics say the United States could afford more. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations also contribute resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In the years ahead, the United States will have to make important choices about its goals and priorities in fighting the disease. Should it concentrate its resources on combating the disease in the United States? What should be U.S. priorities in foreign aid—preventing the spread of the disease, fighting the disease itself by increasing access to medicines, or assisting economic development?

**Malaria:** Another significant international health concern is malaria. Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes, and is a leading killer in Africa and in many tropical countries. In 2010, malaria caused 655,000 deaths worldwide, and health experts estimate that one child dies from malaria every minute in Africa. Treatment of the infection is straightforward and relatively cheap, but treatment remains largely

A health care clinic in Madagascar. Preventing the transmission of HIV from mothers to their children is one important approach to curbing the epidemic. The UN reported that in 2010, 48% of pregnant women living with HIV worldwide received treatment to prevent transmitting the virus to their child. The number of new HIV infections in Sub-Saharan Africa dropped by more than 26% from 1997 to 2010.
unaffordable or inaccessible for many poor people who contract the disease. Environmental factors, such as natural disasters or close quarters in refugee camps, increase a population’s vulnerability to malaria. Initiatives to curb malaria have made significant progress in recent years—malaria death rates fell 25% from 2000 to 2010. The United States pledged to contribute $4 billion from 2011-2013 to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, a leading international group in the fight against malaria.

**Malnutrition and Hunger:** Another critically important international health issue is malnutrition and hunger. Malnutrition is disproportionately prevalent in poor countries. While malnutrition is in some cases a matter of underproduction of food in a region, it is more likely a matter of lack of access to adequate food in poor populations. The UN estimated that in 2010 close to one billion people were undernourished. Some experts note that famines never take place in democratic countries with a free press. Without a free press a government can withhold information about small crises that then become larger ones.

Although it decreased its donations in recent years, the United States remains the greatest contributor to the World Food Program (WFP), donating over $1.1 billion in 2011. While uncertain or limited access to adequate sustenance—called “food insecurity”—is often considered a problem of poorer countries, it is a symptom of poverty the world over. In fact, according to the U.S. census, over 14 percent of households in the United States are thought to be “food insecure.” In the years to come, the United States must determine where to focus its efforts in addressing malnutrition and hunger. For example, should the United States focus its efforts to fight hunger at home or abroad, or both?

**What are some of the leading environmental concerns?**

Policy makers disagree about the extent to which the world’s environment is under threat. Scientists agree that climate change, which is characterized by an increase in the earth’s temperature called the “greenhouse effect,” has worsened as a result of human activity. Scientists say the problem will continue to harm the environment in the future if we continue to expel the gases into the atmosphere that cause climate change. Those gases, present in small quantities naturally, are increased dramatically when people burn fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas in industrial processes and to heat their homes and drive their cars.

Many scientists project that climate change will make temperatures around the world more extreme more often and that people will need to cope with increased frequency and severity of heat waves, floods, droughts, and hurricanes. They warn that changes will affect agricultural production, and the availability of freshwater and other natural resources that humans depend upon for survival. There is a general consensus among scientists that the areas that will be most severely affected by climate change are within poorer, less-developed countries. Other major environmental problems include the destruction of the ozone layer in the atmosphere, water pollution and acid rain, deforestation, and the decline of biodiversity.

**How have international leaders begun to deal with environmental problems?**

Several international conferences in recent years have raised the profile of global environmental problems. In 1992 the largest gathering of international leaders in history met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil at what became known as the Earth Summit. The UN protocol, which 150 governments signed in Rio, set in motion a series of conferences among governments on climate change that led to a 1997 conference held in Kyoto, Japan. More recently, policy makers, environmentalists, and corporations...
met at the Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa in 2011.

**What unresolved conflicts prevent cooperation among nations on environmental issues?**

These conferences have offered challenges to policy makers worldwide. It has been difficult for countries to agree on how to combat these problems and difficult to agree on who should make changes to limit future problems. The economy of a particular country, its values, and its political structure all contribute to its stance on environmental issues.

One political battle pits wealthy countries against poorer countries. On the whole, people living in the former group (often collectively called the North) have access to a healthier environment than people living in the latter group (often called the South). Additionally, countries in the North tend to use far more resources. Until recently, Northern countries also contributed far more pollution than Southern ones. That gap is closing as population growth has put pressure on countries to develop their economies quickly with less concern for environmental impact. The United States has called for these countries to curb population growth and reduce emissions, while it has bristled at proposals that might harm U.S. economic growth.

In contrast, Southern countries point the finger at the Northern economies, noting that they consume most of the world’s resources and emit most of the pollutants. They argue that their need for economic development cannot be overlooked in efforts to clean up the global environment, and that rich countries should help pay for developing countries’ efforts to meet international environmental standards. The capacity to adapt to climate change is not evenly distributed among countries. Poorer countries are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to grappling with the resulting rising sea levels, more extreme weather, and other effects that many argue are the result of centuries of greenhouse gas emissions by richer countries.

**How has the United States participated in environmental regulation?**

With less than 5 percent of the world’s population, the United States consumes about 19 percent of the world’s energy and produces about 23 percent of the world’s goods and services. The United States also supplied much of the early initiative to address global environmental problems. Today, the United States is no longer at the forefront of worldwide environmental regulation. Current U.S. policy reflects the idea that economies need to
grow in order for environmental issues to be solved.

Many Northern nations, particularly those in Europe, are more willing to reduce threats to the environment, even if it is economically costly to do so. The United States did not ratify the treaty that emerged from the Kyoto conference in part because it felt that the treaty would unfairly burden the U.S. economy.

The role of the United States in future international environmental policy raises important questions. Should the United States take an active role in promoting “green” technologies such as hybrid cars and hydrogen fuel cells, and in reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Should the United States work more closely within international frameworks and guidelines for environmental protection? Or should the government stay out of the regulating business and let market forces determine the direction U.S. citizens will take?

**International Relations**

Over the past twenty-five years, democracy has spread along with free-trade capitalism around the world. Many states in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the former Soviet bloc have transitioned to democracy. Promoting these transitions around the world has been one of the United States’ principal foreign policy priorities for several reasons. Among them is the belief that democratic states respect the rights of their citizens and that wars between democratic states have been virtually nonexistent historically. Whether democracy is universally valued or even universally possible remains unsettled.

### Definitions

A “state” is a country with a government that is recognized by its citizens and other countries and has sole control over its military power.

“State sovereignty” is the right of a country to make its own decisions free from outside interference.

---

**Number of Democratic States in the World**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democracies</th>
<th>Non-democratic states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from “Democracy’s Century,” Freedom House.

---

**What is the role of international organizations?**

International governmental organizations (IGOs) seek to resolve problems that affect multiple states. These groups set rules for states that choose to be members. The United Nations (UN), which was formed to address issues of international security, includes all states of the world. Other organizations are regional: the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) are examples. IGOs have proven to be a significant forum for dialogue and debate among states. To many, these organizations are a vehicle for a new form of international relations.

Governments around the world have reacted differently to the emergence of these new organizations. Some states see the authority of international organizations as competing with their own. Some leading figures in the United States, for example, worry that the authority of IGOs threatens U.S. sovereignty, and could override the U.S. Constitution. Others believe that international organizations bolster national power by increasing cooperation and pooling resources. For instance, members of the EU follow the laws passed by a multinational parliament, have all-but-dissolved borders between EU states, and are adopting a single currency (the euro).

**What concerns exist about international organizations?**

Despite concerns on the part of some in the United States about the preservation of state sovereignty, the United States plays a leading role in many international
organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Bank and the IMF work to address issues of international economic development and global finance. The United States contributes the most money, and as a result is the single strongest governmental voice in these organizations. Many critics argue that these organizations serve more as agents of U.S. foreign policy than as independent organizations.

In fact, some countries’ voices are more powerful than others. Permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States), for instance, have much more sway in international politics than others. Given this discrepancy, many have begun to consider the importance of democratization not only within states but in the international governmental organizations to which states belong. Some have called for reform of the UN so that less powerful nations can participate at the same level as more powerful ones. Others say that the Security Council structure should be changed to reflect the changes in the political order since the founding of the UN.

What other groups have challenged the role of states in world politics?

In addition to the large international governmental organizations, groups smaller than states have begun affect world politics as well. For example, multinational corporations play a significant role in the global economy and often have an interest in influencing the political decisions of states. In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have had a significant impact around the globe. NGOs are generally nonprofit, private organizations with a particular interest in a public policy issue. NGOs not only lobby governments to achieve their goals, but more and more they fulfill the role of governments by pursuing their goals in the field. Different NGOs work around the world pushing for reform in education, human rights, environmental policy, health care, and poverty alleviation. Often, NGOs are more successful at solving problems and delivering services than governments because they have financial backing from donors and can sometimes act outside of government restrictions. In some cases NGOs have taken on roles that U.S. and other governmental agencies used to maintain. The number of NGOs has increased dramatically over the last thirty years. Today there are more than forty thousand international NGOs.

Other small groups have also gained international importance. Terrorists and criminal organizations are both examples of this trend. You will read more about the role played by terrorist organizations in Part III.

The role these new international and non-governmental organizations will have in the years to come remains to be seen and raises important questions for the United States. How should the United States manage its relationship with these organizations? What role should the UN play in foreign policy?

Culture and Values

Different cultures, like individuals, often have different values. The process of globalization has challenged and sometimes changed values within societies around the world. In one sense, globalization has produced strong pressures for harmonization of values around the world—in particular, the value of universal human rights. In another important sense, globalization has resulted in the interaction and competition of many different value systems on the global stage. While there have always been debate and discussion within cultures about values, globalization has brought these debates to a global scale. Sometimes the interaction of differing value systems has been a source of positive change and growth. At times, such interaction has also been a source of great tension.

How have human rights been incorporated into the values of many nations?

The notion of universal human rights emerged after World War II and the Holocaust. Proponents of these rights argue that there are certain fundamental and absolute rights that every human being possesses, regardless of
national laws or cultural traditions. Some of the fundamental human rights, as expressed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, include the right to life, liberty, security, sufficient standard of living, equality under the law, education, freedom of movement, and freedom of thought and religion. The doctrine of universal human rights emerged in step with pressures for liberty, equality, and democracy.

The international community has used economic sanctions and military action to punish or prevent extreme abuses of human rights. International courts have held leaders who abused the rights of their citizens accountable. Particularly in the past twenty years, the international community has begun to take a stand against human rights abuses.

On the other hand, how far these human rights will be extended in the twenty-first century is unclear. Some have raised questions as to how universal these values really are. Some argue that beliefs in individual liberty and equality originated in the West, and are not shared or valued by other cultures, particularly those with strong communal traditions.

The human rights championed by the UN and others are also criticized on political grounds. China, Russia, and other non-Western powers, as well as conservative critics in the United States, contend that an emphasis on human rights will topple a crucial pillar of the international system—the principle of state sovereignty. Defenders of state sovereignty maintain that states should be free from external control. Those who wish to prioritize human rights argue that state sovereignty should be limited when states violate the rights of their citizens.

Is the United States an international leader in human rights?

Today, the United States claims to be a model and international advocate of human rights. Many people consider the United States to be a leader of the international human rights movement because it was instrumental in founding the United Nations and played an important role in creating international human rights treaties. In addition, the U.S. Constitution, the first constitution that protected the rights of citizens, has been a model for other countries.

While the United States has been a leader for human rights, it sometimes places its political interests above conforming to international human rights agreements and standards. For political, economic, or security reasons,
The Arab Spring—Considering U.S. Values and Interests

In December 2010, protests began against the autocratic government in the North African country of Tunisia. Hundreds of thousands of Tunisians took to the streets calling for an end to authoritarian rule. They wanted more democracy, an end to corruption, and economic opportunity. The protests spread to more than a dozen countries in the region. In some, like Egypt and Libya, protests led to a change in government. In other countries, like Syria and Bahrain, protests have been met with fierce repression by the government.

Although several governments have cracked down on protestors and committed grave human rights violations, the U.S. response has been varied. In some instances the United States has supported demonstrators’ demands, but in other cases it has been reluctant to criticize longstanding allies. In Libya, the United States participated in an international coalition that used military force against the government of Colonel Qaddafi, a dictator that ruled the country for forty-two years. In Bahrain, U.S. officials have not voiced clear support for pro-democracy demonstrators as they have elsewhere, despite the fact that the government has conducted mass arrests and tortured protestors. The Bahrain government has been an ally of the United States for decades, and the country is home to the headquarters of the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet.

The wave of movements that swept across the region in 2011 and 2012—and the United States’ varied response to movements in different countries—sheds light on the tension between values and interests at the heart of U.S. policy. However the Arab Spring unfolds, the United States will continue to have important economic and security interests in the Middle East. Many in the United States have applauded the democratic spirit of the Arab Spring, but some experts worry that divisions in Arab societies—long-suppressed by authoritarian rulers—could boil over, leading to conflict and instability that will threaten U.S. interests.

The demonstrations present an opportunity for the United States to consider the basis for U.S. policy. Are economic and political interests more important to U.S. policy than democratic governance and human rights? What should the United States do if these values and interests come into conflict? For example, what should the United States do if supporting a new democratic government results in a rise in the price of oil, or a government that is unfriendly or hostile to the United States? In the long run, is support for all forms of democracy in the best interest of the United States?
You have read in this section about some of the numerous challenges facing the United States and the world. You have begun to examine the complex and interrelated issues that U.S. leaders are facing right now in this era of change and globalization. Because these issues have a fundamental impact on people and the countries they live in, many international relations experts see them as security issues. U.S. policies and actions in areas such as economics and the environment influence military decisions and ultimately the security of people around the world. Keep these connections in mind as you read the next section on conflict and security. For example, how do the issues surrounding culture and values affect U.S. policy in the Middle East? How do free trade policies affect relationships with impoverished nations? How do donations to global disease-fighting organizations affect security issues in the developing world?

Protests in Hama, Syria against the government of Bashar al-Assad, July 22, 2011. At least half a million people participated in the demonstration.

Policy? Should the U.S. strive to spread U.S. values and culture around the world? Should the human rights records of other countries influence U.S. foreign relations?
Throughout history, states have taken threats to their security with the utmost seriousness. As you read in Part II, security has come to mean more than military security. Economic globalization, the environment, and human health all are considered security issues. Nevertheless, military security remains a significant concern.

Today many in the United States are concerned about the war in Afghanistan, but their grandparents might be able to tell them about the threat of nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis. Their great grandparents could recount the trying times of the Second World War. As you read in Part I, U.S. citizens have often faced difficult questions about how best to secure the future of the United States. Because lives are at stake, the debates about these issues are sometimes contentious and involve competing values and beliefs. Nevertheless, throughout U.S. history these debates have been central to an active and healthy democracy.

In this section of the reading you will review some of the changes in the international system since the end of the Cold War. You will explore developments in international security in the twentieth century in order to better assess the situation today. You will also examine how U.S. policy has contributed to the international debate about the use of force. Finally, you will examine three important security problems for the twenty-first century: the war in Afghanistan, terrorism, and nuclear weapons.

After the Cold War

With the end of the Cold War came an opportunity for the UN to increase its role in maintaining international peace and security. Although the organization was still torn by rivalries among the world’s most powerful nations, the ideological gridlock of the Cold War no longer blocked decision making. Each new situation tested the international system and shaped the response to the next event.

How did Iraq challenge the international community in 1990?

In August 1990, one hundred thousand troops from Saddam Hussein’s Iraq poured across the desert border and occupied Kuwait. A few years earlier, during the Cold War, the United States might have hesitated to take strong action against Iraq for fear of setting off a wider international crisis. But by mid-1990, both the world and the U.S. outlook had changed. President George H.W. Bush (1989-...
1993) spoke of creating a “new world order” in which the leading powers would work together to prevent aggression and enforce the rule of law internationally.

The first President Bush carefully built domestic and international support for measures against Iraq. First he pushed for an economic blockade against Iraq. In November 1990, President Bush won UN approval to use “all necessary means” to force Iraq out of Kuwait. A deadline was set—January 15, 1991—for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

As the deadline approached, the United States positioned 540,000 troops in Saudi Arabia. The United States’ European allies, as well as several Arab states, contributed forces.

Despite the Iraqi dictator’s prediction of “the mother of all battles,” his army proved no match for the United States and its allies. After fulfilling the UN authorization to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait, Bush brought the ground war to a halt and allowed the remnants of Iraq’s front-line divisions to limp northward.

When the first war against Iraq ended in 1991, U.S. forces set up a UN operation in northern Iraq to protect the 3.7 million Kurds from Saddam Hussein. Until the second U.S. war against Iraq in 2003, the Kurds depended largely on the international community to protect them from the Iraqi army and to provide them with relief supplies.

**How did events in Somalia demonstrate problems with humanitarian intervention?**

While the UN operation to protect Kurds in northern Iraq seemed to provide a new model for humanitarian intervention, events in Somalia in the early 1990s showed the problems with this kind of involvement. Less than two years after defeating Iraq, the first President Bush sent twenty-five thousand U.S. troops to Somalia. The United States sent these troops at the urging of the UN to safeguard international relief efforts in the war-torn nation. Instead of establishing a successful model for outside intervention, the Somalia operation diminished U.S. public support for involvement overseas.

The U.S. public was particularly outraged by a clash in October 1993 between U.S. forces and a Somali militia that left eighteen U.S. soldiers and hundreds of Somalis dead. Television pictures of the body of a U.S. soldier being dragged through the streets of Somalia’s

---

**Presidential Doctrines**

Throughout history, U.S. presidents have had their names attached to the foreign policy doctrines they established. (A doctrine is a fundamental principle of a policy.) Below are a few examples of famous presidential doctrines.

**The Monroe Doctrine**: President James Monroe’s (1817-1825) stated that efforts by European nations to colonize or interfere in the Americas (North and South) would be considered as acts of aggression that demanded a U.S. response.

**The Truman Doctrine**: President Harry Truman (1945-1953) asserted that the United States would support democracy around the world and help states and peoples resist the spread of Soviet Communism.


**The Bush Doctrine**: President George W. Bush (2001-2009) said that the United States would use military force preventively against perceived threats to the United States even if the threat of attack was not immediate.

**The Obama Doctrine**: Historians may one day identify a foreign policy doctrine for President Barack Obama (2009- ). What do you think the Obama Doctrine might be?
capital horrified viewers and led President Clinton to order a U.S. withdrawal from the country. By the time the last U.S. troops left in March 1994, Somalia had plunged into chaos. The UN evacuated the last of the UN force from the country in 1995, leaving behind a nation without an effective central government.

**Why was the war against Yugoslavia important?**

The war against Yugoslavia in 1999 established a new precedent. For the first time, a U.S.-led international coalition launched a war to stop a government from carrying out human rights violations and genocide within its own borders. The United States and its NATO allies intervened militarily to stop the Yugoslav government from committing human rights violations and genocide against ethnic Albanians, the majority population in Kosovo, a region within Serbia.

Due to opposition from China and Russia, this intervention did not have the support of the UN Security Council. Sensitive to international scrutiny of their human rights records, China and Russia maintained that such an intervention would violate the principle of state sovereignty as protected in the UN Charter. Chinese and Russian leaders also argued that this concern for human rights was simply a ploy to bolster the influence of the United States and its NATO allies. Their staunch opposition to the intervention in Yugoslavia exposed a disagreement over what principles should govern international relations.

**The Bush Doctrine**

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush (2001-2009) developed a strategy to address the threat of terrorism, which was referred to as the “global war on terror.” The Bush administration also outlined a strategy to deal with other international security issues.

"Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. 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."

—President George W. Bush, September 20, 2001

The Bush administration argued that international relations had changed after the terrorist attacks of September 11 and that the Cold War policies of deterrence and containment could no longer serve as the only cornerstones of U.S. security policy. President Bush asserted that the United States would act alone—unilaterally—when necessary. The strategy also endorsed preventive military action to address potential threats even before an
attack against U.S. citizens or U.S. infrastructure was imminent.

**Why did these new policies cause controversy?**

President Bush’s security strategy caused controversy in the United States and abroad. Critics claimed that acting unilaterally undermined any hope for an effective system of collective security, contributed to negative perceptions of the United States, and raised legal questions about any action the United States might take. Critics also worried that the threat of preventive war might actually lead some countries to rush to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrent to U.S. military action. The debate over President Bush’s policies heightened as tensions with Iraq heated up in 2002 and 2003.

**Why did the United States invade Iraq in 2003?**

The United States stated that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and that Saddam Hussein would use them to threaten the United States. U.S. President George W. Bush denounced Saddam Hussein as a ruthless dictator that endangered his own people, his neighbors, and the world. Additionally, Secretary of State Colin Powell argued before the UN Security Council that the United States had evidence of Iraqi links to al Qaeda. Although the UN resumed weapons inspections in 2002, the Bush administration questioned their effectiveness.

Debates over what to do about Iraq intensified. Many could not agree about the nature or urgency of the problem with Iraq or how the international community should respond. The Bush administration argued that the United States had to take military action, and the U.S. Congress authorized the use of force. Although the UN Security Council did not authorize the use of force in Iraq, President Bush ordered the U.S. military to invade.

---

**The Significance of Four Interventions**

In these four cases various approaches to international conflict were tested. Both the form of intervention and the reasons for it evolved from one situation to the next.

**The Gulf War (1991):** The UN authorized the use of force against Iraq to liberate Kuwait. U.S. forces in northern Iraq stayed to protect Iraqi Kurds from Saddam Hussein. Hope for greater international cooperation about security grew.

**Somalia (1993-1995):** UN efforts to use military force to protect relief efforts ended in failure. Enthusiasm for involvement overseas decreased, especially when U.S. citizens perceived that their security and economic interests were not at stake.

**Yugoslavia (1999):** A U.S.-led NATO coalition attacked Yugoslavia in 1999 to protect an ethnic minority within Yugoslavia from genocide. The United States bypassed the UN when it failed to win approval to use force.

**War in Iraq (2003-2011):** A U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq and overthrew the Iraqi government. Claiming the right to act preventively against a potential threat from Iraq, the U.S. bypassed the UN. U.S. forces occupied Iraq and worked to establish a government friendly to U.S. interests.

---

**What has happened since the invasion of Iraq?**

In the spring of 2003, a U.S.-led military coalition invaded Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein’s government. An intensive search for WMD in Iraq began, but no conclusive evidence of WMD or direct links to al Qaeda were found. The arguments the Bush administration had used to justify war were false.

By the summer of 2003, opposition to coalition forces had grown into an insurgency (or military resistance movement) made up of
local and foreign groups fighting against the U.S. presence in Iraq. These groups were also fighting amongst each other, vying for power, and often targeting civilians.

The war has taken a devastating toll on Iraqi society. As of 2011, estimates from various independent groups ranged from 100,000 deaths to over one million. Almost one in five Iraqis—over five million people—fled their homes after the invasion because of violence, unemployment, and insecurity.

The violence in Iraq has not ended. During 2011, a series of bombings led to a surge in civilian deaths and caused the casualty rate for U.S. soldiers to reach its highest level since 2008. The last U.S. soldiers left Iraq in December 2011.

The new Iraqi government has held elections, but challenges to stability and democracy remain. Many Iraqis complain about the government’s inability to provide basic services to the people, such as clean drinking water, electricity, employment, and security.

The costs of the war to the United States, in both lives and dollars, have also been high—as have the social effects that cannot be easily quantified. As of May 2011, the United States had spent at least 700 billion dollars in Iraq. In human terms, the cost has been steep. Nearly 4,500 U.S. soldiers died in the Iraq War and over 32,000 wounded. The injuries to soldiers are not only physical. Some estimate that 25 percent of soldiers returning from the war suffer from psychological issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and substance abuse.

How has the Iraq War affected perceptions of the United States?

U.S. forces played a complicated role in the violence in Iraq. Although these forces were trying to create security and end the violence, in some ways the U.S. presence contributed to the violence. Many groups throughout the region, already angry about U.S. support for Israel, were very unhappy about further U.S. involvement in the Middle East. In some Iraqi communities, civilian deaths, imprisonment, and abuse by U.S. forces influenced many to join insurgent groups.

Analysts also note that Iraq, which did not have an al Qaeda presence prior to the U.S.-led invasion, became an active area for al Qaeda and other terrorist operations. They argue that the military presence in Iraq helped terrorist groups—in Iraq and elsewhere—recruit new members. During the war, many foreign fighters came to the country to fight in the insurgency against U.S. forces.

The conflict was generally unpopular internationally, and friction between the United States and other countries because of the Iraq War hindered international cooperation on other issues. In addition, U.S. claims of supporting democracy in Iraq and the region were met with skepticism and anger.

“I know there has been controversy about the promotion of democracy in recent years, and much of this is connected to the war in Iraq. So let me be clear: no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by another.”

—President Barack Obama, June 4, 2009

The war in Iraq remains one of the most controversial topics in U.S. and international politics, heightened by the failure of U.S. officials there to find any WMD. While many people agree that an end to Saddam Hussein’s brutal dictatorship was positive, disagreements remain and are likely to continue to play an important role in the political debate about the U.S. role in the world.

Three Security Issues

Of the many security problems in the world today, three loom especially large for the United States: 1) the war in Afghanistan; 2) terrorism; 3) the threats posed by nuclear weapons. These three challenges overlap in important ways. As you read, notice the connections between the war in Afghanistan, terrorism, and concerns about nuclear proliferation. Ask yourself, do these connections
make these problems simpler or more complex to solve?

Addressing these three issues will be a long-term effort, requiring policy makers and citizens to examine carefully the allocation of the country’s resources as well its values and beliefs. The question of how the United States chooses to address these threats in the years to come remains of great importance.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

In the weeks following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States identified Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda network as responsible for the violence. Al Qaeda was based in the country of Afghanistan with the support and approval of Afghanistan’s extreme Islamist government known as the Taliban. President Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over bin Laden and dismantle al Qaeda.

The Taliban government refused to meet the conditions of the United States, although it claimed it would put bin Laden on trial if offered conclusive evidence of his guilt.

On October 7, 2001, the United States began a military campaign in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al Qaeda. The United States and its ally the United Kingdom unleashed some of their most powerful and advanced weaponry as well as small groups of ground forces to support a campaign led by various Afghan warlords opposed to the Taliban regime. The operation overthrew the Taliban government and eliminated al Qaeda’s base of operation in Afghanistan, but many al Qaeda members, including Osama bin Laden, escaped into neighboring Pakistan.

With the support of the United Nations, Afghanistan created a new constitution in 2004 and has held legislative and presidential elections.

Nevertheless, the United States is concerned about corruption in the government and connections to Afghanistan’s vast trade in illegal opium. In addition, the reelection of President Hamid Karzai in 2009 was tainted by widespread voting fraud.

U.S. and NATO military forces remain in Afghanistan in an effort to quell violence by Taliban insurgents while the country attempts to construct a government that can provide security and stability for its people.

What are the costs of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan?

In economic terms, the war now costs the United States more than 300 million dollars a day to fight, or about 10 billion dollars a month. Human costs are also high and increasing. As of March 2012, seventeen hundred U.S. soldiers have died and more than fifteen thousand have been wounded.

In addition, life for Afghan citizens is difficult. Continued poverty, a lack of infrastructure, and civilian casualties at the hands of the Taliban and NATO forces have tested the patience of many.
What role does Pakistan play?
It is impossible to look at events in Afghanistan without considering the role that Pakistan plays. Bin Laden’s escape in late 2001 into Pakistan highlighted connections between the two countries. Pakistan’s ISI (Interservice Intelligence agency) and military had helped bring the Taliban to power and even supported al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan because they trained militants that could help in Pakistan’s confrontation with India. But after September 11, the United States demanded that Pakistan’s government stop supporting the Taliban and cooperate fully with the United States to catch Osama bin Laden.

Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan stretches for fifteen hundred miles. Taliban fighters and members of al Qaeda cross back and forth with ease. The struggle against the Taliban and al Qaeda spans the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

After September 11, the U.S. government worked quickly to gain the cooperation of Pakistan—cooperation that was necessary to conduct military operations against neighboring Afghanistan. While Pakistan had previously supported the Taliban, the Pakistani government agreed to allow some U.S. troops to be based in Pakistan. It also supported the campaign against the Taliban government. U.S. foreign aid to support Pakistan’s military and security has averaged more than one billion dollars a year since 2001. The United States sees Pakistan and its democratically elected government as a key ally, but there are some issues that complicate the relationship.

Many security experts believe that remnants of the Taliban government and al Qaeda have taken refuge in Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier Province and tribal areas and are behind the increased violence in Afghanistan. Some observers believe that elements of Pakistan’s ISI still provide support to the Taliban.

The United States has pressed Pakistan’s government to act against suspected al Qaeda and Taliban members. In 2009, Pakistan’s military launched a large-scale offensive against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Pakistan. U.S. military forces have also conducted strikes with unmanned aerial drones against suspected Taliban and al Qaeda compounds in Pakistan. The United States argues that the strikes have killed important al Qaeda and Taliban leaders. The strikes infuriate many Pakistanis, who note that innocent civilians have also been killed. Many in Pakistan resent their government’s cooperation with the United States.

How has the killing of Osama bin Laden affected the region?
On May 1, 2011 U.S. special forces stormed a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan and killed Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks, had eluded U.S. forces for ten years.

The killing of bin Laden raised more questions about the U.S. relationship with Pakistan. Abbottabad is less than forty miles from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. Bin Laden’s compound was one mile away from a Pakistani military academy. Many U.S. politicians have questioned how bin Laden was able to live there without detection. Others argue that this incident suggests that he was, in fact, aided by Pakistan’s intelligence agency.

“A lot of people on our side wonder how this could have happened without the Pakistanis knowing. If they weren’t complicit, they were incompetent, so why should we bother partnering with them?”
—Daniel Markey, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, May 2011

U.S. officials worry that Pakistan’s government is waging a selective battle against extremists: pursuing some, while ignoring or protecting others. Another worry is that Pakistan’s government does not have full control over the actions of its army and the ISI. While Pakistan’s leaders promise to cooperate with the United States—and they have in many ways—other parts of the government may not be as willing.
At the same time, many Pakistanis were angry about the U.S. raid, arguing that it violated their country’s sovereignty. Although the U.S. government had been in contact with Pakistani officials, it did not get permission for U.S. forces to enter the country. This raises important issues about U.S.-Pakistan relations. Clearly, the United States chose not to inform Pakistan’s government because it feared that information about the raid would somehow reach bin Laden and allow him to escape. For its part, Pakistan’s government believes that the United States has no intention of treating them as an equal partner in fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda, groups that have killed and wounded thousands of Pakistani citizens.

U.S. President Barack Obama (2009- ) sees the stability of both Afghanistan and Pakistan as key to preventing terrorist attacks. His goal is to prevent the Taliban from returning to power in Afghanistan and creating an environment that allows al Qaeda to plan terrorist attacks.

“I am convinced that our security is at stake in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the epicenter of the violent extremism practiced by al Qaeda. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11, and it is from here that new attacks are being plotted as I speak...We must keep the pressure on al Qaeda, and to do that, we must increase the stability and capacity of our partners in the region.”

—President Barack Obama, December 9, 2009

The U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and its relationship with Pakistan raises important questions. What should the U.S. role be in Afghanistan? How should the United States regard Pakistan’s role in the region?

Terrorism

The September 11 attacks created new challenges and priorities for U.S. policy. The attacks caused the government to rethink the ways in which it provided both international and domestic security.

“In today’s globalizing world, terrorists can reach their targets more easily, their targets are exposed in more places, and news and ideas that inflame people to resort to terrorism spread more widely and rapidly than in the past.”

—Paul R. Pillar, CIA official, 2001

One of the U.S. government’s first responses to terrorism in the aftermath of September 11 was military force. The Bush administration contended that the U.S. military should fight terrorists on foreign soil rather than allow them to attack civilians in the United States.
In 2001, the United States went to war in Afghanistan, and in 2003 it went to war in Iraq. The Bush administration considered these wars to be part of a “global war on terror.” U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq at the end of 2011, and most U.S. forces are scheduled to leave Afghanistan by 2014. In some cases, U.S. policies after September 11 resulted in harsh criticism of the U.S. government both at home and abroad.

Since the events of September 2001, attention to security threats has dramatically increased. Still, some argue that the country remains seriously underprepared for another attack. In June 2006, the Department of Homeland Security released a report that said only one quarter of states and one in ten cities had adequate plans in place to deal with a natural disaster or another terrorist attack. The chaotic federal response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 heightened concerns about unpreparedness.

**How strong is al Qaeda today?**

Many have questioned what effect the death of bin Laden will have on the strength of al Qaeda. Some experts argue that without its famous leader, al Qaeda’s influence and appeal in the Muslim world will decrease. Some point to the uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa in 2011 as evidence that there is broad support for democracy in these countries, and waning support for militant Islamist groups. Others argue that his death could provide a rallying point, and fear that it might spark violence among al Qaeda sympathizers across the world.

While al Qaeda continues to direct attacks, experts argue that one of its greatest strengths today is its ability to inspire other radical terrorist groups and individuals. Al Qaeda has morphed from a highly structured and bureaucratic organization into an ideological movement made up of a network of weakly linked groups and individuals across the world.

A growing number of terrorist groups from places like Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan, and Malaysia have affiliated with the al Qaeda network. Al Qaeda’s ideology has encouraged some national and regional terrorist groups to link their aims to the international goals of al Qaeda.

This presents new challenges and questions about how effective military power can be in a fight against terrorism. For example, other states are unlikely to harbor terrorist groups like al Qaeda, as the Taliban regime openly did in Afghanistan. This means that the U.S. struggle against terrorism may not be concentrated in a single country and victory may not be defined by easily measurable standards, such as capturing a country’s capital or occupying territory. Advanced technology, weapons, and large forces may be impossible to use against small groups of terrorists scattered around the globe.

**What other programs has the United States used to fight terrorism?**

The United States also used its military to address terrorism in other, more covert ways. Many of these programs are highly controversial, and some are so secretive that the U.S. government refuses to admit they exist.

After September 11, the U.S. government initiated programs to arrest terrorist suspects around the world and interrogate them for information about Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and future terror attacks. Extraordinary rendition refers to a secret CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) program that transports terrorism suspects to secret locations around the world. European and UN reports state that the CIA in at least one hundred cases secretly transported detainees to countries known to torture prisoners including Egypt, Syria, Uzbekistan, and Algeria. The goal of the CIA was to gather information using methods that U.S. interrogators would not use themselves.

The U.S. government also built a high-security prison for terrorist suspects at its naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In addition, the CIA kept a series of secret prisons around the world to house suspected terrorists. The United States has come under heavy international criticism for its treatment of these
individuals. Although President Obama has demanded the closure of these “black site” CIA prisons and worked to close the prison in Guantanamo, some of these programs—including extraordinary rendition—continue today.

The United States’ use of drones to launch missiles against terrorist targets is also controversial. Drone is a term for what the U.S. military calls an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). UAVs are not flown by pilots; instead they are directed by human controllers on the ground. The CIA has used drones to target terrorist groups and individuals in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Since 2004, drone attacks have killed between 1,300 and 2,100 militants in Pakistan. Estimates of both militant and civilian casualties are highly disputed.

The United States does not acknowledge that they conduct these attacks. But it is an open secret that the CIA runs the drone program, which officials claim is one of the most successful programs against al Qaeda and the Taliban. The number of attacks increased dramatically under President Obama. These attacks are highly controversial for a number of reasons, including the fact that civilians are often killed. In addition, because the program is secret, the method for determining who or what is a legitimate target is unknown. Critics argue that any U.S. government program designed to kill people should be subjected to more public scrutiny.

The drone program is linked to the rise in targeted assassinations by the U.S. government. In many recent cases—including the killing of Osama bin Laden—the United States has chosen to assassinate terrorist leaders rather than capture them and put them on trial. Many critics argue that targeted killings are illegal under U.S. law. U.S. officials claim that the individuals on the target list are military enemies of the United States and imminent threats to the security of the country.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 led to dramatic changes in U.S. foreign policy. The death of Osama bin Laden raises important questions. Has the United States reduced the threat of terrorism enough to reconsider it foreign policy? Are there other policies the United States should use to reduce the threat of terrorism?

■ Nuclear Weapons

The potential consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are difficult for most of us to imagine. Because of their destructive power, they remain among the most important security issues of the twenty-first century. Experts believe that the United States faces three challenges in this area: states that already have nuclear weapons; the potential spread of nuclear weapons to other states (known as “proliferation” of nuclear weapons); and the possibility that a terrorist might obtain a nuclear device.

![A Russian shipyard worker uses a cutting torch to break down a section of a Russian Oscar Class nuclear submarine in Severodvinsk, Russia. This Russian ballistic submarine was dismantled as part of the Nunn-Lugar/Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.](image)
The United States developed the first nuclear weapons. The United States dropped nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, killing more than 150,000 people and forcing Japan to surrender. The Soviet Union detonated its first nuclear device in 1949.

Why do Russian nuclear weapons remain a high concern to the United States?

Today, Russia and the United States have approximately 19,500 of the some 20,500 nuclear weapons in the world. Significant parts of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals remain targeted at each other’s territory—even though there is no political reason that either country would use them in a surprise attack. While an accident is highly unlikely, if one did occur the consequences would be unimaginably disastrous. Although not all of the weapons are ready to be used, some consider their presence alone to be the world’s greatest threat.

A Russian nuclear attack is no longer the chief concern of U.S. security officials. Rather, most of them fear that Russia’s transformation weakened Moscow’s grip over its nuclear weapons program.

Russian nuclear materials are scattered throughout a vast web of military installations, weapons laboratories and assembly factories, research institutes, nuclear power plants, naval fuel depots, nuclear waste storage facilities, and other sites.

According to estimates, Russia possesses 170 tons of plutonium and 750 tons of highly enriched uranium. Less than ten pounds of weapons-grade plutonium is needed to make a small nuclear bomb. An even smaller amount would be sufficient to poison the water supply of a large city and kill thousands of people.

Nuclear weapons experts fear that nuclear research centers and power plants are especially vulnerable to would-be smugglers of nuclear materials. Within Russia, criminal gangs have attempted to gain access to nuclear materials and sell them on the international black market. A few pounds of plutonium could be worth millions of dollars.

Why is the United States concerned about Russia’s nuclear scientists?

In addition to preventing the spread of nuclear materials, the United States has sought to prevent Russian nuclear scientists from selling their skills abroad. According to U.S. estimates, roughly two thousand scientists in the former Soviet Union have the technical knowledge to make nuclear arms. Hundreds more specialize in building long-range missiles that could be equipped with nuclear warheads.

The United States and other nations have provided more than $750 million to establish and support the International Science and Technology Center. The Center provides civilian employment to scientists and engineers of the former Soviet Union who helped build weapons of mass destruction.
Many of the scientists who were once elite members of the Soviet Union’s nuclear program now work at private companies that offer their services to industrializing countries. Iran has been a leading customer. The United States has maintained steady pressure on the Russian government to cooperate more in the effort to curb Iran’s nuclear program.

What is the Cooperative Threat Reduction program?

Many experts believe that the best way to reduce the threat of stolen or illegally sold nuclear weapons is to go directly to the source. In addition to treaties intended to reduce the overall number of such weapons, the United States has sponsored Cooperative Threat Reduction programs throughout the former Soviet Union designed to help dismantle, dispose of, and safely store nuclear weapons materials. The programs, also known as Nunn-Lugar for the senators who initiated them, have deactivated over six thousand nuclear warheads and destroyed hundreds of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), missile silos, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, bombers, and nuclear test tunnels since 1991. All nuclear weapons have been removed from the former Soviet Republics of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

What is nuclear proliferation?

Nuclear proliferation is the spread of nuclear weapons to other states. Since the United States exploded the first nuclear weapon in 1945, it has tried to keep these weapons out of other states’ hands. Only seven nations have declared that they have nuclear arsenals: the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, China, India, and Pakistan. Most experts believe that Israel has nuclear weapons, although Israel has never admitted this. North Korea exploded a small nuclear device in 2006 and again in 2009.

Some experts argue that it makes little difference to the United States how many other countries have nuclear weapons. They argue that nuclear weapons can help keep the peace among other nations as they did between the United States and Soviet Union. Others counter that the spread of nuclear weapons increases the chance of an accident, the unauthorized use of these weapons, or the danger that they will fall into the hands of terrorists or rogue states. Many experts worry about Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran in particular. On the other hand, South Africa’s decision to give up its nuclear weapons in 1990 and Libya’s decision to open its doors to arms inspectors encourages some and suggests that controlling proliferation is possible.

International Agreements on Nuclear Weapons

Through international agreements, the international community has tried to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology. Central to this effort is the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); 189 nations have joined the treaty. While the United States is a party to the NPT and other agreements, it has rejected other nuclear weapons treaties. For example, in October 1999, the United States Senate rejected the ratification of the UN-endorsed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which seeks to end to all nuclear weapons testing. In addition, in 2002 the United States withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia so that it could begin to develop a national missile defense. One of the most prominent arguments against these international agreements is that they limit U.S. sovereignty by reducing its military options. On the other hand, supporters assert that although the agreements may not be perfect, given the threat from rogue states and terrorists, the United States is still more secure with such treaties in force than without them. Arms control supporters believe that when agreements need to be strengthened, the United States should work with the UN and other nations to craft better agreements rather than renouncing them completely.
India and Pakistan:
Since 1947, India and Pakistan have fought three wars across the LoC—the Line of Control that separates Indian from Pakistani Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan claim the land that was divided by the partition of India in 1947. After the partition, millions of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs were displaced from their homes. Up to a million were killed in ensuing violence.

Since 1947, more than thirty thousand soldiers have died in Kashmir. Today, both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons.

In 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test, which it called a “peaceful nuclear explosion.” Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto stated that, if necessary, Pakistanis would “eat grass” in order to develop nuclear weapons of their own. On May 11 and 13, 1998, India tested five nuclear devices. On May 28 and 30, 1998, Pakistan successfully conducted its first nuclear tests.

Since 2004, India and Pakistan have made some progress toward peace, but tensions continue as do concerns about the threat of nuclear conflict. Whether India and Pakistan can resolve the problem of Kashmir remains to be seen.

Evidence has emerged that Pakistani scientists have provided both their expertise and equipment to North Korea’s and Iran’s nuclear weapons programs during the 1990s. While some scientists may have acted without the government’s knowledge, it is likely that the Pakistani government authorized much of this activity.

Another worry is that weapons may fall into the hands of extremists in Pakistan. The presence of the Taliban and al Qaeda there has many experts worried. They believe that the greatest security threat today is Pakistan’s nuclear weapons.

“I am gravely concerned about the situation in Pakistan, not because I think that they’re immediately going to be overrun and the Taliban would take over in Pakistan; I am more concerned that the civilian government there right now is very fragile.... [W]e have huge strategic interests, huge national security interests, in making sure that Pakistan is stable and that you don’t end up having a nuclear-armed militant state.”
—President Barack Obama, April 29, 2009

North Korea: In the fall of 2002, North Korea stunned U.S. officials when it admitted that it had been continuing work on a nuclear weapons program for years, violating a 1994 agreement—known as the Agreed Framework—not to develop weapons. North Korea noted that the United States had also failed to live up to its half of the 1994 agreement, which was to help North Korea produce...
two nuclear reactors for electric power. North Korea expelled the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) weapons monitors from its borders, announced that it was beginning production of nuclear materials, and declared that it was withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In August 2003, six countries—the United States, Russia, China, South Korea, North Korea, and Japan—met in the first of a series of meetings to negotiate an end to North Korea’s nuclear program. Delegates met frequently over the next few years in what became known as the “six-party talks.”

Despite the efforts of the international community, in February 2005 North Korea announced to the world that it had nuclear weapons. In July 2006 it conducted additional missile tests and in October 2006 conducted its first nuclear test. North Korea conducted its second nuclear test on May 25, 2009. Leaders around the world resoundingly condemned North Korea’s action. Many expressed concern and frustration.

North Korea, a maverick state with few allies, made it clear to the world that it has continued to pursue a nuclear weapons program. This is despite nearly two decades of high-level international talks aimed at convincing it to renounce the program. U.S. President Obama has stated that the action is a threat to international peace. Experts believe that North Korea has not yet developed the capacity to launch a nuclear weapon via missile, but this test has increased fears that North Korea is closer to becoming a full-fledged nuclear state. Analysts believe that North Korea has enough weapons-grade plutonium for six to eight nuclear weapons.

In late 2011, the death of North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong Il added to international uncertainty about the country.

Iran: The United States government worries that Iran has a program to develop nuclear weapons. The Iranian government denies it is developing weapons, but claims that as a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) it has the right to develop nuclear materials for peaceful purposes. (All countries that have signed the NPT are allowed to acquire equipment, materials, and knowledge for peaceful purposes.) The dilemma for the international community is that it is difficult to distinguish between “good atoms” for peaceful purposes and “bad atoms” for military purposes.

In a move supported by Washington and Europe, Russian officials proposed supplying Iran with fuel for its nuclear power plants that could be used only for peaceful purposes. Nevertheless, in 2009 Iran admitted that it had a secret uranium enrichment plant. In 2011, a UN report stated that Iran’s nuclear program could have a military dimension. These events have heightened concern around the world. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have negotiated closely with Iran to encourage it to end its nuclear program. Iran’s hard-line president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has staunchly defended Iran’s right to a nuclear energy program. His hostile language towards Israel has also heightened international anxiety about Iran’s intentions.

“Iran does not have a right to nuclear military capacity, and we’re determined to prevent that. But it does have a right to civil nuclear power if it reestablishes the confidence of the international community that it will use its programs exclusively for peaceful purposes.”

—Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, July 15, 2009

In 2010, Iranian nuclear enrichment facilities sustained damage from a sophisticated computer virus, known as Stuxnet. The origins of the virus are unknown, but some experts believe that Israel and the United States were behind the attack. In addition, several key Iranian nuclear scientists have been assassinated in Tehran. Tensions between the United States and Iran are high and even raise the possibility of a military confrontation. How should the United States deal with Iran? Is Iran develop-
You have just considered some of the important security issues of the day for the United States. In Part II, you read about today’s leading economic, environmental, political, and cultural issues and how globalization has presented new opportunities and new difficulties to people around the world. As these readings make clear, the world is full of complex challenges. Together, Parts II and III provide you with new tools to evaluate the world around you.

In Part I, you read about three turning points in U.S. history. You are now challenged to consider whether the United States is at a new turning point. What direction do you believe it should take in the next decade and beyond? What issues are of most concern to you? What do you think should be done about these issues? What kind of world do you want in the twenty-first century? In the coming days, you will explore four distinct alternatives—or Options. They are designed to help you think about a range of possible policy alternatives, and the risks and trade-offs involved. At the end of this reading, you will be asked to make your own choices about where our country should be heading.