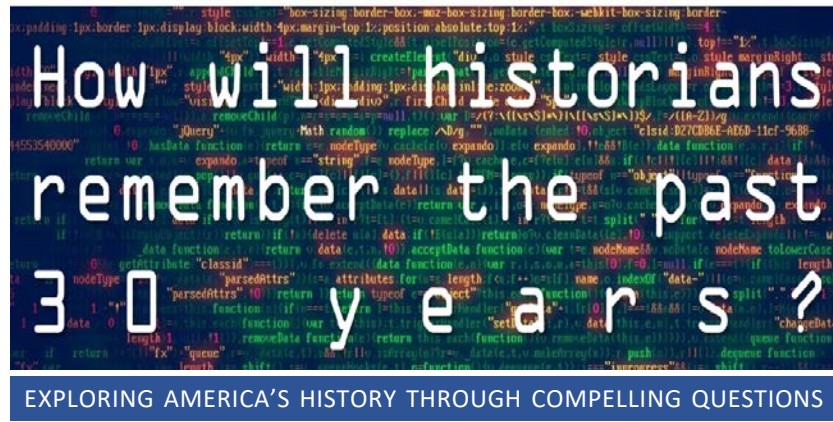






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Q U E S T I O N N I N E T E E N



S U P P O R T I N G Q U E S T I O N S

- 1 CAN THE UNITED STATES BE THE WORLD'S POLICE OFFICER?
- 2 IS THE WAR ON TERROR WORTH THE COST?
- 3 WILL THERE EVER BE A POST-RACIAL AMERICA?
- 4 IS OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM BROKEN?

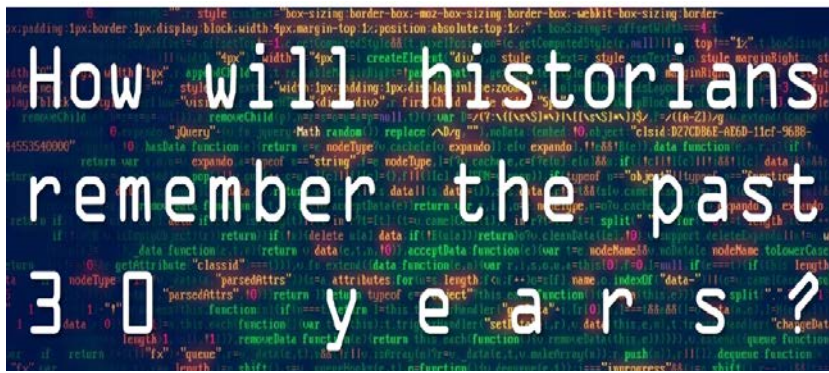
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QUESTION NINETEEN



Looking back, we can separate truly impactful events from things that seemed important in the moment but had no lasting influence because we can analyze their impact on the course of history. That's why most historians are reluctant to include the most recent few decades in their textbooks. How can we write a history of the years we're living through right now without the benefit of hindsight? The answer is that we probably can't. But that's not going to stop us from trying! After all, it's the time we've lived through, which means it's most relevant, to us.

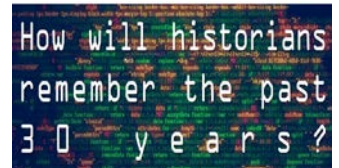
Of course, we know our analysis of the present won't be perfect. No doubt in the coming years we will rewrite this chapter again and again as we see what actually results in important change and what does not.

However, now that we have studied the past and understand the story of how we got here, we can look at the present with a historian's eye and consider what people in the future will say about us.

What do you think, how will historians remember the past 30 years?

1

F I R S T Q U E S T I O N CAN THE UNITED STATES BE THE WORLD'S POLICE OFFICER?



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INTRODUCTION

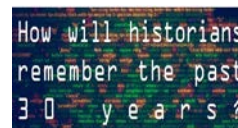
For decades, the contours of the Cold War had largely determined American action abroad. Strategists saw each coup, revolution, and civil war as part of the larger struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. But after 1989 with the Soviet Union vanquished, the United States was suddenly free of this paradigm, and Presidents Bush, Clinton, Bush, Obama and Trump have seen international crises differently from their predecessors.

President George H. W. Bush envisioned a post-Cold War role in which the United States used its overwhelming military superiority and influence as global policing tools to preserve peace. President Bill Clinton also used the armed forces in this policing role. President George W. Bush oversaw the opening of a new conflict – the fight against terrorism – but both he and Barack Obama also sent America's fighting men and women into combat in the role of the world's police force.

Can this be America's role in the world? Can we act as the police officer, patrolling the smaller conflicts, weighing in and picking sides to ensure that justice is served and peace preserved? 2000 years ago the Mediterranean World lived under the so-called Pax Romana as the forces of the Roman Empire ensured a long period of peace between former enemies who fell under the reach of their empire. Can, or should the world now live in an era of Pax Americana?

What do you think? Can the United States be the world's police officer?

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THE FIRST GULF WAR

The Middle East had always been a source of interest for the United States. Jews who had survived the Holocaust in Europe during World War II, fled to Palestine in the Middle East and founded the modern nation of Israel which Americans have always supported. The nations of the Persian Gulf supply the United States and the rest of the world with oil, an essential ingredient of the modern economy. During the Cold War, conflicts in the Middle East, such as the war between neighbors Iraq and Iran served as proxies for our conflict with the Soviet Union. For these, and a variety of lesser reasons, the Middle East has always been a point of American interest.

At the end of the Cold War, the Middle East became a source of increased concern. In 1988, Iraq faced a problem. It had run up an enormous debt during its war with neighboring Iran. At the same time, other Arab states had increased their oil production, forcing oil prices down and further hurting Iraq's economy. Iraq's leader, **Saddam Hussein**, approached these oil-producing states for assistance, particularly Saudi Arabia and the tiny, but wealthy neighboring Kuwait. When talks broke down in August 1990, and Iraq found itself politically and economically isolated, Hussein ordered the invasion of oil-rich Kuwait.

The invasion of Kuwait served as a new test for the United States in the post-Cold War era. President George H. W. Bush had a choice. On the one hand, he could intervene to protect Kuwait, essentially recasting the role of the United States from Soviet adversary into global cop. On the other, the United States could stand back and allow minor conflicts around the world to go on without notice. For many, the second option seemed best. After all, without the threat of communism, what possible reason did the United States have to get involved?

President Bush, however, chose the first option. He and his foreign policy team forged an unprecedented coalition of 34 countries, including many members of NATO and the Middle Eastern countries of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, to oppose Iraqi aggression. The Saudis had never allowed American troops on their soil before, and during the Cold War Syria and Egypt had been friendly with the Soviet Union. Bush hoped that this coalition would herald the beginning of a "new world order" in which the nations of the world would work together to deter belligerence. For the first time, Woodrow Wilson's dream of moral diplomacy looked like it might be coming true.

A deadline was set for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face serious consequences. Bush first deployed troops to defend Saudi Arabia in Operation Desert Shield. On January 14, Bush succeeded in getting resolutions from Congress authorizing the use of military force against Iraq and the United States launched an effective bombing campaign. The air war was the first time the United States deployed some of its new, high-tech



Saddam Hussein: Dictator of Iraq from 1979 until 2003. He was a strong Arab nationalist and led his nation during the Iran-Iraq War as well as the First Gulf War and the American invasion of Iraq after 9/11.

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weaponry, including stealth bombers and laser-guided bombs. After successfully weakening the Iraqi defenses, the United States launched Operation Desert Storm, a 100-hour land war involving over 500,000 American troops and another 200,000 from 27 other countries. Iraqi forces were expelled from Kuwait and almost entirely destroyed. Together, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm are now known as the **First Gulf War**.



The First Gulf War: Conflict in 1990 between Iraq and an American-led international coalition after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It was the first major test of American foreign policy after the Cold War.

Primary Source: Photograph

President George H. W. Bush flew to the Middle East to meet the troops during the First Gulf War.

Some controversy arose among Bush's advisors regarding whether to end the war without removing Saddam Hussein from power, but General **Colin Powell**, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argued that to continue to attack a defeated army would be "un-American." Bush agreed and troops began moving out of the area in March 1991. Although Hussein was not removed from power, the war nevertheless suggested that the United States no longer suffered from Vietnam Syndrome and would deploy massive military resources if and when it thought necessary. In April 1991, United Nations Resolution 687 set the terms of the peace, with long-term implications. Its concluding paragraph authorizing the UN to take such steps as necessary to maintain the peace was later taken as the legal justification for the further use of force, as in 1996 and 1998, when Iraq was again bombed. It was also referenced in the lead-up to the second invasion of Iraq in 2003, when it appeared that Saddam Hussein was refusing to comply with other UN resolutions.

Apart from the end of Vietnam Syndrome, the Gulf War was important for a number of other reasons. Unlike the Vietnam War, Bush's use of the military to stop one nation from invading a smaller neighbor proved to be enormously popular. Americans tied yellow ribbons around trees in their



Colin Powell: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the First Gulf War and later Secretary of State under George W. Bush at the start of the War on Terror.

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yards and on the radio antenna of their cars to show support for the troops. At the Super Bowl in 1991, Whitney Houston sang the National Anthem, then released the recording which went platinum. Americans were caught up in patriotic fervor. So many who had feared “another Vietnam,” but video images of laser guided bombs blowing up Iraqi radar stations and missile sites gave Americans reason to be proud of their nation’s status as the world’s greatest military power. It was the first war to be shown on cable news, and it went so well that the tiny minority of people who protested were drowned out by the enormous show of support for the president and the armed forces. For the military itself, the war had enormous consequences. The leaders of the war, like Colin Powell, had been young officers in Vietnam, taking orders from an older generation. This time, they were in charge, and they showed that the modernized army, navy, and air force with its high tech weapons had come a long way since the days of the disaster in Vietnam.



Primary Source: Photograph

Whitney Houston’s rendition of The Star Spangled Banner at the Super Bowl during the First Gulf War is the only recording of that song ever to break the Top 10 charts for popular music in the United States.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

As discussed earlier, the United States has been a strong ally of the nation of Israel since its inception after World War II. Israel’s history is one of violent conflict with its neighbors. The mostly Muslim, Arab nations that exist today in the Middle East around Israel were British protectorates at the end of that war and did not want to lose land to what they saw as invaders. The Jewish immigrants who built the nation of Israel fought a war for their existence against these Arab neighbors in 1948 and won. That victory ensured the existence of their country, but also set up a long-standing conflict, that the United States has always been interested in ending.

Most problematic was the fate of the Palestinians, the original residents of the land that became Israel itself. Many had been expelled from their

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homes, or had fled during the fighting and were living in the nations surrounding Israel. Some had taken up arms under the leadership of Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian Liberation Organization, which carried out terrorist attacks on Israelis around the world.

In the 1970s, American diplomats had their first measure of success when President Jimmy Carter helped negotiate peace between Israel and Egypt. 14 years later, another Democratic president found a way to inch the peace process along. In September 1993, at the White House, Yitzhak Rabin, prime minister of Israel, and Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), signed the **Oslo Accords**, granting some self-rule to Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. A year later, the Clinton administration helped facilitate peace treaty between Israel and its neighbor Jordan.



Oslo Accords: 1993 peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was an important step towards lasting peace in the Middle East and one of President Bill Clinton's foreign policy successes.



Primary Source: Photograph

Yitzhak Rabin (left) and Yasser Arafat (right), shown with Bill Clinton, signed the Oslo Accords at the White House on September 13, 1993. Rabin was killed two years later by an Israeli who opposed the treaty.

THE BALKAN WARS

As a small measure of stability was brought to the Middle East, violence erupted in the **Balkans**, the region in the southeastern corner of Europe. For the previous half-century, the region had been united as Yugoslavia, a communist nation behind the Iron Curtain. Yugoslavia consisted of six provinces: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Each was occupied by a number of ethnic groups, some of which shared a history of hostile relations. Ethnic and national disputes in the Balkans were nothing new. The murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the trigger that led to World War I, had taken place in the heart of the Balkans. In May 1980, the leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, died. Without him to hold the country together, ethnic tensions increased, and this, along with the breakdown of communism elsewhere in Europe at the end of the 1980s, led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. In 1991, Croatia,



The Balkans: Region in southeastern Europe made up of many small nations. It marks the boundary between Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East and has traditionally been a source of conflict throughout history. World War II started there and it was the site of intense civil wars following the collapse of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War.



Serbia: Christian Slavic nation in the Balkans. It is the center and largest nation to be formed after the fall of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War and was the aggressor in the wars during the 1990s against its neighbors Bosnia and Kosovo.

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Slovenia, and Macedonia declared their independence. In 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina did as well. Only **Serbia** and Montenegro remained united as the Serbian-dominated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

With the fall of communism and the lack of any dominating authority like Tito, ethnic tensions within **Bosnia and Herzegovina** escalated into war. Yugoslavian Serbs aided Bosnian Serbs who did not wish to live in an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. These Bosnian Serbs proclaimed the existence of autonomous Serbian regions within the country and attacked Bosnian Muslims and Croats. During the conflict, the Serbs engaged in **genocide**. The brutal conflict also gave rise to the systematic rape of Muslim women by Serbian military or paramilitary forces. The International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia estimated that between 12,000 and 50,000 women were raped during the war.

NATO intervened in 1995, and President Bill Clinton agreed to American participation in airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs. That year, the **Dayton Accords** peace settlement was signed in Dayton, Ohio, ending three and a half years of war in Bosnia. Four years later, the United States, acting with other NATO members, launched an air campaign against Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia to stop it from attacking ethnic Albanians in **Kosovo**. Although these attacks were not sanctioned by the UN and were criticized by Russia and China, Yugoslavia withdrew its forces from Kosovo in June 1999.



The fighting in the Balkans helped define a new role for NATO. First founded as a mutual defense alliance to counter the Soviet Union, some had been wondering what purpose the alliance had in the years after the end of the Cold War. Now, the years of planning, joint exercises, and coordination paid off as the forces from the various NATO powers could collaborate, share



Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Independent nation that was formed in the Balkans after the fall of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War. It was the site of intense civil war and genocide as Christian Serbs murdered Muslims. The war concluded with the Dayton Accords in 1995.



Genocide: Mass murder in an attempt to eliminate an entire population of people. The Holocaust of Jews in Europe during World War II is one example.



Dayton Accords: Peace agreement signed in 1995 that ended the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

President Bill Clinton was influential in the negotiations and American airstrikes against the Serbian military helped convince Serbians to negotiate.



Kosovo: Independent nation that was formed in the Balkans after the fall of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War. Its population is primarily ethnic Albanian and the United States led NATO in a bombing campaign to prevent Serbia from carrying out mass murder.

Primary Source: Photograph

Marines walk with a group of children in Kosovo during the American intervention there. American soldiers have served as peace keepers in various places. The case of Kosovo is one of the successful uses of military might to end mass murder.



Madeline Albright: Secretary of State under Bill Clinton in the 1990s. She was the first woman to hold the position and a strong advocate of military intervention in the Balkans to prevent genocide.

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bases, hardware and carry out joint missions to achieve what they saw as a goal of ending genocide. The American Secretary of State at the time, **Madeline Albright**, had been a child in Czechoslovakia during World War II, and understood the dangers of hate and dictatorship in Europe. Her leadership was crucial in guiding the alliance in its new mission as a force for justice.

The United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) after the war. A total of 161 individuals were indicted, setting an important precedent for the role of the United Nations in the years after the Cold War. Not since the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials at the end of World War II had there been an international court to force perpetrators of genocide to face justice.

SOMALIA AND RWANDA

The use of force in the decades after the Cold War did not always bring positive results. For example, in December 1992, George H. W. Bush sent a contingent of American soldiers to **Somalia**, initially to protect and distribute relief supplies to civilians as part of a United Nations mission. Without an effective Somali government, however, the warlords who controlled different regions stole food, and their forces endangered the lives of UN workers. In 1993, the Clinton administration sent soldiers to capture one of these leaders, Mohammed Farah Aidid, in the city of Mogadishu. The resulting battle proved disastrous. A Black Hawk helicopter was shot down, and Army Rangers and members of Delta Force spent hours battling their way through the streets. 84 soldiers were wounded and 19 died. The United States withdrew, leaving Somalia to struggle with its own anarchy.

The sting of the Somalia failure probably contributed to Clinton's reluctance to send American forces to end the 1994 genocide in **Rwanda**. In the days of brutal colonial rule, Belgian administrators had given control to Tutsi tribal chiefs, although Hutus constituted a majority of the population. Resentment over ethnic privileges, and the discrimination that began then and continued after independence in 1962, erupted into civil war in 1980. The Hutu majority began to slaughter the Tutsi minority and their Hutu supporters. President Clinton was aware of the extent of the killing, but chose not to send American troops to intervene, fearing another failure like the one in Somalia. In 1998, while visiting Rwanda, Clinton apologized for having done nothing to save the lives of the 800,000 massacred in three months of genocidal slaughter. In the end, the United Nations also set up a court to try criminals from Rwanda as well, but justice after the fact is nothing compared to the lives that might have been saved if the power militaries of the world had been sent to stop the killing.



Somalia: Nation in the east of Africa. The government failed there and the United States has tried at various times to provide humanitarian aid. In 1992, American soldiers carried out a failed mission in which 19 American soldiers died trying to protect UN workers.



Rwanda: Small nation in east-central Africa that was the site of genocide in 1994. President Bill Clinton and the United States was criticized for not intervening to stop the massacre.

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THE ARAB SPRING

Americans have a mixed record of protecting life and supporting democracy in the past decade. The various uprisings of the Arab Spring have shown the limits of both American military might and political willpower.

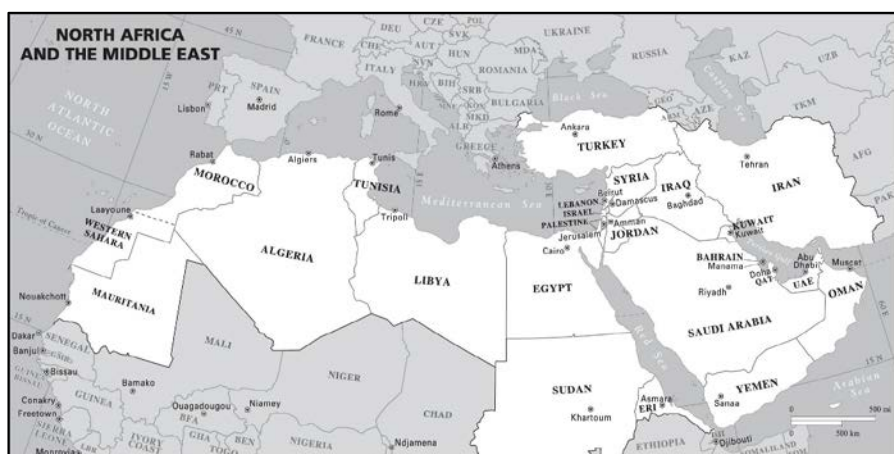
The **Arab Spring** was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across the Middle East in late 2010. It began in response to oppressive regimes and a low standard of living, beginning with protests in Tunisia.



Arab Spring: A series of protests and uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East beginning in 2010 focused on the overthrow of corrupt, dictatorial regimes. Most of the uprisings have turned into violent civil wars with only Tunisia have converted to a democracy.

Secondary Source: Map

This map of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa shows almost all of the places the United States has been involved in since the end of the Cold War.



The effects of the Tunisian Revolution spread strongly to five other countries: Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain, where either the regime was toppled or major uprisings and social violence occurred, including riots, civil wars or insurgencies. Sustained street demonstrations took place in Morocco, Iraq, Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and Sudan. The early hopes that these popular movements would end corruption, increase political participation, and bring about greater economic equity collapsed by mid-2012, as many Arab Spring demonstrations were met with violent responses from authorities. Large-scale conflicts resulted in Syria, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. As of May 2018, only the uprising in Tunisia has resulted in a transition to constitutional democratic governance.

LIBYA

Protests against Libya's dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, began in **Libya** in 2011 and within a few days, the opposition controlled most of Benghazi, the country's second-largest city. Gaddafi amassed his army and prepared to invade Benghazi, promising to kill everyone in the city. To protect civilians from what appeared to be imminent slaughter, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution to create a no-fly zone over Libya, and authorized "all necessary measures" to protect civilians.



Libya: Arab nation in North Africa. For many years it was ruled by dictator Muammar Gaddafi until he was overthrown during a revolution that grew out of the Arab Spring. Airstrikes by American, French and other nations protected civilians during the revolution and weakened Gaddafi's forces.

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Two days later, France, the United States and the United Kingdom intervened in Libya with a **bombing campaign against pro-Gaddafi forces**. A coalition of 27 states from Europe and the Middle East soon joined the intervention. President Obama addressed the nation and articulated America's role as global cop. "For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and as an advocate for human freedom. Mindful of the risks and costs of military action, we are naturally reluctant to use force to solve the world's many challenges. But when our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act." For Obama and his advisors, the possibility of mass murder in Libya qualified as a threat to American values.

The air attacks did not end the war. It took five more months before anti-Gaddafi fighters captured Tripoli, scattered Gaddafi's government and ended his 42 years of rule. After the government fell the civil war continued between various factions within Libya. Obama and his foreign policy team had not anticipated the chaos that would follow Gaddafi's demise and he said in 2016 that failing to plan for Libya after Gaddafi was the "worst mistake" of his presidency.

In 2019, various Libyan factions again fought for control of the nation's capital. The head of the United Nations was unable to convince the sides to refrain from violence and the government that took power after the fall of Gaddafi appeared to be in jeopardy.



2011 Airstrikes in Libya: Attacks by American and 26 other nations on Libyan government forces under the command of Gaddafi in order to stop the slaughter of civilians during the Libyan Civil War.

Primary Source: Photograph

Airmen from the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri prepare B-2 Spirit stealth bombers for an attack on Libya. The modern air force has the ability to send bombers around the world on long missions. Some have criticized the United States for using its military to strike for a distance, separating Americans from the actual fighting.

SYRIA

Protests in **Syria** started in 2011 as part of the Arab Spring in response to aggressive tactics by the government security forces, most notably when they arrested children for writing antigovernment slogans. When protests erupted, approximately 3,000 people were arrested. The government



Syria: Arab nation at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders both Iraq and Israel and is the site of the worst civil war that resulted from the Arab Spring protests. The United States has been

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responding with harsh security clampdowns and military operations when the protests spread. In July, Syrian army tanks stormed several cities killing protesters. By the end of the year, the opposition had formed into a military force and began taking control of territory in an attempt to oust Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

Battles between the government's security forces and the rebel Free Syrian Army intensified. Massacres ensued in which hundreds of civilians were killed in a single day. By mid-2012, the peaceful protests of 2011 had evolved into full scale civil war. The **Syrian Civil War** remains ongoing. The United States has opposed the government of Bashar al-Assad, due to both his opposition to democracy and his use of force against his own people.



reluctant to become fully involved in the conflict.



Syrian Civil War: Ongoing war within Syria between government forces, anti-government opposition forces, terrorist groups, Americans, Russians, Iranians, and a variety of other players. The war has resulted in an enormous humanitarian crisis and millions of refugees.

Primary Source: Photograph

A destroyed neighborhood in the Syrian city of Raqqa. The war has been especially deadly for civilians.

However, Iran and Russia support the government. American presidents Obama and Trump have both shown great reluctance to commit the military to the fight in Syria. The United States is supporting the anti-government forces with material and financing, but even when it seemed clear that Assad had deployed chemical weapons against his own people, Obama asked Congress to vote before using force against the government. When Congress voted no, Obama focused instead on trying to negotiate with Assad to convince him to voluntarily give up his remaining chemical weapons. This effort was at least partially successful, with Assad agreeing to turn over his chemical weapons to an international group that would destroy them. He turned over some, but not all of his chemical weapons stockpile.

The United States had not entirely stayed out of the fighting. In 2014, American aircraft conducted airstrikes against terrorist forces from Iraq that had moved into Syria as well as some against government and pro-government targets. They also deployed special forces and artillery units to engage terrorists on the ground.

Russia, on the other hand, has deployed its jets in Syria with the explicit goal of supporting Assad and the government forces. Some Americans find this deeply unsettling as Russia seems to have the upper hand in a new sort of

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proxy war. President Trump promised not to get involved in the Syrian Civil War as part of his **American First** policy, but ordered a bombing raid against Assad's forces when it was clear that he had once again used chemical weapons in an attack against civilians.

International organizations have accused virtually all sides involved, including the government, opposition rebel groups, Russia, terrorist organizations, and the United States of severe human rights violations and of massacres. Over the course of the war, a number of peace initiatives have been launched, but fighting continues.

The conflict has caused a major refugee crisis with approximately half of the entire population having been displaced. Millions have fled to neighboring Lebanon, creating unrest there. Millions have also sought refuge in Europe. While some European leaders have welcomed Syrian refugees, others have not. Anti-immigrant sentiment has been a growing political issue in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, in large part due to the flood of refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria and other conflicts associated with the Arab Spring. Whereas President Obama was welcoming to the first waves of Syrian refugees, President Trump has sought to bar all Syrians seeking a new home in America.

PUTIN'S RUSSIA

While the United States has launched airstrikes and sometimes used ground troops against weaker nations, no president has been willing to go head to head with powerful foes Russia or China. When Russia invaded its small neighbor Georgia in 2008, President George W. Bush said, "Such an action is unacceptable in the 21st Century," and that Russia would "jeopardize" its standing with the West if it did not withdraw its forces. Although the Bush administration contemplated a military response to defend Georgia, it decided against it so as to not provoke a conflict with Russia.

The problem the United States faces today in dealing with Russia is not just that it is the successor state to the Soviet Union and possesses nuclear weapons, but also that its new leader, **Vladimir Putin**, is a fierce nationalist who has publicly decried Russia's loss of prestige. He said, "the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster" and as a former Soviet spy, seems intent on manipulating global politics to his nation's advantage. After convincing his nation to rewrite its constitution so that he could return to power, he embarked on a campaign to rebuild the glories of decades past.

Especially distressing to Americans who favor international action and an active role for the United States in promoting global peace and security are the aggressive actions of Russia in **Ukraine**. The Ukraine was once an important part of the Soviet Union, but since 1991 has swayed between pro-Russia and pro-European politics. The nation itself is divided between Ukrainians who speak the Ukrainian language, and those who speak Russian. In 2014, Ukrainians who wanted closer ties with the West rose up in protest



America First: President Trump's foreign policy. He generally has advocated isolationism, but has used the military to intervene in some cases, such as in Syria.



Vladimir Putin: President of Russia. He believes that Russia should rebuilt its power in the world and has led his nation in attacks on neighbors Georgia and Ukraine, as well as ordered the interference in American and other European nations' elections.



Ukraine: Nation in the far east of Europe bordering Russia. It was an important part of the Soviet Union but is not torn between pro-European and pro-Russian factions. Crimea was a part of this nation until Russia invaded and it is the site of ongoing Russian intervention.

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in the capital city of Kiev when the president announced the he would not be signing a trade agreement with the European Union. That president, Viktor Yanukovich, eventually fled to Russia and power was turned over to a pro-European president.

Following the ousting of Yanukovich, Putin ordered Russian troops to occupy **Crimea**, a peninsula that had been a part of Ukraine since 1954 but had been Russian territory before that. Putin declared that the territory rightfully belonged to Russia, and given that most of the residents were pro-Russian, Russian speaking Ukrainians, his forces faced little opposition as they swept in and installed a new government subordinate to Russia.

Western leaders, including President Obama were horrified at Putin's aggression. Many saw parallels to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. However, despite tough talk, the United States did nothing to stop the Russian invasion. Obama noted, "Bigger nations can bully smaller ones to get their way." Like Truman who was criticized for allowing communists to take over China in 1949, Obama was criticized by his political opponents for not preventing a conflict he had little control over. Launching a military attack against Russia today is as unthinkable as invading China seemed in the late 1940s.



Crimea: Peninsula in the south of Ukraine jutting out into the Black Sea. It was part of Russia until 1954 and was retaken by force by Russian forces in 2014 under the direction of Vladimir Putin. The United States protested and implemented sanctions against Russia, but took no military action to stop Russia's move to annex the territory.

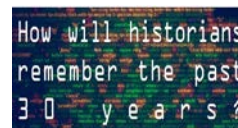


Primary Source: Photograph

Vladimir Putin meeting with President Obama in 2012. A series of American presidents have been unable to control Putin's aggressive actions.

Putin went further by ordering his troops, sometimes in uniform and sometimes not, into Eastern Ukraine. On July 17, 2014, Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 was shot down while flying over the border between Russia and Ukraine. Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk laid the blame on professional soldiers who came from Russia, stating that "it was done by Russian professionals and coordinated from Russia," adding that "the whole

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world has learned about the Russian lies and Russian propaganda.” As of today, the Russian government rejects claims that Russia bears any responsibility for the crash and denies involvement. The Russian defense ministry said that it had never deployed anti-aircraft missile systems in Ukraine. Several false conspiracy theories about the crash have since appeared in Russian media, including that the aircraft was followed by a Ukrainian military jet. The United States and its allies, however, trusted the results of an international investigation which concluded that the plane had been brought down by a Russian anti-aircraft missile.

In response to Russia's actions in the Ukraine and Crimea, the United States and its European allies implemented **sanctions against Russian businesses and top government officials**. These sanctions were responsible for the collapse of the Russian economy in 2015. One reason Putin was so eager to help Donald Trump win the presidency in 2016 was that Trump proposed reducing the sanctions in an effort to reduce tensions between the United States and Russia.



Russian Sanctions: Restrictions on Russian business dealings implemented by Congress after the Russian invasion of Crimea and Ukraine in 2014. They negatively impacted the Russian economy and are one reason Russia interfered in the American election in 2016.

CONCLUSION

For the purposes of studying history, we have broken down American military activities after the Cold War into two broad categories: police actions, and the war on terrorism. Everything you just learned about American intervention in the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa and Ukraine, is only part of the story. It was be entirely understandable if you started to long for the simplicity of the Cold War. You would not be alone. Truly, America's foreign affairs are complicated. Whereas the Cold War had a simple goal: stop communism, the years since have been much less one-dimensional.

In 1990 when President George H. W. Bush launched the First Gulf War and expelled the Iraqis from Kuwait, it seemed that the role for the United States might be global police officer. When Bill Clinton led NATO's efforts to end genocide in the Balkans that role appeared to be solidified. But then the United States did not stop genocide in Rwanda or a civil war in Syria, and refused to even consider military force against Russia, which leaves us today with some interesting questions.

Should we try to be the world's police officers? Could we if we wanted to? What responsibility do we have to others as a democracy and the world's most powerful military and economy?

What do you think? Should the 21st Century be an age of Pax Americana? Can, or should the United States be the world's police officer?



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Saddam Hussein: Dictator of Iraq from 1979 until 2003. He was a strong Arab nationalist and led his nation during the Iran-Iraq War as well as the First Gulf War and the American invasion of Iraq after 9/11.

Colin Powell: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the First Gulf War and later Secretary of State under George W. Bush at the start of the War on Terror.

Madeline Albright: Secretary of State under Bill Clinton in the 1990s. She was the first woman to hold the position and a strong advocate of military intervention in the Balkans to prevent genocide.

Vladimir Putin: President of Russia. He believes that Russia should rebuilt its power in the world and has led his nation in attacks on neighbors Georgia and Ukraine, as well as ordered the interference in American and other European nations' elections.



KEY CONCEPTS

Genocide: Mass murder in an attempt to eliminate an entire population of people. The Holocaust of Jews in Europe during World War II is one example.

Russian Sanctions: Restrictions on Russian business dealings implemented by Congress after the Russian invasion of Crimea and Ukraine in 2014. They negatively impacted the Russian economy and are one reason Russia interfered in the American election in 2016.

America First: President Trump's foreign policy. He generally has advocated isolationism, but has used the military to intervene in some cases, such as in Syria.



TREATIES

Oslo Accords: 1993 peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was an important step towards lasting peace in the Middle East and one of President Bill Clinton's foreign policy successes.

Dayton Accords: Peace agreement signed in 1995 that ended the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. President Bill Clinton was influential in the negotiations and American airstrikes against the Serbian military helped convince Serbians to negotiate.



LOCATIONS

The Balkans: Region in southeastern Europe made up of many small nations. It marks the boundary between Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East and has traditionally been a source of conflict throughout history. World War II started there and it was the site of intense civil wars following the collapse of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War.

Serbia: Christian Slavic nation in the Balkans. It is the center and largest nation to be formed after the fall of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War and was the aggressor in the wars during the 1990s against its neighbors Bosnia and Kosovo.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Independent nation that was formed in the Balkans after the fall of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War. It was the site of intense civil war and genocide as Christian Serbs murdered Muslims. The war concluded with the Dayton Accords in 1995.

Kosovo: Independent nation that was formed in the Balkans after the fall of Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War. Its population is primarily ethnic Albanian and the United States led NATO in a bombing campaign to prevent Serbia from carrying out mass murder.

Somalia: Nation in the east of Africa. The government failed there and the United States has tried at various times to provide humanitarian aid. In 1992, American soldiers carried out a failed mission in which 19 American soldiers died trying to protect UN workers.

Rwanda: Small nation in east-central Africa that was the site of genocide in 1994. President Bill Clinton and the United States was criticized for not intervening to stop the massacre.

Libya: Arab nation in North Africa. For many years it was ruled by dictator Muammar Gaddafi until he was overthrown during a revolution that grew out of the Arab Spring. Airstrikes by American, French and other nations protected civilians during the revolution and weakened Gaddafi's forces.

Syria: Arab nation at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders both Iraq and Israel and is the site of the worst civil war that resulted from the Arab Spring protests. The United States has been reluctant to become fully involved in the conflict.

Ukraine: Nation in the far east of Europe bordering Russia. It was an important part of the Soviet Union but is not torn between pro-European and pro-Russian factions. Crimea was a part of this nation until Russia invaded and it is the site of ongoing Russian intervention.

Crimea: Peninsula in the south of Ukraine jutting out into the Black Sea. It was part of Russia until 1954 and was retaken by force by Russian forces in 2014 under the direction of Vladimir Putin. The United States protested and implemented sanctions against Russia, but took no military action to stop Russia's move to annex the territory.



EVENTS

The First Gulf War: Conflict in 1990 between Iraq and an American-led international coalition after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It was the first major test of American foreign policy after the Cold War.

Arab Spring: A series of protests and uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East beginning in 2010 focused on the overthrow of corrupt, dictatorial regimes. Most of the uprisings have turned into violent civil wars with only Tunisia have converted to a democracy.

2011 Airstrikes in Libya: Attacks by American and 26 other nations on Libyan government forced under the command of Gaddafi in order to stop the slaughter of civilians during the Libyan Civil War.

Syrian Civil War: Ongoing war within Syria between government forces, anti-government opposition forces, terrorist groups, Americans, Russians, Iranians, and a variety of other players. The war has resulted in an enormous humanitarian crisis and millions of refugees.

2

S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N

IS THE WAR ON TERROR WORTH THE COST?

How will historians
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INTRODUCTION

The dominant foreign policy issue in the past two decades has been the War on Terror. Begun when al-Qaeda attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, the War on Terror has extended to distant battlefields and in classrooms, courtrooms and halls of power.

In addition to foreign terrorism, Americans also are dealing with terrorists who come from within, especially a dangerous epidemic of mass shootings, as well as an increase in overall gun violence.

To counter these threats we have gone to war in the Middle East, but also implemented new policies at home. We created the Department of Homeland Security and most noticeably the TSA to protect the nation's airlines. We passed laws that gave the government the power to monitor our cell phone usage, and then after realizing how intrusive the government had become, we took that power away again. Even now, we debate the balance between the right to own guns for sport and the right to be safe from violence perpetrated by others.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and cost Americans trillions of dollars. The thousands of gun deaths at home have produced no significant change in the law, and little change in public opinion about gun regulation.

For all that we've spent, and all we've endured, are we safer? What do you think? Has the War on Terror been worth the cost?

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DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Some in America have grown to fear the government, especially after trust in the nation's leaders was rocked during the 1970s by the Watergate and other scandals. Those fears appeared to be confirmed in the spring of 1993, when federal and state law enforcement authorities laid siege to the compound of a religious sect called the **Branch Davidians** near Waco, Texas. The group, which believed the end of world was approaching, was suspected of violating gun laws and various members of the sect had resisted arrest. A standoff developed that lasted nearly two months and was captured on television each day. Federal official decided to make a final assault on the compound to end the siege. As police moved in, 76 men, women, and children died in a fire set by members of the sect. Many others committed suicide or were killed by fellow sect members.

During the siege, numerous people who held antigovernment views and those who feared that the government would use force to take away their freedom came to satisfy their curiosity or show support for sect members inside the compound. One was Timothy McVeigh, a former army infantry soldier. McVeigh had served in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, earning a bronze star, but he became disillusioned with the military and the government when he was deemed psychologically unfit for the Army Special Forces. He was convinced that the Branch Davidians were victims of government terrorism, and he and a friend, Terry Nichols, determined to avenge them.



Branch Davidian Raid: 1993 raid by the FBI and other law enforcement authorities on the compound of a cult group in Waco, Texas after a long standoff. The raid went badly and the cult members set their compound on fire and committed suicide. The raid inspired the Oklahoma City bombing.



Primary Source: Photograph

Charles Porter IV's photograph of a fireman cradling one of the children killed in the Murrah Federal Building attack captured the shock and horror many Americans felt and won the Pulitzer Prize.

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Two years later, on the anniversary of the day the Waco compound burned to the ground, McVeigh parked a rented truck full of explosives in front of the **Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building** in Oklahoma City and blew it up. More than 600 people were injured in the attack and 168 died, including 19 children at a daycare center inside. Charles Porter IV, one of the workers in the building was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the photo he snapped of a fireman cradling one of the children who died in the bombing. The image captured the shock, horror and sorrow many Americans felt.

McVeigh hoped that his actions would spark a revolution against government control, but it did not. He and Nichols were both arrested and tried. McVeigh was executed for the worst act of terrorism yet committed on American soil. Just a few months later, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 broke that dark record.

SEPTEMBER 11

Unlike the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma, the September 11 attacks were carried out by foreigners. The group responsible, **al-Qaeda** was not new. In fact, they had already launched attacks against Americans, including an attempted bombing of the World Trade Center a few years before that had failed.

Al-Qaeda was led by **Osama bin Laden**, a wealthy man from Saudi Arabia who had gone to Afghanistan in the 1980s to fight against the Soviet invasion. In Bin Laden's mind, Muslims and their values were under siege from Christians in America and Europe. To be sure, almost no Muslims in the world supported his extreme views, but he found a small following and the conservative government of Afghanistan in the 1990s protected him and his group. They called themselves al-Qaeda and planned and carried out terrorist suicide attacks on American targets.

In 1996, bin Laden personally engineered a plot to assassinate United States President Bill Clinton while the president was visiting the Philippines. However, intelligence agents discovered the plot and alerted the Secret Service. Agents later discovered a bomb planted under a bridge.

On August 7, 1998, al-Qaeda **bombed the US embassies** in the East African nations of Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 people, including 12 Americans. In retaliation, President Clinton ordered an attack with cruise missiles against an al-Qaeda base in Afghanistan.

In 2000, al-Qaeda militants in Yemen **bombed the missile destroyer USS Cole** in a suicide attack, killing 17 navy servicemen and damaging the vessel while it lay offshore. Inspired by the success of such a brazen attack, al-Qaeda's command core began to prepare for an attack on the United States itself.



Bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building: 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building killing 168 people. It was the most deadly terrorist attack in America before 9/11 and the most deadly every carried out by American citizens.



Al-Qaeda: Terrorist group led by Osama bin Laden that carried out the 9/11 attacks.



Osama bin Laden: Leader of al-Qaeda and mastermind of the 9/11 terror attacks. He was eventually killed by American special forces in 2011.



1998 Embassy Bombings: Attacks by al-Qaeda suicide bombers against Americans in Kenya and Tanzania in Africa before the 9/11 attack.



USS Cole Attack: Suicide bombing of an American navy destroyer in 2000 by al-Qaeda.

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Shortly after takeoff on the morning of **September 11, 2001**, teams of hijackers seized control of four American airliners. Two of the airplanes were flown into the twin towers of the **World Trade Center** in Lower Manhattan. Morning news programs assumed it had been an accident. Turning their cameras on the burning building, they captured and aired live footage of the second plane as it barreled into the other tower in a flash of fire and smoke. Less than two hours later, the heat from the crash and the explosion of jet fuel caused the upper floors of both buildings to collapse onto the lower floors, destroying the towers and damaging many of the surrounding skyscrapers as well. The passengers and crew on both planes, as well as 2,606 people on the ground all died, including 343 New York City firefighters who rushed in to save victims shortly before the towers collapsed.

The third hijacked plane was flown into the **Pentagon** building, the headquarters of the military, just outside Washington, DC, killing everyone on board and 125 people on the ground. The fourth plane, also heading towards Washington, crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, when passengers, aware of the other attacks, attempted to storm the cockpit and disarm the hijackers. Everyone on board was killed.



September 11, 2001: The most deadly terrorist attack in American history. Al-Qaeda members hijacked four airlines and flew them into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon across the river from Washington, DC. A fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania when passengers attempted to retake control.



World Trade Center: Largest skyscrapers in America in 2001 before they collapsed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.



Pentagon: Headquarters of the American military. The large building is across the Potomac River from Washington, DC and was the target of one of the hijacked planes in the 9/11 attack.

Primary Source: Photograph

Firefighters raised an American flag on the rubble of the collapsed World Trade Center. Americans were enormously unified in the wake of the attack and supportive of President Bush. This photograph has often been compared to the images of the flag raising on Iwo Jima by marines during World War II.

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THE BUSH DOCTRINE

That evening, President Bush promised the nation that those responsible for the attacks would be brought to justice. Three days later, Congress issued a joint resolution authorizing the president to use all means necessary against the individuals, organizations, or nations involved in the attacks. On September 20, in an address to a joint session of Congress, **Bush declared war on terrorism**, blamed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden for the attacks, and demanded that the radical Islamic fundamentalists who ruled Afghanistan, the Taliban, turn bin Laden over or face attack by the United States. This speech encapsulated what became known as the **Bush Doctrine**, the belief that the United States has the right to protect itself from terrorist acts by engaging in pre-emptive wars or ousting hostile governments in favor of friendly, preferably democratic, regimes.

World leaders and millions of their citizens expressed support for the United States and condemned the deadly attacks. Russian president Vladimir Putin characterized them as a bold challenge to humanity itself. German chancellor Gerhard Schröder said the events of that day were “not only attacks on the people in the United States, our friends in America, but also against the entire civilized world, against our own freedom, against our own values, values which we share with the American people.” Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and a veteran of several bloody struggles against Israel, was dumbfounded by the news and announced to reporters in Gaza, “We completely condemn this very dangerous attack, and I convey my condolences to the American people, to the American president and to the American administration.”

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

When it became clear that the mastermind behind the attack was Osama bin Laden, the full attention of the United States turned to Afghanistan and the government there that was protecting him. Like many others from around the Islamic world, bin Laden had come to Afghanistan to help a group called the **Taliban** fight to oust the Soviets during the 1980s. Ironically, both bin Laden and the Taliban had received material support from the United States since the war there was one of the many proxy fights of the Cold War. By the late 1980s, the Soviets and the Americans had both left, although bin Laden remained as the leader of his own terrorist organization.

When the Soviets left, the Taliban took over the government of Afghanistan and ran it as a strict Islamic theocracy, applying extreme interpretations of Muslim teaching to civil law. Many of their ideas seemed draconian to Americans, such as refusing to allow girls to attend school, or even leave their homes without a male relative escort. Those who dared to break these laws or speak out against them were beaten.



War on Terror: The fight against al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other terrorist groups that has dominated American foreign policy after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.



Bush Doctrine: The belief that the United States has the right to engage in preemptive war and to use force without the help of allies is acceptable.



Taliban: Ultra-conservative Muslim group that took over the government of Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion ended. They harbored Osama bin Laden and were defeated by the United States in 2002, but have since waged an insurgency against the American occupation and new Afghan government.



Invasion of Afghanistan: War that began in 2002 in an attempt to capture the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attack. It continued on as a war against the Taliban insurgency and is now the longest war in American history.

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President George W. Bush demanded that the Taliban turn over bin Laden and the other members of al-Qaeda, and when they refused, **he ordered and invasion**. The United States formed an alliance with the Afghan Northern Alliance, a coalition of tribal leaders opposed to the Taliban and by November 2001, only two months after the terrorist attacks, the Taliban had been ousted from power. Osama bin Laden and his followers had already escaped across the Afghan border into Pakistan, however, where they remained hidden for many years.



Primary Source: Photograph

An American soldier in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan is now the longest war in American history.

THE IRAQ WAR

At the same time that the military was taking control of Afghanistan, the Bush administration was looking to a new and larger war with Iraq. Relations between the United States and Iraq had been strained since the Gulf War a decade earlier. Economic sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations, and American attempts to foster internal revolts against President Saddam Hussein's government had further tainted the relationship. A group of advisors within George W. Bush's administration, sometimes labeled **neoconservatives**, or neocons, believed Iraq's resistance in the face of overwhelming American military superiority represented a dangerous model for terrorist groups around the world. Powerful members of this faction, including Vice President **Dick Cheney** and Secretary of Defense **Donald Rumsfeld**, believed the time to strike Iraq and solve this festering problem was right then in the wake of 9/11. Others, like Secretary of State Colin Powell, a highly respected veteran of the Vietnam War and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were more cautious about initiating combat.



Neoconservatives: A group of Republican advisors to President George W. Bush who advocated for the invasion of Iraq and argued that it was morally acceptable to invade a nation that had not attacked the United States in order to prevent possible future attacks.



Richard "Dick" Cheney: Vice President for George W. Bush. He was a strong supporter of the Iraq War.



Donald Rumsfeld: First Secretary of Defense for George W. Bush. He was a strong supporter of the Iraq War but later resigned when it went poorly.

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President Bush himself had singled out Iraq as one of the America's most significant enemies in his State of the Union Speech in January 2002, when he called Iraq, Iran and North Korea an **Axis of Evil**. Borrowing on both the name for America's enemies in World War II and Reagan's famous nickname for the Soviet Union, the Axis of Evil had a nice ring to it, and Bush returned again and again to this simple way of labeling America's adversaries during the rest of his presidency.

Attacking Iraq was a difficult decision for many people in the United States. On one hand, no one thought that Saddam Hussein was a good person, and it was clear that he had done terrible things to both his own people and his neighbors. On the other hand, he had not directly attacked America, nor had he supported terrorists. Many wondered if it was legal or moral to attack first.

Neoconservatives who favored preemptive action won, and the argument for war was gradually laid out for the American people. The immediate impetus to the invasion, the neocons argued, was the fear that Hussein was stockpiling **weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)**. Specifically they claimed that Hussein had nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons capable of wreaking great havoc. Hussein had in fact used chemical weapons against Iranian forces during his war with Iran in the 1980s, and against the Kurds, an ethnic minority group who opposed his government in northern Iraq in 1988.

Following the Gulf War, inspectors from the United Nations Special Commission and International Atomic Energy Agency had in fact located and destroyed stockpiles of Iraqi weapons. Those arguing for a new Iraqi invasion insisted, however, that weapons still existed. President Bush himself told the nation in October 2002 that the United States was "facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

The head of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, Hans Blix, dismissed these claims. Blix argued that while Saddam Hussein was not being entirely forthright, he did not appear to be in possession of WMDs. Despite Blix's findings and his own earlier misgivings, Secretary of State Colin Powell argued in 2003 before the United Nations General Assembly that Hussein had violated UN resolutions. Much of his evidence relied on secret information provided by an informant that was later proven to be false. On March 17, 2003, the United States cut off all relations with Iraq. Two days later, in a coalition with Great Britain, Australia, and Poland, the United States began Operation Iraqi Freedom with an **invasion of Iraq**.

Other arguments supporting the invasion noted the ease with which the operation could be accomplished. In February 2002, some in the Department of Defense were suggesting the war would be "a cakewalk." In



Axis of Evil: President George W. Bush's nickname for Iran, Iraq, and North Korea.



Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs): Name for weapons that can kill large numbers of people in a single attack such as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.



Iraq War: 2003-2014 war initiated by President George W. Bush in an effort to capture WMDs held by Saddam Hussein and eventually concluded by President Obama. It was always controversial and ultimately very unpopular.

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November, reference to the short and successful First Gulf War, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told the American people it was absurd, as some were claiming, that the conflict would degenerate into a long, drawn-out quagmire. “Five days or five weeks or five months, but it certainly isn’t going to last any longer than that,” he insisted. “It won’t be a World War III.” And, just days before the start of combat operations in 2003, Vice President Cheney announced that American forces would likely “be greeted as liberators,” and the war would be over in “weeks rather than months.” Early in the conflict, these predictions seemed to be coming true. The march into Bagdad went fairly smoothly. Americans back home watched on television as American soldiers and the Iraqi people worked together to topple statues of Saddam Hussein around the capital.

The reality, however, was far more complex. While American deaths had been few, thousands of Iraqis had died. Even those who did not like Saddam Hussein, did not like the idea of Americans invading their homeland and killing their fellow citizens.

The destruction of Saddam Hussein’s regime had other unintended consequences. Iraq is a large country with many different groups of people. There are Sunni and Shia Muslims within its borders. These two groups have sometimes gone to war with one another. A large Kurdish minority in the North of Iraq had for many years wanted independence from the central government. While he was in power, Hussein had kept all of these groups in line by threatening them with force. Without his unifying presence, they all began jockeying for power.



Primary Source: Photograph

Although he never said the words “mission accomplished” the banner behind him gave Americans the impression that President Bush thought the war was over. Later when the insurgency in Iraq dragged on, the speech was used by his political rivals to demonstrate the failure of his foreign policy team to prepare for what would happen in Iraq after the initial military victory of Saddam Hussein’s forces.

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Bush and his advisors had not anticipated a long war and had not prepared for a long period of occupation. They had also not prepared for the inevitable problems of law and order, or for the violent conflicts that emerged between groups within Iraq who began to compete for power after Saddam Hussein was gone. Bush proudly announced victory in May 2003, on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln with a banner proclaiming **Mission Accomplished** prominently displayed behind him, the celebration proved premature. Although Bush stated at the time, “Our mission continues” and “We have difficult work to do in Iraq,” he also stated that it was the end to major combat operations in Iraq. Bush never uttered the phrase “Mission Accomplished.” However, Bush’s assertion and the sign itself haunted his presidency as fighting in Iraq continued. The vast majority of casualties, both military and civilian, occurred after the speech.

GROWING DISCONTENT

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Americans had rallied around their president, giving Bush approval ratings of 90%. Even following the first few months of the Iraq War, his approval rating remained historically high at approximately 70%. But as the 2004 presidential election approached, opposition to the war in Iraq began to grow. As the 2004 campaign ramped up, the president was persistently dogged by rising criticism of the violence of the Iraq War and the fact that his administration’s claims of WMDs had been greatly overstated. In the end, no such weapons were ever found.

These criticisms were amplified by growing international concern over the treatment of prisoners at the **Guantanamo Bay detention camp**. American authorities did not want to bring captured terrorist suspects from Afghanistan to the United States because they would be subject to American law and guaranteed a right to lawyers and a trial. Nor did they want to leave these potential terrorists in Afghanistan or Iraq where they feared local authorities might set them free. Instead, 779 prisoners were transported to the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, the last bit of land on Cuba the United States controlled. Many people in the United States and around the world criticized the Bush administration for finding a loophole around the law. Criticism went further when it was revealed that the prisoners were being tortured in order to extract information. For Americans who had been tortured as prisoners in Vietnam, including Senator John McCain, finding out that their own nation was repeating that terrible practice came as a shock and tremendous disappointment. When Barack Obama ran for president in 2008, he explicitly promised to end the practice and close the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay. Although torture did stop, the camp remains open.

There was also widespread disgust when photographs surfaced showing the unauthorized torture of Iraqis by American troops at the **Abu Ghraib prison** in Iraq. Just as the United States had lost moral authority after the My Lai



Bush’s Mission Accomplished

Speech: Speech by George W. Bush after the successful invasion of Iraq and destruction of Saddam Hussein’s government in 2003. It became a symbol of his problems in Iraq after the insurgency began.



Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp:

Prison built to house terrorists captured in Afghanistan and elsewhere. It has been criticized because the prisoners there are not guaranteed a trial and were tortured during the George W. Bush Presidency.



Abu Ghraib Prison:

Prison in Iraq that was the site of torture by American guards. Photos of the incidents were leaked and turned many against the war, and many around the world against the United States and its war in Iraq.

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Massacre in Vietnam, America was losing its moral authority to fight for freedom and justice in the War on Terror.

Despite these challenges, George W. Bush won reelection against Senator John Kerry in 2004. Bush's reelection meant that the occupations of both Afghanistan and Iraq would continue.

THE IRAQI INSURGENCY

In March 2004, an ambush by Iraqi insurgents of a convoy of private military contractors from Blackwater USA and the subsequent torture and mutilation of the four captured mercenaries shocked the American public. But the event also highlighted the growing **insurgency against the American occupation**, and the escalating sectarian conflict between competing groups of Iraqis. Just as importantly, the American campaign in Iraq had diverted resources from the war against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan where troops were no closer to capturing Osama bin Laden than they had been years before.

As the United States and our ally the United Kingdom tried to secure Iraq and enable the development of a new government, foreign fighters from around the Middle East as well as al-Qaeda in Iraq, an affiliated al-Qaeda, added to the anti-American and anti-British insurgency. As the insurgency grew there was a distinct change in targeting. No longer were American and British troops the primary targets. The insurgents began attacking the new Iraqi Security Forces the Americans had been training and hundreds of Iraqi civilians and police officers were killed in a series of massive bombings.



Iraqi Insurgency: Fight by various groups in Iraq against the American occupation. The effort to rebuild the nation after the initial destruction of Saddam Hussein's government went poorly and was not well planned. This phase of the war included numerous suicide bombings against American and Iraqi government targets.

Primary Source: Photograph

American tanks patrol the streets of Tal Afar, Iraq in February 2005. Patrols and convoys of trucks were frequent targets of homemade bombs during the insurgency.



The Americans found themselves in a situation eerily similar to the Vietnam War. Soldiers were looking for enemy fighters who blended in with the civilians. Although some of the insurgents fought in units, Americans grew

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frustrated as they read reports of casualties in battles to clear insurgents from towns that had supposedly been pacified just months before.

Hopes for a quick end to the insurgency and a withdrawal of American troops were dashed as suicide bombers struck at targets throughout Iraq. To counter the growing unrest, President Bush proposed a **surge of 21,500 more troops**, a job program for Iraqis, and \$1.2 billion for reconstruction programs. He hoped the combination of increased security and the rebuilding of Iraq would win of the **hearts and minds** of the people. Pressure on the United States to make their strategy work was compounded as the United Kingdom withdrew its forces. The war had become so unpopular there that politicians simply quit the job on trying to stabilize Iraq and left the remaining task to the United States.

The Iraq War was a significant issue in the 2008 presidential campaign, especially in the Democratic primary race between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Clinton had voted to approve President Bush's proposal to invade Iraq, whereas Obama had opposed it. By 2008, many Democratic primary voters had turned against the war entirely, and although Clinton also took a position against continuing the war, her earlier vote hurt her at the polls. In the general election, the Republican candidate, John McCain had a difficult time countering Obama's claim that the war in Afghanistan had been justified in the hunt for Osama bin Laden, whereas the war in Iraq had been a mistake.

True to his campaign rhetoric, after winning election, President Obama announced a plan to slowly withdraw American troops from Iraq and turn over the nation's security to the Iraqi army they had worked so hard to train. In December of 2011, the last American troops came home.

In the summer of 2014, President Obama announced the return of American forces to Iraq, but only in the form of air support in an effort to halt the advance of the **Islamic State**, or **ISIS** terrorist army, render humanitarian aid to stranded refugees and stabilize the political situation. A civil war between ISIS and the central government continued for the next three years, until the government declared victory in December 2017. By 2018, violence in Iraq was at its lowest level in ten years.

President Obama also kept his campaign promise to fully prosecute the hunt for terrorists in Afghanistan. Like Bush had done in Iraq, Obama implemented a surge of troops in Afghanistan to fight against Taliban insurgents who threatened to undermine the central government America supported. One great challenge in Afghanistan remained the fact that Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks, remained at large. After the initial invasion of Afghanistan in 2002, he had escaped into the mountains. Finally, in 2011, spy agencies located him hidden in a house in neighboring Pakistan. In April 2011, President Obama ordered a covert operation to kill or capture America's most wanted man, and on May 2, a



The Surge: An increase of 21,500 troops in Iraq in 2007 during the insurgency. It was intended to increase security in order to allow rebuilding programs and government stabilization to take place.



Winning Hearts and Minds: Phrase to describe the counter-insurgency objective of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. It shows an emphasis on convincing the people to support the new government rather than on winning territory.



Islamic State (ISIS): Terrorist group that became powerful in 2014 during the Iraqi insurgency and captured territory in Iraq and Syria during the Syrian Civil War. They practiced an extreme version of Islam and have been the primary target of the American War on Terror in recent years. As of March 2019 they no longer controlled any territory.

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somber president announced that Navy SEALs had successfully flown into Pakistan without being noticed, killed bin Laden, and buried his body at sea.

A full three years later, and five years after becoming president, Obama declared that combat operations in Afghanistan were over. Despite that, over 8,000 American troops remain in the country to help fight terrorists and providing training for the Afghan security forces. It is now the longest war in American history.



Primary Source: Photograph

President Obama, along with this foreign policy team and military leaders wait and watch in the White house Situation room for the results of the mission to kill or capture Osama bin Laden.

The years of warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan have brought the United States few rewards. In Iraq, 4,475 American soldiers died and 32,220 were wounded. In Afghanistan, the toll through March 2019 was 2,419 dead and 19,950 wounded. Iraqi and Afghani deaths could number as high as 800,000. By some estimates, the total monetary cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could easily reach \$4 trillion, and the Congressional Budget Office believes that the cost of providing medical care for the veterans might climb to \$8 billion by 2020. For the generation whose taxes will pay this bill, the cost to the nation's wealth and prosperity is still unknown.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The attacks of September 11 awakened many to the reality that the end of the Cold War did not mean an end to violent threats from abroad. Just as had happened during the Red Scare of the 1950s, some Americans grew fearful of possible enemies in their midst and hate crimes against Muslim Americans. Fearing that terrorists might strike within the nation's borders again, and aware of the chronic lack of cooperation among different federal law enforcement agencies, President Bush created the Office of Homeland Security in October 2001. The next year, Congress passed the Homeland Security Act, creating the **Department of Homeland Security**, which



Department of Homeland Security:

New government department formed after the 9/11 attacks that includes the Coast Guard, TSA, and agencies responsible for customs, border patrol, and immigration.

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centralized control over a number of different government functions in order to better control threats at home. For most Americans, the most noticeable consequence of the War on Terror is the **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)**. Gone are the days when anyone could go through security and meet their friends at the gate.

The Bush administration also pushed the **USA Patriot Act** through Congress, which was intended to give law enforcement agencies the powers they needed to discover terrorist plots and stop attacks before they happened. For some, too much privacy was handed away to the government with the passage of the Patriot Act. For example, the law enabled government agencies to monitor citizens' e-mails and phone conversations without a warrant. Beginning in 2002, the Bush administration implemented a wide-ranging program of warrantless domestic wiretapping, known as the Terrorist Surveillance Program, and run by the **National Security Agency (NSA)**. The program ended when it was exposed by leaks from within the agency and the New York Times which published an account of what the government was doing.



The struggle between the government's desire for secrecy and the public's right to know what its government is doing in their name has been heightened by the War on Terror. In 2013, a government contractor named **Edward Snowden** stole a trove of intelligence files and turned them over to the press. In June 2013, the first of Snowden's documents were published simultaneously by The Washington Post and The Guardian in London, attracting considerable public attention. The disclosure continued throughout 2013, and a small portion of the estimated full cache of documents was later published by other media outlets worldwide, most notably The New York Times in the United States.



Transportation Security Administration (TSA): Government agency responsible for security airports and air travel. It was created after the 9/11 attacks and replaced private security guards in the job of inspecting people and baggage on American flights.



USA Patriot Act: Law passed in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks that gave law enforcement agencies expanded powers to gather information in order to prevent terrorist attacks. Some of its provisions have been criticized and reversed as invasions of personal freedom and privacy.



National Security Agency (NSA): Government spy agency that has grown during the War on Terror. Unlike the CIA, they do not rely on human spies, but use data collection instead. They carried out the cell phone surveillance program that was widely criticized.

Primary Source: Photograph

For most Americans, the TSA is the most visible evidence of the War on Terror.

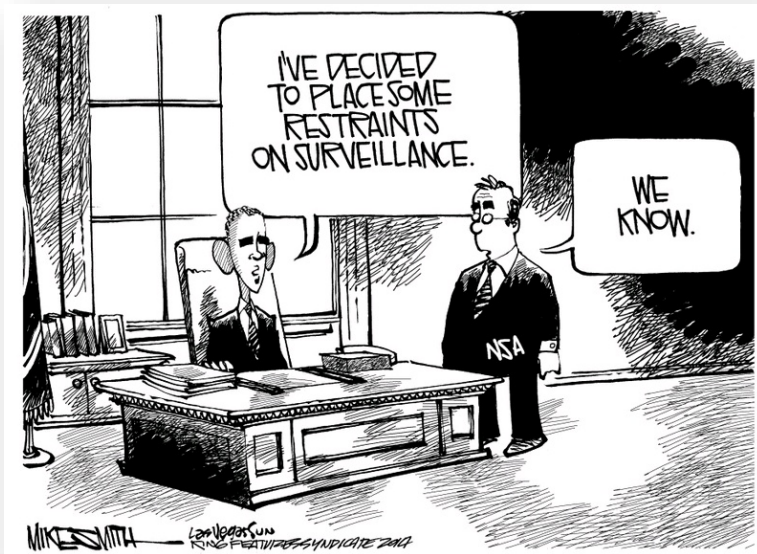


Edward Snowden: Government contractor who stole and released a trove of documents that detailed some of the activities in the War on Terror. He is seen by some as a traitor and by others as a hero depending on one's position on government spying and secrecy.

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These media reports have shed light on several secret treaties in which the United States and its allies agreed to share information about their citizens. For many, Snowden's actions and the publication of the documents he stole reminded them of the Pentagon Papers, which had also revealed government secrecy and lies. For the Obama Administration, Snowden's actions were dangerous. President Barack Obama made a public appearance on national television where he told Americans that "We don't have a domestic spying program" and that "There is no spying on Americans". Prosecutors charged Snowden with espionage and theft of government property. He fled to Russia where Vladimir Putin granted him asylum. For those who support the government's efforts to root out terrorists, Snowden is a traitor. For those who believe the government has taken too much power, Snowden is a hero for exposing illegal government activities.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

This cartoon pokes fun at President Obama's efforts to reign in the expansive surveillance programs at the NSA, and at the extensive nature of the NSA programs themselves. For many Americans, learning about what the NSA knew and how much information it had collected was frightening and made them question how much privacy and individual freedom they were willing to give up in the name of protection from potential terror attacks.

GUN VIOLENCE

In addition to international terrorism and home-grown politically motivated bombings, the nation has recently been plagued with a new, uniquely American form of terror: mass shootings. For high school students, school shootings are familiar concept, but few teenagers today realize that this particular form of terrorism is quite new. The first mass school shooting was in 1999 when two students attacked **Columbine High School** in Colorado. Since then, a string of tragic attacks has shaken Americans' sense of safety. Between the 1999 Columbine High School massacre and the 2018 Santa Fe High School shooting in Texas, more than 214,000 students experienced gun violence at 216 different schools. At least 141 children, educators and other people were killed and another 284 were injured.



Columbine High School Shooting: 1999 attack at a Colorado high school that resulted in 17 deaths. It was the first mass shooting in the United States and inspired many copycat attacks.

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70% of the perpetrators of school shootings were under the age of 18 and more than 85% of the perpetrators of school shootings obtained their firearms from their own homes or from friends or relatives. Targeted school shootings, those occurring for example in the context of a feud, were about three times as common as those that appeared indiscriminate. Contrary to popular belief, most perpetrators of school shootings exhibited no signs of debilitating mental disorder, such as psychosis or schizophrenia beforehand. However, most mass killers typically exhibited signs of depression. Between 1999 and 2015, more than 40 people attempted attacks that mimicked Columbine. Of these, almost all were White male teenagers and almost all had studied the Columbine attack or cited the Columbine perpetrators as inspiration.

In addition to school shootings, other mass shootings have been carried out at movie theaters, concerts, churches, restaurants, military bases and post offices. The most deadly was the **2017 Las Vegas attack** during a concert in which 58 people were murdered and 851 more were injured. The 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting left 53 people dead. As of 2019, the five most deadly shootings in America all occurred within the past 12 years.



2017 Las Vegas Shooting: Most deadly mass shooting in the United States. 58 people were killed at an outdoor concert.

Although mass shootings are covered extensively in the media, they account for only a small fraction of gun-related deaths in the United States. In 2013, 33,636 people died from gun-related injuries. These deaths included 21,175 suicides, 11,208 homicides, and 505 deaths due to accidents or negligence. Additionally, another 73,505 people were injured. Compared to 22 other high-income nations, the American gun-related murder rate is 25 times higher. Although it has half the population of the other 22 nations combined, the United States had 82% of all gun deaths, 90% of all women killed with guns, 91% of children under 14 and 92% of young people between ages 15 and 24 killed with guns.

It is estimated that guns can be found in 40% of American homes households, and in the United States today, there are more guns than people. Gun violence is most common in poor urban areas and frequently associated with gang violence, although as the highly publicized mass shootings attest, gun ownership and gun violence is spread through the nation.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT

Naturally, many people have sought ways to reduce gun violence, most recently by trying to pass laws that reduce access to guns. However, guns have a special place in the nation's history and politics, stemming back to the founding of the country. Because Americans owned guns in the 1770s, they were able to form militias and fight against British occupation. Eventually, an army of citizens defeated the mighty British army and the United States came into existence. The Founding Fathers who wrote the new nation's Constitution recognized the importance of the relationship between a government and citizens with weapons. In order to prevent the new

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government from abusing the rights of the people, they added the **Second Amendment** to the Constitution, guaranteeing the right of Americans to own guns. The Second Amendment reads: “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” For most of America’s history, the Second Amendment has been mostly taken for granted. Americans were farmers and explorers and gun ownership was common. Recently, however, as cities have grown and urban crime increased, Americans have started rethinking the meaning of the Second Amendment.



Second Amendment: Constitutional amendment that guarantees citizens the right to own and carry guns.



Primary Source: Photograph

A gun show in Houston, Texas. A frequent target of gun regulation activists is the fact that people who want to buy guns do not have to complete background checks when making their purchases at gun shows.

Today, gun politics is defined by two primary opposing ideologies about civilian gun ownership. People who advocate for gun control support increasing regulation of gun ownership. These people point to the first half of the Second Amendment, noting that it guarantees the right to bear arms in order to participate in a well-regulated militia. For these people, the Amendment clearly provides a reason for gun ownership. Guns that are unnecessary for the purpose of joining a militia should, they argue, be restricted or banned.

Alternatively, people who advocate for gun rights point to the second half of the Amendment as evidence that the government has no power to limit gun ownership. The Supreme Court normally settles disagreements about the meaning of the Constitution, but has only recently taken any cases about gun rights, and when they did, they sided with the view that gun ownership is a fundamental right. In the **District of Columbia v. Heller** decision in 2008, the Court struck down a ban on handguns on the basis that the Second Amendment does not give the government the right to pick and choose which types of guns people are allowed to own. However, the Court also



District of Columbia v. Heller: 2008 Supreme Court case that upheld the right own and carry guns (by striking down a ban on handguns) but affirmed the government’s power to regulate gun ownership.

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stated in the Heller decision that the right to bear arms was not unlimited. It remains to be seen what restrictions they might be willing to uphold in future decisions.

In other nations where the right to own guns is not written the constitution, mass shootings have resulted in quick political action. After a mass shooting at a mosque in New Zealand, that nation's government banned almost all forms of military-style weapons. In Australia, a mass shooting resulted in an almost universal ban on gun ownership. In the United Kingdom, gun ownership is so rare that police officers do not even carry guns.

In the United States today, the **National Rifle Association (NRA)** serves as a powerful protector of gun rights. They are a well-funded interest group that supports political candidates and works to affect public opinion about gun ownership. The NRA started their lobbying practices in conjunction with the conservative revolution in the 1970s and has a mutually supportive relationship with the Republican Party. Most Republicans support gun rights, and the NRA has been an important donor to many Republican politicians. In 2016 alone they spent \$412 million on political activities. Like the Moral Majority, the NRA produces voter information materials that encourage people to make decisions on Election Day based on a candidate's stance on gun rights.



National Rifle Association (NRA): Powerful interest group that lobbies for gun rights and brings gun rights cases to court.



Primary Source: Photograph

Students protest gun violence outside the White House in Washington, DC. After the shooting in Parkland, Florida, survivors from Stoneman Douglas High School organized a student movement to advocate for legislative change.

After the 2018 **Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting** in Parkland, Florida that left 17 dead, student survivors organized a movement to demand passage of gun control measures. Many of the students blamed the NRA and the politicians who accept money from them for preventing enactment of any gun control proposals after previous shootings. An NRA



Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting: 2018 mass shooting that inspired a student movement for gun regulation.

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spokesman responded by defending gun ownership and blaming the shooting on the FBI and the media. The NRA also said in a statement that the incident was proof that more guns were immediately required in schools in the hands both security guards and teachers in order to “harden” them against similar assaults in the future. A Florida law passed in the wake of the shooting, which includes a provision to ban the sale of firearms to people under 21 was immediately challenged in federal court by the NRA on the grounds that it is “violating the constitutional rights of 18- to 21-year-olds.”

Based on the evidence from the past 20 years, the danger of gun violence, and the debate over gun ownership both seem to be part of America’s future.

CONCLUSION

Over time, Americans have held different ideas about what it means to be free. When the nation was founded, freedom meant the freedom from foreign domination. In the 1800s, freedom was about the right to move west and start a new life in the untamed wilderness. In the 1930s, Americans wanted to be free from hunger and turned to their government to provide a New Deal to ensure this right. In the Cold War, we wanted our government to protect our existence. We wanted freedom from death in a nuclear war.

In the past two decades, freedom has again changed meanings. Franklin Roosevelt’s old “freedom from fear” has taken on new significance as we want our government to protect us from terrorism. Of course, as resistance to surveillance measures such as the USA Patriot Act, and resistance to gun regulation both show, we do not want so much protection that our freedom of privacy or right to protect ourselves is infringed.

Thus, the War on Terror has had many casualties. We have given up some of our privacy and some of our rights to purchase more security. We have sacrificed billions of dollars and spend thousands of lives in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in an effort to root out those who attacked us. In the process, the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay and stories of torture have damaged the reputation of the United States in the eyes of the world.

Is it worth it? Are the things we have lost equal to the security we have won? Are you willing to wait in long lines at TSA checkpoints in order to be sure no hijackers are on your flight? Would you be comfortable walking through a metal detector every morning before school if it meant that you knew none of your fellow students had guns hidden in their bags?

What do you think? Has the War on Terror been worth the cost?



EVENTS

Branch Davidian Raid: 1993 raid by the FBI and other law enforcement authorities on the compound of a cult group in Waco, Texas after a long standoff. The raid went badly and the cult members set their compound on fire and committed suicide. The raid inspired the Oklahoma City bombing.

Bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building: 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building killing 168 people. It was the most deadly terrorist attack in America before 9/11 and the most deadly every carried out by American citizens.

1998 Embassy Bombings: Attacks by al-Qaeda suicide bombers against Americans in Kenya and Tanzania in Africa before the 9/11 attack.

USS Cole Attack: Suicide bombing of an American navy destroyer in 2000 by al-Qaeda.

September 11, 2001: The most deadly terrorist attack in American history. Al-Qaeda members hijacked four airlines and flew them into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon across the river from Washington, DC. A fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania when passengers attempted to retake control.

War on Terror: The fight against al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other terrorist groups that has dominated American foreign policy after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Invasion of Afghanistan: War that began in 2002 in an attempt to capture the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attack. It continued on as a war against the Taliban insurgency and is now the longest war in American history.

Iraq War: 2003-2014 war initiated by President George W. Bush in an effort to capture WMDs held by Saddam Hussein and eventually concluded by President Obama. It was always controversial and ultimately very unpopular.

Iraqi Insurgency: Fight by various groups in Iraq against the American occupation. The effort to rebuild the nation after the initial destruction of Saddam Hussein's government went poorly and was not well planned. This phase of the war included numerous suicide bombings against American and Iraqi government targets.

The Surge: An increase of 21,500 troops in Iraq in 2007 during the insurgency. It was intended to increase security in order to allow rebuilding programs and government stabilization to take place.

Columbine High School Shooting: 1999 attack at a Colorado high school that resulted in 17 deaths. It was the first mass shooting in the United States and inspired many copycat attacks.

2017 Las Vegas Shooting: Most deadly mass shooting in the United States. 58 people were killed at an outdoor concert.

Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting: 2018 mass shooting that inspired a student movement for gun regulation.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Al-Qaeda: Terrorist group led by Osama bin Laden that carried out the 9/11 attacks.

Osama bin Laden: Leader of al-Qaeda and mastermind of the 9/11 terror attacks. He was eventually killed by American special forces in 2011.

Taliban: Ultra-conservative Muslim group that took over the government of Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion ended. They harbored Osama bin Laden and were defeated by the United States in 2002, but have since waged an insurgency against the American occupation and new Afghan government.

Neoconservatives: A group of Republican advisors to President George W. Bush who advocated for the invasion of Iraq and argued that it was morally acceptable to invade a nation that had not attacked the United States in order to prevent possible future attacks.

Richard "Dick" Cheney: Vice President for George W. Bush. He was a strong supporter of the Iraq War.

Donald Rumsfeld: First Secretary of Defense for George W. Bush. He was a strong supporter of the Iraq War but later resigned when it went poorly.

Islamic State (ISIS): Terrorist group that became powerful in 2014 during the Iraqi insurgency and captured territory in Iraq and Syria during the Syrian Civil War. They practiced and extreme version of Islam and have been the primary target of the American War on Terror in recent years. As of March 2019 they no longer controlled any territory.

Edward Snowden: Government contractor who stole and released a trove of documents that detailed some of the activities in the War on Terror. He is seen by some as a traitor and by others as a hero depending on one's position on government spying and secrecy.

National Rifle Association (NRA): Powerful interest group that lobbies for gun rights and brings gun rights cases to court.



SPEECHES

Bush's Mission Accomplished Speech: Speech by George W. Bush after the successful invasion of Iraq and destruction of Saddam Hussein's government in 2003. It became a symbol of his problems in Iraq after the insurgency began.



KEY CONCEPTS

Bush Doctrine: The belief that the United States has the right to engage in preemptive war and to use force without the help of allies is acceptable.

Axis of Evil: President George W. Bush's nickname for Iran, Iraq, and North Korea.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs): Name for weapons that can kill large numbers of people in a single attack such as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

Winning Hearts and Minds: Phrase to describe the counter-insurgency objective of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. It shows an emphasis on convincing the people to support the new government rather than on winning territory.



LOCATIONS

World Trade Center: Largest skyscrapers in America in 2001 before they collapsed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Pentagon: Headquarters of the American military. The large building is across the Potomac River from Washington, DC and was the target of one of the hijacked planes in the 9/11 attack.

Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp: Prison built to house terrorists captured in Afghanistan and elsewhere. It has been criticized because the prisoners there are not guaranteed a trial and were tortured during the George W. Bush Presidency.

Abu Ghraib Prison: Prison in Iraq that was the site of torture by American guards. Photos of the incidents were leaked and turned many against the war, and many around the world against the United States and its war in Iraq.



LAWS

USA Patriot Act: Law passed in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks that gave law enforcement agencies expanded powers to gather information in order to prevent terrorist attacks. Some of its provisions have been criticized and reversed as invasions of personal freedom and privacy.

Second Amendment: Constitutional amendment that guarantees citizens the right to own and carry guns.



COURT CASES

District of Columbia v. Heller: 2008 Supreme Court case that upheld the right own and carry guns (by striking down a ban on handguns) but affirmed the government's power to regulate gun ownership.



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

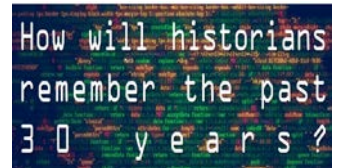
Department of Homeland Security: New government department formed after the 9/11 attacks that includes the Coast Guard, TSA, and agencies responsible for customs, border patrol, and immigration.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): Government agency responsible for security airports and air travel. It was created after the 9/11 attacks and replaced private security guards in the job of inspecting people and baggage on American flights.

National Security Agency (NSA): Government spy agency that has grown during the War on Terror. Unlike the CIA, they do not rely on human spies, but use data collection instead. They carried out the cell phone surveillance program that was widely criticized.

3

T H I R D Q U E S T I O N WILL THERE EVER BE A POST-RACIAL AMERICA?



How will historians
remember the past
30 years?

INTRODUCTION

Most American high school students graduate with an inaccurate idea of the state of race relations in the nation today. Unfortunately, summer vacation arrives before most history teachers have made it past the 60s or 70s in the textbook and the last thing most students have learned is that Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement broke down the Jim Crow system of segregation, Congress passed the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, and that we celebrate Black History Month each February to mark the achievements of great African Americans. Little or no mention is made of the urban riots in Los Angeles in the 1990s, the emotional trial of OJ Simpson, the election of Barack Obama, or challenges to voting rights in the past decade. This is unfortunate, because race relations are an important element in our current national discourse.

It is forgivable that people might think the days of racial division are over. After all, we elected an African American president. In fact, after Obama's election, some commentators began talking about a post-racial America in which we no longer see color. They thought or hoped that we had arrived at the "promised land" Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke about and envisioned when he described his dream for the nation. A quick glance at the news tells us that that is not true. From police shootings to Black Lives Matter protests to football players kneeling during the national anthem there is abundant evidence that race still plays an important role in America. But, those who are hopeful still wonder: Does it always have to be this way?

What do you think? Will there ever be a post-racial America?

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SEGREGATION TODAY

Despite important legal achievements and the election of an African American president, America remains a deeply racially divided nation. Evidence of continued divisions can also be found in demographics. For instance, African-Americans account for less than 15% of the total population of the state Michigan, but more than 82% of the population of Detroit, the state's largest city.

Dozens of cities across the North and West repeat Detroit's model. During the Great Migration 100 years ago, African Americans from the South flocked to the North in search of jobs and to escape racial animus. Although life in the North was an improvement for many, the Whites they met were not universally welcoming and urban ghettos developed as African Americans were concentrated into segregated neighborhoods. The lack of opportunities and poverty in these neighborhoods were primary factors that fueled the frustration that has repeatedly boiled over into violence. They are the same factors that drive young people toward gang life and drug use, two problems stereotypically associated with African American urban neighborhoods. This is nothing new in African American life. The Kerner Commission reported on this situation in 1968.

In the 1980s when cities began to struggle as manufacturing jobs moved overseas, White residents moved to the suburbs, leaving mostly African American residents behind in the urban core. This phenomenon was so widespread that it got a name: **White Flight**. In short, segregation continues, not necessarily because laws dictate that Americans of different races must live apart from one another, but because systemic factors have made integration unlikely.

There are important consequences of this ongoing segregation. Because American schools are mostly neighborhood-based, they remain mostly segregated. In 2012, researchers at the UCLA found that "15% of black students, and 14% of Latino students, attend 'apartheid schools' across the nation, where whites make up 0 to 1% of the enrollment." They noted that in this sort of segregation also affects Hispanics. While "half of the black students in the Chicago metro, and one third of black students in New York, attend apartheid schools" they found that "Latino students experience high levels of extreme segregation in the Los Angeles metro, where roughly 30% attend a school in which whites make up 1% or less of the enrollment."

There is a similar dynamic in the South. About 64% of the population of Louisiana is White as of the 2010 Census, but its largest city, New Orleans, is 60% African American. Like other major urban areas, the neighborhoods of New Orleans are further segregated. The Lower Ninth Ward, for example, is 97% African American.

Many have criticized civic leaders for taking care of mostly White neighborhoods first, and using what is left of tax dollars to provide services



White Flight: The movement of Whites out of inner cities into suburbs in the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in poorer urban cores populated by African Americans and Hispanics surrounded by suburbs of almost all White residents.

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for minority neighborhoods. Parks, roads and trash collection is often better in predominantly White neighborhoods. A glaring examples of this was in **Flint, Michigan** in 2014, where White state officials changed source of the city's drinking water from Lake Huron and the Detroit River to a less costly source of the Flint River. Due to insufficient water treatment, lead leached from water pipes into the drinking water, exposing over 100,000 mostly African American residents to elevated lead levels.

New Orleans provides another example. The **Lower Ninth Ward** experienced the most catastrophic flooding after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and class was a major factor in who survived the disaster. Those who lived in areas better protected from flooding, and those who were able to evacuate before the storm, tended to be wealthier. At the time, President George W. Bush acknowledged that this poverty had "roots in the history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunities of America".



BARACK OBAMA

Barack Obama was a Baby Boomer and was elected in 2008 by Baby Boomer voters who had grown up during the Civil Rights Movement. For many, it was a dream come true. As teenagers and young adults they had lived through the turbulent 1960s and had fought for equal rights. Finally, it seemed, as adults the goals they had worked so hard for had come true. They saw the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama and his election in 2008 as the first African American president of the United States as a sign that the nation had, in fact, become post-racial. The conservative radio host Lou Dobbs, for example, said in November 2009, "We are now in a 21st Century post-partisan, post-racial society." Two months later, Chris Matthews, an MSNBC



Flint Water Crisis: Health crisis revealed in 2014 in which the mostly African American residents of Flint, Michigan were drinking tap water contaminated with lead.



Lower Ninth Ward: Mostly African American neighborhood in New Orleans that was devastated by flooding in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina.

Primary Source: Photograph

Senator Barack Obama announcing his candidacy for president in 2007. Obama went on to defeat Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primary and then John McCain in the general election. He won reelection in 2012, serving eight years as the nation's first African American president.



Barack Obama: First African American president. He is a Democrat and was elected in 2008 and reelected 2012.

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host, said of President Obama, “He is post-racial by all appearances. You know, I forgot he was black tonight for an hour.”

President Obama actively promoted the idea that American was overcoming its divided past. His **keynote speech at the 2002 Democratic National Convention** has been widely regarded as the moment that propelled him to the national stage. In that address he said, “There’s not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there’s the United States of America.”

However, public opinion on whether the United States had indeed moved past its old divisions and become post-racial is itself divided starkly by race. In a Washington Post/ABC News poll conducted in December 2014, about 50% of White respondents said they believed that the justice system treats Americans of all races equally, but only 10% of African-Americans said the same. In the spring of 2015, according to a Gallup poll, 13% of African Americans surveyed identified race relations as the most important problem the United States faces, compared with 4% of White Americans.

Obama himself understood that some wanted his presidency to mean the end of racial division. But he also knew that his historic election was not going to be the final chapter in the nation’s long struggle for racial justice.

During the 2008 campaign, he directly addressed the issue of race in one of his most famous speeches, entitled **A More Perfect Union**. He said, “This is where we are right now. It’s a racial stalemate we’ve been stuck in for years. Contrary to the claims of some of my critics, black and white, I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy — particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own. But I have asserted a firm conviction — a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people — that, working together, we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds, and that in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union. For the African-American community, that path means embracing the burdens of our past without becoming victims of our past. It means continuing to insist on a full measure of justice in every aspect of American life. But it also means binding our particular grievances — for better health care and better schools and better jobs — to the larger aspirations of all Americans...”

During the course of his presidency, Obama was alternately criticized as being concerned with only African Americans, or not taking advantage of his years in the White House to adequately address their concerns. The nature of these critiques, of course, had a great deal to do with who was making them. In the end, President Obama’s civil rights legacy is mixed. Sentencing reform and the end of long jail terms for drug offenders has been tremendously important. Perhaps, however, his greatest impact will simply be the fact that he was president at all. One should not underestimate the



2002 Democratic National Convention Keynote Speech:

Speech by then-Senator Barack Obama in which he rejected divisions in America. It is sometimes called the “Purple America” speech in reference to the merging of blue and red. Obama’s performance propelled him to national fame.



A More Perfect Union Speech:

Speech by Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign in which he explicitly addressed the issue of race. Some political historians regard it as a turning point in the campaign.

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power of a positive role model. If Obama could be president, why should any African American child doubt that he or she too, could be president one day?

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Arguments that the United States is not post-racial frequently emphasize the treatment of African-Americans and other racial minorities in the criminal justice system and in interactions with the police. In 2015, according to a study by The Guardian newspaper, police officers in the United States killed 7.13 African Americans per million, compared with 2.91 White Americans per million. Young African American men were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers in 2015, according to the findings of The Guardian.

Killings of unarmed African Americans by police officers exploded as a public issue during Obama's presidency. For African Americans, violence at the hands of White police officers was nothing new. After all, the beating of Rodney King in 1991 was famous because it was captured on video, not because it was unusual.

However, as cell phone with video cameras and social media became widespread during Obama's presidency, so did videos of killings and beatings of African Americans by White law enforcement officers. Such killings had a marked effect on public perceptions of race relations in America. The 13% of African Americans who called race relations the most pressing problem in the United States in the spring 2015 Gallup poll dwarfed the 3% that Gallup reported at the beginning of 2014. And the percentage of White Americans who said race relations were the most important issue rose to 4% in 2015 from 1% the year before.

The **Black Lives Matter (BLM)** movement, grew up with social media and is an ongoing effort by African Americans to bring awareness to their concerns, effect police reform, and seek justice. Although BLM claims inspiration from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, Pan-Africanism, the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa, hip hop, LGBTQ social movements, and Occupy Wall Street, it is in fact distinct in important ways. The BLM leaders and protesters are young. They do not share the same ideas, experiences and values as the older generation of African American leadership, such as Al Sharpton. They have an aversion to middle-class traditions such as church involvement, Democratic Party loyalty, and respectability politics. They do not have a single unifying leader like Martin Luther King, Jr. BLM protesters are from Generation X, and they look, sound, think and act line Gen X. The term Black Lives Matter itself, was born in a truly Gen X way: it was a hashtag.




Black Lives Matter (BLM): Racial justice movement that developed around 2014 and focuses on police brutality. It is led by younger Americans rather than the generation that led the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

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SHOOTINGS AND PROTESTS

Although the Black Lives Matter movement has spanned numerous events, a few stand out as particularly important. The death that launched the hashtag and the movement was the killing of **Treyvon Martin** in Florida. On the night of February 26, 2012, George Zimmerman was patrolling his gated neighborhood. Although not a police officer, Zimmerman had volunteered to serve as a member of a citizen's watch group and was carrying a gun. That night he encountered Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African-American high school student who was visiting his relatives and had gone out to buy some candy. There was some sort of fight between the two and Zimmerman shot Martin, who was unarmed. In the trial afterward Zimmerman, who was injured during the encounter, claimed self-defense and was acquitted of murder. The incident was reviewed by the Department of Justice for potential civil rights violations, but no additional charges were filed, citing insufficient evidence.

 **Treyvon Martin:** African American teenager who was murdered in 2012 while walking home from buying candy from a convenience store in Florida. His death sparked the beginnings of the Black Lives Matter movement.



Primary Source: Photograph

Treyvon Martin was only 17 when he was killed on his way home from a convenience store in Florida in 2012. His death marked the start of the modern campaign to bring attention to the killing of unarmed African American men and boys.

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The death of **Eric Garner** in New York City in 2014 resulted in one of the movement's most potent slogans. According to bystanders, including a friend of Garner, who recorded the incident on his cell phone, Garner had just broken up a fight, which may have drawn the attention of the police. When a police officer approached Garner from behind and attempted to handcuff him, Garner pulled his arms away, saying "Don't touch me, please." The officer then put Garner in a chokehold from behind as other officers swarmed in. After 15 seconds, the video showed that the officer had let go of Garner's neck but then used his hands to push his face into the sidewalk. Garner is heard saying "I can't breathe" eleven times while lying face down on the sidewalk. The arrest was supervised by a female African-American NYPD sergeant, Kizzy Adoni, who did not intercede. Adoni was quoted in the original police report as stating, "The perpetrator's condition did not seem serious and he did not appear to get worse." Garner lay motionless, handcuffed, and unresponsive for several minutes before an ambulance arrived, as shown in a second video. Other than one officer who told the unconscious Garner to "breathe in, breathe out", the police made no attempt to resuscitate Garner. According to police, Garner had a heart attack while being transported to Richmond University Medical Center. He was pronounced dead at the hospital one hour later.



Eric Garner: African American man who died in 2014 after being held in a chokehold by New York City Police. His last words were "I can't breathe" which became a slogan of anti-police brutality protests.



Primary Source: Video

A still image from the video of police restraining Eric Garner in New York City in 2014. He later died from injuries he sustained during his arrest. His last words, "I can't breathe" and now famous.

A grand jury decided not to indict the officer who had originally wrapped his arm around Garner's neck and because under New York law, most grand jury proceedings were kept secret, including the exact charges sought by the

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prosecutor, the autopsy report, and transcripts of testimony it is unclear why the officer was never charged with a crime. After the announcement, citizens in New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Washington, DC and Baltimore, Minneapolis, Berkeley, Atlanta and even London gathered in protest, demonstrating with several die-ins, making speeches and rallies against the lack of indictment. Protesters have made use of Garner's last words, "**I can't breathe**", as a slogan and chant against police brutality.

On August 9, 2014, 18-year-old **Michael Brown Jr.** was fatally shot by police officer Darren Wilson in the city of Ferguson, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. The exact nature of their initial encounter is debated, but after some sort of altercation, Brown began to run away with Wilson in pursuit. Wilson stated that Brown stopped and charged him, but Brown's friend who was there as well contradicted this account, stating that Brown turned around with his hands raised after Wilson shot at his back. According to the friend, Wilson then shot Brown multiple times. In the entire altercation, Wilson fired a total of twelve bullets, including twice during the initial struggle. Other officers from the Ferguson Police Department were on the scene within minutes, as were crowds of residents, some expressing hostility toward the police. Brown's body was covered with sheets by paramedics, but police were widely criticized for leaving him on the road for four hours before taking him away. Many saw this delay as demeaning and disrespectful.



I Can't Breathe: Eric Garner's last words. They became a slogan of protesters against police brutality.



Michel Brown, Jr.: African American teenager killed by police in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri. Protests after his death were the first to feature large numbers of participants organized by the Black Lives Matter movement.



Primary Source: Photograph

The unrest in Ferguson, Missouri following the death of Michael Brown. The police were criticized for using militarized tactics against the demonstrators.

Already before Brown's death, residents of Ferguson had reason to distrust and dislike their police department. Although most of the town's population was African American, the police department had hired mostly White officers who lived in surrounding cities. A subsequent investigation found that the police department regularly pulled over African American drivers for minor infractions such as broken taillights. The resulting tickets produced an

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important part of the money the city received to support its budget. In effect, city officials were taxing African American citizens through traffic tickets.

Michael Brown's death ignited **unrest in Ferguson**. Although a subsequent FBI investigation found that there was no evidence that Brown had his hands up in surrender or said "don't shoot" before he was shot, protesters believed that he had done so, and used the slogan "**Hands up, don't shoot**" in protest. Protests, both peaceful and violent, exploded for more than a week in Ferguson. The response by the Ferguson and other area police agencies in dealing with the protests was strongly criticized by the media and politicians. There were concerns over insensitivity and a militarized response featuring riot shields, tear gas, automatic weapons, and armored vehicles.

A few months after Brown's death, a grand jury decided not to indict Wilson for murder. A separate Department of Justice investigation cleared Wilson of civil rights violations in the shooting. They concluded that Wilson shot Brown in self-defense.

Three months after Michael Brown's death, media attention was again transfixed, this time by a shooting in Cleveland, Ohio. Two police officers had responded to a police dispatch call of an African American male that "keeps pulling a gun out of his pants and pointing it at people" at a local recreation center. A caller reported that a male was pointing "a pistol" at random people. At the beginning of the call and again in the middle he said that the pistol was "probably fake". Toward the end of the two-minute call, the caller stated "he is probably a juvenile". However, this information was not relayed to the officers and when they arrived at the park they shot and killed the suspect.

The victim turned out to be **Tamir Rice**, a 12-year-old and his gun was an airsoft replica that lacked the orange-tipped barrel which would have indicated it was an air gun. A surveillance video of the incident was released by police four days later. The next year, prosecutors declined to press charges against the officers, claiming that it appeared Rice was pulling an actual gun out from under his shirt when he was killed. In the aftermath of the shooting, it was revealed that one of the officers had been deemed an emotionally unstable recruit and unfit for duty in his previous job as a police officer in the Cleveland suburb of Independence. Protesters have pointed to Rice's death as evidence that police officers too often jump to conclusions about African Americans rather than relying on evidence and making reasonable judgements.

In 2015, **Freddie Gray, Jr.**, a 25-year-old black man, was arrested by the Baltimore Police Department for possessing what the police alleged was an illegal knife. While being transported in a police van, Gray fell into a coma and was taken to a trauma center where he later died. The circumstances of the injuries were initially unclear. Eyewitness accounts suggested that the officers involved used unnecessary force against Gray during the arrest which



Ferguson Unrest: Weeklong protests and confrontations between protesters and law enforcement after the death of Michael Brown in 2014. Protests restarted after the announcement that the officer who shot him would not be indicted, and again on the anniversary of Brown's death.



Hands Up, Don't Shoot: The last words some believe Michael Brown said before being killed by police in 2014. They became a slogan of the Black Lives Matter movement.



Tamir Rice: 12-year-old African American boy killed by police in 2014 who believed he was carrying a gun. It turned out to be an air pistol. His death was widely protested as part of the Black Lives Matter movement.



Freddie Gray, Jr.: African American man who died in a police van from spinal cord injuries in 2015 in Baltimore. His death sparked protests that turned violent.

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was denied by all officers involved. The police commissioner reported that, contrary to department policy, the officers did not secure him inside the van while driving to the police station. The medical investigation found that Gray had sustained the injuries to his spine while in transport, and the Maryland state attorney announced that her office had filed charges against six police officers. Although African Americans across the country praised the state attorney for bringing charges against the officers, none of them were found guilty. The case against the first officer ended in a mistrial, three were found not guilty by their juries, and the charges against the remaining officers were dropped.

Gray's hospitalization and subsequent death resulted in an ongoing series of protests. On April 25, 2015, a major **protest in downtown Baltimore turned violent**, resulting in 34 arrests and injuries to 15 police officers. After Gray's funeral on April 27, civil disorder intensified with looting and burning of local businesses and a CVS drug store, culminating with the governor declaring a state of emergency and the deployment of the National Guard to Baltimore to restore order.



2015 Baltimore Protest: Violent unrest after the death of Freddie Gray in 2015. The protests resulted in arson, arrests, injuries to police and the calling of the National Guard to restore order.

Primary Source: Photograph

The death of Freddie Gray launched protests that turned violent in Baltimore, Maryland. Eventually the National Guard was brought to the city to restore order. Baltimore has been one of the nation's most deeply segregated cities.

Although each of the preceding cases did not result in convictions for the police officers involved, one case stands out because it did.

In 2015, a police officer in South Carolina shot and killed **Walter Scott** in the back after a traffic stop for a non-functioning brake light. Scott, who was unarmed, was on his way to the auto parts store to buy a new break light.

The video from the police dashcam shows him approaching Scott's car, speaking to Scott, and then returning to his patrol car. When he did, Scott exited his car and ran. The officer pursued Scott and the two became involved in a physical altercation. At some point the officer fired his Taser,



Walter Scott: African American man shot in the back by a White police officer in 2015 in South Carolina. Unlike many other shootings of unarmed African Americans at the time, the officers was charged with a crime and went to jail.

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hitting Scott. When Scott fled again the officer shot him eight times in the back.

The officer, Michael Slager, was charged with murder after a video surfaced which showed the murder. When Slager had fired his gun, Scott was 15 to 20 feet away and fleeing. In the police report of the shooting filed before the video surfaced, Slager said he had feared for his life because Scott had taken his Taser and that he shot Scott because he “felt threatened”. Although police reports stated that officers performed CPR, no such action is visible on the video. The video shows that Slager ran back toward where the initial scuffle occurred and picked something up off the ground. Moments later, he dropped the object, possibly the Taser, beside Scott’s body. In December 2017, Slager was sentenced to 20 years in prison.



Primary Source: Video

A moment from the video of the intervention at the McKinney pool party in 2015 when a White police officer tackled an African American teenage girl. Later in the video he is seen pulling his gun in an attempt to maintain control.

The Black Lives Matter movement has protested dozens of killings of unarmed African American men, but protesters have also highlighted other acts of police violence and disrespect. The 2015 incident, also known as the **McKinney pool party** is one example. That year, at a pool party in a gated McKinney, Texas, community, a police officer recorded violently restraining Dajerria Becton, a 15-year-old African American girl wearing a swimsuit. He later drew his handgun, evidence many protesters believe of how quickly officers resort to deadly force when working with African American citizens, regardless of their age, gender, or whether or not they are armed. The officer shown in the video was placed on administrative leave and later resigned. The incident sparked protests in McKinney involving hundreds of people.



McKinney Pool Party: 2015 incident in Texas in which a White police officer tackled an African American teenage girl outside a pool party and then later pulled his gun. The incident was captured on video.

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CRITICISM

Some critics accuse Black Lives Matter of being anti-police. In response, a counter movement named **Blue Lives Matter** has emerged in support of law enforcement officers who clearly have a difficult and sometimes dangerous job to do.

Former New York City Mayor and Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani said that Black Lives Matter is “inherently racist” and called the movement anti-American. According to Giuliani, the BLM movement divides people and exacerbates racial tensions. Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza replied, “What those comments show me is that the former mayor doesn’t understand racism.” Washington Post columnist Jonathan Capehart wrote that Giuliani’s comments reinforced his sense that the former mayor lives in a “racial world of make-believe”.

Critics of the BLM movement who think that it emphasizes race in a way that divides America have promoted the phrase “all lives matter.” Supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement criticized the “all lives matter” phrase, arguing that it minimized the systemic threats faced by African-Americans. President Obama defended the movement against these criticisms saying, “There is a specific problem that is happening in the African-American community that’s not happening in other communities.” Andrew Rosenthal, an editor at The New York Times wrote similarly, “The point of ‘Black Lives Matter’ is that the lives of African-Americans have come under special and deadly threat since before the birth of this country.”

American’s perception of Black Lives Matter varies considerably by race. According to a September 2015 poll, 41% of Whites thought that Black Lives Matter advocated violence, and 59% thought the movement distracted attention from the real issues of racial discrimination. By comparison, 82% of African Americans polled thought that Black Lives Matter was a nonviolent movement, and only 26% blacks thought that it distracted attention from the real issues of racial discrimination.

EFFECTS

It is difficult to assess the successes or failures of the movement since it is ongoing. While there has been no significant change in police shootings in the past few years, it may be too early to recognize any effects of the protests.

Sam Dotson, chief of the St. Louis Police Department, coined the term **Ferguson Effect** to describe what he believed was a change in enforcement behavior following the shooting of Michael Brown and subsequent unrest. According to Dotson, his officers were less active in enforcing the law because they were afraid they might be charged with breaking the law themselves. Former FBI Director James Comey suggested that the Black Lives Matter movement is partly leading to a national rise in crime rates because



Blue Lives Matter: Slogan of a movement in support of police officers in response to criticism from the Black Lives Matter movement.



Ferguson Effect: The idea that crime rates rose because police officers were more afraid to intervene in the wake of police shootings of unarmed African Americans.

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police officers have pulled back from doing their jobs. A study published by the Justice Department, said there was an increase in homicides in 56 large cities over the course of 2015, and examined the Ferguson Effect as one of three plausible explanations. Other researchers have looked for a Ferguson Effect in the rise in crime rates and failed to find evidence for it on a national level. A report over the increased homicide rate in St. Louis concluded there was an “absence of credible and comprehensive evidence” for the Ferguson Effect being responsible for the city’s homicide increase.

On the other hand, efforts to reform police department policies and procedures have been initiated in many cities to address problems associated with the movement. More officers are trained and assigned to **community policing**, a practice in which officers get out of their patrol cars to talk with citizens and participate in activities such as youth sports leagues in order to develop relationships with the people they serve. **Body cameras** that record everything an officer does have also emerged as a potential solution, although there is debate among officers about whether or not such cameras will result in a net benefit relative to their cost and intrusiveness. Few people really would like to have their every movement on the job recorded.

THE CONFEDERATE FLAG

The **Confederate battle flag** from the Civil War is a potent symbol of White supremacy. Although its use died out after the Civil War ended in 1865, the flag was reintroduced as an element of the Georgia state flag in 1956 just two years after the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision that ended segregation in public school. It was also raised at the University of Mississippi during protests against integration and added to multiple southern state flags, including South Carolina’s.

While some White Southerners associate the Confederate battle flag with pride in their heritage and traditions, for many outsiders it is impossible to separate the flag from its association with the defense of slavery and racism. Southern historian Gordon Rhea wrote in 2011 that, “It is no accident that Confederate symbols have been the mainstay of white supremacist organizations, from the Ku Klux Klan to the skinheads. They did not appropriate the Confederate battle flag simply because it was pretty. They picked it because it was the flag of a nation dedicated to their ideals: ‘that the negro is not equal to the white man’. The Confederate flag, we are told, represents heritage, not hate. But why should we celebrate a heritage grounded in hate, a heritage whose self-avowed reason for existence was the exploitation and debasement of a sizeable segment of its population?”

While debate over displays of the Confederate flag simmered for years, they were brought to national attention in 2015 when a 21-year-old White supremacist **murdered nine African Americans** during a prayer service at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston. The



Community Policing: Police practices that include meeting people instead of only riding in cars, and doing public relations activities such as running children’s sports leagues.



Body Cameras: Small digital video cameras worn by police officers.



Confederate Battle Flag: The flag carried by troops from the South into battle during the Civil War. It was resurrected in the 1960s by White Southerners who opposed the Civil Rights Movement and is now a powerful symbol of hate and racism.



Charleston Church Shooting: Mass shooting of African Americans at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in 2015 by a White supremacist. The attack sparked a debate over public displays of the Confederate battle flag.

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morning after the attack, police arrested the shooter who confessed to carrying out the attack in the hope of igniting a race war.

Because the murderer, who was sent to life in prison, had espoused racial hatred in both a website manifesto published before the shooting and a journal written from jail afterwards, and because photographs posted on the website showed him posing with the Confederate battle flag, the shooting triggered a public debate and widespread public protests.



Primary Source: Photograph

The Charleston Church Shooting launched protests aimed at removing symbols of the old Confederacy, especially the Confederate battle flag from government buildings and monuments. Counter protests such as this one also were staged.

Shortly after the shooting and after intense public pressure, the South Carolina General Assembly voted to remove the flag from a memorial on the State Capitol grounds. In 2016, the United States House of Representatives voted to ban the display of Confederate flags on flagpoles at Veterans Administration cemeteries. The author of the amendment was California congressman Jared Huffman, who stated that the flag represented “racism, slavery and division.” In 2016, Republicans in Congress attempted to reverse the flag ban but their bill was blocked by Democrats.

SPORTS AND POPULAR CULTURE

Protests regarding racial division have spilled over into many areas of life. In 2015, a Facebook post by the **University of Missouri's** student government president Payton Head described bigotry and anti-gay sentiment around the college campus. He claimed that in an incident off campus, unidentified people in the back of a passing pickup truck taunted him with racial slurs. “For those of you who wonder why I’m always talking about the importance of inclusion and respect, it’s because I’ve experienced moments like this multiple times at THIS university, making me not feel included here.” An incident involving a drunken student gave rise to more racial tensions. While an African-American student group was preparing for homecoming, a White



University of Missouri Protests:

Protests in 2015 at the University of Missouri when students decided the school’s chancellor had not done enough to address racism and hate on campus. The protests succeeded when the school’s football team refused to play.

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student walked on stage and was asked to leave. Supposedly, while departing the premises the student said, “These niggers are getting aggressive with me.” Student protests resulted calling for the university chancellor to resign for not having done enough to address racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of prejudice on campus. The protesters gained an enormous ally when the school’s football players announced they would not practice or play until the chancellor resigned, potentially costing the university a \$1 million fine if they had to forfeit an upcoming game. The chancellor resigned.



Primary Source: Photograph

Members of the NFL’s San Francisco 49ers kneel during the playing of the national anthem before a football game. This particular form of protest was first noticed by the national media when Colin Kaepernick knelt in 2016.

The National Football League has been another aspect of the world of sports where African American players have used their influence as national stars to make public statements about racism. Since August 2016, some athletes have protested against police brutality and racism by kneeling during the playing of The Star Spangled Banner.

The protests became widely known in 2016 when San Francisco 49ers quarterback **Colin Kaepernick** knelt during the anthem. Throughout the following seasons, members of various NFL and other sports teams have engaged in similar silent protests. “We chose to kneel because it’s a respectful gesture. I remember thinking our posture was like a flag flown at half-mast to mark a tragedy.” Torrey Smith, a wide receiver for the Carolina Panthers, said in an interview, “I understand why people are offended by people protesting the National Anthem. My father served 25 years. When he dies, he’s going to be wrapped in an American flag. But my dad is also out of the Army, and he drives trucks all over the country, and he’s a black man everywhere he goes, and sometimes he has racial incidents still today. That doesn’t protect him, just because he served our country. And I think that’s



Colin Kaepernick: NFL quarterback who knelt during The Star Spangled Banner beginning in 2016. His actions launched a wider use of that non-violent protest among professional athletes.

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important.” In 2017, the NFL protests became more widespread when over 200 players sat or knelt in response to President Donald Trump’s calling for owners to “fire” the protesting players.

Americans are divided on the intended meaning of the anthem and the player protests. Some believe the anthem salutes military and police officers who have died on duty. For others, it honors the United States generally. A 2018 poll by Quinnipiac University found that only 35% of voters believed the players were unpatriotic. However, 70% of Republican voters believed the kneeling players were unpatriotic.



Primary Source: Photograph

Beyoncé’s performance at the 2016 Super Bowl Halftime Show bore similarities to the Black Power salute that made some Americans proud and others uneasy.

Superstar **Beyoncé** sent a political message in her own way during her performance at America’s most-watched event: the Super Bowl. When she performed her single **Formation** at the **Super Bowl halftime show in 2016**, she and her backup dancers wore all black outfits, and she incorporated the Black Power salute made famous by Olympic runners in 1968 into the choreography. Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani accused the performance of being anti-police. “This is football, not Hollywood, and I thought it was really outrageous that she used it as a platform to attack police officers who are the people who protect her and protect us, and keep us alive,” he said. The controversy launched a **#BoycottBeyonce** hashtag on Twitter and protesters announced plans for an anti-Beyoncé rally on the morning of February 16 outside of the NFL’s headquarters in New York City, but no one showed up. Black Lives Matter activist and professor Melina Abdullah praised Beyoncé and other artists who “are willing to raise social consciousness and use their artistry to advance social justice.” In attempt to address her own controversy, Beyoncé explained, “I have so much admiration and respect for officers and the families of officers who sacrifice themselves to keep us safe. But let’s be clear: I am against police brutality and injustice.”

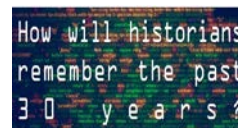


Beyoncé: Pop star who used Black Power symbolism to protest treatment of African Americans by police during the 2016 Super Bowl Halftime Show.



2016 Super Bowl Halftime Show: Performance by Beyoncé in which she used Black Power symbolism to protest treatment of African Americans by police.

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VOTING RIGHTS

The idea that America is post-racial or close to it has played a role in at least one United States Supreme Court decision. In **Shelby County v. Holder** in 2013, the court invalidated a section of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that had required nine states with particularly severe histories of racial discrimination to obtain approval from the federal Justice Department for any change to their election laws. The ruling, written by Chief Justice John Roberts, said in part, “Our country has changed.” It added that in the decades since the Voting Rights Act was passed, “voting tests were abolished, disparities in voter registration and turnout due to race were erased, and African-Americans attained political office in record numbers.” In short, the Court found that the evidence suggested racial discrimination in voting practices had ended and therefore the Voting Rights Act was unnecessary.

Shortly after the ruling, state legislatures controlled by Republican majorities began passing laws they claimed were intended to stop voter fraud such as voting twice, or claiming to be someone else when voting. Democrats and minority rights advocates point out that incidents of voter fraud are almost nonexistent in the United States, and that the true intention of these laws is to disenfranchise minority and lower income voters.

The most common laws require voters to show identification. These **voter ID laws** seem like common sense to many, but they affect voters who do not normally maintain driver’s licenses, or move frequently and do not have accurate identification. In conjunction with voter identification laws, states began limiting access to offices where citizens can obtain the required documents. In Alabama, the Republican-controlled state government closed DMV offices in eight of ten counties which had the highest percentage African American population, but only three in the ten counties with the lowest percentage. The specific types of identification required also have been in contention. In 2016, a federal appeals court found that Texas’s voter ID law discriminated against African American and Hispanic voters because only a few types of ID were allowed. For example, military IDs and concealed carry permits were allowed, but state employee photo IDs and university photo IDs were not.

Another method of **voter suppression** was to clean up the voter registration databases by removing people who had not voted in the previous few elections, in theory removing people who had died or moved away. However, since there is no requirement to vote in the United States, many people vote only occasionally, or do not vote regularly because it is difficult to go to the polls on Election Day. The poor, who are disproportionately minority voters, have a harder time getting out of work or finding transportation to get to voting sites and have found that they had been removed from the voting rolls when they eventually did go to vote.



Shelby County v. Holder: 2013 Supreme Court case in which the Court ruled that large sections of the 1965 Voting Rights Act no longer applied. After the ruling, Republican politicians in many states implemented changes designed to suppress the minority vote.



Voter ID Laws: Laws that require voters to show photo identification. Proponents claim they will stop voter fraud. Opponents claim they make voting harder, especially for the elderly, minorities and the poor.



Voter Suppression: Any action designed to make voting harder. After the Shelby County v. Holder Supreme Court case, numerous laws and policies have been implemented to this effect.

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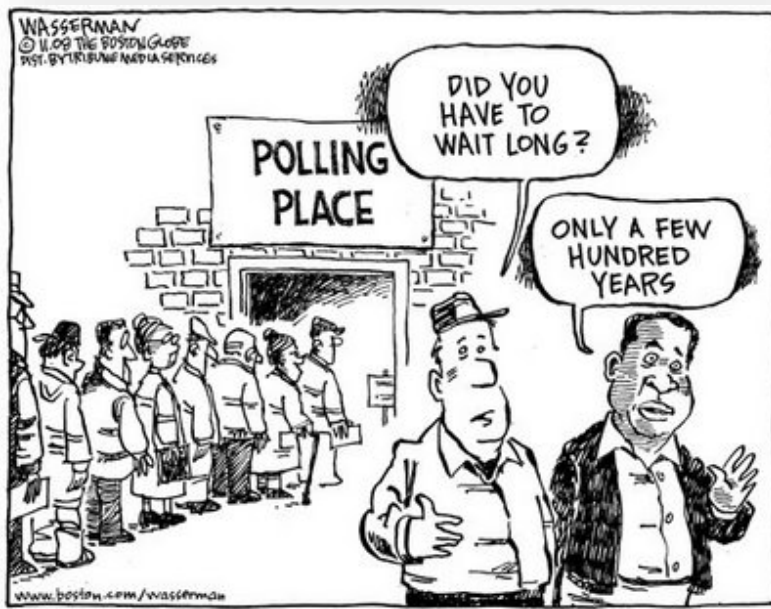
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Another method was to use a computer to compare voting rolls to Social Security or driver's license databases and remove names that do not match. Researchers have found that the most common names identified are those most associated with minorities. Perhaps, it has been speculated, names like Gutierrez and Jazzaria are most commonly misspelled in state computer systems by White clerks.

Running elections is expensive, and Republicans who claim to want to save money have closed down polling stations, often in minority neighborhood. They also have stopped early voting which provides opportunities to vote for people who cannot get out of work on Election Day. Some have proposed making Election Day a national holiday or moving our elections to a Saturday.

Other laws ban convicted felons from voting, which since minorities make up the bulk of incarcerated Americans, disproportionately affects minority voters.

Perhaps the greatest threat to voting access is simply the closing of polling places. Since 2013, 868 polling places across the South have been shut down completely. Ostensibly an effort to save money, critics note that the closing of polling places results in longer distances needed to travel and longer lines waiting to vote. When polling places are closed in minority neighborhoods, the effect is a reduction of minority voters.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

This cartoon comments on both the long lines some voters have faced on Election Day when many people have to vote in one place, and the long history of disenfranchisement African Americans have faced in America.

CONCLUSION

Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote in *The Atlantic* in 2015 that the phrase post-racial was “usually employed by talk-show hosts and news anchors looking to measure progress in the Obama era.” And Anna Holmes wrote in *The New York Times*,

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“Chattel slavery and the legacies it left behind continue to shape American society. Sometimes it seems as if the desire for a ‘post-racial’ America is an attempt by white people to liberate themselves from the burden of having to deal with that legacy.”

However, others argue that post-racial politics is not about never seeing race, but about being a champion of aggressive action to deliver economic opportunity and weed out police misconduct. They argue that when the media amplifies division, it makes racial healing and justice more difficult. Because events demonstrating racial harmony are dismissed as non-newsworthy, they would say the media’s emphasis on conflict undermines trust and impedes progress.

So, our question could be answered in multiple ways. Do you think that we have arrived at a time when we no longer see race? Or, have we arrived at a time when we can see through the media’s obsession with division and can work together on justice for all? Alternatively, do you think we have not achieved either of those goals? In that case, how should we define a post-racial America?

What do you think? Will there ever be a post-racial America?



KEY CONCEPTS

White Flight: The movement of Whites out of inner cities into suburbs in the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in poorer urban cores populated by African Americans and Hispanics surrounded by suburbs of almost all White residents.

Ferguson Effect: The idea that crime rates rose because police officers were more afraid to intervene in the wake of police shootings of unarmed African Americans.

Community Policing: Police practices that include meeting people instead of only riding in cars, and doing public relations activities such as running children's sports leagues.

Body Cameras: Small digital video cameras worn by police officers.

Voter Suppression: Any action designed to make voting harder. After the *Shelby County v. Holder* Supreme Court case, numerous laws and policies have been implemented to this effect.



SPEECHES, SLOGANS & SYMBOLS

2002 Democratic National Convention Keynote Speech: Speech by then-Senator Barack Obama in which he rejected divisions in America. It is sometimes called the "Purple America" speech in reference to the merging of blue and red. Obama's performance propelled him to national fame.

A More Perfect Union Speech: Speech by Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign in which he explicitly addressed the issue of race. Some political historians regard it as a turning point in the campaign.

I Can't Breathe: Eric Garner's last words. They became a slogan of protesters against police brutality.

Hands Up, Don't Shoot: The last words some believe Michael Brown said before being killed by police in 2014. They became a slogan of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Blue Lives Matter: Slogan of a movement in support of police officers in response to criticism from the Black Lives Matter movement.

Confederate Battle Flag: The flag carried by troops from the South into battle during the Civil War. It was resurrected in the 1960s by White Southerners who opposed the Civil Rights Movement and is now a powerful symbol of hate and racism.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Barack Obama: First African American president. He is a Democrat and was elected in 2008 and reelected 2012.

Treyvon Martin: African American teenager who was murdered in 2012 while walking home from buying candy from a convenience store in Florida. His death sparked the beginnings of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Eric Garner: African American man who died in 2014 after being held in a chokehold by New York City Police. His last words were "I can't breathe" which became a slogan of anti-police brutality protests.

Michel Brown, Jr.: African American teenager killed by police in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri. Protests after his death were the first to feature large numbers of participants organized by the Black Lives Matter movement.

Tamir Rice: 12-year-old African American boy killed by police in 2014 who believed he was carrying a gun. It turned out to be an air pistol. His death was widely protested as part of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Freddie Gray, Jr.: African American man who died in a police van from spinal cord injuries in 2015 in Baltimore. His death sparked protests that turned violent.

Walter Scott: African American man shot in the back by a White police officer in 2015 in South Carolina. Unlike many other shootings of unarmed African Americans at the time, the officers was charged with a crime and went to jail.

Colin Kaepernick: NFL quarterback who knelt during The Star Spangled Banner beginning in 2016. His actions launched a wider use of that non-violent protest among professional athletes.

Beyoncé: Pop star who used Black Power symbolism to protest treatment of African Americans by police during the 2016 Super Bowl Halftime Show.



COURT CASES

Shelby County v. Holder: 2013 Supreme Court case in which the Court ruled that large sections of the 1965 Voting Rights Act no longer applied. After the ruling, Republican politicians in many states implemented changes designed to suppress the minority vote.



EVENTS

Flint Water Crisis: Health crisis revealed in 2014 in which the mostly African American residents of Flint, Michigan were drinking tap water contaminated with lead.

Black Lives Matter (BLM): Racial justice movement that developed around 2014 and focuses on police brutality. It is led by younger Americans rather than the generation that led the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Ferguson Unrest: Weeklong protests and confrontations between protesters and law enforcement after the death of Michael Brown in 2014. Protests restarted after the announcement that the officer who shot him would not be indicted, and again on the anniversary of Brown's death.

2015 Baltimore Protest: Violent unrest after the death of Freddie Gray in 2015. The protests resulted in arson, arrests, injuries to police and the calling of the National Guard to restore order.

McKinney Pool Party: 2015 incident in Texas in which a White police officer tackled an African American teenage girl outside a pool party and then later pulled his gun. The incident was captured on video.

Charleston Church Shooting: Mass shooting of African Americans at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in 2015 by a White supremacist. The attack sparked a debate over public displays of the Confederate battle flag.

University of Missouri Protests: Protests in 2015 at the University of Missouri when students decided the school's chancellor had not done enough to address racism and hate on campus. The protests succeeded when the school's football team refused to play.

2016 Super Bowl Halftime Show: Performance by Beyoncé in which she used Black Power symbolism to protest treatment of African Americans by police.



LAWS

Voter ID Laws: Laws that require voters to show photo identification. Proponents claim they will stop voter fraud. Opponents claim they make voting harder, especially for the elderly, minorities and the poor.



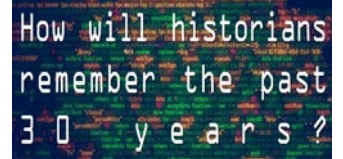
LOCATIONS

Lower Ninth Ward: Mostly African American neighborhood in New Orleans that was devastated by flooding in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina.

4

F O U R T H Q U E S T I O N

IS OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM BROKEN?



How will historians
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INTRODUCTION

Imagine a nation in which the people vote but the person who wins the election does not get to be president. Imagine a time when a president lies about an affair under oath but does not lose his job and instead is the most popular outgoing president ever. Imagine a nation in which greedy bankers cause a major economic collapse but then the government uses taxpayer money to save the bankers.

These are all descriptions of the United States in the past 30 years. George W. Bush and Donald Trump both lost the popular vote but became president by winning the electoral vote. Bill Clinton was impeached because of lies he told about his affair but left office with a 66% approval rating. The TARP bailouts saved the bankers who caused the Great Recession.

Doesn't this mean that something is wrong with our political system? Shouldn't we do something about it? How can these seemingly impossible things happen in our country?

What do you think? Is our political system broken?

GEORGE H. W. BUSH AND BILL CLINTON

President George H. W. Bush was the last of his generation to hold the office of the presidency. A World War II veteran, Bush had made a fortune as a businessman and had then gone on to a long and successful career in government, serving as head of the CIA and as vice president for Ronald Reagan. Although he promised to carry on Reagan's economic legacy, the problems Bush inherited made it difficult to do so. Reagan's policies of cutting taxes and increasing defense spending had exploded the federal budget deficit, making it three times larger in 1989 than when Reagan took office in 1980. Bush was further constrained by the emphatic pledge he had made at the 1988 Republican Convention, "**read my lips: no new taxes**" and found himself in the difficult position of trying to balance the budget and reduce the deficit without breaking his promise. He also faced a Congress controlled by the Democrats, who wanted to raise taxes on the rich. When he eventually broke his "no new taxes" pledge, he damaged his standing among conservatives who were crucial to his reelection chances.

The contrast between George H. W. Bush and **William "Bill" Clinton** could not have been greater. Bill Clinton was a Baby Boomer born in 1946 in Hope, Arkansas. Compared to Bush, Clinton was relaxed and approachable. He had excellent interpersonal skills and could make those around him feel like he really understood and cared about their problems.

Clinton's background distinguished him from the president as well. Whereas Bush was wealthy, Clinton had come from tough beginnings. His biological father died in a car wreck three months before he was born. When he was a boy, his mother married Roger Clinton, an alcoholic who abused his family. Despite a troubled home life, Clinton was an excellent student. He took an interest in politics and on a high school trip to Washington, DC, he met his political idol President John F. Kennedy. As a student at Georgetown University he supported both the civil rights and antiwar movements and ran for student council president. In 1968, Clinton received a prestigious Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University. From Oxford he moved on to Yale where he earned his law degree in 1973.

After finishing school, Clinton returned home and became a professor at the University of Arkansas's law school. The following year, he tried his hand at state politics and was elected the state's youngest governor in 1978. Losing the office to his Republican opponent in 1980, he retook the governor's mansion in 1982 and remained governor of Arkansas until 1992 when he announced his candidacy for president.

During his campaign against George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton described himself as a **New Democrat**, a member of a faction of the Democratic Party that, like the Republicans, favored free trade and deregulation. He tried to appeal to the middle class by promising higher taxes on the rich and reform of the welfare system. Although Clinton garnered only 43% of the popular



"Read my lips: no new taxes":

Campaign promise by George H. W. Bush in 1988 that cost him support when he had to break it later as president.



Bill Clinton: Former governor of Arkansas who won the presidency in 1992 as a Democrat and served eight

years. His second term was rocked by scandal and impeachment.



New Democrats: Democrats in the early 1990s who found ways to be elected after the Conservative

Revolution by promoting free trade and welfare reform. Bill Clinton used this term to describe himself.

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vote, he easily won in the Electoral College with 370 votes to President Bush's 188. Bush lost support among conservatives for both breaking his "no new taxes" pledge and because Texas billionaire H. Ross Perot won 19% of the popular vote, the best showing by any third-party candidate since 1912.



Primary Source: Photograph

Governor of Arkansas Bill Clinton campaigning for president as a New Democrat in 1992. He was the first Baby Boomer to be elected president.

CLINTON AND THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

True to his promise as a New Democrat, Clinton raised taxes on the wealthy, lowered taxes for the middle and lower classes and lowered tariffs to increase trade. Clinton worked to convince the Senate to ratify the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The treaty had been negotiated by the Bush Administration, and the leaders of all three nations had signed it in December 1992. However, because of strong opposition from American labor unions and some in Congress who feared the loss of jobs to Mexico, the treaty had not been ratified by the time Clinton took office. To allay the concerns of unions, he added an agreement to protect workers and also one to protect the environment.

During Clinton's administration, the nation experienced the longest period of economic expansion in its history, almost ten consecutive years. Year after year, job growth increased and the deficit shrank. Increased tax revenue and budget cuts erased the federal budget deficit and the government began to run as surplus. Reduced government borrowing freed up capital for private-sector use, and lower interest rates in turn fueled more growth. During the Clinton years, more people owned homes than ever before in the country's history. Much of the prosperity of the 1990s was related to technological change and the advent of new information systems. In 1994, the Clinton Administration became the first to launch an official White House website.

An important and popular part of Clinton's domestic agenda was healthcare reform. Clinton appointed his wife **Hillary Clinton**, a Yale Law School

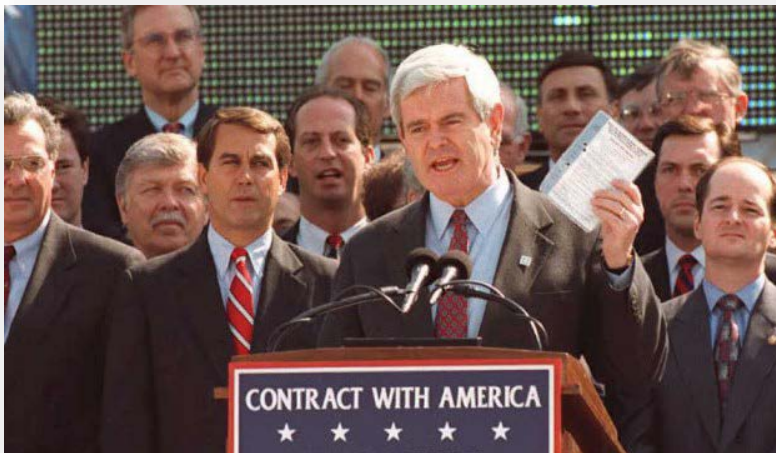


Hillary Clinton: First lady to Bill Clinton. She led a task force during his presidency to prepare for healthcare reform. Later she served as senator from New York, Secretary of State, and ran for president.

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graduate and accomplished attorney, to head his Task Force on National Health Care Reform in 1993. The **Health Security Act** presented to Congress that year sought to offer universal coverage by raising taxes and using the money to pay everyone's medical bills. The outlook for the plan was good in 1993. It had the support of a number of institutions like the American Medical Association and the Health Insurance Association of America. But in relatively short order the political winds changed. As budget battles distracted the administration and the midterm elections of 1994 approached, Republicans began to recognize the strategic benefits of opposing reform. Moderate conservatives dubbed the reform proposals "Hillarycare" and argued that the bill was an unwarranted expansion of the powers of the federal government that would interfere with people's ability to choose the doctors they wanted. Those further to the right argued that healthcare reform was part of a larger and nefarious plot by Democrats to control the public.



Health Security Act: Health care bill proposed by Bill Clinton in 1993. It failed to gain popular support and was never passed. Sometimes it was nicknamed Hillarycare because of Hillary Clinton's involvement in planning the law.

Primary Source: Photograph

Newt Gingrich holds a copy of the Contract with America during a press conference. His proposals helped propel Republicans to electoral victory in 1994.

To rally Republican opposition to Clinton and the Democrats, **Newt Gingrich**, leader of the Republican minority in the House of Representatives, published a plan they called the **Contract with America**. It listed eight specific reforms or initiatives the Republicans would enact if they gained a majority in Congress in the upcoming midterm elections. Most of these dealt with reducing spending by eliminating government waste and most of the wording of the contract had been borrowed from one of Ronald Reagan's speeches.

Lacking support, the healthcare bill was never passed and died in Congress. Dislike of the proposed healthcare plan on the part of conservatives and the bold strategy laid out in the Contract with America enabled the Republican Party to retake both the Senate and House of Representatives. This **Republican Revolution** was the most sweeping change of power in Washington in decades. Newt Gingrich took the gavel as the Speaker of the



Newt Gingrich: Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives who proposed the Contract with America in 1994, lead the Republican Revolution, and was Bill Clinton's leading political opponent.



Contract with America: Set of eight proposals set out by Republicans in 1994 which helped propel them to retake the House of Representatives.



Republican Revolution: Nickname for the electoral gains made by congressional Republicans in 1994. For the first time in decades Republicans took control of the House of Representatives.

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House of Representatives becoming the primary political opponent of President Clinton.

The Republicans used their new power to push for conservative reforms. Clinton responded to his party's electoral loss by finding ways to work with the Republicans. One law they negotiated and passed was the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, known better as **welfare reform**. The act set time limits on welfare benefits and required most recipients to begin working within two years of receiving assistance.

SCANDAL AND IMPEACHMENT

From the moment he entered national politics, Bill Clinton's opponents had attempted to tie both him and Hillary to crimes and unethical activities. Multiple women had accused the president of rape and sexual abuse before he had won in 1992, but he had been able to shake these allegations, although they were most likely true. Some accusations were almost certainly false. One such wild story held that Clinton had murdered his childhood friend to prevent him from revealing secrets he knew about the president. One accusation the Clintons could not shake, however, was of possible improper involvement in a failed real estate deal associated with the Whitewater Development Corporation in Arkansas in the 1970s and 1980s. **Kenneth Starr**, a former judge, was appointed to investigate the matter.

While Starr was never able to prove any wrongdoing in the Whitewater deal, he soon turned up other allegations. Starr's team eventually learned about **Monica Lewinsky**, a young White House intern. Both Lewinsky and Clinton denied under oath that they had had a sexual relationship. The evidence, however, indicated otherwise, and Starr began to investigate the possibility that Clinton had committed **perjury** by lying under oath. Again, Clinton denied any relationship and even went on national television to assure the American people that he had done nothing wrong. His claim, "**I did not have sexual relations with that woman**" reminded many Americans of Nixon's claim, "I am not a crook." After receiving a promise of immunity, Lewinsky turned over evidence of her affair with Clinton, and the president admitted he had indeed had inappropriate relations with her. He nevertheless denied that he had lied under oath.

In September 1997, Starr reported to the House of Representatives that he believed Clinton had committed perjury. Eager to force a man they believed unethical out of office, Republicans voted in the House of Representatives to send articles of **impeachment** to the Senate, charging Clinton with lying under oath and obstructing justice. In February 1998, the Senate voted 45-55 on the perjury charge and 50-50 on obstruction of justice. A few Republican senators from New England saved Clinton from losing his job when they voted against impeachment. For them, the entire process was not about removing a president for a crime, but instead about political vendetta and unethical behavior.



Welfare Reform: Efforts in the 1990s to change welfare laws by including a requirement that people receiving welfare begin working within two years.



Kenneth Starr: Independent prosecutor appointed to investigate Bill Clinton's wrongdoing. He investigated both the Whitewater real estate deal and Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky.



Monica Lewinsky: White House intern who had an affair with President Bill Clinton.



Perjury: Lying under oath. It is a crime.



"I did not have sexual relations with that woman": Famous quote by President Bill Clinton when he denied his affair with Monica Lewinsky on television.



Impeachment: The Constitutional process of removing an elected official or judge. In the case of a president, the House of Representatives serves as the prosecutors and the Senate as the jury.

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Primary Source: Photograph


This famous photograph was taken a few months after President Clinton admitted his affair with Monica Lewinsky. Hillary did not leave him or move out of the White House and their teenage daughter, Chelsea helped bring them together. The photograph was taken as the First Family walked across the White House lawn to a helicopter.

Many thought that Clinton should have resigned the way Nixon had done instead of forcing the country to endure his impeachment. However, Clinton hung on, always believing that he could survive and outsmart his opponents. In the end, he did and remained popular, in large part because of his successful foreign policy endeavors in the Balkans and because the economy was doing well. He left office at the end of his second term with an approval rating of 66%, the highest of any outgoing president. Despite his popularity in the end, the suspicion of wrongdoing following both Bill and Hillary Clinton into the future.

BUSH V. GORE

Despite Clinton's high approval rating, his vice president and the 2000 Democratic nominee for president, Al Gore, was eager to distance himself from scandal. Unfortunately, he also alienated Clinton loyalists and lost some of the benefit of Clinton's genuine popularity. On the Republican side, where strategists promised to "restore honor and dignity" to the White House, voters selected **George W. Bush**, governor of Texas and eldest son of former president Bush. Bush had the robust support of both the Christian Right and the Republican leadership.

One hundred million votes were cast in the 2000 election, and Gore topped Bush in the popular vote by 540,000 ballots, or 0.5%. The race was so close that news reports declared each candidate the winner at various times during the evening. It all came down to Florida. Whoever won Florida would get the state's 25 electoral votes and secure the presidency.

 **George W. Bush:** Republican president elected in 2000 and reelected in 2004. He is remembered mostly for prosecuting the War on Terror, but also instituted education reforms and oversaw the beginning of the Great Recession.



Primary Source: Newspaper

The 2000 election was not decided for over a month as recounts and court proceedings dragged on. Finally the Supreme Court decided the election by a 5-4 vote.

Because there seemed to be irregularities in four counties traditionally dominated by Democrats, especially in largely African American precincts, Gore called for a recount of the ballots by hand. Florida's secretary of state, Katherine Harris, a Republican, set a deadline for the new vote tallies to be submitted, a deadline the counties could not meet. When the Democrats requested an extension, the Florida Supreme Court granted it, but Harris refused to accept the new tallies unless the counties could explain why they



Bush v. Gore: 2000 Supreme Court case in which the Court ruled to end a recount of votes in Florida, thus handing the presidential election victory to George W. Bush. It marked an important turning point in the politicization of the Supreme Court.

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had not met the original deadline. When the explanations were submitted, they were rejected. Gore then asked the Florida Supreme Court for an injunction that would prevent Harris from declaring a winner until the recount was finished. On November 26, Harris declared Bush the winner in Florida. Gore protested that not all votes had been recounted by hand. When the Florida Supreme Court ordered the recount to continue, the Republicans appealed to the Supreme Court. The case, **Bush v. Gore** was decided 5-4 to stop the recount. Bush received Florida's electoral votes and with a total of 271 votes in the Electoral College to Gore's 266, became the next president of the United States. It was only the second time in the nation's history that a son of a former president won the office himself.


The 2000 election had a number of important consequences for America's political system. First, it increased calls for the elimination of the Electoral College system that includes a winner-take-all system for allocating each state's votes. Only three times before 2000 had the winner of the popular vote lost the electoral vote and become president. It also focused enormous attention on the Supreme Court since, in the end, the vote of the nine justices decided who would be president.

BUSH, TAX CUTS, AND THE INCOME GAP

By the time George W. Bush became president, the concept of supply-side economics had become an article of faith within the Republican Party. It was unthinkable that a Republican might not believe that tax cuts for the wealthy would allow them to invest more and create jobs for everyone else. The Republican Party platform for the 2000 election offered the American people an opportunity to once again test the rosy expectations of supply-side economics and in 2001, Bush and the Republicans pushed through a **tax cut** by lowering tax rates for everyone. However, they gave the largest cuts to those in the highest tax brackets. This was in the face of calls by Republicans for a balanced budget, which Bush insisted would happen when the so-called job creators expanded the economy by using their increased income to invest in business.

The cuts were controversial. The rich were getting richer while the middle and lower classes bore a proportionally larger share of the nation's tax burden. By 2005, dramatic examples of income inequity were increasing. For example, the CEO of Wal-Mart earned \$15 million. It would take over 900 average workers at Wal-Mart to make that much. Even as productivity climbed, workers' incomes stagnated. With a larger share of the wealth, the very rich further solidified their influence on public policy. Left with a smaller share of the economic pie, average workers had fewer resources to improve their lives or contribute to the nation's prosperity.

Another gap that had been widening for years was the education gap. Some education researchers had argued that American students were being left behind by their counterparts around the world. In 1983, a commission

 **Bush Tax Cuts:** Reductions in taxes for all Americans, but especially for the wealthy, implemented by George W. Bush in 2001.

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established by Ronald Reagan had published a sobering assessment of the American educational system entitled *A Nation at Risk*. The report argued that American students were more poorly educated than their peers in other countries, especially in areas such as math and science, and were thus unprepared to compete in the global marketplace. Proclaiming himself the education president, Bush sought to hold schools accountable for raising standards and enabling students to meet them. The **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**, created a system of testing to measure student performance in reading and math. Schools whose students performed poorly on the tests would be labeled “in need of improvement.” If poor performance continued, schools could face changes in curricula and teachers or even the prospect of closure.

The second proposed solution was to give students the opportunity to attend schools with better performance records. Some of these might be **charter schools**, institutions funded by local tax monies in the same way as public schools, but able to accept private donations. Charter schools are exempt from some of the rules public schools must follow giving them more freedom to innovate and experiment with new ideas to help students succeed. President Bush also encouraged states to grant **vouchers** to parents. Using a voucher, parents could send their children to private schools. The vouchers were funded by tax revenue. Unsurprisingly, teachers unions were strongly opposed to vouchers and fought against both them and the testing regime created by NCLB.

While Bush had wanted to be remembered as the education president, the September 11 attacks changed everything, and he will probably always be remembered as the president who led the nation into the War on Terror. Although the Iraq War proved to be difficult, Bush defeated Senator John Kerry and was in 2004. Victory at the polls did not translate into lasting popularity however. The nation’s economic division grew, as did other tensions.

One event highlighted the nation’s economic inequality and racial divisions, as well as the Bush Administration’s difficulty in addressing them effectively. On August 29, 2005, **Hurricane Katrina** came ashore and devastated coastal stretches of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The city of New Orleans, no stranger to hurricanes and floods, suffered heavy damage when the levees designed to protect against flooding failed during the storm surge, as the Army Corps of Engineers had warned they might. The flooding killed more than 1,500 people and so overwhelmed parts of the city that tens of thousands more were trapped and unable to evacuate. Thousands who were elderly, ill, or too poor to own a car followed the mayor’s directions and sought refuge at the Superdome, which lacked adequate food, water, and sanitation. Public services collapsed under the weight of the crisis.

Although the Coast Guard managed to rescue more than 35,000 people from the stricken city, the response by other federal agencies was less effective.



No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB):

Education reform law passed by George W. Bush in 2002 which introduced a system of high-stakes testing and the possibility of restructuring for low performing schools.



Charter Schools:

Independently run schools that operate with public funding. They are seen by many as opportunities for educators to innovate and provide options for families who live in neighborhoods with failing schools.



School Vouchers:

A system in which parents can receive public tax dollars to pay for private school tuition. Proponents believe it gives parents choice and students a chance at a better education. Opponents believe it robs public schools of needed funding.



Hurricane Katrina:

Major natural disaster in 2005. The federal government’s response was widely criticized which hurt President George W. Bush’s popularity.

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The **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**, which is charged with assisting state and local governments in times of natural disaster, proved inept at coordinating the rescue and relief effort. Critics argued that FEMA was to blame and that its director, Michael D. Brown, a Bush friend and appointee with no background in emergency management, was an example of cronyism at its worst. The failures of FEMA were particularly harmful for an administration that had made homeland security its top priority.

While there was plenty of blame to go around, FEMA and the Bush Administration got the lion's share. Even when the president attempted to demonstrate his concern with a personal appearance, the tactic largely backfired. Photographs of him looking down on the flooded city from the comfort of Air Force One only reinforced the impression that the president was detached from the problems of everyday people. On the eve of the 2006 midterm elections, President Bush's popularity had reached a new low, as a result of the war in Iraq and Hurricane Katrina, and a growing number of Americans who felt that his party's economic policy benefitted the wealthy first and foremost.



Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Government agency under the Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for coordinating rescue and relief operations after disasters or terrorist attacks. Their response to Hurricane Katrina was widely criticized.

Primary Source: Photograph

In order to avoid interrupting the relief efforts on the ground, President George W. Bush chose to observe the devastation in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina from Air Force One. Photos of him looking out of the plane's windows backfired and gave people the impression that their president was disconnected from their problems and did not care about their suffering.

THE GREAT RECESSION

The early 2000s were a time of wild ups and downs for the economy. In 2001, the stock market had taken a sharp drop and the ensuing recession triggered the loss of millions of jobs over the next two years. In response, the Federal Reserve Board cut interest rates to historic lows to encourage consumer spending. By 2002, the economy seemed to be stabilizing somewhat and outsourcing of jobs to China and India became an increasing concern. Many consumers were buying on credit, and with interest rates low financial institutions were eager to oblige them. By 2008, credit card

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debt had risen to over \$1 trillion. More importantly, banks were making high-risk, high-interest mortgage loans.

Normally when someone wants to buy a house or condominium, the prospective home buyer went to a local bank for a mortgage loan. Because the bank expected to make a profit in the form of interest charged on the loan, it carefully vetted buyers for their ability to repay. Deregulation of the banking industry in the 1990s and early 2000s, however, allowed lending institutions to securitize their mortgage loans and sell them as bonds. In other words, the home buyer made a promise to pay back their loan to the bank, but that bank put hundreds of these promises together and sold that as one unit to a larger bank. These collections of mortgages were called **mortgage backed securities**. Big Wall Street banks wanted them because they promised big rewards. Also, with more money in their pockets because of the Bush tax cuts, more people wanted to invest and the mortgage backed securities seemed like a sure payoff.

However, there was a terrible dark side. Banks could afford to make bad loans because they could sell them quickly and not suffer the financial consequences when borrowers failed to repay in the long term. The large banks that were putting the securities together were pushing up demand for mortgages in general, so local banks started ignoring caution and encouraged people to take out loans for large houses that they would never be able to repay. These **subprime mortgages** were sure to fail eventually.

Once they had purchased the loans, larger investment banks bundled them into huge packages known as collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) and sold them to investors around the world. Even though CDOs consisted of subprime mortgages, credit card debt, and other risky investments, credit ratings agencies had a financial incentive to rate them as very safe. Normally a **credit rating agency** gave an honest score to an investment, telling prospective buyers about the potential risk involved in purchasing it. However, giving the CDOs low scores would mean losing business with the investment banks who were paying the rating agencies. Eventually, every CDO was rated A+ even though the subprime mortgages and credit card debt deep down at their core was unlikely to be paid back and anyone who bought them would surely lose their money in the end.

Making matters worse, financial institutions created instruments called **credit default swaps**, which were essentially a form of insurance on investments. The large investment banks bought insurance from one another thinking they would never have to use it. Each month, each bank paid a little to the other banks for a guarantee that they would bail them out if their investments failed. Eventually, all the large banks on Wall Street were so closely tied together that if one of them faltered, all of them would suffer. Instead of supporting the system, credit default swaps made the financial system far more susceptible to a sudden crash.



Mortgage Backed Securities: Investments that were made up of a collection of home loans bundled together and sold as a single unit.



Subprime Mortgage: A home loan made to a lender that was unlikely to be able to repay it. They were sold in large numbers in the early 2000s in order to make mortgage backed securities and when they failed it caused the Great Recession.



Credit Rating Agency: A company that gives a score to investment opportunities to rank them in terms of their risk. They are important in order to help investors manage risk.



Credit Default Swap: Insurance investment banks took out on their investments with other large banks. Because all the large banks had these with all the other large banks in the early 2000s, the Great Recession had a domino effect within the financial markets.

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When the **real estate market** stalled after reaching a peak in 2007, the house of cards built by the country's financial institutions came tumbling down. People began to default on their loans. When they could not afford their housing payments they wanted to sell their oversized and overpriced homes. But there were no longer people who wanted to buy, and banks were no longer giving away easy loans anyway. Many people found themselves underwater: unable to pay their mortgages and owning more on their homes than they could get if they sold them.

More than one hundred mortgage lenders went out of business. American International Group (AIG), a multinational insurance company that had insured many of the investments, faced collapse. Other large financial institutions, which had once been prevented by federal regulations from engaging in risky investment practices, found themselves in danger as they either were besieged by demands for payment or found that the companies they had bought credit default swaps from could not pay them. The prestigious investment firm Lehman Brothers was completely wiped out and closed its doors in September 2008 the shock of the business and political world. Some endangered companies, like Wall Street giant Merrill Lynch, sold themselves to other financial institutions to survive.

TARP

Members of Congress met with Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson in September 2008, to find a way to head off the crisis. They agreed to use \$700 billion in federal tax money to bail out the troubled institutions and Congress subsequently passed the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, creating the **Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)**. Companies that were in trouble could apply for TARP money in order to stay open, but would have to pay it back over time once the crisis had passed.

The actions of the Federal Reserve, Congress, and the president prevented the complete disintegration of the nation's financial sector and prevented a repeat of the Great Depression.

However, the bailouts could not prevent a tremendous decline in the world economy that has come to be known as the **Great Recession**. As people lost faith in the economy, stock prices fell by 45%. Unable to receive credit from banks that were suddenly more careful about who they loaned money to, smaller businesses found that they could not pay suppliers or employees and many people lost their jobs. With houses at record prices and growing economic uncertainty, people stopped buying new homes. As the value of homes decreased, owners were unable to borrow against them to pay off other obligations, such as credit card debt or car loans. More importantly, millions of homeowners who had expected to sell their houses at a profit and pay off their mortgages were now stuck in houses with values shrinking below their purchasing price and forced to make mortgage payments they



Real Estate Market Crash: 2007 economic disaster in which investors and home buyers finally realized that housing prices were inflated and stopped buying. People were left with mortgages they couldn't pay and homes they couldn't sell.



Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP): Government program designed to save banks during the Great Recession. The government loaned banks enormous sums of money in order to help them survive as they dealt with all of the failed investments they had purchased during the housing boom.



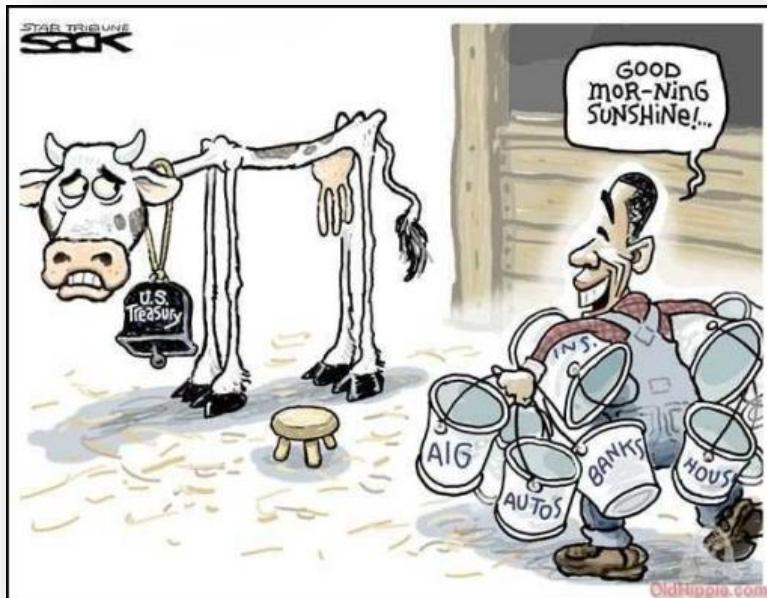
Great Recession: Economic crash starting in 2007 caused by speculation in the housing market and lax oversight of the financial markets. It was the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and caused unemployment to peak at 10%.

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could no longer afford. Without access to credit, consumer spending declined.

As the Great Recession deepened, the situation of ordinary citizens became worse. During the last four months of 2008, one million American workers lost their jobs, and during 2009, another three million found themselves out of work. Under such circumstances, many resented the expensive federal bailout of banks and investment firms. It seemed as if the wealthy people who had caused the problem in the first place were being rescued with taxpayer money from the consequences of their imprudent and even corrupt practices. Meanwhile, everyday Americans were suffering. The feelings of betrayal led to both protests against the rich and against the government that saved them.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

This artist is poking fun at the bailout programs implemented to save the financial system after the financial crash in 2007. President Obama is seen coming to take more tax money to give away to financial institutions that had caused the Great Recession.

OBAMA'S STIMULUS

Born in Hawaii in 1961 to a Kenyan father and an American woman from Kansas, Barack Obama was elected on a platform of hope and change in 2008. With George W. Bush facing economic crisis, an ongoing war in Iraq, and the failed response to Hurricane Katrina, Americans wanted a change, and Obama's youth and excitement was just what they were looking for. As he entered office in 2009, Obama set out to deal with the Great Recession and to reform healthcare, a decades-old dream of the Democratic Party.

Taking charge of the TARP program instituted under George W. Bush to stabilize the country's financial institutions, Obama oversaw the distribution of some \$7.77 trillion designed to help shore up the nation's banking system.

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Recognizing that the economic downturn also threatened major auto manufacturers in the United States, he sought and received congressional authorization for \$80 billion to help Chrysler and General Motors. The action was controversial, and some characterized it as a government takeover of industry. The money did, however, help the automakers earn a profit by 2011, reversing the trend of consistent losses that had hurt the industry since 2004. It also helped prevent layoffs and wage cuts. By 2013, the automakers had repaid over \$50 billion of bailout funds. Finally, Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, better known as **The Stimulus**. This set of programs pumped almost \$800 billion of taxpayer money into the economy to stimulate economic growth and job creation. The Stimulus worked like the New Deal had during the Great Depression. Priming the pump, Obama believed, would pay off in the end as people found jobs and started paying taxes again.

OBAMACARE

More important for Obama supporters than his attempts to restore the economy was that he fulfill his promise to enact comprehensive healthcare reform. Learning from Clinton's mistakes years before, the Democrats in 2009 worked with the insurance companies and doctors to draft the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The act, which has come to be known as **Obamacare**, represented the first significant overhaul of the American healthcare system since the passage of Medicaid in 1965. Its goals were to provide all Americans with access to affordable health insurance, to require that everyone in the United States purchase some form of health insurance, and to lower the costs of healthcare. In theory, if everyone, including healthy people, paid insurance then insurance costs could be spread around and everyone would pay less. By doing so, Democrats believed they could include one of the law's most popular provisions: an end to insurance companies' ability to deny coverage to people with **preexisting conditions**. No longer could a health insurance company refuse to sell coverage to someone if they knew already about a person's health problems.

Although the plan implemented the market-based reforms that they had supported for years, Republicans refused to vote for it. Following its passage, they called numerous times for its repeal, and more than twenty-four states sued the federal government to stop its implementation. Discontent over the Affordable Care Act helped the Republicans capture the majority in the House of Representatives in the 2010 midterm elections.

OCCUPY WALL STREET AND THE TEA PARTY

As mentioned before, the Great Recession, the government bailout of the banks and auto industry, Obama's stimulus, and Obamacare produced waves of backlash from voters.



The Stimulus: Economic program signed by Barack Obama to help boost the economy during the Great Recession. It included investing \$800 billion in infrastructure and green technologies.



Obamacare: Nickname for the Affordable Care Act passed in 2009 by Democrats in Congress and Barack Obama. It included guarantees of coverage for patients with preexisting conditions, and expansion of Medicaid and a mandate that everyone purchase healthcare coverage.



Preexisting Conditions: Medical problems that a patient has before applying for health insurance. Before the passage of Obamacare, insurers could deny coverage because they knew patients would need medical care.

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Those who felt like the economy was rigged by the wealthy to help themselves saw the government bailout of banks and the enormous money top executives were making as evidence of a corrupt system at the highest levels. Tone deaf business leaders made things worse for themselves. For example, when the Big Three auto executives first went to Washington to ask Congress to give them taxpayer money to save their companies, they arrived on private jets. After years of growing disparity between the very rich and the rest of Americans, it felt like the government had taken the side of the 1% of people who controlled most of the nation's wealth. Protesters gathered in New York and formed the **Occupy Wall Street** Movement. They use the slogan "**We are the 99%**" and the #Occupy hashtag. Supporting protests sprang up in hundreds of other American cities and similar protests erupted around the world.



Occupy Wall Street: Protest movement in 2011 focused on real and perceived inequality in the economy, especially on the influence of the wealthy in government and the growing wealth divide between the superrich and everyday Americans. They coined the phrase "We are the 99%."



The 99%: Nickname coined by the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 to describe everyday Americans in contrast to the superrich who they believed controlled business and political decisions.

Primary Source: Photograph

A Tea Party protest rally. Events such as this were organized by voters who wanted to show their discontent with Obamacare and the economic recovery programs such as TARP and the Stimulus.

Other Americans saw things differently. They were angry at their government for taking their money in taxes and giving it away. They concentrated their ire on politicians rather than business leaders. They borrowed a name for America's revolutionary past and formed the Tea Party. Not a political party exactly, the supporters of the **Tea Party** carried signs that read "Taxed Enough Already" and were especially angry that Obamacare used tax money to expand Medicaid. They helped elect a wave of anti-government, anti-tax Republicans to Congress in 2010.

POLITICAL GRIDLOCK

Whenever we have divided government with one party in control in Congress and a different party holding the White House, it is hard to get things done. However, throughout our nation's history there have been cases when leaders from different parties have found ways to work together. This was not the case in the last six years of Obama's presidency.



Tea Party: Political protest movement within the Republican Party in 2009 that formed in reaction to passage of Obamacare. They focused on lowering taxes and reducing government spending. Members of Congress with backing of these voters usually used extreme tactics including shutting down the government to try to achieve their goals.

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As Obama entered his second term in office, the economy remained stagnant in many areas. On average, American students continued to fall behind their peers in the rest of the world and the cost of a college education became increasingly unaffordable for many. Problems continued overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, and another act of terrorism took place on American soil when bombs exploded at the 2013 Boston Marathon. At the same time, the cause of same-sex marriage made significant advances and Obama was able to secure greater protection for the environment. He raised fuel-efficiency standards for automobiles to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and required coal-burning power plants to capture their carbon emissions. However, instead of working with Republicans to make these changes happen, he used executive orders. He simply told federal agencies to enforce laws or change rules about how laws should be implemented.

In an effort to get their way and to undo Obamacare, Congressional Republicans, led by newly elected Tea Party champion Senator **Ted Cruz**, refused to allocate money for government operations. Without a law authorizing payments, the government shut down. National parks closed. People could no longer apply for Medicare or unemployment benefits since no one was there to take their applications. Some services remained open such as the military, TSA and air traffic controllers, but as the shutdown dragged on, even these workers started looking for other work. After all, even though they were deemed essential and told to come to work, there was no money to pay them. After 16 days Republicans relented and passed the appropriations bills needed to reopen the government. Americans mostly blamed Congress for the shutdown, but the experience drove Republicans and Democrats further apart, and made the parties' supporters around the country even more convinced that the other side was ruining the nation.

With Congress no closer to agreeing with him than ever, Obama issued some of his most famous and controversial executive orders. First was the creation of the **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** Program. Normally, people who come to the United States illegally are considered criminals for having broken immigration law and are subject to deportation. However, many young Americans are brought over the border as children by their parents. This group of people are known as **Dreamers**, and many Americans believe they should be exempt from deportation and should have a chance to become citizens in the only country they can remember. When Obama realized that the **DREAM Act** that would protect them would not pass the Republican-controlled Congress, he simply ordered the immigration officers to stop deporting them.

He went a step further and decided that illegal immigrants who had not committed crimes (other than coming to America illegally) would have the lowest priority for law enforcement. Essentially, Obama promised that police and immigration officers would ignore law-abiding illegal immigrants



Ted Cruz: Republican senator from Texas who has strong backing from the Tea Party movement and promoted a government shutdown during Obama's presidency. He ran unsuccessfully for president in the Republican primary election in 2016.



Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): Government program that provides amnesty for illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.



Dreamers: Nickname for illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.



DREAM Act: Proposed law to allow illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children a chance to become legal residents and eventually become citizens. It has not passed Congress due to opposition from Republicans.

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in order to focus on stopping other crimes. His stance was that as the top law enforcement officer in the country, he had **prosecutorial discretion** on how to best use America's law enforcement officers. If, he claimed, Republicans in Congress were so intent on lowering taxes and saving money that they refused to raise taxes to fund the government, he would use what little money he had to go after serious criminals. For conservatives it was too much. Obama, they believed, was simply refusing to enforce the laws Congress has passed.

DONALD TRUMP

Donald Trump, a New York real estate investor and television celebrity won the presidency in 2016 by capitalizing on many of the political currents at work in the past few decades.

Those who were alarmed by the nation's growing Hispanic population and Obama's DACA Program and prosecutorial discretion loved Trump's promise to build a wall along the border with Mexico.

People in the Rust Belt states of the Midwest who had been the losers of globalization loved his promise to bring back manufacturing jobs. They also liked his promise to tear up NAFTA and negotiate better trade deals.

Coal miners and people in states that relied on the oil industry liked his promise to ignore global warming and reduce regulation on greenhouse gasses.

Tea Party supporters liked his talk of reducing taxes and repealing Obamacare.



Prosecutorial Discretion: The idea that the president as chief law enforcement officer can choose which type of crimes to focus resource on. President Obama used this concept to announce that illegal immigrants who had not broken laws would not be subject to deportation.



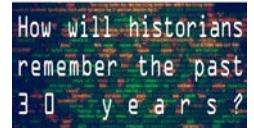
Donald Trump: New York real estate investor and television celebrity won the presidency in 2016 as a Republican.



Primary Source: Photograph

President Bush is seen here in a campaign rally during his presidency. Some of the signs mention coal, which is an industry the president promised to protect.

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Just about any Republican conspiracy theorist who hated President Obama loved Trump for inventing birtherism, the lie that Obama had been born in Kenya instead of Hawaii.

Those who had grown tired of the War on Terror liked Trump's promise to ban all Muslim immigrants and put "America first."

Trump ran against Hillary Clinton and nicknamed her "Crooked Hillary," successfully reminded voters of Bill and Hillary's many scandals. Additionally, American men who felt uneasy about having a women president and about feminism in general, favored Trump.

Trump capitalized on frustration over race relations by attacking Black Lives Matter protesters and embracing the police. He criticized African American protestors and blasted inner city neighborhoods, calling them crime ridden ghettos. His comments drew praise from KKK leaders.

Despite having been married three times and not having any record of religious conviction, he won over conservative Christians by publishing a list of right-wing judges he would nominate to the Supreme Court who might overturn Roe v. Wade and end abortion.

In the end, he won the presidency by winning just the right combination of states, especially the Rust Belt states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. Although Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by winning overwhelming majorities in New York, California and other blue states, Trump's narrow victories in the Midwest gave him the White House. For the fifth time in American history, the winner of the popular vote, did not win the presidency.

#METOO

There is much that can be written about the politics of the past few years. Trump has been divisive. Democrats hate him. Republicans tried but failed again to repeal Obamacare. Investigations into Trump's business deals and use of presidential power consume the media. The deep divisions of the Obama years seem just as strong as ever. That being said, a new political moment may have a long term impact worth noting.

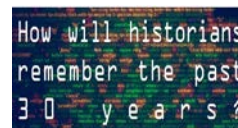
In response to Trump's widely reported sexism and multiple sexual abuse allegations, as well Hillary Clinton's electoral defeat, American women have become more politically active than ever before and more willing to step up and take charge of their future. One area is in politics. For example, the 2018 congressional elections saw the highest number of female candidates ever. The 2020 Democratic presidential field includes multiple women. However, the thing that may have the greatest impact in American life is that women have decided to step up and address sexism and sexual abuse.

After brave women came out in 2017 to expose Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's sexual abuse, the hashtag **#MeToo** was popularized as a way of



#MeToo: Movement to expose perpetrators of sexual abuse. It was started in 2017 by women in the entertainment industry who using social media to tell their stories.

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sharing stories and encouraging other women to stand up against abusers. Superstars Alyssa Milano, Gwyneth Paltrow, Ashley Judd, Jennifer Lawrence, and Uma Thurman have all told their stories using #MeToo. In addition to Weinstein, comedian Bill Cosby and Senator Al Franken, Olympic gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar, and musician R. Kelly have all been exposed as abusers. Many more are sure to follow as more women decide to confront men who have abused them. As Oprah Winfrey said at the Golden Globe Awards in 2018, "...a new day is on the horizon! And when that new day finally dawns, it will be because of a lot of magnificent women, many of whom are right here in this room tonight, and some pretty phenomenal men, fighting hard to make sure that they become the leaders who take us to the time when nobody ever has to say 'Me too' again."

CONCLUSION

By any objective measure, our political system is not functioning well. Our two parties rarely agree. Social media and cable news fan the flames. Voters have grown more tribal, rallying around flawed leaders rather than considering voting for someone from the other side. Those who read William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* would find parallels in modern American politics. Our leaders encourage us to think that the other side is criminal, hates America and is out to ruin the nation.

But having said that, it is worth noting that our elections have gone on unimpeded. Twice in the past 20 years the majority of voters did not get their way, but we respected the institutions of government anyway and peacefully transferred power. Perhaps, the framers of our government had more foresight than we give them credit for. 219 years before Twitter they wrote a Constitution that has endured civil war, imperialism, global conflict, civil rights unrest, scandal, depression, and recession. Maybe our system is not as broken as it feels.

What do you think? Is our political system broken?



KEY CONCEPTS

Perjury: Lying under oath. It is a crime.

Impeachment: The Constitutional process of removing an elected official or judge. In the case of a president, the House of Representatives serves as the prosecutors and the Senate as the jury.

Charter Schools: Independently run schools that operate with public funding. They are seen by many as opportunities for educators to innovate and provide options for families who live in neighborhoods with failing schools.

School Vouchers: A system in which parents can receive public tax dollars to pay for private school tuition. Proponents believe it gives parents choice and students a chance at a better education. Opponents believe it robs public schools of needed funding.

Preexisting Conditions: Medical problems that a patient has before applying for health insurance. Before the passage of Obamacare, insurers could deny coverage because they knew patients would need medical care.

The 99%: Nickname coined by the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 to describe everyday Americans in contrast to the superrich who they believed controlled business and political decisions.

Prosecutorial Discretion: The idea that the president as chief law enforcement officer can choose which type of crimes to focus resource on. President Obama used this concept to announce that illegal immigrants who had not broken laws would not be subject to deportation.



ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

Mortgage Backed Securities: Investments that were made up of a collection of home loans bundled together and sold as a single unit.

Subprime Mortgage: A home loan made to a lender that was unlikely to be able to repay it. They were sold in large numbers in the early 2000s in order to make mortgage backed securities and when they failed it caused the Great Recession.

Credit Rating Agency: A company that gives a score to investment opportunities to rank them in terms of their risk. They are important in order to help investors manage risk.

Credit Default Swap: Insurance investment banks took out on their investments with other large banks. Because all the large banks had these with all the other large banks in the early 2000s, the Great Recession had a domino effect within the financial markets.



LAWS, POLICIES & PROGRAMS

Health Security Act: Health care bill proposed by Bill Clinton in 1993. It failed to gain popular support and was never passed. Sometimes it was nicknamed Hillarycare because of Hillary Clinton's involvement in planning the law.

Contract with America: Set of eight proposals set out by Republicans in 1994 which helped propel them to retake the House of Representatives.

Welfare Reform: Efforts in the 1990s to change welfare laws by including a requirement that people receiving welfare begin working within two years.

Bush Tax Cuts: Reductions in taxes for all Americans, but especially for the wealthy, implemented by George W. Bush in 2001.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): Education reform law passed by George W. Bush in 2002 which introduced a system of high-stakes testing and the possibility of restructuring for low performing schools.

Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP): Government program designed to save banks during the Great Recession. The government loaned banks enormous sums of money in order to help them survive as they dealt with all of the failed investments they had purchased during the housing boom.

The Stimulus: Economic program signed by Barack Obama to help boost the economy during the Great Recession. It included investing \$800 billion in infrastructure and green technologies.

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DREAM Act: Proposed law to allow illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children a chance to become legal residents and eventually become citizens. It has not passed Congress due to opposition from Republicans.



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Government agency under the Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for coordinating rescue and relief operations after disasters or terrorist attacks. Their response to Hurricane Katrina was widely criticized.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Bill Clinton: Former governor of Arkansas who won the presidency in 1992 as a Democrat and served eight years. His second term was rocked by scandal and impeachment.

New Democrats: Democrats in the early 1990s who found ways to be elected after the Conservative Revolution by promoting free trade and welfare reform. Bill Clinton used this term to describe himself.

Hillary Clinton: First lady to Bill Clinton. She led a task force during his presidency to prepare for healthcare reform. Later she served as senator from New York, Secretary of State, and ran for president.

Newt Gingrich: Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives who proposed the Contract with America in 1994, led the Republican Revolution, and was Bill Clinton's leading political opponent.

Kenneth Starr: Independent prosecutor appointed to investigate Bill Clinton's wrongdoing. He investigated both the Whitewater real estate deal and Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky.

Monica Lewinsky: White House intern who had an affair with President Bill Clinton.

George W. Bush: Republican president elected in 2000 and reelected in 2004. He is remembered mostly for prosecuting the War on Terror, but also instituted education reforms and oversaw the beginning of the Great Recession.

Ted Cruz: Republican senator from Texas who has strong backing from the Tea Party movement and promoted a government shutdown during Obama's presidency. He ran unsuccessfully for president in the Republican primary election in 2016.

Dreamers: Nickname for illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.

Donald Trump: New York real estate investor and television celebrity won the presidency in 2016 as a Republican.



QUOTES

"Read my lips: no new taxes": Campaign promise by George H. W. Bush in 1988 that cost him support when he had to break it later as president.

"I did not have sexual relations with that woman": Famous quote by President Bill Clinton when he denied his affair with Monica Lewinsky on television.



EVENTS

Republican Revolution: Nickname for the electoral gains made by congressional Republicans in 1994. For the first time in decades Republicans took control of the House of Representatives.

Hurricane Katrina: Major natural disaster in 2005. The federal government's response was widely criticized which hurt President George W. Bush's popularity.

Real Estate Market Crash: 2007 economic disaster in which investors and home buyers finally realized that housing prices were inflated and stopped buying. People were left with mortgages they couldn't pay and homes they couldn't sell.

Great Recession: Economic crash starting in 2007 caused by speculation in the housing market and lax oversight of the financial markets. It was the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and caused unemployment to peak at 10%.

Occupy Wall Street: Protest movement in 2011 focused on real and perceived inequality in the economy, especially on the influence of the wealthy in government and the growing wealth divide between the superrich and everyday Americans. They coined the phrase "We are the 99%."

Tea Party: Political protest movement within the Republican Party in 2009 that formed in reaction to passage of Obamacare. They focused on lowering taxes and reducing government spending. Members of Congress with backing of these voters usually used extreme tactics including shutting down the government to try to achieve their goals.

#MeToo: Movement to expose perpetrators of sexual abuse. It was started in 2017 by women in the entertainment industry who using social media to tell their stories.



COURT CASES

Bush v. Gore: 2000 Supreme Court case in which the Court ruled to end a recount of votes in Florida, thus handing the presidential election victory to George W. Bush. It marked an important turning point in the politicization of the Supreme Court.



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