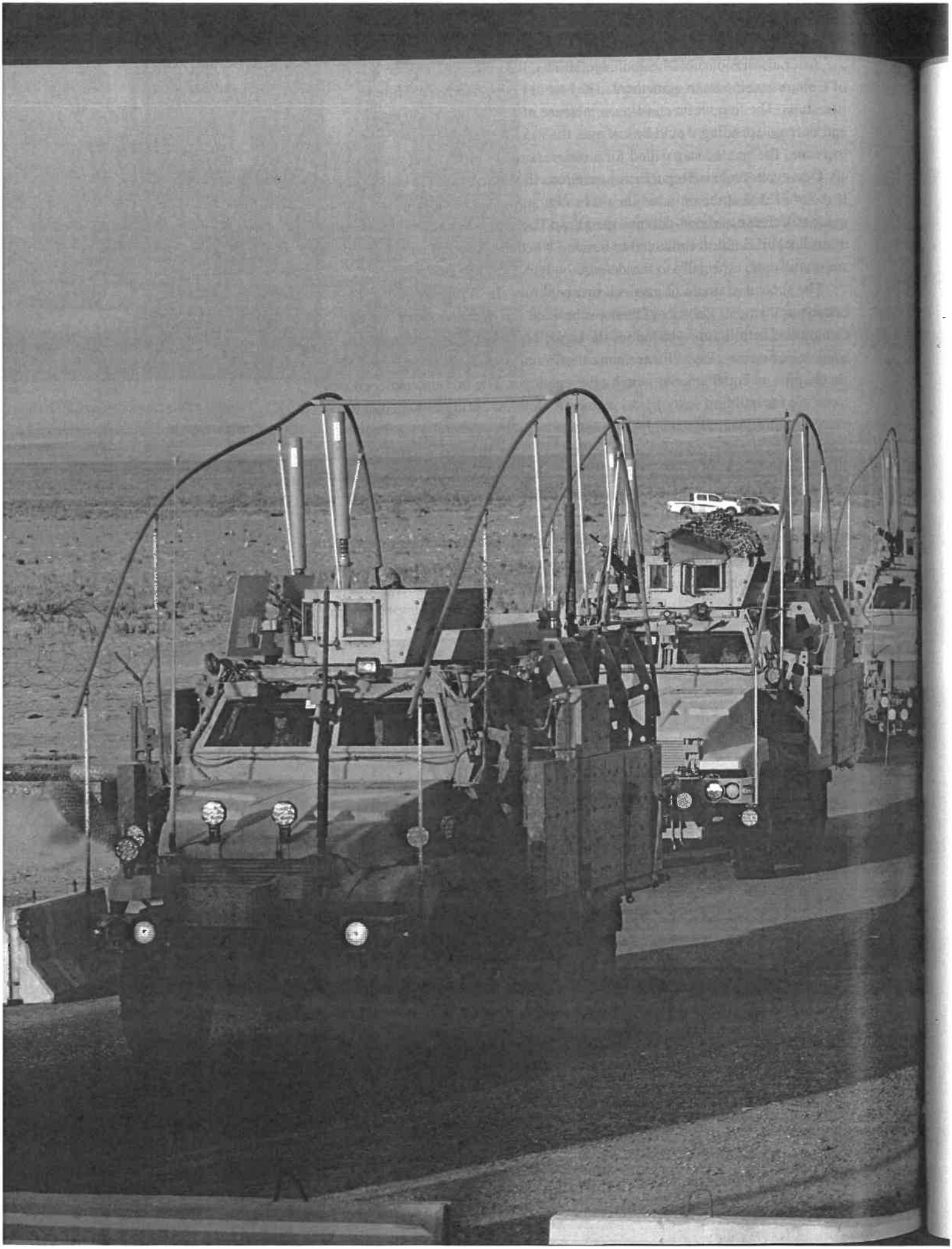


Chapter 58

U.S. Foreign Policy in a Global Age

How well have U.S. foreign policy decisions met the challenges of the global age?

58.1 Introduction

The Cold War ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Democracy had triumphed. Finally, the world would now know peace and stability. At least, that was what some Americans predicted and what most Americans hoped. Instead, the post-Cold War world presented the United States with new and often dangerous challenges. To meet those challenges, U.S. leaders have had to rethink American foreign policy.

A driving force in the post-Cold War world is the trend toward globalization, or the increasing interdependence of nations. As organizations, groups, and companies have expanded their use of the Internet, the pace of globalization has intensified. Globalization has created networks of connections among countries.

Much of that interconnectedness is economic. For example, the United States has entered into several trade pacts with other countries, and its banks do business internationally. But the globalization of trade and finance also carries risks. Today, a crisis in one part of the world might not affect just a single country or region. It could spread across the globe. This presents a foreign policy challenge—how intricately should the U.S. economy be linked to other economies?

Another challenge of the global age is military. After the Cold War, the United States stood apart as the world's only superpower. It could choose to act alone, in a unilateral ("one-sided") fashion, to pursue its political objectives. Or it could take a multilateral ("many-sided") approach, working with other countries. This presents another foreign policy challenge—how should the United States handle foreign crises that call for military action?

This rapidly changing world is full of other potential challenges, from terrorism to ethnic clashes to natural disasters. The United States is still trying to determine the best ways to deal with them. This chapter will examine how well U.S. foreign policy decisions have met those challenges so far.

In December 2011, President Obama gave a speech at Fort Bragg military base in North Carolina to mark the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq. The war lasted nearly nine years, and a majority of the American public was relieved to see it end. Ending the Iraq war had been one of Obama's chief campaign promises.

◀ The last convoy of U.S. troops leaving Iraq, December 2011

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov exchange documents after finalizing the New START treaty. The new treaty called on both countries to reduce their nuclear stockpiles by 30 percent, compared with previous limits.

58.2 The End of the Cold War Intensifies Globalization

Although people around the world welcomed the end of the Cold War, the sense of celebration was short-lived. Many crucial issues still had to be dealt with, and many difficult questions about the future had to be answered. For example, the United States and Western Europe had to reformulate their relationships with Russia and the other former Soviet republics. The pressures of globalization demanded it.

Negotiating with the Former Soviet Union Despite the tensions and dangers of the Cold War era, a certain predictable order characterized those years. The United States and the Soviet Union had largely dominated world affairs. When the Cold War ended, so did that predictability. Instead of dealing with one major adversary—the Soviet Union—the United States now faced a host of potential rivals. Some were solely economic rivals, like the European Union. Some were economic and military rivals, like China.

An immediate set of problems concerned nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union. In mid-1991, before the Soviet collapse, the United States and the USSR had signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START. This agreement called for both countries to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. Attempts to further lower each side's number of warheads, missiles, and bombers fell victim to Russian concerns over various U.S. foreign policy decisions. The 2009 round of talks, between President Obama and Russian leader Dmitry Medvedev, did prove fruitful. In April 2010, they signed New START, which would significantly limit offensive nuclear weapons.

Other former Soviet republics also possessed nuclear arms. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States tried to persuade them to place their stockpiles under Russian control. The United States feared that deadly nuclear materials might end up in the hands of terrorists or be sold to potential nuclear states such as Iran or North Korea. Eventually, all the republics agreed. However, the security of the Russian arsenal remained in doubt.

Economic problems also challenged peace and democracy in the former Soviet Union. Several republics had formed democratic governments. However, economic difficulties threatened to undermine their political stability. In October 1992, after much debate, Congress approved a foreign-aid package to help stimulate economic growth and support democracy in Russia and the newly independent states. Over the next decade, the United States provided them with billions of dollars in assistance to support the transition to a market economy and the development of civil society.

In 1999, Vladimir Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin as president of Russia. Putin's strong leadership brought stability, but the nation continued to suffer from economic woes and political corruption. Putin also restricted rights and freedoms in Russia and tried to exert influence over the former Soviet republics. When Medvedev succeeded Putin as president of Russia, he made Putin his prime minister. Putin, who still seemed to hold the reins of power in Russia, announced plans to run for the top office again in 2012. In spite of Putin's aggressive style, the United States and Russia maintained a cooperative relationship.

Building New Ties in Europe During the Cold War, the Iron Curtain divided Europe in many ways. After the Cold War ended, however, new political, military, and economic alliances developed in Europe. They included the expansion of NATO and the European Common Market.

One set of changes revolved around the collapse of the Soviet military alliance—the Warsaw Pact. Several former Warsaw Pact nations hoped to join NATO as a way to develop closer ties to Western Europe and the United States. NATO saw the addition of countries that were previously enemies as a way to increase global stability and security. Russia, however, feared that an expansion of NATO might isolate it and threaten its interests. After careful consideration, NATO agreed to enlarge its membership. It would also seek to appease Russia by giving it a voice in NATO policy. From 1999 to 2009, NATO added 12 new members from Eastern Europe.

Europe changed in political and economic terms as well. In 1992, 12 countries in Western Europe agreed to form the **European Union (EU)**. The EU was an expanded version of the 40-year-old Common Market. The goal of the EU was to advance Europe's economic integration and unify European laws and foreign policies. In 1999, most of the EU countries adopted a shared currency, the euro. Ten new member states joined the EU in 2004 and two more in 2007. Most of them came from the former Soviet bloc.

The European Union brought together the original members of the Common Market, formed in 1952, with other European nations. The EU admitted 10 new members and in 2004. Most of these countries came from the former Soviet bloc. Two more countries joined the EU in 2007, for a total of 27.

European Union, 2004


Helsinki, Finland


Gdansk, Poland


Bran, Romania

uly 1995, more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslim
s and men were murdered by Bosnian
b forces in the town of Srebrenica. This
s the worst episode of mass murder in
ope since World War II. Widows and
:hers of the victims of Srebrenica continue
ırganize protests to remind people of
se who were murdered, and of the thou-
ıds who are still missing as a result of the
snian Serb military occupation.

58.3 Responding to Ethnic Conflicts and Genocide

In the post-Cold War era, the rise of ethnic conflict posed a challenge to the United States. In parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, ethnic and national tensions that communist rulers had suppressed for decades were suddenly unleashed. Some of the worst violence occurred in the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, mass killings took place in Africa.

Ending Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia During the Cold War, Yugoslavia consisted of six republics held together under communist rule. Diverse ethnic and religious groups populated these republics. Most Serbs were Orthodox Christians. Most Slovenes and Croats were Catholics. And most Bosnians and ethnic Albanians were Muslims. Tensions simmered among these groups, but the communist system kept the situation from boiling over.

When communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia fell apart. Four of its republics declared independence, and civil war broke out in Bosnia. The fighting pitted Bosnian Serbs against the majority Muslim population. The conflict was stoked by neighboring Serbia, whose president, Slobodan Milosevic, hoped to hold Yugoslavia together under Serbian leadership.

Bosnian Serbs carried out a policy that they called **ethnic cleansing**—the forced removal and murder of certain ethnic groups, in this case, non-Serbian peoples. They rounded up Muslims, Croats, and ethnic Albanians. The Serbs burned villages, tortured and raped their victims, and committed other atrocities. They killed at least 200,000 people and caused some 2 million Bosnians to flee.

In 1995, the conflict expanded. Croats and Muslims began fighting back against the Serbs. NATO decided to support these attacks by bombing Serbian forces and installations. With the conflict widening, the United States was finally able to bring the warring factions to the peace table. Negotiations held in Dayton, Ohio, led to a peace plan called the Dayton Accords. In 1996, with a cease-fire in place, U.S. troops joined NATO forces in the region. They separated the warring factions, protected civilians, and provided economic aid.

The Serbs, however, launched another round of ethnic cleansing in the Serbian province of Kosovo. The Muslim victims in Kosovo were ethnic Albanians. At the urging of President Clinton, NATO intervened. In March 1999, NATO fighter-bombers attacked the Serbian military in Kosovo. The bombing lasted until June, when Serbian forces began to retreat.

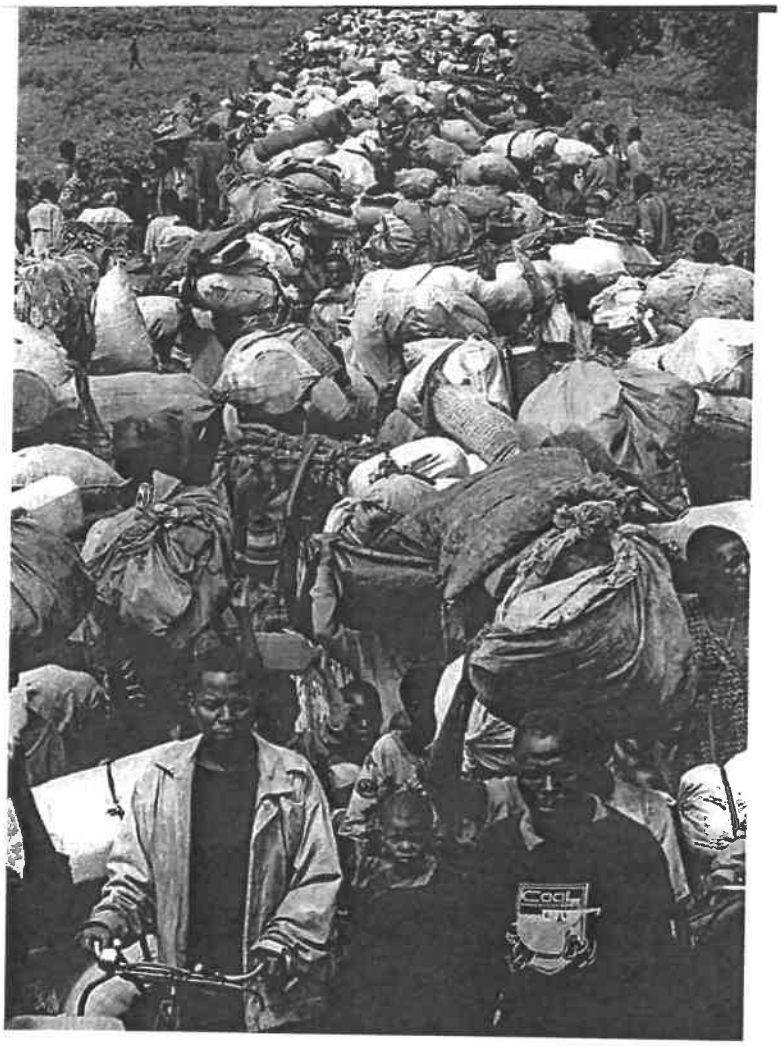
Failing to Halt Genocide in Africa Ethnic violence also took place on a massive scale in Africa. In the 1990s, hundreds of thousands died in the East African nation of Rwanda. Many more were uprooted and forced to flee. A similar tragedy struck the northeastern African nation of Sudan in the 2000s. In both cases, the United States failed to take military action to stop the violence.

In Rwanda, two rival ethnic groups, the Hutus and the Tutsis, vied for power. In 1994, the Hutu-led government lashed out at the Tutsi minority. In about three months, Hutu forces slaughtered more than 800,000 Rwandan men, women, and children, most of them Tutsis. France eventually intervened—but too late to stop the genocide. Not long afterward, Tutsi rebels managed to take control of the country.

The government of Sudan is controlled by Arabs. The western Sudan region of Darfur is populated mainly by black Africans. Long-running disputes between the two ethnic groups escalated into warfare in 2003. Sudanese troops and local Arab militias fought rebel groups in Darfur. The militias made a point of attacking civilians. According to reports from Darfur, they executed men and boys and raped and kidnapped women and girls. They often burned entire villages.

Peacekeepers from the African Union and the UN (none of whom were Americans) tried to prevent more violence. A peace treaty was signed in 2006, but not all rebel groups had agreed to it. Six years later, in spite of diplomatic efforts by the United States and other countries, hundreds of thousands of Darfuris remained in refugee camps, and fighting continued. By 2012, the conflict had killed an estimated 300,000 people, and more than 2 million civilians had fled their homes.

The United States did not take military action in Rwanda and Sudan for several reasons. In general, countries try to avoid interfering in other nations' internal affairs, which are usually best left to the individual countries to resolve. Also, although rich and powerful, the United States could not afford to get involved in every civil war around the world. But critics of U.S. inaction in Rwanda and Sudan argue that in the face of genocide, the United States had a moral responsibility to intervene in a case when human rights were being violated on such an enormous scale. They suggest that the United States would have done so if it had regarded those African nations as crucial to its own interests. Evidently, they say, it did not. Another powerful reason for ignoring the conflicts in Rwanda and Sudan relates to an earlier—and unsuccessful—intervention in the East African nation of Somalia.



In 1994, ethnic conflict and genocide forced millions of Rwandans to flee their homes. Many ended up in refugee camps in neighboring nations. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan later apologized for the world's failure to act. "The world must deeply repent this failure," he remarked. "Rwanda's tragedy was the world's tragedy."

Hasty Withdrawal from Somalia Somalia in the early 1990s was a failed state. That is, its government was ineffective, or incapable of maintaining law and order or providing public services. Civil war had led to economic collapse and famine. After the government fell, numerous rival groups fought one another for power.

Into this chaos, the United States led a multinational force to try to restore order and provide Somalis with food. In 1993, the deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers in a firefight, followed by the dragging of a dead soldier's body through the streets of the Somali capital, outraged the American public. The United States decided to pull its troops out, and the UN mission ended shortly thereafter. When later tragedies unfolded in Rwanda and Sudan, the disastrous intervention in Somalia was still fresh in the memories of U.S. policy makers—and it would remain so for years.

58.4 Supplying Humanitarian Aid

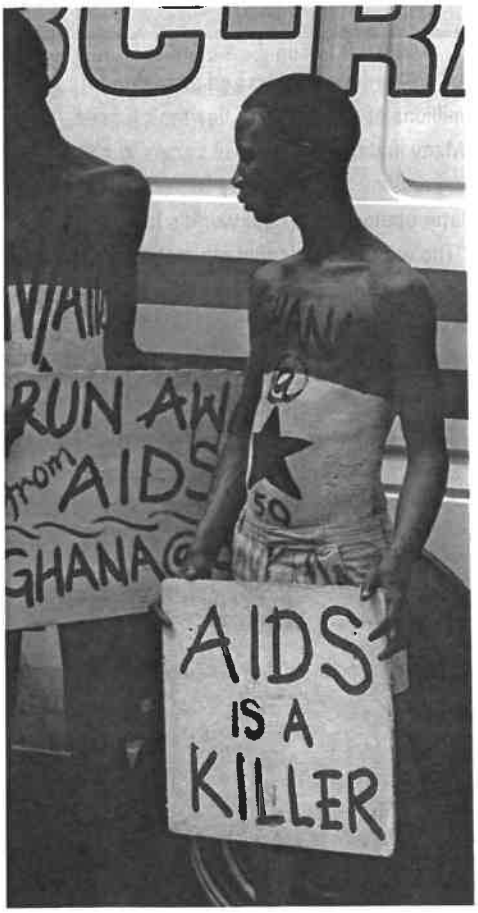
The United States hesitated to get involved militarily in Africa, but along with the rest of the world's wealthiest countries, it shipped generous amounts of food and supplies to Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, and other African countries. The U.S. government remained committed to providing humanitarian aid wherever it was needed. **Humanitarian aid** includes money, food, and other forms of assistance given to people who are suffering and in need. U.S. aid agencies often worked through the UN to combat famine, disease, and natural disasters.

Countering Famine in North Korea During the Cold War, North Korea had relied on the Soviet Union for trade and aid, including food shipments and farm equipment. After the Soviet Union collapsed, communist North Korea did not seek new global partners. Instead, it largely closed itself off from the outside world. Within a few years, famine gripped the country.

Natural disasters made the situation worse. Between 1995 and 1998, severe floods and periods of drought destroyed crops. As many as 3 million North Koreans died of starvation. In spite of its policy of isolation, in 1995 North Korea began to accept aid from the World Food Program (WFP), a branch of the United Nations. Over the next few years, the WFP oversaw the delivery of millions of tons of food to North Korea, including large shipments from the United States.

In the years that followed, North Korea's harvests rarely produced enough food to feed all of people. It relied heavily on U.S. food aid. Critics claimed that much of the food went to government officials and the army, never reaching the starving peasants it was meant to help. In 2011, three years after halting large-scale shipments of food and fertilizer to North Korea, the United States considered restarting those shipments. It hoped to link food aid to a key foreign policy goal—the resumption of stalled talks aimed at limiting North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Two young Ghanaians do their part to call attention to the problem of AIDS in Ghana. Every December 1 since 1988, World AIDS Day has been observed throughout the world. The event aims to prevent future infections by increasing awareness of the disease. Each year, the U.S. president issues a proclamation in observance of the occasion.



Dealing with AIDS in Africa In the 1990s, another humanitarian crisis emerged in Africa: the HIV/AIDS epidemic. By the end of the decade, more than 20 million Africans were infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Several million were dying every year. The United States responded slowly to the crisis. Although President Clinton offered sympathy, his administration did little to combat the AIDS epidemic.

In 2003, President George W. Bush signed a bill allocating $15 billion over a five-year period to combat AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. It was called the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). At the signing ceremony, Bush declared that the United States had a moral duty to take action and urged other rich nations to do the same.

PEPFAR was the most ambitious attempt by any one country to combat a single disease. By 2008, the U.S. government had spent $18 billion, treated some 2 million people, and provided medical care to more than 10 million others. Under President Obama, PEPFAR funding continued. Its new goals included expanding prevention, care, and treatment.

Supporting Earthquake Victims in Haiti On January 12, 2010, a huge earthquake unleashed its destructive forces on the Caribbean island nation of Haiti. Buildings collapsed in the capital city of Port-au-Prince and throughout the surrounding region. Houses, schools, hospitals, and even Haiti's parliament building were turned to rubble. At least 230,000 people died and another 1.5 million were left homeless.

President Obama immediately called for a "swift, coordinated, and aggressive effort to save lives." A disaster team arrived the next day to begin planning the U.S. response, as did members of a search-and-rescue team. In the coming days, weeks, and months, various U.S. agencies provided food, water, shelter, medical care, and other humanitarian aid. Some 20,000 Americans worked alongside teams from other countries, from the United Nations, and from numerous **nongovernmental organizations (NGOs),** such as the Red Cross. An NGO is a group formed by private individuals in order to provide a service or pursue a public policy.

Two Haitian women sit amid the rubble of the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The catastrophe in Haiti galvanized the American public to donate millions of dollars to relief organizations, such as the Red Cross.

Two years after the earthquake, in spite of the multinational efforts, Haiti had not yet fully recovered. Around half a million people were still living in camps under rough conditions. Millions had no steady job. Rebuilding was going slowly in part because Haiti's government was weak and ineffective.

Helping Japan Recover from an Earthquake and Tsunami In March 2011, an earthquake some 200 miles off the east coast of Japan generated a tsunami, a huge and powerful ocean wave. This wall of water, moving at 50 miles per hour, smashed into Japan's northern coastline and rolled several miles inland, carrying boats, cars, and houses with it. Some small towns were washed away completely. The tsunami killed more than 20,000 people.

The tsunami caused a catastrophe at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, located 150 miles north of Tokyo. After explosions in three nuclear reactors at the plant, radioactive gas leaked into the atmosphere and settled on farmlands, forests, and houses. Water used to cool the reactors carried radioactive material into the ocean. Japan's government evacuated around 90,000 residents from the surrounding "hot zone." It was uncertain whether they would ever be able to return to their homes. Months later, Japanese technicians were still trying to stabilize the reactors. Cleanup crews were working to remove contaminated topsoil from an area the size of Connecticut.

After the catastrophe at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, the Japanese government established a restricted zone around the plant and evacuated residents from the area. Months after the disaster, former residents of the town of Okuma, located within the restricted zone, returned in protective gear to attend a memorial service for victims of the tsunami.

Unlike Haiti, Japan had significant economic and technical resources. Yet it still needed help dealing with this huge natural disaster. Shortly after the earthquake and tsunami struck, disaster response teams from the United States and other countries, as well as from various NGOs, went to Japan. But much of the international aid to Japan came in the form of donations of money. Just a month after the event, Americans had already given $246 million to the relief effort.

e effect of economic globalization is off-
re outsourcing, in which companies use
rseas workers to make their products.
e, workers in China assemble laptops for
. corporations. Outsourcing opponents
that the practice takes jobs away from
erican workers. Supporters of outsourcing
ue that it benefits the U.S. economy by
ploying people in other countries who will
e their incomes to buy American products.

58.5 Competing in a Global Economy

The United States confronted new economic challenges in the post-Cold War era. At the height of the Cold War, the world had been divided into two main spheres of influence that fractured along ideological lines. In issues of trade and economic development, as in other realms, the world split between communism and capitalism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world moved quickly toward a more diverse, global economy. As a result, the United States had to find new ways to compete in the global marketplace.

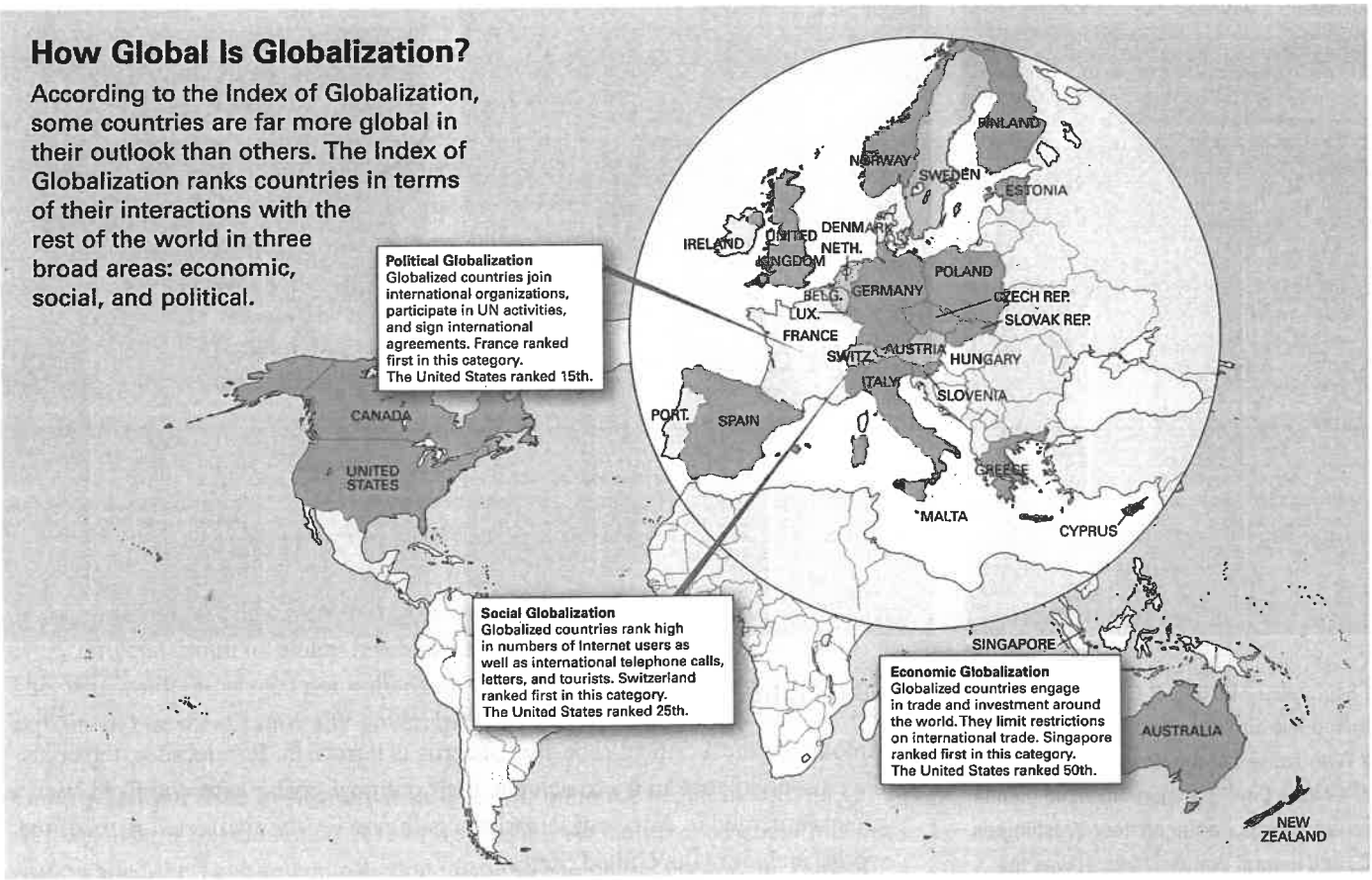
Promoting Free Trade At the end of the Cold War, the United States had the largest economy in the world. However, it ran a high **trade deficit** with economic powers such as China, Japan, and the European Union. A trade deficit occurs when the value of a country's imports exceeds the value of its exports. One way U.S. leaders hoped to correct the trade imbalance was through free trade.

To that end, in 1993, Congress passed the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**. NAFTA created a **free-trade zone** among the United States, Mexico, and Canada. A free-trade zone is a defined geographic area in which governments lower or eliminate tariffs and other barriers to international trade. Supporters of NAFTA claimed that it would increase the market for American exports and would create new, high-wage jobs for American workers. They also maintained that by boosting Mexico's economy, NAFTA would help curtail limit illegal immigration from Mexico. Opponents argued that NAFTA would cost jobs by encouraging American factories to move to Mexico, where labor costs were lower.

Whether or not NAFTA has been good for the U.S. economy is open to debate. Trade among the United States, Canada, and Mexico has increased, but the U.S. trade deficit has continued to grow. Many U.S. factories have moved out of the country, taking jobs with them, but more jobs have gone to China than to Mexico. Employment continued to rise after NAFTA, although an economic downturn starting in 2007 began a lengthy period of high unemployment.

Whatever the impact of NAFTA might be, the United States has continued to pursue free trade. In 1994, the U.S. government participated in a major overhaul of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The first GATT, signed after World War II, had required its members to reduce barriers to trade. The updated GATT called for further reductions. It also established the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**. The main function of the WTO is to set trade policies and mediate disputes among its more than 150 member nations. In the years that followed, the government made more than a dozen other trade pacts. These include a 2006 free-trade agreement with the Dominican Republic and five Central American countries. It is known as CAFTA-DR.

Challenges and Opportunities of Economic Globalization The creation of the WTO and the sharp increase in free-trade deals indicated that economic globalization during the post-Cold War era was on the rise. Several factors have contributed to its growth. Trade pacts like GATT and NAFTA have certainly spurred the expansion of the global marketplace. But advances in transportation and communications technology have been just as important. The Internet, for



example, has helped "shrink" the globe, making it possible for people in distant parts of the world to communicate and work together almost instantaneously.

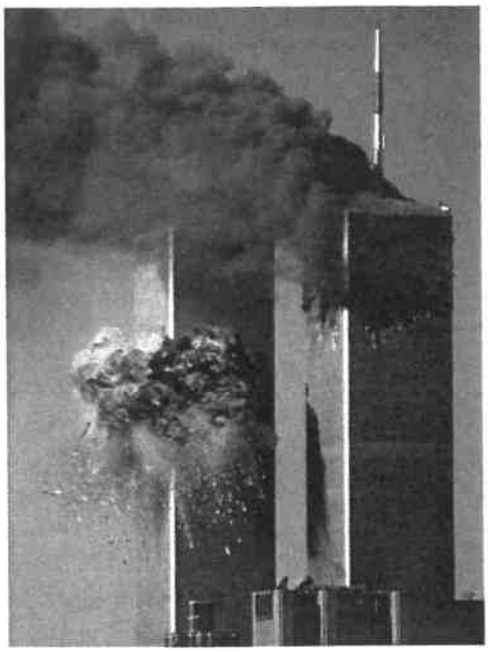
Globalization has produced many benefits. It has given more people access to goods and services from around the world. It has helped promote economic development and create new opportunities in poor countries. It has also stimulated cultural diffusion, or the sharing of ideas and customs among nations.

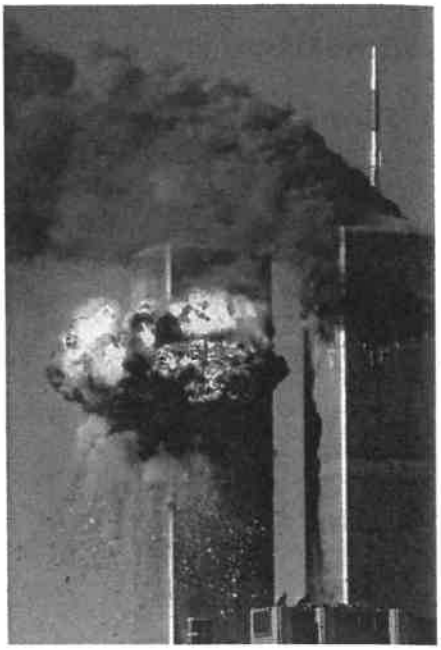
But globalization has also raised concerns. Environmentalists argue that the rapid growth of the world economy is adding to environmental problems such as global warming. Labor leaders worry about the transfer of jobs to low-wage countries. Many people are also concerned that globalization may result in a loss of cultural diversity. They fear that modern, Western values will take the place of more traditional customs. In addition, some critics argue that globalization amounts to a new type of colonialism by helping concentrate wealth in the hands of economically advanced nations and large, multinational corporations. A **multinational corporation** has facilities—offices, factories, stores, warehouses—in more than one nation.

The Great Recession, discussed in the previous chapter, showed just how perilous globalization can be. It began in the United States when the housing bubble burst and banks faced collapse. Through the financial networks that link economies around the world, the recession quickly became a global phenomenon. Clearly, the globalization that allows the free and rapid flow of goods, ideas, and money across borders can also spread financial chaos worldwide. It may create opportunities, but it also poses new and complex challenges.

The Global Top 30 in 2008

1. Belgium
2. Austria
3. Netherlands
4. Sweden
5. Switzerland
6. Denmark
7. France
8. Hungary
9. Portugal
10. Ireland
11. Finland
12. Czech Republic
13. Canada
14. Luxembourg
15. Slovak Republic
16. Germany
17. Spain
18. Singapore
19. Norway
20. Cyprus
21. United Kingdom
22. Australia
23. Italy
24. Estonia
25. New Zealand
26. Slovenia
27. United States
28. Poland
29. Greece
30. Malta





ı September 11, 2001, al Qaeda terrorists acked two airplanes and flew them into ə Twin Towers of the World Trade Center New York City. Two more hijacked planes ashed into the Pentagon near Washington, C., and in rural Pennsylvania. It was the ıgest terrorist attack ever to take place on S. soil.

58.6 Fighting Terrorism

Among the most critical security concerns is terrorism. For decades, terrorists have used violence to try to achieve their political goals. After the Cold War, groups emerged to carry out terrorist acts in previously unaffected parts of the world, including the United States.

Terrorists Strike the United States A series of terrorist attacks took place during the Clinton administration. In 1993, Muslim terrorists set off a bomb beneath the World Trade Center in New York City. In 1998, the U.S. embassies in the East African nations of Kenya and Tanzania were bombed. Then, in 2000, terrorists attacked the USS *Cole,* a Navy destroyer anchored off the coast of the Arab nation of Yemen. In response, the United States arrested and prosecuted suspects. It also launched missile strikes against terrorist camps overseas.

Such actions did not deter terrorists. The next attack occurred during George W. Bush's presidency and was by far the worst in U.S. history. On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes. They flew two of the planes into the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center, causing both towers to collapse. The third airplane hit the Pentagon, the Defense Department's headquarters just outside of Washington, D.C. The fourth crashed in a Pennsylvania field after passengers fought with the hijackers. This last plane had been heading for either the White House or the Capitol building. Altogether, about 3,000 people died in the terrorist acts of 9/11.

In the days that followed, Americans learned that an international terrorist network called **al Qaeda** had carried out the 9/11 attacks. The organization's leader was Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian and Muslim extremist. Al Qaeda sought to rid Muslim countries of Western influence and establish a "pan-Islamic caliphate"—a kind of kingdom ruled according to fundamentalist Islamic principles. Al Qaeda had also carried out the U.S. embassy attacks in Africa and the assault on the USS *Cole.*

Bin Laden ran al Qaeda from Afghanistan, but local al Qaeda cells, or groups, operated all over the world. They often took refuge in failed states, where the government was weak. To coordinate activities, they used modern communications technologies—cell phones, the Internet, encrypted e-mail, and laser disks. Electronic transfers of money financed those activities.

In 1998, bin Laden had declared that all Muslims had a duty "to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian or military." Bin Laden was not representing the feelings of the vast majority of Muslims, who reject terrorism as being counter to Islamic values. But he did speak to a general feeling among some Muslims that the United States did not respect Islam or support Muslim interests. These Muslims resented having thousands of U.S. soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia years after the Persian Gulf War's end. They also resented U.S. support for Israel in its struggle with the Arab Palestinians. Bin Laden used those bitter feelings to promote his cause and to recruit terrorists.

President Bush reacted to al Qaeda's attacks on September 11, 2001, by declaring a **war on terror**. In a speech to Congress he stated, "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." This war would be waged not only against the terrorists themselves, Bush explained, but also against any governments that sponsored them.

Ending Taliban Rule in Afghanistan The war on terror began in 2001 in Afghanistan, al Qaeda's main base of operations. At the time, a radical Muslim group called the **Taliban** controlled the nation. The ultraconservative Taliban were known for their harsh punishments and their rules barring women from working, receiving an education, or enjoying other basic rights. The Taliban also permitted al Qaeda to operate terrorist training camps on Afghan soil.

After 9/11, President Bush asked the Taliban to turn bin Laden over to the United States. The Afghan leaders refused. The United States formed an international coalition to overthrow the Taliban and capture bin Laden. In early October 2001, U.S. and British forces began bombing al Qaeda camps and Taliban military sites. U.S. ground troops and anti-Taliban Afghan militias also joined the fighting. By mid-November, Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, and other major cities had fallen. U.S. Marines took on the task of subduing the remaining Taliban fighters. The U.S forces then began to hunt for bin Laden, who had gone into hiding.

Toppling the Iraqi Regime After the victory in Afghanistan, President Bush turned his attention to another Southwest Asian country—Iraq. In his State of the Union address in January 2002, Bush referred to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an "axis of evil." These nations, he said, all had **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**. WMD include chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Bush feared that Iraq, in particular, might provide such weapons to terrorists.

Since taking power in 1979, Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein, had compiled a horrific human-rights record. He brutally tortured and killed his opponents. In the late 1980s, he used chemical weapons against the Kurds, an ethnic group in northern Iraq. At least 50,000 Kurds died. After the Persian Gulf War, Saddam—a Sunni Muslim—crushed a rebellion by Shi'a Muslims in southern Iraq.

.S. military troops departed from Iraq in late 011, ending nearly nine years of American ıilitary operations in the Iraq War. Shown ere are troops from the Third Brigade, First avalry Division, part of the last U.S. combat nits to depart from Iraq, arriving at their ome base in Fort Hood, Texas.

The Sunni and Shi'a branches of Islam have a long-standing rivalry in the Muslim world. In putting down the rebellion, Saddam murdered many thousands of Shi'ites and other Iraqis. He also blocked UN inspectors in their search for WMD, which the victorious coalition forces had banned in Iraq after the Gulf War.

After 9/11, President Bush accused Saddam of aiding terrorists and hiding WMD. Bush thus urged an extension of the war on terror to Iraq. Iraq had taken no direct action against the United States. Yet Bush insisted that Saddam had WMD and that a real threat existed. He was ready to act unilaterally, without the approval of U.S. allies or the UN. The president's foreign policy of taking action to head off trouble became known as the Bush Doctrine. In October 2002, persuaded by Bush's arguments, Congress authorized the president to send troops to Iraq if necessary.

In March 2003, the United States launched an invasion of Iraq. President Bush did seek to enlist the support of the international community, as he had said he would. He put together a "coalition of the willing" that consisted of some three dozen nations that agreed to send troops. But several European allies, including France and Germany, opposed the invasion, and the UN failed to approve it.

Within a month, coalition forces had seized Iraq's capital, Baghdad, and toppled the government. Saddam escaped, only to be captured eight months later, tried in an Iraqi court, and executed. Meanwhile, U.S. inspection teams began the search for banned weapons. However, they would later find that Iraq had no significant weapons of mass destruction.

The Second Phase of the Iraq War After a quick victory, the United States struggled to bring peace to Iraq. It undertook a mission of **nation building**—the construction of political institutions and a stable government in a country. Although most Iraqis welcomed the end of Saddam's regime, some resented having foreign troops in their country. An armed resistance, including insurgent forces from both inside and outside Iraq, soon rose up to battle the coalition forces. The Iraq War entered a second, much longer phase.

Attempting to destabilize the new government, insurgents used guerrilla warfare and terror tactics, such as the assassination of Iraqi leaders. They ambushed coalition troops, often employing roadside bombs that could be detonated from a distance. Meanwhile, armed conflicts between rival Sunni and Shi'a militias increased, especially in Baghdad. Many analysts began calling the conflict in Iraq a civil war.

In January 2007, President Bush announced that 30,000 more troops would be sent to Iraq. This "troop surge" helped U.S. and Iraqi forces get better control of the country. Over the next several years, U.S. forces remained a prime target of the violence. But that violence slowly diminished. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government grew more stable, and with the help of U.S. trainers, the Iraqi army and police gained the skills and experience needed to keep order in the country.

In August 2010, President Obama announced that all U.S. troops would leave Iraq by the end of the following year. The withdrawal went according to plan. The last U.S. troops left Iraq in December 2011.

Nearly 4,500 U.S. soldiers were killed in the Iraq War. Neither the United States nor the Iraqi government provided an official count of Iraqi civilian deaths over the nine-year war. Estimates of civilian deaths reported by private

organizations and the UN varied widely and were greatly disputed. One U.S.-British independent group run by peace activists estimated between about 90,000 and 100,000 civilian deaths. In 2010, an independent organization called WikiLeaks released an archive of several hundred secret Pentagon reports on the Iraq War. The reports were posted online and were made available to several major news organizations. According to these reports, most civilians were killed by other Iraqis.

War Continues in Afghanistan In Afghanistan, the Taliban resurfaced as an armed force. Its fighters regularly attacked the Afghan army and the coalition forces, which were now under NATO command and made up largely of American soldiers. The Taliban, along with a limited number of al Qaeda advisers, launched its attacks largely from the mountainous border region of Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan. They were able to take back territory that they had earlier lost. In late 2009, following the strategy that worked in Iraq, Obama announced a surge of 33,000 U.S. troops into Afghanistan. As in Iraq, the surge helped NATO forces blunt the Taliban assaults.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military launched a successful campaign to weaken al Qaeda by killing some of its leaders. It owed its success largely to the use of drones, remotely piloted aircraft whose missiles could be directed at targets on the ground. Drone attacks killed a number of al Qaeda officials in Pakistan, causing the Pakistani government to protest that U.S. strikes were violating their sovereignty. The United States provoked a harsher protest from Pakistan in May 2011, when an American assault force on the ground in Pakistan finally located and killed Osama bin Laden.

With bin Laden dead and the Taliban no longer in control, Obama decided to begin withdrawing U.S. soldiers from Afghanistan. According to his timetable, the troops would gradually pull out of the country, the last leaving in 2014. However, some military leaders believed that U.S. forces would have to stay longer to ensure that the Taliban would not retake control.

Soldiers in Apache Company 2-28 of the U.S. Army prepare for a patrol in Afghanistan. More than 2 million U.S. troops served in Afghanistan and Iraq since the 9/11 attacks, deployed from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

In 2005, Iraqis took advantage of their new democratic rights to elect a national assembly. Many proudly showed off their ink-stained fingers—proof that they had voted in the election.

58.7 Challenges and Progress

One of the United States' foreign policy goals is to promote freedom and democracy around the world. U.S. military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq were intended to support that goal. In 2011, however, a movement to achieve democratic government in several countries in North Africa and the Middle East came not from the United States but arose within that region. People in North Africa and the Middle East sought democratic rule in a series of uprisings against authoritarian rulers.

Afghanistan and Iraq The United States and the United Nations worked with Afghan opposition groups to establish a democratically elected government. By 2005, the nation had a new president and a constitution. The constitution included rights and freedoms found in many Western democracies. It made Afghanistan an Islamic republic, but it also guaranteed freedom of religion. In addition, it ensured that women would have the same legal rights as men. A second round of national and provincial elections took place in 2009. These elections—the first post-Taliban elections run by the Afghan government—were marred by incidents of violence and widespread charges of voter fraud.

Afghanistan continued to experience serious problems as it struggled to recover from decades of war. Although the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan removed the Taliban from power in 2001, Taliban leaders continued to act against the Afghan government and U.S. forces. The resurgence raised concerns both in the United States and in Afghanistan that women's rights would once again be threatened.

The United States also supported efforts to build democracy in Iraq. In October 2005, Iraqis voted by a large majority to approve a new constitution. As in Afghanistan, Islam would play a role in the nation's laws, but Iraqis would enjoy most of the rights and freedoms of other democracies. Two months later, Iraqi voters cast ballots to elect a national assembly. In 2010, Iraq again held an election that led to a national government in which the country's major political parties agreed to share power. Despite progress, Iraq continued to suffer from political violence. Attempting to destabilize the new government, insurgents used guerrilla warfare and terror tactics, such as the assassination of Iraqi leaders. Meanwhile, armed conflicts between rival Sunni and Shi'a militias continued, especially in Baghdad.

The Arab Spring In 2011, a remarkable wave of democratization swept across North Africa and the Middle East. It consisted of a series of popular revolts against oppressive rulers in this largely Arab region. Together, they became known as the **Arab Spring**.

The Arab Spring began in the North African country of Tunisia in late 2010. Tunisians, many of them young and unemployed, took to the streets to protest the lack of jobs, poverty, and government corruption. After just a few weeks, the growing demonstrations caused Tunisia's president to flee the country.

Tunisia's outburst of democratic action triggered other civil unrest. At the end of January 2011, pro-democracy demonstrations broke out in several Egyptian cities. By April, huge protests in the capital city of Cairo led to

the downfall of the government and the arrest of Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak. Similar protests, most of them peaceful, followed in Algeria, Yemen, Lebanon, Iran, Bahrain, and elsewhere.

In Libya, however, it took an armed rebellion to overthrow dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi. The rebels relied on NATO air strikes, some of which were carried out by U.S. aircraft.

Beginning in early 2011, rebels also fought for democracy in Syria. Syria's dictatorship government responded with with heavy military force, leading to thousands of civilian deaths. The United States supported the rebels with trade sanctions, and a call for Syria's president to resign. In early 2012, it was too soon to know if the Arab Spring countries would achieve fully democratic rule.

Gauging Future Foreign Policy Challenges As the second decade of the 21st century began, several areas of the world posed ongoing challenges for the United States. Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon remained a key issue. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process had to be revived. Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Pakistan, needed support to maintain stability and democratic rule.

As U.S. military operations in Iraq ended, the United States began focusing more attention on Asia. India and China, both with robust economies, have increased military spending, especially on their navies. U.S. officials viewed India's naval buildup as a way to add stability to the region, while helping balance power on a continent dominated more and more by China.

The United States also began to reassert its power in Asia. In 2011, it opened a new military base in Australia, not far from the vital shipping lanes of the South China Sea. This move showed that the United States was serious about looking after old allies such as Japan and South Korea and making new friends in Asia.

In 2011, Libyans celebrated the official declaration of their country's liberation from 42 years of dictatorship under Muammar al-Gaddafi. Revolutionary leaders set up a Transitional National Council that pledged to lead the country to a democratically elected government.

Summary

The beginning of the 21st century brought hopes for a new era of peace and cooperation in the world. Nevertheless, the United States faced many challenges.

Ethnic cleansing and genocide Ethnic conflicts in various countries prompted mixed responses from the United States. In the former Yugoslavia, the United States backed NATO military actions against ethnic cleansing. However, it failed to stop genocide in Rwanda and Sudan.

Humanitarian aid The United States offered humanitarian aid in a number of countries, including Somalia, North Korea, Haiti, and Japan. To combat the rise of HIV/AIDS in Africa, the United States funded a program of prevention, care, and treatment.

Free trade The United States promoted free trade as part of a growing trend toward economic globalization. The North American Free Trade Agreement linked Mexico, Canada, and the United States.

Fighting terrorists The al Qaeda terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, prompted the United States to declare a war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Building democracy The United States worked with Afghans and Iraqis to try to build stable democracies in their countries. It also supported, although less directly, the Arab Spring uprisings.