Period 8: 1945–1980

Domestic and International Challenges in Cold War America

When World War II ended in 1945, Europe was economically and physically destroyed. Out of the ashes of war emerged two superpowers, diametrically opposed to each other: the United States and the Soviet Union. Though historians debate the starting point of the Cold War, the fact remains that the next forty-five years were marked by tension between these superpowers and the nations aligned with them. The Cold War—and the ominous specter of nuclear war that accompanied it—dictated American foreign policy from the end of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Though the United States and the Soviet Union never entered into the dreaded World War III that some saw coming, the U.S. military did engage in fights to contain and/or eradicate communism all over the world.

Domestically, the United States experienced great highs and alarming lows in the second half of the twentieth century, with postwar prosperity reaching new heights and technology revolutionizing the way that people lived and communicated. Amidst this boon, minorities fought for civil rights with their accomplishments mixed in with some tragic results, and protests against the Vietnam War threatened the social fabric of the nation. By the 1960s, the social and cultural makeup of the United States was significantly different than when the nation entered World War II forty years earlier.

**KEY CONCEPTS FROM THE COLLEGE BOARD**

8.1 The United States responded to an uncertain and unstable postwar world by asserting and attempting to defend a position of global leadership, with far-reaching domestic and international consequences.

8.2 Liberalism, based on anticommunism abroad and a firm belief in the efficacy of governmental and especially federal power to achieve social goals at home, reached its apex in the mid-1960s and generated a variety of political and cultural responses.

8.3 Postwar economic, demographic, and technological changes had a far-reaching impact on American society, politics, and the environment.
U.S. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS
FROM 1945 TO THE 1980s

In 1945 much of Europe lay in ruins with their economies and political systems shattered and millions displaced. In Asia, the United States occupied Japan, China was poised to revert to civil war, and Southeast Asia and the Korean peninsula would soon be divided between communist and anticommunist groups and governments. The war had taken approximately 50 million lives, and cost hundreds of billions of dollars. It had taken its toll on the United States as well, which suffered more than 1 million casualties, of which 300,000 were killed in action. In monetary terms, it had cost well over $300 billion. In many ways, however, the United States emerged from the war more powerful in political and economic terms than the other combatants. To be sure, the number of Americans killed was staggering, but it paled in comparison with the Soviet Union's losses—approximately 8 million civilians and 14 million soldiers. Many nations in Europe and Asia had experienced invasion as well; the continental United States was untouched by such an experience during the war. The United States entered the war as an international power and emerged a superpower, the only nation in the world at that time with a nuclear arsenal.

Numerous problems lay ahead for the United States despite its success in the war and its healthy condition relative to other nations. President Roosevelt died in April 1945, just weeks before the surrender of Germany's Third Reich. The vice president was the untested and seemingly inexperienced Harry Truman. His task was daunting. The United States and its allies would first have to defeat Japan and then decide how to integrate millions of service members back into the economy. Demobilization was not the only economic concern; reconversion from a war to a consumer economy would also present a considerable challenge. As Americans adjusted their lives to the new realities of the postwar years, they would soon find that relations with their former ally, the Soviet Union, would rapidly deteriorate, leading to decades of tension, conflict, and enormous
military expenditures. The Cold War—the adversarial relationship between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies—defined in many ways the quality of life in the postwar era, made worse by the knowledge that there were more than enough nuclear weapons to destroy the planet.

**Key Concepts**

- In the postwar period, the U.S. economy reconverted from one geared to the production of military supplies to one that was consumer-oriented.
- The postwar years witnessed an enormous expansion of the economy, highlighted by the baby boom, suburbanization, and massive consumer spending.
- The civil rights movements helped black Americans, but they were still relegated to a second-class status economically, politically, and socially.
- The presidential administrations in the postwar decades expanded the size and scope of government.
- Some administrations addressed the demands of labor, whereas others had an adversarial relationship.
- Liberalism reshaped social, economic, gender, racial, and political relations.
- A conservative backlash evolved in response to the liberal policies of the 1960s.
- The Watergate scandal undermined the American people’s trust in their political system.


**The Economic "Boom"**

Of course it is easy to see the United States after World War II as a nation overwhelmed by the Cold War and the arms race that developed between the two powerful adversaries, the United States and the Soviet Union. Yet conditions were still dreadful for millions of Americans at the end of the war, and they would stay that way. Poor whites, blacks, Latinos, and others lived desperate lives, struggling to stay above the poverty line, as postwar prosperity did not touch their lives.

- Twenty percent of the population lived in poverty.
- Parts of rural America had been untouched by modern developments in sanitation, housing, education, and health care. For example, as late as 1952 some parts of rural America still did not have access to electric power.

Yet for many Americans the postwar years represented a new level of national and personal prosperity few had ever known. The generations that had fought the war had not only experienced the unparalleled devastation of World War II but also endured the Great Depression. The decade following the war, when the nation achieved unprecedented and sustained economic growth, must have seemed like an illusion to some. Citizens and the government embarked on a
massive spending spree, stimulated by the carefree spending habits of many Americans, who had saved millions of dollars during the war, and government spending. The government had stimulated the economy out of necessity during the war, but it continued to do so when the conflict ended. Billions of dollars were budgeted for public education and welfare programs. The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 allotted over $30 billion to highway development. The primary beneficiaries of this infrastructural development were the trucking and automobile industries (the auto became the symbol of postwar prosperity), and the integrated highway network, a major conduit between urban central business districts and the "bedroom communities" of suburbia, altered the national landscape forever. Government spending for former service members covered a variety of areas: the Veterans Administration and the Federal Housing Administration provided low-interest loans for purchasing homes and for low-cost public housing. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act, commonly known as the GI Bill, provided veterans low-interest loans to start businesses and enroll in technical schools and universities.

The vitality of the economy was remarkable:

- Production of goods and services doubled as Americans engaged in unprecedented consumerism.
- Unemployment and inflation stayed below 5 percent.
- The gross national product had increased fivefold during the war.

**DEMOBILIZATION AND ECONOMIC RECONVERSION**

Shortly after becoming president, Harry Truman changed the paperweight on his desk; one modeled after a gun was replaced by one modeled after a plow. The message was clear: reconverst the economy from a war footing to a consumer one. As more and more service people returned home—approximately 7 million servicemen and servicewomen had returned to civilian status just one year after V-J Day—economic reconversion was a high priority for the administration.

Another concern soon surfaced: postwar inflation. Some feared inflation could spark a recession and widespread unemployment. The Office of Price Administration (OPA), created during the war, had imposed price controls—and therefore controlled inflation. But what would happen after the war, when it was anticipated that consumer demand would drive up prices and the general cost of living? Fortunately, the OPA, rapid reconversion to producing consumer goods, and considerable demand offset a temporary increase in inflation. By late 1947 most concerns had dissipated. The growth of the economy was further sustained by the military demands of the Cold War; the government continued to be a major purchaser of goods and services. With so much money in the system, combined with ever-growing consumer demand, businesses introduced a new phenomenon in consumer spending, an early form of the credit card, in order to further stimulate consumer demand.
THE BABY BOOM AND SUBURBANIZATION

Between 1945 and 1960 the total U.S. population increased by 40 million. In the 1950s alone the population increased by 28 million. This expansion represented an almost 20 percent population increase, the largest since the height of immigration earlier in the century. Americans who were born in the decade and a half after the war and came of age in the midst of the Cold War are known as "baby boomers."

The population explosion created a demand for affordable family housing in the late 1940s and 1950s, which precipitated dramatic demographic changes:

- The need for housing immediately following the war spurred the remarkable growth of the suburbs. However, almost the entire population increase in this period was an urban experience, as millions settled in the nation’s bustling cities.
- Much of the demographic shift that took place led to substantial growth in what became the “sunbelt” states, an arc that stretches from the Carolinas to Florida, Texas, and California. Millions of Americans relocated, lured by lower taxes, a more temperate climate (aided by the introduction of air conditioning in businesses and homes), and economic opportunities in defense-related industries. The industrial areas of the Northeast, which became known as the “rustbelt,” experienced economic hard times and a reduction in representation in the House.
- The Northeast, however, remained the most densely populated section of the nation. Twenty years after the end of the war, one in five Americans lived in the narrow corridor that stretched from Massachusetts to Virginia.
- By the early 1960s population growth was mostly a suburban phenomenon, so that by the 1970s many more Americans were living in suburban neighborhoods than in cities.
- With military spending increasing employment opportunities in the North from 1941 to 1945, black Americans had migrated to the North in significant numbers; this trend would continue well after the end of the war.
- The growth of suburbia was the consequence of numerous factors: the automobile, the highway system, consumer demand to live outside congested urban areas, and the efforts of development contractors such as William Levitt. Levitt mass-produced low-priced family homes (the prototype was Long Island, New York’s Levittown). This massive construction project, offering low-interest rates on mortgages that were government insured and tax deductible, paved the way for millions to own their own suburban homes. Unfortunately, Levitt homes were not made available to black Americans. The effect of this demographic shift and racial discrimination was “white flight” from urban to suburban areas. Consequently, inner cities became increasingly poorer and racially segregated.

Advocates of suburbanization claim that it represents the American dream of home ownership, a cleaner environment, and less crime.
Critics contend that it despoils the environment, leads to conformity, promotes racial segregation, and weakens the economic and cultural qualities of urban areas.

**DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION (1945–1953)**

Harry Truman had been vice president of the United States only three months when President Roosevelt died in April 1945. Many skeptics were convinced that he lacked the experience and leadership skills necessary to run the nation at such a pivotal moment. It did not take him long, however, to form his own identity independent of the long shadow cast by his predecessor. As president Truman wanted to adopt many of the features of the New Deal into his reform program, called the Fair Deal. One critic implied that he came up with so many programs and policies that resembled the New Deal that not even the Brain Trust had thought of them. Political consequences would doom many of his programs to failure. The short postwar recession convinced enough Americans to vote for Republicans, who proceeded to take over both houses of Congress in 1946. Consequently, Republican conservatives in Congress blocked most of Truman’s domestic programs, such as a comprehensive civil rights program, a national health insurance program, agricultural reforms, and aid to education. Actually, the last had bipartisan support, but the issue floundered on whether to fund religious parochial schools as well.

Labor’s relationship with Truman was rocky at times. Postwar wages had not kept up with inflation, and by 1946 nearly 2 million workers went out on strike. When railroad workers struck, Truman threatened to seize and operate the railroads, thus ending the work stoppage. When the United Mine Workers union went out on strike and refused to heed the same warning, the government took over the mines until a compromise contract was worked out.

Labor’s fortunes took a turn for the worse when Congress changed hands. Dismayed at the frequency of strikes and intensity of labor unrest, the pro-business Republican Party acted quickly to stop the strikes, passing the controversial Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 over Truman’s veto. The bill defined “unfair labor practices” as boycotts, sympathy strikes, and the closed shop and required unions to adhere to a sixty-day cooling-off period before workers could strike. Union leaders were required to swear that they were not communists.

Undaunted, Truman pushed ahead with his own domestic agenda. In his two terms, the following measures were taken:

- **Housing Act of 1949** This act budgeted $3 billion for slum clearance and new low-rent housing.
- **Minimum Wage Act of 1949** The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was amended to increase the minimum wage.
- **Social Security Act of 1950** Coverage to individuals who were self-employed was added, and retirees were given increased benefits.
- **Civil rights** Truman’s policies alienated the southern wing of the Democratic Party, or Dixiecrats, who in turn created their own States’ Rights party and ran South Carolina Governor Strom
Thurmond against Truman in the 1948 election. Truman took the following steps despite the anticipated opposition from southern Democrats and Republican conservatives:

- Created the Committee on Civil Rights, which proposed, for instance, that public institutions engaging in racial discrimination be denied federal funds, segregation in interstate transportation be prohibited, and lynching made a federal offense—all matters for which Congress refused to enact legislation
- Desegregated the federal government and the armed forces
- Appointed black federal judges

Despite strong opposition from the progressive wing of his own party (which ran Henry A. Wallace) and the Dixiecrats, not to mention his popular Republican opponent, Thomas E. Dewey, Truman surprised pollsters and political pundits by receiving over one hundred more electoral votes than did Dewey in the 1948 election. Prevented from seeking a third term when the Twenty-second Amendment was ratified in 1951, and with his popularity waning, Truman retired from public office.

**DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION (1953–1961)**

Dwight Eisenhower emerged from World War II a national hero. As supreme allied commander, he was enormously popular. In 1952 he ran as a Republican and easily defeated Illinois's Adlai Stevenson. His campaign slogan, “Time for a Change,” resonated with the public after two decades of Democratic leadership. He would repeat his victory over Stevenson again in 1956. The cabinet he selected comprised wealthy advocates of business. Despite this, labor did better in the 1950s compared with other sectors of the economy. In 1955 the AFL and the CIO merged, forming a powerful union. That year the government raised the minimum wage from seventy-five cents to one dollar an hour. In Eisenhower's two terms in office, the following steps were taken:

- The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (initially recommended by Truman) was organized as a cabinet-level position in 1953. Its first secretary was Oveta Culp Hobby.
- Social Security was amended in 1954 to include new groups: state and local government employees and farmers. Retirees received cost-of-living increases. Two years later it was amended again to cover physicians. The eligibility requirement was lowered to age sixty-two for women and to age fifty for the disabled.
- The National Defense Education Act (1958) appropriated $1 billion for education, in large part because of concerns about Soviet advances in aeronautics. The act provided financial aid to college students, and provided matching federal funds for state education to improve courses in science, math, and language arts.

Civil rights claimed much of the country's attention. Blacks had experienced some important gains under Truman and some assistance from the Eisenhower administration when they took bold steps to
challenge segregation and discrimination in the 1950s. With the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision (1954), the Warren Court shattered the eighty-year history of Jim Crow laws in the South and forever transformed black rights in relation to the Fourteenth Amendment. In overturning the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision, the court ruled that separate but equal is unconstitutional because facilities for the races were inherently unequal.

Some southern communities refused to abide by the new law. When Arkansas’s Governor Orval Faubus sent the National Guard to turn away black students from Little Rock’s Central High School, Eisenhower sent the U.S. Army to the school to guarantee the safety of its newly registered black students. When the Little Rock School Board challenged the president’s authority to integrate Little Rock’s schools, the court decision in Cooper v. Aaron (1958) reiterated its rationale in the Brown case as a fundamental right of citizens under the Fourteenth Amendment. Legalized segregation was dead, though the struggle for integration continues to this day.

As segregation lingered on in the South, blacks took it upon themselves to challenge municipal and state laws that sustained inequality and segregation. In late 1955 Rosa Parks, a black resident of Montgomery, Alabama, refused to relinquish her seat on a city bus to a white person in accordance with the city’s segregation statute. Parks’s arrest galvanized Montgomery’s black community. Led by a twenty-six-year-old Baptist minister, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a successful, nonviolent boycott of Montgomery’s buses was organized. The following year the Supreme Court ruled that segregated seating in municipal buses was unconstitutional. The boycott, Dr. King, and his philosophy of nonviolent resistance received international attention.

One year after the Montgomery bus boycott, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. It was designed to enforce voting rights that had been systematically denied to blacks throughout the South. A bipartisan Civil Rights Commission was established to oversee and prosecute (through the Justice Department) those interfering with a citizen’s Fifteenth Amendment rights. In 1960 the act was strengthened to make such abuses a federal crime. Further, in response to a wave of bomb attacks on mostly southern black churches and homes in the 1950s, the act made transporting explosives across state lines a federal crime.

Domestic Developments During the Kennedy Administration: “The New Frontier” (1961–1963)

John F. Kennedy (JFK) narrowly defeated the Republican candidate, Richard M. Nixon, in a campaign notable for the first nationally televised presidential debates. An assassin’s bullet ended his life less than three years into his term in office, but in that brief time, JFK sought to expand on FDR’s New Deal and Truman’s Fair Deal programs. Like FDR he sought out the advice of intellectuals and university professors. As in Truman’s presidency, Congress rejected most of Kennedy’s most progressive programs. The following are
representative of the programs and measures enacted during his short term in office:

- The Housing Act of 1961 budgeted $5 billion for slum clearance.
- The Minimum Wage Act of 1961 increased minimum hourly wages to $1.25.
- Amendments to Social Security extended coverage to children of unemployed workers and increased payments to retirees; however, a penalty was imposed on retirement before age sixty-five.
- Congress approved a Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Civil rights still dominated the domestic scene. Kennedy was at first hesitant to use all of the federal government’s power to tackle civil rights problems, but events compelled him to act. He eventually took important steps to guarantee black Americans their constitutional rights. Under the direction of his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, the Justice Department sued in federal court to protect voting rights for black Americans. In 1961 he dispatched federal marshals to protect the Freedom Riders, who had been brutally attacked when they attempted to integrate interstate bus facilities. After announcing his support for the Voter Education Project, which was designed to register southern blacks to vote, JFK told Dr. King, “I may lose the next election, but I don’t care.” When a black Korean War veteran named James Meredith attempted to enroll in the all-white University of Mississippi in 1962, the governor of the state ordered that Meredith be rejected despite having met the academic requirements for admission. President Kennedy ordered federal marshals to Mississippi to compel the school to enroll Meredith. Violence erupted, and two people were killed. It eventually took over five thousand federal marshals to register Meredith at the university. The following year Medgar Evers, the head of Mississippi’s NAACP, was assassinated by a white racist in front of his home. Ironically, that very evening Kennedy had appeared on television to persuade the nation that stronger civil rights legislation was needed.

In 1963 another southern governor, George Wallace of Alabama, attempted to accomplish what his fellow governors in Arkansas and Mississippi had failed to do: stop the enrollment of qualified black students in a state university. Again, the result was the same. Wallace symbolically and ceremoniously stood in the doorway of the registrar’s office at the University of Alabama, preventing the black students from registering. Careful not to send the U.S. military into the state for fear it would result in rioting, Kennedy outmaneuvered Wallace; he nationalized the Alabama National Guard and commanded its senior general to order Wallace away. His act of bravado complete, Wallace left the university, and it was soon integrated. That same year, under the leadership of Dr. King and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the “cradle of the Confederacy,” Birmingham, Alabama, was integrated.

Inspired by these gains, but not satisfied that almost ten years had passed since segregation was outlawed in the Brown decision, more than 200,000 black and white demonstrators participated in the March on Washington, demanding an end to segregation and racial discrimination. Three months later Kennedy was dead, and it was left to a progressive southerner, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, to continue the series of reforms started by his predecessors.

A great admirer of Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson sought to emulate him as a political leader. Like FDR, Johnson came to the White House during a traumatic moment in U.S. history, but fortunately he had had considerable experience in government. Domestically Johnson sought to combat poverty, disease, inadequate education, racial injustices, and generally improve the quality of life for millions who knew little more than hardship and discrimination. His approach appealed to the voting public. When he ran for election in 1964 he received over 61 percent of the popular vote, even more than FDR had received in his four successful bids for the presidency. Johnson’s Great Society reform program brought about or inspired the following:

- **The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964** The act authorized $1 billion for the War on Poverty. In addition, it created the Job Corps to provide vocational training and educational opportunities for underprivileged youth.

- **Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965** The act set aside $1 billion for aid to the poverty-stricken Appalachian mountain regions.

- **Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965** The act provided extensive financial aid to public and parochial schools.

- **Medicare Act of 1965** The act provided nursing and hospital care, funded by the Social Security system, to the elderly.

Johnson also oversaw the creation of two cabinet-level agencies: the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 1965, which was led by Robert Weaver, the nation’s first black cabinet secretary; and the Department of Transportation in 1966, which oversees and coordinates national transportation policies. In addition two constitutional amendments were ratified: the Twenty-fourth Amendment (1964) prohibited the use of a poll tax as a prerequisite for voting; and the Twenty-fifth Amendment (1967) provided for the vice president to assume the duties of the president if the chief executive is incapacitated.

Two crucial civil rights acts were passed in the mid-1960s:

- **Civil Rights Act of 1964** This act strengthened antisegregation policies by withholding federal funding to states that did not comply with federal laws regarding voting rights, education, and public facilities.

- **Voting Rights Act of 1965** The act forbade literacy tests under certain circumstances and authorized the president to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment.

To Martin Luther King, these two civil rights acts gave crucial federal protection for blacks seeking to exercise their constitutional rights. More radical and militant black leaders and groups such as Malcolm X and the Black Panthers challenged this view. Malcolm X, who had converted to Islam while in prison in the 1950s, advocated racial separation and Black Nationalism, but eventually modified his position.
somewhat before he was assassinated in 1964. The Black Panthers, led by Bobby Seale, Huey Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver, advocated a militant response to police harassment, inequality, and systematic racial subordination. The police regularly arrested Black Panther members until the early 1970s, when the organization decided to redirect its energies from armed defense of black rights to community development programs. In fact, in 1973, Bobby Seale was a mayoral candidate in Oakland, California. Other groups that had experienced discrimination and were mired in poverty, such as Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, also organized. Labor leader César Chávez, for instance, organized Mexican American farm workers in a bid for higher wages. He appealed to the public to boycott certain crops such as grapes in order to force employers to raise wages.

Even though he had been elected in a landslide in 1964, the war in Vietnam eroded much of Lyndon Johnson's initial support. In 1968, weary and overwhelmed by the quagmire in Vietnam, he surprised the nation by deciding not to run for reelection.

**AP Tip**

The postwar decades were filled with turmoil, especially the 1960s. In order to understand this decade better, you need a working understanding of the countercultural movements that shaped American domestic life. The decade was characterized by the rebelliousness of America's youth in response to what many perceived as the socially stifling mores and lifestyles of the previous decades.

- Many of the nation's "baby boomers" sought to combat the social ills they saw as fundamentally undemocratic: racism, poverty, inequality, and American foreign policy, especially in Vietnam. In the early 1960s, for example, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was formed with the intention of democratizing the institutions that shaped American life, such as universities and government.

- A new generation of feminists re-energized the women's movement, which worked to raise the consciousness of women themselves and society as a whole and pressed for profound changes in both social and economic life.

- Sexual mores were under attack as earlier changes in sexual attitudes inspired even more criticisms of traditional sexual values. The advent of birth control ("the pill") as well as increasingly risqué advertising and sexuality in movies and television loosened certain stereotypes about sexuality. The 1980s would witness a backlash to the revolution in sexuality that took place in the previous decades.

- The music of the 1960s, as well as the dress of many young people ("hippies"), was seen as an expression of a frustrated, sometimes angry, but politically conscious American youth.
Richard Nixon’s unfortunate legacy is that he is the only chief executive to resign the office of president. Nixon ran for election as the Republican candidate on the promise that he could end the war in Vietnam honorably. Although foreign affairs often dominated his presidency, a number of key domestic events and policies shaped his administration as well. Nixon appealed to the “silent majority,” middle-class Americans, some of whom were Democrats, who had not participated in one or another sort of demonstration, were opposed to “big government,” and rejected the nation’s cultural and social direction. His cabinet secretaries, reflecting Nixon’s pro-business, conservative constituency, were initially white Christian males, hardly a reflection of the social crusades sweeping the nation at the time.

Nixon entered the White House in January 1969 and immediately faced significant economic problems. The cost of Johnson’s Great Society programs and the war in Vietnam had led to inflation, increasing unemployment, and a moribund gross national product. Nixon tried to cut government spending while reducing personal income taxes to encourage consumer spending, but the economy worsened. Even a ninety-day wage and price freeze did not have the desired effect. Surprisingly, the fiscally conservative Nixon turned to a Keynesian solution: deficit spending. In order to address the nation’s huge trade deficit, Nixon devalued U.S. currency by taking the dollar off the gold standard, thereby making products manufactured in the United States more affordable to foreign consumers. By 1972 the economy was showing signs of recovery.

At that same time, Nixon was exploring his reelection bid. Having received only 43.3 percent of the popular vote in the 1968 election, Nixon and his advisers formulated a strategy to appeal to the disaffected “silent majority” and southern voters discontented with the Democrats’ domestic and foreign affairs policies. When he attempted slow integration and nominated two conservative southerners to the Supreme Court, Congress rejected both maneuvers. He even took steps to “reform” welfare but was again thwarted by Congress. In response to growing concerns about the environment since the publication of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring in 1962, Nixon did create the Environmental Protection Agency, a move that seemingly contradicts the more conservative aspects of his agenda. Yet Nixon, with his abrasive vice president Spiro Agnew in the vanguard attacking liberals and antiwar protestors, won over many southerners. In the 1972 election he defeated his Democratic opponent, George McGovern, in a landslide.

Nixon’s administration coincided with two important developments, one constitutional, the other scientific. In response to the cry, “Old enough to fight, too young to vote,” the Twenty-sixth Amendment, lowering the voting age to eighteen, was ratified in 1971. In 1969 Apollo 11 landed on the moon, profoundly boosting American morale in the midst of domestic turmoil and the quandary in Vietnam. By 1973, however, the economy worsened again, in large part because of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries’ (OPEC) oil embargo against the United States for its support of Israel in the Six-Day War.
It was Watergate, however, that unraveled the Nixon presidency. The unfortunate acronym for Nixon’s reelection organization was CREEP (Committee to Re-Elect the President). Having won the popular vote by a slim majority in 1968, Nixon’s advisers were prepared to do everything possible to guarantee victory, even if that meant breaking the law and engaging in a vast array of “dirty tricks.” When burglars (called “plumbers” by the White House because they plugged political leaks) were caught breaking into the Democratic Party headquarters in Washington, D.C.’s Watergate complex, suspicions were raised that the plot had been formulated in the White House. CREEP officials and Nixon’s administration, led by White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman and domestic adviser John Ehrlichman, vehemently denied a connection to the “plumbers.” Two determined reporters for the Washington Post, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, dug deeper into the affair, ultimately exposing criminal acts and cover-ups at the highest levels of government. What is more, the administration had even used independent government agencies to do some of its dirty work and had created an “enemies list,” which included politicians, actors, newspaper and television reporters, and opponents of the administration who could be harassed by the White House in a variety of ways (for example, with income tax audits).

Nixon and his aides attempted to cover up their activities, but unfortunately for the president, it was revealed that he habitually tape-recorded all of his Oval Office conversations. The Justice Department and the Senate demanded that Nixon release the tapes to them. Nixon’s response was to appoint a special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, to investigate. Cox then demanded Nixon turn over the tapes. On October 20, 1973, Nixon ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Cox, but Richardson and his assistant both resigned in protest. Solicitor General Robert Bork (a future unsuccessful candidate to the Supreme Court) finally agreed to fire Cox in what became known as the “Saturday Night Massacre.” Nixon’s popularity plummeted. The House Judiciary Committee began to consider impeachment proceedings. At last, Nixon turned over what were obviously extensively edited tapes that conclusively proved that Nixon had been lying and had attempted to cover up a crime. The tapes also revealed that Vice President Spiro Agnew had engaged in criminal activities when he was governor of Maryland. Agnew resigned and was replaced by Congressman Gerald Ford. By this point even members of his own party considered Nixon a liability. When the House Judiciary Committee reported that it was prepared to impeach the president, and with his own advisers admitting that he lacked the support to survive such a proceeding, Nixon resigned the office of the president on August 9, 1974.


Gerald R. Ford is the only vice president to become chief executive under the Twenty-fifth Amendment. In order to maintain continuity as the nation experienced a transfer of power because of Nixon’s resignation, Ford kept most of Nixon’s policies and even his cabinet secretaries. His first controversial act came one month into his presidency when he pardoned Nixon. Ford’s domestic policy involved
limiting government expenditures on social programs, such as welfare and education; high taxes on imported oil; and tax cuts to stimulate consumer demand. Ford spent much of his term unsuccessfully fighting the effects of inflation and the Democratic-controlled Congress. In an act of futility, he endeavored to get the American people and U.S. businesses behind his economic policies by distributing WIN (Whip Inflation Now) buttons. Nevertheless, inflation was not whipped, and as it worsened, unemployment began to creep ever higher. As was the case during the Nixon years, the federal budget increased appreciably in Ford’s term.

### Social Concerns in the 1970s and 1980s

Politics played a significant role in American life in the two decades following Nixon’s resignation, but no more than social changes.

- By the early 1980s, Asian Americans became the nation’s fastest growing ethnic minority.
- Illegal immigration reached record proportions, possibly as high as 12 million in the late 1970s.
- Latino Americans began entering politics and winning elected offices throughout the nation.
- Native Americans began organizing to preserve the vestiges of their culture from the effects of assimilation and to call attention to the terrible standard of living they were experiencing. The American Indian Movement (AIM), a militant organization, seized government property to generate awareness for the plight of the nation’s original inhabitants.
- Inspired by the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), a dire warning about the use of insecticides on plant and animal life, the American environmental movement came into its own in the 1960s and 1970s. The nation grew increasingly conscious of and concerned about the frequency and extent of industrial disasters: oil spills, a near-catastrophic accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, and the spoliation of the nation’s land by companies that irresponsibly dumped toxic waste material. In New York an entire community, Love Canal, was built on a toxic waste dumpsite; over time, residents began experiencing serious health problems. Concerned citizens across the nation demanded that the federal government take action. In 1970 the government created the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and two years later, the Clean Water Act passed Congress.
- Many women sought a constitutional amendment (an equal rights amendment) to address gender abuses and discrimination in the workplace.
- Reproductive rights became a hotly contested issue, especially when the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) that states could not prohibit abortion in the first trimester of a woman’s pregnancy.

In 1976 the nation celebrated its bicentennial and the election of a new president, Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, who defeated Ford in a close race. Carter’s popularity rested largely on his claim to be a populist and an outsider—meaning that his political career had not been shaped by the machinations of Washington politics. His one term in office was marred by runaway inflation and a foreign policy that
seemed at times amateurish. Domestically, President Carter pardoned thousands of Vietnam War draft evaders to illustrate to the American people that it was time to move on and not dwell on the turmoil and divisiveness of the late 1960s and early 1970s. During his presidency the following policies and legislation were enacted:

- The minimum wage was increased.
- The Social Security payroll tax was increased.
- Two cabinet-level departments were created: the Department of Energy (1977) and the Department of Education (1979).

Carter’s budget, like the rest of the economy, was highly inflationary. The inability to harness runaway inflation ravaged the economy while unemployment, the deficit, and interest rates rose. But the nation’s confidence in Carter declined. In his bid for re-election, Republican Ronald Reagan defeated Carter in a landslide.


Not since Hoover had an unambiguously conservative president like Ronald Reagan been elected to lead the nation. On the campaign trail and in the Oval Office, he openly criticized the New Deal and the Great Society.

He fulfilled his campaign pledge to redefine the Supreme Court by nominating conservative justices. Three of his appointees, Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, and Sandra Day O’Connor (the first female Supreme Court justice), were confirmed by the Senate. However, the Senate rejected the outspoken conservative judge Robert Bork. Reagan’s appointments shifted the balance away from a more progressive to a decidedly conservative Supreme Court, as evidenced by the limitations it placed on abortion rights and affirmative action.

His economic record is an indication of the direction he took the nation in his eight years as president. President Reagan’s administration is associated with deep cuts in government spending and considerable business deregulation.

- A freeze was placed on the number of workers on the federal government’s payroll.
- Tax cuts for citizens and corporations were passed.
- Government funding for a range of social programs, such as student education loans and mass transportation, was significantly reduced. Welfare-related programs such as food stamps also suffered budget cuts. Medicare was not touched, but the age for Social Security recipients was raised.
- An attempt was made to reorganize the federal government by eliminating the Departments of Energy and Education.
- Previous restrictions on certain types of mergers and takeovers were removed, as were certain environmental protection standards that businesses contended were driving up their costs. Restrictions on the savings-and-loan industry were reduced, while the government simultaneously increased the federal government’s depositors’ insurance from $20,000 to $100,000. Bad loans, opportunists, and crooks precipitated a flood of bankruptcies,
leaving the American taxpayer to pay for the $200 billion bailout of the savings-and-loan industry.

President Reagan is the only former union president (of the Screen Actors Guild) to serve as president of the United States, so it is ironic that his presidency is associated with a strongly pro-business outlook (as indicated by his view that federal regulations inhibited business growth) and an adversarial relationship with unions. Nineteen months into his first term, he eviscerated the air traffic controllers union (PATCO) by firing strikers who refused to return to work. As with his predecessors, Reagan had to confront looming economic problems. The federal budget deficit was growing in part because of his tax cuts, which reduced the government’s revenue. Reagan’s solution was supply-side economics: massive tax cuts through the Tax Reform Act which would, it was believed, stimulate the economy by starting new businesses and expanding others. Admirers called his plan “Reaganomics,” but critics, reminded of Treasury Secretary Mellon’s justification for tax cuts in the 1920s, called it “trickle down.” Certainly the wealthiest citizens benefited from supply-side economics, but so did some middle-class investors, who could now invest some of their money in tax-free Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). Unfortunately the middle class’s real wages (surplus capital after all other cost-of-living expenses have been paid for) did not increase in the 1980s. Offsetting the enormous budget cuts was unprecedented spending on the military, in part to undermine the Soviet Union’s ability to keep pace with the United States in military expenditures.

When President Reagan entered the White House, the United States was the world’s number one creditor nation. Eight years later it had a $200 billion a year federal deficit and an almost equally large trade deficit. Congress’s response to the bloated deficit was to pass the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget Act in 1985, which succeeded in reducing the deficit by approximately $60 billion in just one year. Despite the economic problems facing the nation, many Americans admired Reagan for instilling a sense of patriotism and pride in the United States that had seemed to dissipate over the previous decade. Critics blame him for a host of domestic and foreign policy debacles, but undeniably, his stature is greater than of any American president since Franklin Roosevelt.

Content Review Questions

1. President Reagan’s nominations of Justices Scalia, O’Connor, and Kennedy to the Supreme Court
   (A) were warmly supported by Democrats in Congress.
   (B) failed to win the approval of the Senate.
   (C) reveal his attempt to make the Supreme Court more conservative.
   (D) indicated to many Americans his moderate stance on constitutional issues.
2. A stimulus to postwar prosperity was
   (A) the spending habits of Americans as more consumer items became available.
   (B) the significant cuts in the military budget made by Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy.
   (C) the purchasing power of millions of women who entered the workforce at war’s end.
   (D) the elimination of the income tax.

3. Which U.S. president is associated with the Fair Deal?
   (A) Franklin Roosevelt
   (B) Harry Truman
   (C) John Kennedy
   (D) Lyndon Johnson

4. The Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* dealt with
   (A) voting rights.
   (B) environmental protection laws.
   (C) reproductive rights.
   (D) federal funding for welfare programs.

5. In the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*
   (A) the Court reaffirmed the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896.
   (B) the Court affirmed voting rights of all citizens in accordance with the Fifteenth Amendment.
   (C) segregation was ruled unconstitutional.
   (D) the Court ruled that the federal government was not responsible for integrating facilities and institutions.

6. The National Defense Education Act
   (A) was passed during the administration of Lyndon Johnson.
   (B) was designed in response to Soviet advancements in aeronautics.
   (C) significantly increased the federal aid to military research programs.
   (D) appropriated billions of dollars for developing peaceful uses for nuclear energy.

7. The Taft-Hartley Act
   (A) helped fund the construction of schools and hospitals in economically depressed areas.
   (B) provided billions in federal aid to communities faced with serious environmental problems.
   (C) was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on the grounds that the federal government could withhold funds from states that refused to integrate.
   (D) placed serious restrictions on the rights and powers of labor unions.

8. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., played a significant role in
   (A) the integration of the University of Alabama.
   (B) the integration of the University of Mississippi.
   (C) the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott.
   (D) the formation of the Black Panthers.
9. Which postwar president is most associated with business deregulation?
(A) Dwight Eisenhower
(B) Gerald Ford
(C) Jimmy Carter
(D) Ronald Reagan

10. Which of the following challenged President Truman in his bid for election in 1948?
(A) Northern Democrats who believed his integration of the military had been premature
(B) Corporate interests who believed Truman was pro-union and anti-business
(C) Northern liberals who opposed his Fair Deal
(D) Southerners who were opposed to his civil rights policies

11. Which of the following is NOT associated with Lyndon Johnson’s presidency?
(A) The Medicare Act
(B) Appalachian Regional Development Act
(C) Voting Rights Act
(D) Supply-side economics

12. Published in 1963, author Betty Friedan’s landmark work on women’s rights is titled
(A) The Vindication of the Rights of Women.
(B) Revolution from Within.
(C) The Feminine Mystique.
(D) Women and the New Race.

13. The televised “Checkers Speech” saved which candidate’s political career and position as vice presidential candidate?
(A) Richard Nixon
(B) Dwight Eisenhower
(C) Harry Truman
(D) Joseph McCarthy

14. President Lyndon Johnson chose not to run for reelection in 1968 because he
(A) had been implicated in the Watergate affair.
(B) was under indictment for tax evasion.
(C) had been involved in the Whitewater affair.
(D) believed his policy in Vietnam had divided the nation.

15. Key to Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter’s 1976 victory was the enormous support he received from
(A) blue-collar workers.
(B) African Americans.
(C) suburban women.
(D) military servicemen and servicewomen.

Short-Answer Questions

1. The second half of the twentieth century was marked by social movements, many of which were influenced by the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.
(a) Choose one of the following social movements and discuss how its goals and/or tactics were influenced by the civil rights movement:
- Women’s movement
- Student movement
- Anti-war movement
(b) Did the movement you chose achieve its goals? Provide historical evidence to support your answer.

**Question 2 is based on the following cartoon.**

![Cartoon Image]

Smoking Pistol Exhibit A, cartoon by Pat Oliphant. Reprinted with permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.

2. The Watergate scandal during Richard Nixon’s presidency led to the only presidential resignation in American history.
   (a) What is the main idea of the cartoon?
   (b) How did this event affect Americans’ faith in their leaders? Provide historical evidence to support your answer.

**Long Essay Questions**

1. To what extent did New Deal liberalism continue to shape the United States domestically in the decades after World War II? In your answer include relevant information from
   - Truman’s “Fair Deal”
   - Johnson’s “Great Society”
   - Kennedy’s “New Frontier”

2. Compare and contrast the conservative ideologies of Presidents Nixon and Reagan with the liberal views of Presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson.
Answers

CONTENT REVIEW QUESTIONS


2. (A) Many consumer items were unavailable during the war. As more goods became available and wages rose, consumers happily spent (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 831–832/16th ed., pp. 837–839; Learning Objective ID-7).

3. (B) The Fair Deal was the name given to Truman's domestic reform program (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 854/16th ed., p. 840; Learning Objective POL-4).


6. (B) One billion dollars was appropriated for improving science, math, and language arts courses in order to keep pace with the Soviet Union's advances (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 877/16th ed., p. 866; Learning Objective WOR-4).

7. (D) The act forbade the closed shop, restricted boycotts and sympathy strikes, and required a sixty-day cooling off period before workers could strike (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 830/16th ed., p. 838; Learning Objective WXT-8).

8. (C) His work on the bus boycott brought King to national attention (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 868/16th ed., p. 858; Learning Objective ID-8).


12. (C) The Feminine Mystique critiqued the essentially dreary existence of modern housewives, the contemporary variant of the nineteenth-century "cult of domesticity." The book was widely read and proved influential in inspiring women in the 1960s to challenge the status quo (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 861–862/16th ed., p. 851; Learning Objective ID-8).

13. (A) As Eisenhower's running mate, Nixon nearly saw his career derailed when he was accused of accepting illegal donations (including a dog the Nixons named Checkers). In an attempt to appeal to the American people, he appeared on television to repudiate the claims made against him; the appeal worked, and he was kept on the ticket (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 864/16th ed., p. 855; Learning Objective POL-6).

14. (D) Antiwar protests had been a regular feature of the Johnson presidency. The president came to believe that in order for the nation to reunify, heal, and move forward, he must step aside. His televised speech to the nation in March 1968 greatly surprised even his closest advisers (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 908/16th ed., p. 893; Learning Objective WOR-4).


SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Each of the movements borrows from the civil rights movement. You can discuss the tactics each movement used, including civil disobedience and protests as well as demands for workplace equality and equality in the public sphere. You might also want to address the idea that the successes of the civil rights movement convinced other groups that the time was right to fight for their own goals. Each of the movements had varying success. The student movement secured some rights but eventually devolved into radicalism and violence. The anti-war movement ultimately toppled a president and led to the withdrawal of American troops. The women's movement succeeded in gaining greater status for women and entry into professions but failed to see the ERA ratified, which was a major goal.

2. The cartoon is showing that Nixon was ultimately caught red-handed with evidence of his involvement in Watergate. His long nose is reminiscent of Pinocchio, showing him to be a liar, and his clothes look like a 1920s gangster. The Watergate scandal affirmed people's thoughts about government abuses
and corruption that began to come to the fore in a widespread way during Vietnam. The way that we question our leaders today is the result of events like Vietnam and Watergate in the second half of the twentieth century.

LONG ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. You should discuss how the New Deal redefined the role of government by adopting a Keynesian approach to the economy and by budgeting millions of dollars to establish various social programs. Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson all in one way or another expanded on the ideology and policies of Roosevelt liberalism. You should identify those programs, like the War on Poverty, that have a correlation to similar programs of the New Deal. (Historical Thinking Skills: I-2: Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time, II-4: Comparison, II-5: Contextualization, IV-8: Interpretation, and IV-9: Synthesis)

2. You should discuss how Reagan's election was in part a conservative response to the liberal programs under Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson. Include a discussion as to why this occurred, such as the view that government bureaucracy and government spending had become too extensive. Point out that while Reagan's budget was enormous, much of his budget was used for military spending, whereas the liberal presidents—Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson—also sought to establish social programs as well as engage in enormous military spending. Another relevant contrast is the relationship Reagan had with labor as opposed to the lack of such relationship for Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson. Finally, a discussion of Reagan's supply-side ("trickle-down") economics versus the demand-side approach of the liberal presidents should be included in your response. (Historical Thinking Skills: II-4: Comparison, II-5: Contextualization, IV-8: Interpretation, and IV-9: Synthesis)
U.S. FOREIGN AFFAIRS FROM 1945 TO THE 1980S

When Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, ebullient Americans spontaneously broke into wild celebrations. Their sense of relief was universal. As people around the world took stock of the war’s effects, they were appalled by the devastation in terms of lives, property, and money lost. In the major theaters of the war—Europe, Asia, and the Pacific—survivors had already begun to dig out of the wreckage caused by the war and rebuild their shattered lives; they could only imagine what the future held in store. They had lived through the worst economic disaster the world had ever seen; they had survived the worst military conflict, including attempted genocide, in modern times. They longed for a respite from suffering and despair.

Even before atomic bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, new storm clouds had appeared on the horizon in the form of a world divided into two armed camps, each ready to use whatever means were at its disposal to achieve its political objectives. As it turned out, there would be no reprieve from the anxiety and uncertainties millions had experienced since the Great Depression. Almost without pause, the world would shift from total war to what became known as “Cold War.”

The two Cold War adversaries, the United States and the Soviet Union, had experienced World War II differently. The United States had suffered 1 million casualties; the Soviets, at least twenty times that number. For the second time in twenty-five years, Germany had invaded the Soviet Union. Millions of Soviet citizens had been killed, and its western agrarian and urban areas had been devastated by the Nazi invasion in 1941. The Soviet government, led by Josef Stalin, would make certain that no European nation ever invaded again. For Americans, the war had been fought from afar, and they were comforted by the protection accorded by the vast Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
When the war ended, the United States and Soviet Union were the world's two most powerful nations—superpowers—and they were suspicious of each other's political and economic systems, not to mention foreign policy objectives. Despite tensions that had existed between the two nations ever since the communists overthrew Russia's czarist regime in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the two had been wartime allies. One promising indicator that cooperation, rather than conflict, could guide postwar international affairs was the creation of the United Nations in 1945. The most powerful organ of the United Nations, the Security Council, comprised fifteen nations. The major allied powers in the war—the United States, the USSR, Britain, France, and China—each possessed veto power. Nevertheless, the Americans and Soviets remained wary of each other's intentions.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

- Conflicting U.S. and Soviet postwar objectives played a significant role in creating the tensions between the two superpowers that led to the Cold War.
- The United States sought to contain the spread of communism in Europe, Asia, South America, and Africa.
- The second red scare (McCarthyism) affected the United States domestically as the public was led to believe that there were communists seeking to undermine American institutions.
- The United States succeeded in containing communism in Europe.
- The United States was unable to contain the spread of communism to China but did so in South Korea.
- The Vietnam War seriously divided the American people and showed the limitations of the containment policy.
- The collapse of the Soviet Union transformed international affairs.


**soviet and american postwar objectives and priorities**

The end of the war found the Soviets in possession of much of Eastern Europe. After the failure of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa—the invasion of the Soviet Union—the Soviets had counterattacked, driving the German invaders west and out of the East European nations that had been under their control. Germany itself was invaded and finally capitulated to the Allies in May 1945. It soon became abundantly clear that there were deep tensions between the wartime allies. The war ravaged the Soviet Union in human, military, and financial terms. The immediate Soviet priorities, then, were economic rehabilitation and military defense:

- **Reconstruction of the economy** The Soviets demanded that Germany pay it $20 billion in war reparations. Initially, the United States promised large loans to the Soviets.
- **Military competition** The Soviets sought to remain on par with the United States militarily. This resulted in the nuclear arms race.
- **Self-defense** The Soviets wanted to make certain that they no longer would be surrounded by countries hostile to the USSR. They therefore created a buffer zone, referred to as the Soviet-bloc nations, in Eastern Europe, contradicting promises Stalin made to the Allies during World War II.

The United States was deeply concerned that nations devastated by the war might be susceptible to Soviet-backed communism. Furthermore, if the United States itself were to grow its communism, it would need trading partners, which meant helping to rebuild Europe's destroyed infrastructure and manufacturing centers. Essential to the expansion of the U.S. economy was cheap energy sources. To this end the United States in 1953 helped overthrow Iran's government, which had promised to nationalize foreign-controlled oil companies, and replaced it with Shah Reza Pahlavi, who then proceeded to supply the West with inexpensive oil. In the immediate postwar period, the United States sought to achieve the following:

- **Reconstruction of Europe** This became a major goal of the United States. It set out to help rebuild the economies of West European nations such as France, Great Britain, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, Greece, and Germany for the following reasons:
  - These nations would be able to repay their war debts.
  - An economically stable Western Europe would eventually benefit the U.S. economy by importing U.S. goods.
  - For the United States to reap the economic benefits of a stable and reconstructed Western Europe, it was imperative that the Europeans eschew policies and political systems antithetical to U.S. postwar economic needs, including, but not limited to, socialist and communist systems. This policy was also applied to Asia, South America, and Africa during the Cold War.

- **Military superiority** This would be achieved through nuclear monopoly, later through nuclear superiority.

- **Containment of Soviet-backed communism** Ultimately containment became the focus of U.S. foreign policy in the decades after the war's end.

**THE COLD WAR IN EUROPE**

According to one school of thought, the Cold War began even before World War II ended. This view postulates that at the Yalta Conference—the final meeting in February 1945 between the Big Three: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin—the Soviet premier deceived a gravely ill President Roosevelt. Stalin pledged to declare war on Japan in return for its pre-Russo-Japanese War status in the Far East. It was decided that the United States, the USSR, and Britain, with French participation, would divide and administer Germany and its capital, Berlin, following the German surrender. Several important issues dealing with Europe were left unresolved, with the expectation that post-war commissions and agreements would settle them. The most
Who started the Cold War? The responsibility for starting the Cold War has been an enduring topic of discussion among historians for over half a century. Predictably, a simple answer is not the case here. For the most part historians are seriously divided in their analysis of the causes of the Cold War.

- One perspective claims that ideology was at the center of the conflict. That is, there existed an ideological incompatibility between the United States, which stood for freedom and democracy, and the tyrannical, imperialist Soviet Union. Thus the United States adopted a policy that at the very least would contain this “evil” or, possibly, even assist in its demise.

- Another viewpoint is that the Cold War was less an expression of ideology than an objective by which each power could enhance its national interests. As for the Soviet Union, it was behaving as it had always done, whether under the tsars or under the communists—namely, expansion and mistrust of the outside world. For example, the U.S.-sponsored Baruch Plan to regulate nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament was rejected by the Soviets, who may have mistrusted American intentions, believing the plan was an attempt to thwart their goal of nuclear parity with the United States.

- For other historians, the onus for starting the Cold War rests with both the United States and the USSR. The Cold War could have been prevented had it not been for misperceptions, misguided idealism, and unfounded suspicions.

- A fourth view places the responsibility for starting the Cold War with the United States. While not condoning the brutal aspects of the Soviet regime, tension between the two nations had its origins in the early twentieth century when the United States revealed its counterrevolutionary tendencies during the Russian Civil War. The Cold War was simply another expression of that predisposition. What is more, they argue, given the need for capitalism to expand, the United States itself had engaged in imperialism. The Cold War then is viewed as just another example of aggressive and exploitative U.S. foreign policy, which seeks to extend its hegemony worldwide. Whereas some historians view, say, the Soviet refusal to participate in the development of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (also known as the World Bank) as symptomatic of Soviet power politics, others acknowledge Soviet suspicions that the World Bank might become a tool of American capitalist hegemony.

Troublesome issue involved the establishment of a Polish government, not to mention the other East European nations liberated by the Soviets. Military necessity may have convinced Roosevelt that Soviet support for the war against Japan required granting concessions to the Soviets in the Far East and an acceptance of Stalin’s promise to hold elections in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, the elections promised by Stalin exacerbated relations with the West when Soviet-supported
communists took over the governments of what became known as the Soviet bloc: East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania, and Romania. Yugoslavia, a communist nation, remained independent of the USSR because of the efforts of its president, Tito. To the Americans, the wartime conference had divided Europe into East European communist and totalitarian governments and Western capitalist democracies. The Soviets, from their perspective, had merely addressed a long-standing military necessity: protection of its vulnerable western border from invasions by creating a buffer zone between it and potentially hostile West European nations.

Later, Soviet refusal to remove its troops from oil-rich northern Iran further convinced Western leaders that the Soviets were bent on being the hegemonic power in more than Eastern Europe. A strident rebuke from Truman convinced Stalin to remove his troops from Iran, but suspicions remained. Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill echoed the concern about Soviet expansionism when he warned that an “iron curtain” had “descended across the continent” as the Soviets attempted to extend “their power and doctrine.” Churchill’s recommendation was for the Western democracies to stop this expansion. President Truman concurred. “I’m tired of babying the Soviets,” he fumed in response to what he perceived as Soviet intransigence in controlling Eastern Europe. For their part, the Soviets seemed equally resistant to thawing relations with the United States. When George Kennan, an American diplomat and specialist on Russian and Soviet affairs, warned that the Soviets would spread their ideology if given the opportunity but could be stopped if challenged, Truman took to heart his counsel. Just as A. T. Mahan’s The Influence of Sea Power upon History had profoundly influenced U.S. policymakers at the turn of the twentieth century, Kennan’s analysis became the foundation of an American foreign policy. In effect legitimizing the U.S. government’s vigorous anti-Soviet position, Kennan’s major observations included the following:

- The United States can exploit the frailty of the Soviet economy, the lassitude of its people, and the brutal nature of the Soviet leadership if it adopts policies that would discourage Soviet expansion.
- It is unrealistic to expect a thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations in the near future.
- Soviet mistrust of the outside world borders on paranoia.

Kennan recommended that the United States adopt a policy of containment, although he later opposed the way in which his observations were interpreted and implemented, especially when NATO was created. What follows are important examples of the containment policy as applied by the United States to Europe. Keep in mind that for more than forty years this policy was applied to other continents as well.

- **Truman Doctrine (1947)** Just two years after the war’s end, Truman came before Congress to request a $400 million aid package to Greece and Turkey in order to prevent communist rebels from overthrowing their governments. Soviet pressure on Turkey to relinquish control over the strategic Dardanelles was
another incentive for Truman to act. Neither country became communist.

- **Marshall Plan (1947)** The United States was acutely concerned that Europe's depressed economic condition, common to those nations that had experienced the war firsthand, was susceptible to communist influences. In Italy, for instance, there was considerable popular support for leftist movements. In response, Secretary of State George Marshall recommended a program called the European Recovery Plan to rehabilitate more than twenty nations, including the Soviet Union (which rejected the funds). Over $12 billion was distributed in four years, helping to restore the economies of important U.S. trade partners such as Britain, West Germany, and France and preventing the spread of communism to Western Europe.

- **Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948–1949)** At war’s end the former capital of Nazi Germany, Berlin, lay deep inside communist East Germany. As with the rest of Germany, Berlin had been divided into four zones, each administered by the United States, Britain, France, and the USSR. In an attempt to consolidate their control of East Germany, the Soviets ordered the access roads into West Berlin closed. Without needed supplies, the West Berliners would have nowhere to turn and would be absorbed into the rest of communist Berlin—or so the Soviets hoped. What they did not anticipate was a yearlong airlift that numbered one thousand planes per day and successfully provided 2 million West Berliners with basic necessities. Realizing the blockade was fruitless, the Soviets lifted it in May 1949. Although West Berlin did not become communist, tensions mounted between the two superpowers.

- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** Buoyed by the success of the Berlin airlift, but acutely concerned about the Soviet bloc’s military power and suspicious of its intentions, the Western allies believed that a coordinated military alliance could thwart a potential communist invasion of Western Europe. In fact, a number of European nations, France and Britain among them, had already organized a mutual defense pact called the Brussels Treaty. The United States had never entered into a peacetime European alliance; however, the mounting friction with the Soviet Union convinced U.S. leaders to do just that. The U.S. rationale for the creation of NATO was deterrence—that is, an attack on one member nation would be considered an attack on all. By 1955 NATO had fifteen members, the largest permanent peacetime military coalition in history. That year the Soviets responded to NATO’s expansion with its own military alliance of Soviet-bloc East European nations called the Warsaw Pact. Europe was now divided between two hostile and heavily armed camps, each possessing nuclear weapons—despite the U.S. government’s contention that the Soviets were years away from developing and successfully testing an atomic weapon. The U.S. monopoly ended in the spring of 1949 when President Truman announced to the nation that the Soviets had in fact successfully tested such a weapon. The Cold War immediately entered into an even more potentially catastrophic phase, the nuclear arms race.
The Division of Germany

In 1955 French, American, and British occupation of West Germany ended. Many hoped that this would be a prelude to German reunification. Although discussions with the Soviets about reunification went nowhere, four years later a summit was organized that brought together President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev of the Soviet Union. The two agreed to continue their discussion in Paris but the meeting was never held. In 1960 a U.S. spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union. The Eisenhower administration acknowledged responsibility for the surveillance mission, and an angry Khrushchev cancelled not only the Paris summit but also a personal invitation for Eisenhower to visit the USSR. In the meantime, Germany remained divided.

Rollback, Brinkmanship, and Rising Tensions

Upon becoming president, Dwight Eisenhower selected John Foster Dulles, a Republican expert on foreign affairs, to be his secretary of state. Dulles saw serious limitations in the containment policy. He believed that communism was a moral evil that should be rolled back if possible, not merely contained. To achieve this aim, he based his diplomatic strategy on “brinkmanship” and “massive retaliation.” Dulles maintained that the Soviets could be taken to the brink in disputes, at which point they would inevitably back down. Further, it would be in the best interest of the United States to build such a massive nuclear weapons stockpile that the Soviets would be deterred from ever challenging the United States. Given this approach, and the presence of hard-liners in the Kremlin (the center of Soviet administrative and political affairs), U.S.-Soviet relations continued to be tense.

Despite this mistrust, both nations still seemed determined to reduce the tensions that prevailed between the two nuclear superpowers. A summit meeting in 1956 between Khrushchev and Eisenhower failed to produce an “open skies” policy that would allow each nation to fly over the other’s territory, thus preventing a “first strike” attack, but it did indicate that both sides were willing at least to negotiate. When the Soviet premier repudiated the actions and policies of his predecessor, Josef Stalin, a thaw in relations seemed possible. To some in the Soviet-bloc nations of Poland, East Germany, and Hungary, this was taken to mean that reforms could be instituted, giving them greater autonomy and expanded freedoms. In 1956 the Hungarians actually took the momentous step of overthrowing their Soviet-backed government, but the Soviets immediately crushed the rebellion; they would do the same in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The U.S. response, which was to do nothing for fear of sparking a nuclear confrontation, revealed the limitations of Dulles’s policies. Essentially, Eastern Europe was in the Soviet sphere of influence, and the United States would not challenge that reality.
The Second Red Scare: McCarthyism

The Cold War was obviously at the center of U.S. foreign policy; however, it also influenced the nation domestically, sometimes in ways not foreseen. In 1947 Republicans pressured President Truman to establish a Loyalty Review Board to investigate current and prospective federal employees for possible affiliations with radical groups. Thousands consequently lost their jobs. Four years later the federal government prosecuted American Communist party leaders under the Smith Act (1940), which made it illegal to promote the overthrow of the U.S. government or belong to an organization that advocated this intention. In 1951 the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the act in Dennis v. United States. Earlier, in 1938, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) had been formed to investigate political “subversives.” It was resuscitated during the Cold War, in part because of the exposure of Soviet sympathizers such Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. The Rosenbergs were accused of providing atomic bomb information to the Soviets during World War II when the USSR was America’s ally, thereby, according to federal prosecutors, accelerating the Soviet A-bomb program. Although it was peacetime, the nation was in the grip of the red scare, and the “loss” of China to Mao Zedong’s communists and the Korean War all weighed heavily in the government’s decision to electrocute the two convicted spies on June 19, 1953.

The most famous case to come before HUAC involved a former State Department official and adviser to President Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference named Alger Hiss. Hiss’s accuser, Whittaker Chambers, claimed that Hiss had not only been a communist sympathizer in the 1930s but that he had also transmitted secret information to the Soviets. Hiss was convicted of perjury in 1950, in large measure because of the efforts of a young California congressman named Richard M. Nixon. The case led some to question whether there were other Soviet “sympathizers” in public and private life.

HUAC ultimately became a postwar tool whereby anyone who had been even sympathetic to radical causes (and there were quite a few given the disenchantment with capitalism during the Great Depression) could be called to Washington to recant their suspected political allegiance and inform on neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Some refused and suffered dearly. Numerous politicians took advantage of the anticommunist hysteria that swept the nation after the war, but no one did it as effectively and reprehensibly as Wisconsin’s junior Republican senator, Joseph R. McCarthy. Searching for a campaign issue on which to run for reelection, McCarthy found that making unsubstantiated claims and accusations about communist infiltration into every segment of American life generated for him considerable publicity. One week he would claim there were 250 communist sympathizers in the U.S. State Department; the following week the number would arbitrarily change. Before long McCarthy was one of the most powerful and popular political figures in the nation. Few in or out of government would challenge him, for to do so would invariably invite the charge that that person was “soft” on communism. McCarthy even accused George Marshall, the former U.S. Army chief of staff and Truman’s secretary of state and defense, of taking part in a communist conspiracy. Not even President Eisenhower, Marshall’s former comrade in the war, would defend him. Some Republicans personally rejected McCarthy’s tactics, but as his victims tended to be Democrats, they said nothing—with the exception of senators Margaret Chase Smith and Ralph Flanders, both of whom publicly repudiated their colleague.

Over the course of McCarthy’s crusade, many lives and careers were ruined, among them entertainers, screenwriters, teachers, and government employees. Not until Senator McCarthy’s “witch hunt” was televised (during the Senate’s 1954 investigation into possible communist infiltration of the U.S. Army; there was none) did the American people see firsthand the abusive and arbitrary verbal tactics McCarthy used to assault his victims. Many did not like what they saw. The American public, at one time supportive of the showy senator, turned against him. Later that year the Senate censured McCarthy, finally ending the demagogue’s crusade. McCarthy died three years later, leaving in his wake thousands of shattered lives and a legacy of unfounded hysteria.
The following year, 1957, the Soviets launched the world’s first satellite, Sputnik. Similar U.S. efforts continually failed, raising suspicions that U.S. technological superiority may have been exaggerated. Emboldened by the successful orbiting of Sputnik and subsequent satellites, Khrushchev employed his own policy of brinkmanship when he demanded that the West vacate West Berlin. Eisenhower of course refused but invited the Soviet leader to a summit in Paris. The meeting was never held because of the downing of the American spy plane over the Soviet Union in 1960. Khrushchev persisted in his demand; the American response was to strengthen NATO. The following year the Soviets walled off East Berlin in an attempt to halt the flow of refugees to West Berlin.

To the West the Berlin Wall became a symbol of Soviet repression. Despite the increased tensions, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union (and eventually more than one hundred other nations) signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, which banned nuclear weapons tests in the oceans, atmosphere, and outer space. Beginning with Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger’s policy of détente, or cooling of tensions, over the years other arms agreements followed:

- **Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (1968)** The treaty banned the transfer of nuclear weapons to nonnuclear nations.
- **Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (1969–1972)** Known as SALT I, this aimed to prevent the expansion of U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals. SALT II sought further reductions, but when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the Senate refused to ratify the treaty.
- **Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (1972)** ABM restricted the development of defense systems that could be used against strategic ballistic missiles.
- **Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (initiated in 1982)** START aimed to reduce long-range nuclear missiles. President Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), or “Star Wars,” a satellite defensive system that would ostensibly destroy incoming missiles, was an impediment to START.
- **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Agreement (1987)** The United States and the Soviet Union agreed to eliminate all intermediate-range nuclear weapons from their arsenals.

### THE CONTAINMENT POLICY AND LATIN AMERICA: FROM EISENHOWER TO REAGAN

Ever since the early nineteenth century, the United States had warned European nations not to intervene in the internal affairs of nations in the Western Hemisphere. Every U.S. president in the twentieth century had taken steps to prevent this, but after World War II, grassroots movements were often associated with Soviet infiltration into economically and politically vulnerable South American and Caribbean nations. Relations between the United States and South America had generally improved in the decades before World War II, but following the war resentment increased because of U.S. support for dictatorial governments that did little to address the poverty and despair many South Americans were experiencing. Years later the anger had still not subsided. When Vice President Nixon visited South
America in 1959, angry demonstrators attacked his car—an act that symbolized the sentiment toward the United States held by many in Third World nations.

In 1949 the United States helped establish the Organization of American States (OAS) to address the continent’s economic stagnation, but it did little to change the poor conditions under which so many lived. The ultimate priority of the United States was containing communism, and that often meant supporting dictators who were anti-communist. The following are examples of U.S. actions taken in South America and the Caribbean:

- In 1954 the people of Guatemala elected as their president Jacobo Arbenz, who promptly proceeded to alleviate his nation’s economic problems by nationalizing land controlled by U.S. banana companies. The companies had considerable influence with important officials in the U.S. government and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). With U.S. support, revolutionaries overthrew Arbenz’s government and replaced it with a pro-U.S. military regime, adding to the frustration and anger South Americans felt toward the United States.

- In 1959 revolutionary leader Fidel Castro overthrew the corrupt military dictator of Cuba, Fulgencio Batista. A nationalist, Castro adopted radical solutions for Cuba’s problems. This displeased the U.S. government. Castro then moved closer to the Soviet Union. When he began nationalizing foreign-owned businesses, the United States imposed a trade embargo. Near the end of Eisenhower’s second term, in 1961, the United States cut all diplomatic ties with Cuba. President Kennedy extended the trade embargo to include all but essential medical supplies. To this day the embargo is still in effect.

- In 1961 newly elected president John F. Kennedy approved a plan, begun during the Eisenhower administration, to overthrow Castro. Although skeptical, Kennedy gave it his backing. The United States trained and equipped anti-Castro Cubans and landed them at Cuba’s Bay of Pigs. Most of the soldiers were killed or captured. The fiasco was an international embarrassment to the United States and the new president.

- In 1962 U.S. spy planes photographed Soviet-built nuclear missile sites in Cuba. Although the United States had missiles in Turkey, which bordered the Soviet Union, President Kennedy warned that if the sites became operational, they would pose a dire threat to the United States. To prevent the Soviets from delivering the missiles, he ordered a “quarantine” of the Caribbean island. After a few tense days, Soviet premier Khrushchev agreed to dismantle the bases in return for a U.S. guarantee not to invade Cuba. The Cuban missile crisis was the closest the United States and the Soviet Union came during the Cold War to military—possibly nuclear—engagement.

- In 1965 President Johnson sent thousands of U.S. combat troops to the Dominican Republic to prevent the election of a leftist government.

- In 1973, under President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the United States overthrew the democratically elected leader of Chile, Salvador Allende, who was killed in the coup; they
replaced him with a military dictator, Augusto Pinochet. The Nixon administration saw Allende’s Marxist programs and rhetoric as a threat to U.S. political and economic interests.

- In 1979 a leftist revolutionary group called the Sandinistas overthrew the U.S.-backed corrupt dictator of Nicaragua, Anastasio Somoza. President Reagan, deeply opposed to their policies, instructed the CIA to destabilize the country in the hopes of eroding support for the Sandinista government. Millions of dollars were given to the Contras, a rebel group attempting to overthrow the Sandinistas, despite Congress’s passage of the Boland Amendment prohibiting such aid. Nevertheless, advisers to Reagan developed a scheme to funnel weapons to the Contras, clearly circumventing federal law. Reagan claimed he knew nothing of the so-called Iran Contra affair. Meanwhile, the Reagan administration was supporting the often-ruthless Salvadoran government’s battle against leftist guerrillas.

- In 1983 President Reagan sent U.S. combat forces to the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada. The American troops succeeded in overthrowing a Cuban-supported government, which itself had recently overthrown Grenada’s government.

- In 1989 President George H. W. Bush ordered the invasion of Panama to overthrow the government of Manuel Noriega and to stop what he claimed was Noriega’s involvement in the drug trade.

**U.S.-ASIAN AFFAIRS: THE LIMITATIONS OF CONTAINMENT**

The United States was clearly successful in containing the spread of communism to Western Europe in the postwar years. The same could not be said of its involvement in Asia. Three major conflicts defined the U.S. containment policy in Asia: the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

**THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR**

The Chinese Civil War began before World War II. Chinese communists under the guerrilla leader Mao Zedong had been fighting a civil war against Jiang Jieshi’s (Chiang Kai-shek) anti-communist Nationalist government. When Japan invaded China in 1937, the two sides halted their civil war to fight the invaders, but in 1945 they resumed hostilities. The Truman administration sent over $2 billion in economic and military aid to supply Jiang’s military. However, because of the growing popularity of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) among China’s mostly peasant population, and hurt by corrupt Nationalist government officials and generals, the communists won the civil war. In 1949 the Nationalists fled to Formosa (Taiwan).

It was a fateful year for U.S. policymakers. The Soviets had successfully detonated a nuclear weapon, and China, the nation with the world’s largest population, had embraced communism. The question “Who lost China?” sparked criticisms that the Truman administration had not done enough to aid its ally, which was evidence to conservatives that it was soft on communism. The United States would not recognize the People’s Republic of China until 1971, after President Nixon had made a surprise visit to that nation, considered a major thaw in the Cold War.
THE KOREAN WAR

Korea had been occupied during World War II by the Japanese. At the end of the war, Korea was divided along the 38th parallel, the Soviets occupying the area north of the dividing line, the United States south of it. Both nations left after North Korea and South Korea developed their military strength, though North Korea had a more formidable army. Elections were held; North Koreans voted for a communist government under Kim II Sung, while South Koreans elected an anticommmunist government led by Syngman Rhee. Both leaders were strong nationalists who wanted reunification. The Korean War broke out in June 1950, when North Korea invaded South Korea to unify the nation.

Just two months earlier, a U.S. National Security Council memorandum (NSC-68) had recommended to President Truman that the United States engage in a massive development of its conventional and nuclear capabilities in order to send a clear message to the Kremlin. Consequently the U.S. military budget skyrocketed from $13 to $50 billion. Some of that money would be used to supply U.S. troops in the ensuing Korean conflict. To counter North Korea’s invasion, Truman, who mistakenly believed the attack had been planned in Moscow, ordered U.S. troops stationed in occupied Japan to Korea. In the meantime Truman asked the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution condemning the invasion and to send troops immediately to assist South Korea. The resolution passed only because of the absence of the Soviets—they would have vetoed it, but they had been boycotting the U.N. over the U.S. veto of communist China’s admission into the U.N. Troops were rushed to Korea from many nations, though the bulk of the force was American.

They were almost too late. The invasion was so sudden and overpowering that South Korean and U.S. forces had been driven into the southwestern corner of the Korean peninsula around the city of Pusan. General Douglas MacArthur, commander of U.N. troops in Korea, devised an audacious maneuver that outflanked the North Korean army at Inchon and drove it back across the 38th parallel. Not content with that, Truman sought to roll back communism by overthrowing Kim II Sung; he therefore ordered MacArthur’s forces to cross the 38th parallel into North Korea. China threatened to enter the conflict if MacArthur’s troops continued their invasion of North Korea. MacArthur, an advocate of rollback as well, believed the Chinese would do no such thing, and he pressed on north to the Chinese-Korean border at the Yalu River. To his surprise, in November 1950 nearly a half million Chinese soldiers, dressed as North Korean soldiers, poured across the border and drove the U.N. forces back across the 38th parallel. MacArthur was insistant that China itself should be attacked, but Truman, now having second thoughts about invading North Korea, favored a political solution. Outraged, MacArthur publicly criticized the commander in chief’s handling of the war and disobeyed his orders. Truman fired him. MacArthur returned to the United States a national hero, despite his insubordination.

By the summer of 1951, the war had settled into a stalemate. Negotiations for an armistice began that summer and dragged on for two more years. Finally, in 1953 at Panmunjom, on the 38th parallel, a
cease-fire was agreed to. The United States had successfully contained communism in South Korea, but it had been compelled to use its military to do so. To this day, Korea is still divided, and thousands of U.S. troops continue to be stationed there.

**The Vietnam War**

The Vietnam War grew out of France’s effort to reclaim its colonial possession, Indochina, which had been conquered by the Japanese during the war. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Vietnamese independence movement, appealed to the United States and the United Nations for assistance and recognition. Neither was forthcoming. Ho was more warmly received, however, by China and the USSR. When the French tried to crush the insurgents, the United States provided France with economic and military assistance. The French were nevertheless defeated by Ho’s nationalist guerrilla force, the Viet Minh. Concern swept Washington that the rest of Southeast Asia would in turn fall like dominoes (the “domino theory”).

At the 1954 Geneva conference, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam—the three had composed the French colony of Indochina—received their independence. Vietnam, however, was temporarily divided along the 17th parallel. Ho became the leader of North Vietnam, and the U.S.-backed Ngo Dinh Diem took control in the South, with elections scheduled for 1956. Within South Vietnam, a guerrilla force comprising mostly communists known as the Vietcong were determined to reunite Vietnam under Ho’s leadership. Almost immediately, civil war erupted between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The United States sent more and more military advisers to help the South Vietnamese turn back the Vietcong. For his part Diem refused to participate in the election scheduled for 1956, and his brutal measures lost him whatever support he had from the citizens of South Vietnam. Diem’s generals told American officials in Saigon of their plans for a coup and asked for assurances that the United States would not thwart the coup and that U.S. financial assistance would continue after it. The assurances were given. Diem was assassinated in the coup. Three weeks later, Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

In 1962 Soviet Premier Khrushchev prophetically remarked: “In South Vietnam, the United States has stumbled into a bog. It will be mired down there a long time.” American presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon all sought one way or another to either win the war or, at the very least, to extricate the United States from the conflict. Johnson intensified U.S. involvement in 1964 after alleging that the North Vietnamese attacked two of its warships in the Gulf of Tonkin. In a near unanimous vote, Congress gave the president a “blank check” to wage war in Vietnam (Gulf of Tonkin Resolution). By 1965 the United States had nearly 200,000 troops in Vietnam. The war continued to escalate until by 1968 a half million U.S. troops were involved. They were bolstering what seemed to many to be an unpopular government under Nguyen Van Thieu, whose forces, along with American troops, were battling the Army of North Vietnam and the Vietcong. Until this point, most Americans had supported the war, but by 1968, with no end to the conflict in sight and the American people now badly divided over Johnson’s foreign policy, the president chose not to run for reelection. Richard Nixon, who claimed to have a
secret plan to bring “peace with honor,” was elected president. Nixon’s plan was known as Vietnamization: the United States would train and equip the South Vietnamese army while American forces were gradually withdrawn.

Throughout the United States demonstrations in favor of and opposed to the war broke out. Some turned deadly—for example, Ohio National Guard troops opened fire on antilwar demonstrators at Kent State University, killing four students, and police used machine guns and armor-piercing bullets to control demonstrators at Jackson State, killing two students. Now Americans were dying in the Vietnam War at home.

Television, which had changed American culture considerably in the postwar years, dramatically brought the Vietnam War into American living rooms. Search and destroy missions, the use of napalm and defoliants such as Agent Orange, and the massive bombing raids on North Vietnam such as Operation Rolling Thunder convinced many Americans that the war had become one of brutal attrition. Antiwar demonstrations increased and, ultimately, more than one-half million American men resisted the military draft. Still, the government repeatedly attempted to convince the public that the end of the war was in sight.

However, doubts intensified when the North Vietnamese and Vietcong launched a major offensive on the Vietnamese New Year (Tet) in 1968 against every major city in South Vietnam, even breaching the grounds of the U.S. embassy in Saigon. Although the attackers suffered huge casualties, the Tet offensive was a political defeat for the U.S. government; it convinced even more Americans that the end of the war was not in sight and that it was time to withdraw from Vietnam. This position was given added weight when in 1971 the New York Times published the Pentagon Papers, a top-secret study of the war commissioned by the Johnson administration. It revealed that the government had misled the public and Congress about the reasons the United States entered the conflict and had escalated U.S. involvement.

From the end of Johnson’s presidency through Nixon’s, the United States sought a negotiated settlement to the war in peace talks that were convened in Paris in 1968. When talks broke down at one point, Nixon ordered a massive bombardment of Hanoi, the capital of North Vietnam. Finally, on January 23, 1973, an agreement was announced, followed shortly thereafter by the withdrawal of all U.S. troops. Two years later North Vietnamese troops overran Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, and unified the nation, but not before an estimated 2 million Vietnamese and 56,000 Americans had been killed.

**Foreign Affairs in the Post-Vietnam Era**

In the late 1970s President Carter initiated a shift in the U.S. approach to foreign policy. In an attempt to rebuild America’s image, especially in the Third World, he infused morality and human rights into his policies. To Carter, U.S. support of anticomunist totalitarian governments had serious limitations. Conservatives were deeply opposed to this approach, as they believed it would ultimately weaken U.S. power and influence worldwide. However, Carter proved to be inconsistent in his application of human rights to foreign policy.
- He negotiated the Panama Canal Treaty, which returned the Canal Zone to the Panamanians in 2000, angering many conservatives.
- In Central America after the Marxist Sandinistas took over Nicaragua, Carter thought it best to provide aid to the government of El Salvador, which itself was engaged in a civil war. Despite the Salvadoran government’s tolerance of right-wing death squads, turning a blind eye to those abuses, Carter obviously preferred this regime to another leftist government in the region.
- Carter’s greatest success came in the Middle East, when he negotiated a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. It did not bring peace to the region, however.
- Despite his rhetoric to end the Cold War and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) he signed with his Soviet counterpart in 1979, Carter’s actions often proved that he was as much a cold warrior as his predecessors. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to support a faltering Marxist government, Carter refused to send American athletes to participate in the 1980 Moscow Olympics and supplied the Afghan guerrillas with weapons and supplies. Both actions obviously infuriated the Soviets.
- The overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah of Iran in 1979 reverberated through the White House. Angered that the United States had maintained the corrupt and repressive shah’s government in power for so long, as well as U.S. support for Israel, Islamic fundamentalists led a successful popular revolution against their leader. They proceeded to take U.S. embassy officials hostage after Carter allowed the shah to seek medical treatment in the United States. Carter’s futile attempts at a negotiated settlement, an attempted military solution, and neutral intervention all failed. His contradictory foreign policy, the inability to resolve the Iranian crisis, and the slumping U.S. economy were factors in his failed bid for reelection.

If Carter intended to infuse foreign affairs with morality, President Reagan represented the alternative view. In Reagan’s view, the Carter administration had failed to protect the nation’s self-interests, its prestige, and the morale of its people. For Reagan the enemy of the United States was still the “evil empire,” the Soviet Union. It was the Soviet Union, not political repression and poverty, that was behind the instability in the Third World. With this view in mind, Reagan did not hesitate to intervene in all parts of the world when he believed it was in the best interests of the United States to do so. The 1980s saw the United States involved in one way or another in Central America and the Caribbean, Lebanon, the Persian Gulf, Libya, Angola, Afghanistan, and Cambodia.

The events in Lebanon revealed a weakness in the United States role as the world’s policeman. When a civil war ripped that nation apart, the president sent Marines to restore order. In 1983, in a precursor of what would become an increasingly common tactic, a truck packed with explosives blew up the U.S. barracks, killing 241 Marines. The Reagan administration then ordered a “strategic deployment” of its forces out of the area.

The end of the Cold War was a watershed event in the 1980s. When Reagan denounced SALT II and proceeded to take a hard-line approach to the Soviet Union, the Soviets reacted by deploying more
nuclear missiles. It seemed as if the Cold War would continue indefinitely. In the meantime a new Soviet government, led by Mikhail Gorbachev, came to power in 1985. Gorbachev took over a country whose economy could not maintain both an arms race and a consumer economy. He was tired of the economic burden of sustaining the Cold War, especially given the expansion of the U.S. arms buildup under Reagan. Moreover, he wanted to introduce greater democratic freedoms into the Soviet system. To achieve this goal he initiated two important reforms:

- **Perestroika** This restructured the Soviet economy by introducing features of a free-market system.
- **Glasnost** This expanded citizens’ democratic and political freedoms.

Then, in an historic decision, Gorbachev redefined his nation’s relationship with its East European allies by removing Soviet troops from those countries. Beginning with Poland, one after another Soviet-backed governments fell from power in Eastern Europe. Finally, in 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down, and the two Germanys were reunited. It was not long before the USSR itself was dismantled, as nine of its republics broke away and formed the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The end of the Cold War did not make the United States and the world as safe as most had hoped. Now the Persian Gulf Wars; the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and other international targets; and the enduring Middle East crisis have come to define post–Cold War anxieties.

**Content Review Questions**

1. An objective of the Marshall Plan was to
   (A) provide military assistance to the Chinese Nationalists.
   (B) limit the nuclear stockpiles of the United States and Soviet Union.
   (C) rebuild West European nations that had been devastated during the war.
   (D) roll back communism in Eastern Europe.

2. Joseph McCarthy
   (A) was commander of U.N. forces in Korea.
   (B) was successful in exposing thousands of communist sympathizers in the U.S. government.
   (C) was a congressman who strongly opposed U.S. intervention in Vietnam.
   (D) is associated with the second red scare in the 1940s and 1950s.

3. Which of the following is NOT a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council?
   (A) Germany
   (B) France
   (C) Britain
   (D) China
4. In order to prevent the Soviets from placing nuclear missiles in Cuba, President Kennedy
   (A) threatened to strike Moscow with U.S. intercontinental ballistic missiles.
   (B) imposed a trade embargo on Cuba.
   (C) placed a naval quarantine around Cuba.
   (D) agreed to remove U.S. missiles from Europe.

5. The Korean War
   (A) ended in a stalemate.
   (B) resulted in the first successful attempt by the United States to contain communism in Asia.
   (C) was a direct cause of the Chinese Civil War.
   (D) ended when the U.N. sent peacekeeping forces to the Korean peninsula.

6. Which U.S. president advocated the development of a satellite-based defensive system known as Strategic Defense Initiative?
   (A) Eisenhower
   (B) Kennedy
   (C) Johnson
   (D) Reagan

7. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution
   (A) was passed by the U.N., authorizing the United States to send combat troops to Vietnam.
   (B) was passed by Congress, giving President Johnson unlimited powers to wage war in Vietnam.
   (C) ended hostilities in Korea.
   (D) recognized the Viet Minh as the legitimate government in Vietnam.

8. President Nixon authorized a military coup that toppled the popularly elected government of Salvador Allende in
   (A) Guatemala.
   (B) El Salvador.
   (C) Chile.
   (D) Mexico.

9. President Reagan’s administration illegally circumvented Congress’s Boland Amendment in order to
   (A) secretly fund Nicaragua’s Contras.
   (B) increase the U.S. nuclear stockpile.
   (C) undermine Mikhail Gorbachev’s reformist government.
   (D) purchase arms for the Chinese Nationalists.

10. In order to prevent communist forces from toppling the governments of Greece and Turkey, the United States
    (A) sent combat troops to both nations at the end of World War II.
    (B) initiated the Truman Doctrine.
    (C) initiated the Marshall Plan.
    (D) established NATO.
11. Jimmy Carter’s presidency was tarnished by which of the following events?
   (A) The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war
   (B) The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
   (C) The Iranian hostage crisis
   (D) The OPEC oil embargo

12. The limitations of the policy of “massive retaliation” were revealed in which Cold War event?
   (A) The construction of the Berlin Wall
   (B) The Berlin airlift
   (C) The Iranian hostage crisis
   (D) The Hungarian uprising

13. The Camp David Agreement, mediated by President Carter, resulted in
   (A) a peace accord between Israel and Egypt.
   (B) a nuclear arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union.
   (C) a multinational agreement to reduce global warming.
   (D) U.S. recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

14. The policy whereby the United States would honor its current military agreements but in the future would limit its use of combat troops in its allies’ wars is known as
   (A) mutually assured destruction.
   (B) containment.
   (C) Vietnamization.
   (D) the Nixon Doctrine.

15. Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union warmed in 1972 as a result of an agreement by the former to sell the latter
   (A) nonnuclear military supplies.
   (B) much-needed foodstuffs.
   (C) computers.
   (D) oil and other petroleum products.

Short-Answer Questions

1. The United States fought two prolonged “hot wars” in Korea and Vietnam during the course of the Cold War.
   (a) Briefly describe the U.S. goals in Korea.
   (b) Briefly describe the U.S. goals in Vietnam.
   (c) How do both wars reflect the U.S. larger goals during the Cold War?
   (d) Describe one way in which the wars differed.

2. President Carter differed from some of his predecessors by advocating for morality in foreign policy. Some of his policies were, therefore, criticized by the establishment.
   (a) Identify one president prior to Carter and describe an aspect of his foreign policy that contradicted Carter’s.
   (b) How does this difference reflect the shift in foreign policy from earlier in the century?
(c) Did Carter's focus on morality in foreign policy have the intended result for U.S. international relations? Use historical evidence to support your answer.

**Long Essay Questions**

1. Compare and contrast the success of the containment policy during the Cold War. Select TWO of the following case studies:
   (a) containment in Europe
   (b) containment in Asia
   (c) containment in South America

2. It is reasonable to assume that the actions, behavior, and policies of the Soviet Union following World War II caused and prolonged the Cold War.
   To what extent is the above statement true?
Answers

CONTENT REVIEW QUESTIONS


2. (D) McCarthy was at the center of the red scare that profoundly affected American life in the 1940s and 1950s (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 866–867/16th ed., pp. 836–837; Learning Objective POL-7).


5. (A) After three years of fighting, the war essentially ended where it began, with the two Koreas divided along the 38th parallel (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 865/16th ed., pp. 834–835; Learning Objective WOR-8).

6. (D) It was popularly referred to as Star Wars (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 946–947/16th ed., p. 937; Learning Objective WOR-8).


8. (C) Allende was a democratically elected leader (this material does not appear in the 15th edition of the text/16th ed., p. 902; Learning Objective WOR-8).

9. (A) Reagan claimed he was not aware of the actions of his subordinates whose support for the Contras was designed to topple Nicaragua’s Sandinista government, despite the Boland Amendment’s prohibition of such activities (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 950–951/16th ed., pp. 940–942; Learning Objective WOR-8).

10. (B) The Truman administration sent millions in economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey to assist them in their fight against communist rebels (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 846–847/16th ed., p. 826; Learning Objective WOR-8).
11. (C) When an Islamic fundamentalist government took power in Iran in 1979, the U.S. embassy came under attack, and members of the staff were held hostage for 444 days. The Carter administration initiated what turned out to be a disastrous rescue mission that severely hurt his public image (*The American Pageant*, 15th ed., p. 939/16th ed., pp. 930–931; Learning Objective WOR-4).

12. (D) In 1956 Hungarians rose up in open revolt against Soviet domination. The revolutionaries appealed for U.S. assistance, but there was little the United States could do short of confronting the Soviets militarily. The use of nuclear weapons was never considered suitable for such a relatively minor crisis, thus exposing the limitations of nuclear power (*The American Pageant*, 15th ed., p. 875/16th ed., p. 863; Learning Objective WOR-7).

13. (A) The historic agreement was reached by Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. Sadat was later assassinated because of his participation in the Camp David Agreement (*The American Pageant*, 15th ed., pp. 933–934/16th ed., p. 926; Learning Objective WOR-8).


15. (B) The Soviet Union was suffering from a succession of poor harvests and President Nixon worked out an arrangement with the Soviets to sell $750 million in much-needed grains and cereal products (*The American Pageant*, 15th ed., p. 920/16th ed., pp. 901–902; Learning Objective ENV-5).

**SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Although the Vietnam and Korean Wars are extremely different, they are often confused. Korea was meant to be a limited war in which democracy was preserved in South Korea and the communist forces were repelled. The Vietnam War was also meant to keep northern forces out of the South, although the fighting escalated beyond that. Both wars reflect a military application of the containment policy. The wars differ in several ways, including the role of television, the length and effects of the war on the public, and the eventual outcomes, among other disparities.

2. Theodore Roosevelt, whose tactics secured the canal zone in 1902, believed in taking the land that he wanted for the country while Carter voluntarily gave it back. In some ways, this represents a reversal of U.S. policy for years prior, which was much more assertive than defensive. Carter’s show of good faith failed to temper later hostilities between the United States
and Latin American nations, especially considering his successors' interference in and policies regarding Latin America.

LONG ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. When asked to compare, you should identify commonalities; when asked to contrast, identify differences. In discussing containment in Europe, you may wish to first describe the containment policy and then incorporate economic and military programs such as the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the creation of NATO that sought to achieve this objective. In discussing containment in Asia, you should address the three major case studies of U.S. containment on that continent: Chinese Civil War, Korean War, and the Vietnam War. For South America discuss U.S. interventions, the reasons for these interventions, and their outcomes. Three case studies should suffice. (Historical Thinking Skills: II-4: Comparison, III-6: Historical Argumentation, III-7: Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, IV-8: Interpretation)

2. In your essay, you can identify major actions taken by the Soviets in the Cold War and evaluate whether they were reasonable reactions on their part. For example, the development by the Soviets of nuclear weapons, the creation of the Warsaw Pact, the decision to place nuclear missiles in Cuba, and Soviet interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia are some of the events that can be used to support or refute the statement, given your interpretation of the Cold War. Keep in mind that there are three basic interpretations around which a thesis can be constructed: the Soviets caused and prolonged the Cold War, the United States caused and prolonged the Cold War, or both are responsible. (Historical Thinking Skills: I-1: Causation, III-6: Historical Argumentation, IV-8: Interpretation, and IV-9: Synthesis)
Period 9: 1980–Present

The United States in the Global Community

As the twenty-first century approached change was afoot in the United States. The conservative tide that swept in with the “Reagan revolution” changed both the power structure and social mores of the nation in the 1980s in enduring ways. New groups emerged to advocate for equality, and in 2008, the United States elected its first African American president. New, ever-changing technology made former innovations obsolete. The twenty-first-century world is interconnected in ways no one could have dreamed as little as fifty years prior, changing the United States position in the world as well as the way decisions are made and issues arise within the country.

**KEY CONCEPTS FROM THE COLLEGE BOARD**

9.1 A new conservatism grew to prominence in U.S. culture and politics, defending traditional social values and rejecting liberal views about the role of government.

9.2 The end of the Cold War and new challenges to U.S. leadership in the world forced the nation to redefine its foreign policy and global role.

9.3 Moving into the twenty-first century, the nation continued to experience challenges stemming from social, economic, and demographic changes.
THE POST–COLD WAR ERA:
1980–2013

The collapse of the Soviet Union put a sudden end to the Cold War, which had cost billions of dollars and millions of lives and had created insecurity and anxiety for more than fifty years. Yet the decades following the dissolution of the Soviet empire did not bring peace to the United States and the world. In fact, every American president since Ronald Reagan has used the military and economic resources of the United States to resolve foreign-affairs problems. Around the world, from Nicaragua to Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, the United States has engaged new adversaries. The United States has itself been attacked. Even now, years after 9/11, the extent of the devastation is hard to comprehend.

Domestically, the past twenty-five years have been tumultuous as well, including an attempted assassination of one president and the impeachment of another; one popular war in the Mideast and an increasingly unpopular one in the same region a decade later. At home, many Americans have embraced evangelical religious fundamentalism as the essence of their personal and political lives, and they played an important role in the rise to the presidency of a born-again Christian. The cultural and political influence of Christian fundamentalism went hand in hand with the reemergence of conservatism as a political force. With the nation divided into so-called red and blue states, these forces are at the foundation of contemporary American social, political, economic, and cultural life for now and the foreseeable future.

**Key Concepts**

- With the election of Ronald Reagan, conservatism reemerged as a rejection of the liberal social and economic policies of previous administrations. Under Reagan, military spending ballooned, while spending for domestic programs was significantly slashed.
The Cold War ended during the administration of George H. W. Bush. In the post–Cold War era, the United States often intervened militarily in the affairs of foreign nations.

The United States experienced a period of sustained economic growth under President Clinton. During his term in office, the federal budget was balanced for the first time since the 1960s, but the Republicans gained control of Congress for the first time in forty years.

China and Russia began to play an increasingly important economic and political role in world affairs.

The post–Cold War era was fraught with domestic and international terrorism. Less than a year after the inauguration of President George W. Bush, the United States experienced the worst domestic attack in the nation’s history.

George W. Bush led the United States into the Iraq War to search for weapons of mass destruction and, with the hope of changing the dynamic in the Middle East, to liberate and democratize Iraq.

President Bush’s domestic and foreign policies polarized the nation, allowing the Democratic Party to recapture both houses of Congress in 2006 and, with the election of Barack Obama, the White House in 2008.

In late 2008, the United States and the world faced a dire financial crisis as the U.S. housing market and key banking and lending firms collapsed.


**THE PRESIDENCY OF RONALD REAGAN**

When he entered the White House as the nation’s fortyeth president, Ronald Reagan was already a household name. A famous movie actor in the 1940s and 1950s, Reagan entered politics in the early 1960s and won the California governorship as a conservative Republican in 1966. Less than two decades later, he routed the Democratic incumbent, Jimmy Carter, in the 1980 presidential election. As president, Reagan would steer the nation through the final stages of the Cold War and redefine the federal government’s role in the economy. Ultimately he would become the inspiration and guiding light for political conservatives and the nemesis of liberals, who viewed his domestic policies as a threat to hard-won reforms dating back to the New Deal. Not surprisingly, foreign affairs and domestic policies under Reagan had both ardent supporters and vehement detractors, but most would agree that his two terms as president had amounted to a political revolution.

For his supporters, Reagan’s conservatism fortuitously came just when many citizens—in both major political parties—were beginning to question the cultural, economic, and political transformations that had occurred in the post–World War II years. Two streams fed into the rise of conservatism:

- The religious right was made up of evangelical Christians disenchanted with what they considered damaging social and cultural trends, such as feminism, gay rights, affirmative action, and
abortion rights, and they were deeply concerned about what they considered a too-powerful federal government.

- The New Right had coalesced in the 1964 presidential campaign as a challenge to the more liberal wing of the Republican Party and began to play an increasing role in the intellectual debate on the nation’s direction. Some who joined the New Right were former liberals alarmed by the growing power and authority of the federal government; they are now called neoconservatives.

Conservative religious groups such as the Moral Majority, organized by the charismatic and combative Reverend Jerry Falwell, became politically active. In establishing grassroots political movements, they helped enlarge the nation’s political arena and bring new topics to political debate. The New Right got support from corporate America, which embraced the New Right as allies in the struggle to develop a more pro-business environment in Washington. Claiming to represent traditional values and family relationships, conservatives swept into the White House, Ronald Reagan in the vanguard. Soon the religious right’s priorities, peripheral to previous administrations, became cultural and political focal points. A central priority was abortion. In 1973, the Supreme Court had ruled in Roe v. Wade that abortion is legal, a decision that outraged many Americans, including Ronald Reagan. Anti-abortion rights activists saw a true ally in President Reagan, and over time, the federal government and individual states enacted policies and prohibitions that modified Roe—for example, by limiting Medicaid funding for abortions. Abortion today continues to be a fiercely controversial topic.

**REAGANOMICS**

Using economic policy to shrink the federal government, President Reagan persuaded Congress to pass smaller federal budgets, with cuts mostly in social programs. Tax reform bills passed in 1981 and 1986 reduced government regulation, long an aspiration of conservatives. And Reagan cut taxes. At the heart of his domestic economic agenda was supply-side economics (so-called Reaganomics), which the president hoped would stimulate the moribund U.S. economy. Theoretically, a supply-side approach provides wealthy individuals and corporations even more money, through tax cuts, which then goes back into the economy in the form of new investments and new businesses. That results in greater consumerism and lower unemployment. Critics contended that the tax cuts reduced government revenues, which financed domestic programs such as welfare, federal aid to the arts, urban renewal and development, and education. Furthermore, there was no guarantee that the wealthy would in fact stimulate the economy; rather, they might keep the money and just become wealthier.

At the same time, Reagan pushed for the development of an enormously expensive missile defense system: the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), nicknamed Star Wars. Advocates claimed that SDI was essential for the future defense of the nation. Most scientists doubted that the system would work, and other critics claimed the expense was prohibitive given the economic needs of millions of Americans.

Also at the heart of Reagan’s domestic agenda was the desire to increase the power and influence of the states at the expense of the
federal government. This approach, referred to as New Federalism, would mean that the budgets of certain federal programs would be slashed and the money turned over to the individual states, to be used at their discretion. Although New Federalism resonated with those Americans who considered the federal budget to be bloated, critics held that a steep price would be paid as the government deregulated businesses and cut funding for programs that, for example, protected the environment. The administration’s response was that deregulation would lower prices, which would stimulate consumerism and expand employment opportunities. In this corporate-friendly environment, labor unions were marginalized.

Always comfortable in front of a camera, President Reagan’s charisma and straightforward dialogue convinced many Americans that his hard-line views on the Cold War were correct, and he was able to splinter even diehard Democrats from their party. These “Reagan Democrats” helped him win handily in the 1984 presidential race—a campaign noteworthy, in part, because of the Democratic candidate Walter Mondale’s running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, the first female in the nation’s history to run for such a high office.

In his first campaign for the presidency, Reagan had promised to reduce the federal deficit, but as president he actually enlarged it. The huge federal budget included significant military spending, but the substantial tax cuts initiated by his administration meant reduced federal revenues and caused the federal debt to soar. However, the president was more successful in tackling other economic maladies, such as unemployment and inflation. Critics acknowledged that unemployment did indeed decrease, but they pointed out that more and more Americans were relegated to low-paying jobs in the service sector. Nevertheless, the economy of the nation was healthy enough to contribute to Reagan’s bid for reelection.

REAGAN’S FOREIGN POLICY

When it came to the Soviet Union (and communism in general), President Reagan had nothing but contempt for what he referred to as the “evil empire.” To end the Cold War on his terms, Reagan decided to negotiate with the Soviets from a position of military strength. He launched a massive military arms buildup, thereby challenging the Soviet leadership to keep pace while somehow simultaneously satisfying the consumer sector of their economy. The Strategic Defense Initiative was one facet of this strategy; economic sanctions, another. When the Soviets or their proxy governments in Eastern Europe acted in an antagonistic or undemocratic way—for example, when Poland was placed under martial law after Polish workers organized a labor movement known as Solidarity—Reagan imposed sanctions. By the mid-1980s, U.S.-Soviet relations had hit rock bottom.

It was not long, however, before events in the Soviet Union took a dramatic turn. In 1985, a reform-minded and engaging leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, took over as chairman of the Soviet Communist party. Just as Reagan was determined to transform the U.S. government and economy, Gorbachev was resolved to move the Soviet Union away from what he viewed as the economic waste of the Cold War and to end his nation’s long history of domestic repression. Gorbachev set out two new policies:
- **Perestroika**, or restructuring, was the incorporation of capitalist features into the Soviet economy.
- **Glasnost**, or openness, referred to the introduction of democracy into Soviet life and politics.

These policies endeared many Americans to the new Soviet leader. If Reagan was hesitant to trust the new Soviet leader, Gorbachev reassured him by reducing the Soviet nuclear presence in Europe. In a series of summits, the two political leaders warmed to each other and reached an accord that went a long way to ending the Cold War.

**AP Tip**

Note some of the comparisons that can be drawn between different periods in U.S. history. For example, historians have drawn some parallels between the 1920s and the 1980s. Both decades were dominated by conservatives: in the 1920s, three Republican conservatives occupied the White House (Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover), and in the 1980s, two Republican conservatives (Reagan and Bush) served as president. The economic approach taken in the two decades is also similar: the Mellon tax plan (a series of tax reductions on the wealthy and corporations) in the 1920s and the Reagan administration's supply-side approach in the 1980s. Be careful not to overanalyze these comparisons; despite the parallels, each period is unique.

As a diehard anticommunist, Reagan based his foreign policy on the containment policy, the approach taken by U.S. presidents toward communism since the end of World War II. (Some contend that given his record of interventions in various parts of the world, Reagan identified more with a policy of rolling back, rather than containing, communism.) Accordingly, Reagan applied economic and military pressure on leftist nations and leaders worldwide, but most especially in the Western Hemisphere. Intent on supporting governments that were anticommunist, even if they were authoritarian and repressive (such as those in the Philippines, El Salvador, and Mozambique), Reagan had no qualms about destabilizing or overthrowing leftist governments. In 1983, the president sent U.S. troops to the tiny Caribbean island nation of Grenada when a Cuban-backed coup toppled the government and installed a communist as president. The invasion was a successful display of U.S. authority in the Western Hemisphere. Less successful was Reagan's foray into the turmoil of the Middle East. U.S. Marines were dispatched to Lebanon as part of an international peacekeeping force, an exercise that ended abruptly when a suicide bomber killed hundreds of U.S. servicemen, which precipitated a U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon.

The Reagan administration also made every effort to subvert the newly ensconced (1979) Marxist Sandinista government in Nicaragua by supporting an anti-Sandinista guerrilla force known as the Contras. To provide weapons to the Contras—expressly forbidden by Congress because of atrocities committed by the guerrillas—the administration attempted to address two concerns simultaneously: to win the release
of American hostages in Lebanon with the help of Iran and to provide military aid to the Contras. Despite strong American public and official outrage against the new government of Iran, especially given its refusal to immediately release U.S. embassy workers taken hostage after that nation’s 1979 revolution, the Reagan administration secretly sold weapons to Iran; the proceeds of the sale were then sent to the Contras. In what became known as the Iran-Contra affair, Congress launched a televised investigation into the administration’s activities, and several White House officials were convicted on criminal charges.

Despite uncertainties about his involvement in the scandal, President Reagan’s popularity with the American people remained high, in large measure because of his role in thawing U.S.-Soviet relations. His vice president, George H. W. Bush, would benefit from his association with the Reagan administration when he ran for the presidency in 1988.

**The Presidency of George H. W. Bush**

President Bush defeated the Democratic candidate, Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis, in a campaign noted for its intense and sometimes objectionable negative ads, such as the infamous Willie Horton television commercial. Bush had considerable foreign-affairs experience, which he put to good use in confronting a threat to the world’s oil supplies when Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded neighboring oil-rich Kuwait. Skillfully organizing a United Nations military coalition, Bush ordered an invasion of Kuwait. Operation Desert Storm successfully drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait in what is referred to as the Persian Gulf War. Questions remained, however, about the limitations of the U.N. mandate and U.S. hegemony in the region, for it left Saddam in power—a condition that would be resolved by the president’s son, George W. Bush, the forty-third president.

As president, Bush witnessed the final collapse of the Soviet empire and an end to the enormously costly Cold War. A friendly relationship soon developed between Bush and the new Russian president, Boris Yeltsin. Unfortunately, the hard-line government in China had not warmed to the democratic ideas that had helped transform the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies; when a peaceful prodemocracy demonstration took place in China’s Tiananmen Square in 1989, it was mercilessly crushed. Like Reagan, Bush did not hesitate to influence affairs in the Western Hemisphere. For instance, he ordered an invasion of Panama to topple Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega, whom the U.S. government claimed was involved in the international drug trade.

Domestically, Bush was less successful. Campaigning for the presidency, he had promised not to raise taxes: “Read my lips—no new taxes,” he had said. It was a promise he would regret making. A skyrocketing deficit and a weak economy compelled him to increase taxes, a reversal the Democrats would not let the voting public forget when Bush ran for reelection in 1992. Unlike Ronald Reagan, Bush was not the “Great Communicator.” He had difficulty articulating his conservative domestic agenda, such as school prayer. The problems of his presidency were further aggravated by the collapse of the savings-
and-loan industry. In part a result of the Reagan administration's deregulation of savings-and-loan associations, bailing them out would cost American taxpayers $250-$350 billion. Then, as the president began his bid for reelection, the United States experienced a recession, which did not bode well for Bush.

THE PRESIDENCY OF BILL CLINTON

When Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas, ran for the presidency on the Democratic ticket in 1992, his party had controlled the White House for only four of the past twenty-four years. Fortunately for Clinton, many voters had become disenchanted with President Bush's inability to resolve key national problems, especially the faltering economy. Further, at a time when conservatism was gaining popularity—a boost to the Republicans because it was an ideological perspective associated with their party—Clinton offered a new outlook on what it meant to be a Democrat. That outlook was in some ways consistent with the Republicans'. Clinton believed that Democrats could no longer hope to attract voters unless the party supported policies that addressed crime, a strong national defense, and the establishment of a friendlier relationship with the business sector.

In the 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton's appeal was not limited to traditional Democratic bastions such as the Northeast and the Far West. In fact, he performed well in nearly every region, including a number of southern states, defeating not only the incumbent, George H. W. Bush, but also a third-party candidate, Texas billionaire H. Ross Perot (who ultimately captured nearly 20 percent of the popular vote). Clinton was the first person born after World War II to become chief executive.

Clinton initiated his presidency with an effort to address a controversial issue: gays in the military. However, his goal of eliminating a ban on gays serving in the military was met with a firestorm of indignation, and he had to settle for a considerably modified approach, a "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The president then tackled a long-standing social problem, the nation's inadequate health-care system. He appointed his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, director of a task force charged with designing a comprehensive health-care reform. The plan was offered to Congress, but it fared no better than the attempt to lift the ban on gays in the military. Clinton had apparently mistaken his presidential campaign victory as a mandate from the American people. He did, however, sign into law the Family and Medical Leave Act (1993), which requires employers to grant unpaid medical leaves in cases of family emergency.

CLINTON'S ECONOMIC POLICIES

Clinton had greater leverage in tackling other national problems, especially the massive federal deficit. His administration worked hard at reducing the deficit. That effort and a booming economy produced a significant surplus in 1998, an impressive achievement. Clinton, with the help of a Republican-controlled Congress, balanced the federal budget for the first time in nearly thirty years.

Another major accomplishment was the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The president strongly
supported NAFTA, insisting that it would improve the economies of the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Supporters of NAFTA point out that increasing imports have stimulated employment. Critics claim that U.S. businesses have relocated plants to Mexico, where labor is considerably cheaper. Another free-trade proposal supported by Clinton, creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), provoked large-scale demonstrations at a WTO meeting held in Seattle in 1999. Although globalization was long an objective of free-trade advocates, opponents raised serious questions about its negative impact: environmental degradation and poverty wages. The issue of trade with China, a nation Clinton had excoriated before he became president, was addressed near the end of his second term with passage of a trade bill that made China a vital trade partner.

**OTHER DOMESTIC ISSUES**

Gun control was another concern of the president. Gun control had powerful opponents, especially the National Rifle Association. But gun control made sense to many Americans who remembered the assassinations of President Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy in the 1960s and, more recently, the attempted assassination of President Reagan in 1981. Further, a nationwide rise in gun violence seemed nothing less than a pandemic. In 1994, Congress signed into law the Brady Bill (named for one of the victims in the assassination attempt on Reagan), which banned certain assault weapons.

Still, violence shook the nation, often in ways that Americans had never experienced. A 1993 standoff between federal agents and a religious sect known as the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, ended in the fiery destruction of the sect’s compound and the death of many of its members, including children. In 1995, American-born terrorists destroyed a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people—again, including children. And in 1999, a murderous attack carried out by two heavily armed students killed twelve other students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Colorado. Demand for stricter gun-control legislation crescendoed. Opponents argue that instead of enacting more gun-control laws, the government should enforce those laws already on the books, while protecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens. So far, the opponents have carried the day.

A long-festering cynicism about the federal government dating back to the 1960s had convinced many Americans that the conservatives’ message of limited federal government made sense. Led by the confrontational House minority whip, Newt Gingrich, the Republicans overwhelmed the Democrats in the 1994 midterm elections and took control of Congress. Under pressure from this new potent political force (whose agenda was encapsulated in the Contract with America), Clinton was compelled to sign into law a decidedly conservative Welfare Reform Bill, which critics claimed would eviscerate federal aid to those in need. Believing that they now had a mandate to eliminate long-standing federally funded social programs, the Republicans alienated some Americans by failing to compromise with the president over the federal budget, a standoff that shut down the federal government for a short time. Although politically wounded
by his political foes in both parties—some Democrats believed he had neutralized the Republicans only by moving to the right—Clinton recovered from these political battles in time to win reelection against the Republican candidate, Bob Dole, the Senate majority leader, in 1996.

For liberals who had welcomed a Clinton presidency, Clinton's political rhetoric seemed just that and nothing more. But his generally middle-of-the-road approach and the buoyant economy resonated with the American people and provided him some political clout. He did little to stem the Republican tide against affirmative-action programs, however, much to the dismay of liberals.

**CLINTON'S FOREIGN POLICY**

President Clinton's initial forays into foreign affairs often reflected his inexperience. At times it seemed that his administration went from one crisis to another without any real focus. Unlike his post–World War II predecessors, Clinton could not build on Cold War thinking and policies, for the Cold War was over.

Upon his inauguration, Clinton inherited a problem that seemed to have been resolved by the previous Bush administration—namely, a humanitarian mission in Somalia. A devastating civil war between rival warlords had devastated that African nation, and the people of Somalia faced dire conditions, most ominously starvation. Although many U.S. troops were removed from Somalia after aid had been given, Clinton unilaterally decided to keep thousands of troops there to engage the warlords. When some U.S. Army Rangers were killed in October 1993, pressure mounted to remove the troops, which Clinton did. In Haiti, after international economic pressure failed, the president again used combat troops to restore the elected Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had been deposed by a military coup. In the Balkans, Clinton deployed U.S. troops as part of a combined NATO military force. The Serbian-controlled Yugoslavian government had begun ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Croatia shortly after the fragmenting of Yugoslavia in 1991—some estimated that as many as 175,000 Croats and Muslims had been killed by 1992. Three years later, after intensive NATO bombing of Serb positions, the belligerents met at the negotiating table and ultimately ended hostilities, though U.S. troops remain as part of the NATO peacekeeping force.

Like his predecessor, President Bush, President Clinton paid attention to the intrigues of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Under Clinton, U.S. forces mobilized periodically—for instance, in response to Saddam's threatening remarks regarding Kuwait or to neutralize Iraqi troop movements in northern Iraq. But when Saddam refused to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors searching for suspected Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the United States, along with Great Britain, launched a massive air attack on Iraq. It did significant damage; still, the dictator remained firmly in power.

**IMPEACHMENT**

Clinton's hold on power was tenuous at best in 1999 when the U.S. House of Representatives impeached him. A lengthy investigation by Kenneth Starr, a special prosecutor, revealed that the president had
perjured himself while testifying about an affair with a young White House intern, Monica Lewinsky. The president’s defenders were quick to point out that the investigation by a partisan special prosecutor and impeachment by a Republican-controlled House was tantamount to a kangaroo court. But the president survived the impeachment trial in the Senate. Although Clinton’s reputation was tarnished, his popularity with the American people remained high. Ironically, the Republicans experienced fallout from the investigation and trial; many Americans viewed the impeachment proceedings as nothing more than partisan politics, especially when it was revealed that several Republican leaders had themselves committed acts of marital indiscretion.

As President Clinton’s term in office expired, foreign-affairs problems lingered. Tension between the Israelis and the Palestinians was high, despite Clinton’s best efforts to broker a settlement to end their long-standing dispute. The unpredictable actions and rhetoric of North Korea’s regime were also worrisome. In the end, assessment of Clinton’s presidency is caught between charges that he despoiled the office of president and conducted an amateurish foreign policy and credit for his New Democrat policies that invigorated the economy and balanced the federal budget.

**THE PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE W. BUSH**

Texas’s governor, George W. Bush, claimed to represent a new approach to right-wing ideology. He called himself a compassionate conservative, by which he meant that he would, for example, transform welfare programs so that recipients would have opportunities to work for the government assistance they received; in the process, they would gain both new skills and a new outlook on the value of hard work, thrift, and self-sacrifice. Liberals saw compassionate conservatism as a contradiction in terms. But Bush believed that when it was applied to the formulation of both domestic and foreign policy, compassionate conservatism offered Americans and people in nations around the world a materially and spiritually richer life.

**THE CONTESTED ELECTION**

In 2000 President Bush came to the White House after one of the most controversial elections in U.S. history. Bush received fewer popular votes than his opponent, Al Gore, and Florida’s contested election would determine who received enough electoral votes. The design of the Florida ballot confused many voters, and voting machines did not work well. Eventually, after political wrangling at the state level, the Bush campaign took its case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a highly partisan decision, the five conservative justices ruled for the Republican candidate, despite harsh criticisms by the other justices that the Court’s decision would damage the judicial branch’s reputation as a neutral political arbiter.

While in his forties, Bush had become a born-again Christian, and as president, he relied on his religious faith to guide his conservative agenda. Having pledged to work with the political opposition and to represent all Americans, the president was soon seen as a divisive
force whose Christian fundamentalism and so-called compassionate conservatism alienated many. He took strong stands on moral and ethical issues, such as stem-cell research, federal funding for faith-based charitable organizations, and abortion rights. His support of big business, critics claimed, often hurt workers, and it came at the expense of the environment and concerns about global warming. The intellectual inspiration behind many of Bush’s domestic and foreign policies was Karl Rove. Noted for his political acumen and hardnosed approach to politics, Rove was not beyond using Machiavellian methods to achieve his conservative objectives.

Yet the president’s popularity rating was high during his first term, especially in the so-called red states—those that tend to vote Republican. A massive tax cut had been enacted in 2001 to stimulate consumerism, investments, and economic expansion—whether it did so remains in doubt—and even though deficits reappeared and the economy was weak, Americans felt optimistic.

BUSH AND TERRORISM

The defining event of Bush’s first term was the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States by members of Al Qaeda, a Muslim terrorist group headed by Osama bin Laden. Hijacking four passenger planes and using them as guided missiles, the attackers destroyed the two World Trade Center towers in New York City and significantly damaged the Pentagon in Washington. The fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania, brought down by passengers who overpowered the terrorists. Nearly three thousand people died in the attacks, and both the nation and the world were stunned by the magnitude of the destruction.

Later Bush would be criticized for having ignored warnings that the nation’s enemies were planning an attack on American soil, but at the time his popularity ratings soared as Americans rallied to the side of their government and president. Not long after, President Bush ordered an attack on Afghanistan. Controlled by the Taliban, reactionary Islamic fundamentalists, Afghanistan had provided bin Laden and Al Qaeda refuge before and after the attacks. Making no distinction between terrorists and those who harbored them, Bush authorized Operation Enduring Freedom; U.S. forces, along with Afghans opposed to the Taliban, defeated the Taliban in short order and rolled back the policies of its oppressive regime. Although Osama bin Laden’s influence and that of Al Qaeda were significantly neutralized, he and his key aides managed to escape into the mountainous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

IRAQ

Seeing the war on terrorism as a global concern, in 2002 the Bush administration shifted its attention to a long-time nemesis, Iraq’s Saddam Hussein. Relations between the United States and Iraq had been tense following the first Gulf War, when Iraqi troops were forced out of Kuwait but Hussein had been left in place. Hussein’s violence against his own citizens and concern that he was developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) spurred the Clinton administration to adopt a policy favoring regime change in Iraq. George W. Bush was
determined to end Hussein’s regime, which his father could not do given the objectives of the U.N. mandate in the First Gulf War.

Claiming that democracy could help developing countries achieve stability and prosperity, the president laid out a new foreign relations policy known as the Bush Doctrine: the United States would engage in international nation-building in order to promote the spread of democracy, and it would attack its enemies before they had an opportunity to attack the United States and American interests. Unlike his father, who had assembled a broad international coalition for the first Gulf War, the younger President Bush soon realized that even NATO member nations opposed a military solution and instead favored a resumption of United Nations weapons inspections. U.N. Resolution 1441, passed in November 2002, authorized that. It was accepted by Hussein, and weapons inspectors returned to Iraq in early 2003.

No evidence was found that Iraq had resumed development of WMD, but the Bush administration, playing on the public’s doubts and anxieties, campaigned to convince Americans and the world that a military solution was necessary and ultimately inevitable; further, the administration maintained that Iraq had intimate ties with Al Qaeda. Unable to win United Nations approval for a military operation in Iraq, the United States and Britain, its one major ally, gave Hussein and his notorious sons an ultimatum: leave Iraq or be invaded. Despite unprecedented worldwide protests, the United States and its allies attacked Iraq in March 2003. The military phase of the war went well for the United States and coalition forces. The capitulation of Iraqi armed forces ended the major combat operations, as Bush claimed “Mission Accomplished.”

But in a real sense, the conflict was just beginning. Over the next few years, as American and coalition casualties mounted and Iraq was on the brink of civil war, critics increasingly challenged not only the reasons for going to war but also its planning and execution. There were many questions about the administration’s integrity and competence:

- To justify deposing Hussein, the administration had claimed that Iraq had purchased yellowcake uranium from Niger in order to develop its nuclear capabilities. U.S. intelligence documents later proved false.
- The so-called Downing Street memo made reference to a 2002 meeting of British and American officials to discuss ways to alter intelligence reports in order to legitimize military intervention.
- With the support of both parties, Congress passed the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution in 2002. Critics claim that in the absence of U.N. authorization, the invasion of Iraq was illegal.
- Although the Iraqi army was easily routed, the occupation seemed to be a planning afterthought, and the coalition was unprepared when Iraq was overwhelmed by an insurgency and approached civil war.
- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld underestimated the troops and equipment that would be needed for the occupation of Iraq.

Convinced that traditional sources and means of gathering intelligence were woefully inadequate, the administration
controversially embraced so-called asymmetrical warfare, the use of controversial techniques and tactics to gain information and destroy the nation’s enemies, such as assassination and torture of suspected terrorists. This was a major departure from past governmental practices. However, even supporters of the administration’s new policies could not justify a series of scandals that disturbed many Americans and tarnished the reputation of the United States worldwide. Photographs from Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad of Iraqi prisoners being terrorized, humiliated, and abused traveled around the world and brought shame to the United States. Al Qaeda and Taliban prisoners at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba, were also harshly treated, and their legal status became a source of controversy. The Bush administration, claiming the prisoners were illegal combatants and therefore not entitled to legal rights under the Geneva Conventions, put them in legal limbo, incarcerated but not charged with criminal or terrorist behavior.

The very premise for the invasion of Iraq was destroyed when no weapons of mass destruction were found. The administration argued that establishing a new Iraqi state without Saddam was in the best interest of Iraq, the Middle East, and the world, but as American casualties inexorably rose, calls for ending the war increased.

GLOBALIZATION

If the events in Afghanistan and Iraq are mostly U.S. concerns, the integration of the world’s economies and societies, commonly referred to as “globalization,” affects people and states worldwide. According to one observer, globalization has “flattened” the world—meaning that all nations have a shot at economic competitiveness in the global marketplace. Using various international organizations including the World Bank and the International Money Fund (IMF), as well as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), advocates of globalization have sought to reduce obstacles to international trade such as protective tariffs. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), among the United States, Mexico, and Canada, is another example of a free-trade initiative. Globalization has undoubtedly helped many developing economies such as India and China, but critics argue that it has exacerbated already acute environmental conditions, widened the gap between wealthy and poor nations, and stimulated a clash of cultures. While there is a noticeable increase in the flow of commodities worldwide, the demand for inexpensive products has caused a proliferation of sweatshops.

One consequence of expanded industrialization is the impact it has had on the environment. Global warming has certainly caught the attention of world leaders and grassroots organizations. Claiming that Earth’s temperature is increasing primarily because of human activities, politicians and environmentalists have sought international cooperation in combating this global concern. However, believing that international agreements unfairly punish American industries, Bush refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, established in 1997 to reduce global warming. The United States is the only developed nation that has not ratified the agreement.
HOMELAND SECURITY

The events of 9/11 took the U.S. military to Afghanistan and Iraq. They also affected civilians at home. In October 2001, soon after the attacks, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act (an acronym for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) by a nearly unanimous vote. The act is designed to enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate, apprehend, and deport suspected terrorists. Almost immediately, however, the Bush administration was assailed for giving law enforcement expanded surveillance powers and access to citizens’ medical records and communication such as letters and e-mails. Subsequent additions to the Patriot Act have permitted “roving wiretaps” and access to personal voicemails. Critics increasingly charge that some measures in the act come at the expense of personal freedoms and civil rights that are the essence of what it means to be an American.

KATRINA

As if 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not enough, a natural disaster of immense proportions befell New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Sitting at the bottom of a crescent-shaped bowl, well below sea level, New Orleans is susceptible to the effects of hurricanes, which are common in the nearby Gulf of Mexico. Over the years, the city, together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has invested large sums of money to construct levees to protect New Orleans in the event of exceedingly high tides. On August 29, 2005, the enormously powerful category-3 hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans, and before long, giant ocean swells overwhelmed the levees, deluging most of the city. The tragic effects of the hurricane on the city and its inhabitants were compounded by the incompetence of the federal government. Charged with dealing with disaster relief, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was headed by Michael Brown, a political appointee with no experience in disaster management. FEMA’s inability to help those in need shocked not only Americans but people around the world, who observed that many of the city’s poor and black residents were left to fend for themselves. Nearly 2,000 Americans died in the hurricane and in the days after it made landfall, and more than six years later, many remained homeless.

BUSH’S LEGISLATION

George W. Bush was successful in putting many of his plans into effect. But he also suffered setbacks. At the beginning of his presidency, both parties knew that mounting medical insurance and prescription drug costs were of concern to the American public. The Democrats wanted to find a way to cover the approximately 45 million Americans who had little or no medical health care insurance. Republicans wanted to shrink the government’s role in providing not just health care, but all social services, and privatizing some of these functions was always the mantra of the Bush administration. To compensate for cuts in government social programs, the administration controversially channeled federal funds to faith-based organizations that provided services. Republicans were leery of big
government-run health care programs such as Medicare, which they charged were inefficient and provided substandard health care. A better solution, they contended, was to allow individuals to manage their own health care with special savings accounts, which could be used to fund and customize their health care insurance needs. Today health care remains a problem that eludes resolution.

In an effort to address legitimate concerns about the viability of Social Security and shrink the federal government, President Bush sought to partially privatize the enormously expensive program, which was established during the New Deal. His plan called for allowing individuals to direct a portion of their Social Security contributions to their own private accounts invested in stocks and bonds. Some 90 percent of Americans over the age of 65 rely on Social Security payments—for many it is their only retirement income—so it came as no surprise that a concerted attempt to change the program unnerved many Americans; Bush was stymied. With the collapse of so many financial institutions in the fall of 2008, it is hard to imagine this idea gaining much support in the near future.

Another hot-button issue, one as old as the nation itself, is immigration. Ironically, although Americans take pride in being a land of immigrants, we have built up a lot of legislation limiting or blocking immigration from certain regions and nations. Contemporary concerns, however, relate to illegal immigrants, many from Latin America and Mexico, who fill many low-paying jobs in the United States. Just how many there are is unknown, but the number is certainly in the millions. Critics claim that illegal immigrants both drive down wages and strain communities’ social services, while those who favor a lenient policy argue that illegal immigrants are already an integral part of the nation’s economy, filling jobs U.S. citizens refuse, and that deportation would be costly for the country and punitive toward hard-working people. Bush favored a lenient policy toward immigrants and had the support of many Democrats, but Republicans in Congress talked and would not back his legislation.

Bush was encountering substantial criticism in 2004, but he was able to win reelection in a close contest with Senator John Kerry. But the war in Iraq, national security controversies, and the impotent federal response to Katrina were growing sources of controversy in 2006, and Americans had come to think that the country was on the wrong track. The impact on the 2006 congressional elections was profound; the Democrats won back both houses of Congress. At the same time, the nation was gearing up for the 2008 election. For the first time in many years, neither the president nor the vice president would be running, making the contest truly “open.”

**The 2008 Election**

Many candidates vied for the nomination in both parties. The Democratic field was quickly reduced to senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, who struggled for the nomination to the bitter end of the primaries, when Obama eked out a narrow victory. In a campaign characterized by nearly flawless organization, a sophisticated use of the Internet, funding raised from a vast number of citizens giving
small amounts of money, and avoidance of negative campaigning, Obama presented himself as the candidate of change.

Senator John McCain won the Republican nomination. A prisoner of war in Vietnam for more than five years, McCain was admired for his service to the country and liked for his wit. However, he was burdened by being in the same party as George W. Bush and by Americans’ anxiety that the country had been seriously damaged in the past eight years. He chose as his running mate Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska, who proved to be a divisive figure.

The vitality and resilience of the economy became a key issue for voters. Enormous sums of money had been diverted to rebuilding Iraq’s infrastructure, while Bush’s huge tax cuts had reduced the government’s revenue. Dramatic increases in oil prices exacerbated the nation’s economic woes and destabilized the already shaky automobile industry, and robust economic competition from emerged economic giants such as China and India was unsettling. Suddenly, Wall Street investment banks were in deep trouble; greed, financial instruments that were both poorly understood and risky, a lack of transparency, and in some cases fraud brought a number of firms to their knees. The collapse of the subprime mortgage industry precipitated failures throughout the financial sector and led to a credit crunch.

The economic collapse was the most important factor in Barack Obama’s victory, with 53 percent of the vote to John McCain’s 46 percent. (The electoral vote was 365–173.) In Congress, the Democrats, who had taken back both houses in the 2006 midterm elections, strengthened their majorities. In the House of Representatives, Democrats picked up twenty-one seats, giving them 257 of the 435 seats; in the Senate, the Democrats gained eight seats, giving them, including the two Independents who caucus with them, 59 out of 100 seats.

**The Great Recession**

President Obama’s first priority when he came into office was to confront the economic crisis in which the nation was mired. Unemployment rates were escalating, large and small businesses were failing, and people continued to lose their homes. President Obama, under pressure to respond similarly to FDR in the 1930s, pushed his “stimulus package,” the American Relief and Recovery Act, through Congress. The act included improvements to national infrastructure, loans and tax breaks to small businesses, new spending for jobs, and government assistance for big banks and major American automakers. As the 2012 presidential campaign began, the United States still had significant economic woes, complicated by those in Europe and Standard & Poor’s downgrading of the U.S. credit rating. Rebuilding the economy, and disagreements between the executive and legislative branches on how to do so, became central features of President Obama’s second term in office.

**Health Care**

One of the issues on which President Obama campaigned was improving health care and providing access to health care for all Americans. Despite resistance from Congress that led to significant
revisions, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed in March 2010, marking the first time since 1965 that the government successfully instituted health-care reform. The Act mandated all Americans to purchase health insurance, required states to establish “exchanges” to facilitate insurance purchases at competitive rates, prohibited insurers from denying coverage to anyone with a preexisting medical condition, and allowed children up to the age of twenty-six to remain covered by their parent’s health plans. There was a great deal of opposition to the act, largely from “small government” advocates who believed the national government was overstepping its boundaries and those who believed the plan placed an undue burden on the government’s limited resources. Fourteen states sued to block the act, challenging its constitutionality in federal court with mixed results.

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IMPACTING THE 2012 ELECTION

The United States faced many questions as the 2012 presidential campaign began. While the Obama administration successfully removed most American troops from Iraq, with the exception of a small peacekeeping force, American troops remained in Afghanistan. Immigration became entrenched as a major national issue when Arizona passed harsh laws attempting to prevent illegal immigration and provide for the deportation of undocumented immigrants already in the country; other states followed Arizona’s lead. The federal government challenged these laws; portions of the legislation have been declared unconstitutional. The emergence of the Tea Party—a conservative faction of the Republican Party—in response to Barack Obama’s election changed the political landscape as Tea Party members insisted on a renewed emphasis on states’ rights and strict adherence to the Constitution. The continued economic crisis combined with effective campaigns by some “Tea Partiers” contributed to the Republican Party’s regaining their majority in the House of Representatives in the 2010 midterm elections. Republicans retained this majority in the 2012 elections, while the Democrats held onto their majority in the Senate. Gay marriage became a national issue as several states, through legislation and court decisions, legalized same-sex marriages. This led to challenges to established federal laws like the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. The uprisings in the Middle East, called the “Arab Spring,” resulted in new regimes in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, while Syria devolved into a deadly and protracted civil war. These changes left the United States with questions about its relationships with long-standing allies as well as its responsibility to intervene in war-torn regions. Moreover, on May 2, 2011, Navy SEALs found and killed Osama bin Laden at a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, ending a nearly ten-year manhunt for the Al Qaeda leader. In the midst of all of this, Barack Obama sought and won a second term, defeating Mitt Romney, a former governor of Massachusetts, in the 2012 presidential election.
THE UNITED STATES IN PRESIDENT OBAMA’S SECOND TERM

Many of the issues that the United States faced after the 2008 election remained significant to the American people and the government as President Obama’s second term began. Despite small improvements, the economy has yet to completely rebound from the recession that began in 2008. Questions about the implementation of the Affordable Care Act abound despite the Supreme Court ruling key parts of the legislation constitutional. Troop levels in Afghanistan are decreasing as the United States plans to withdraw from the region. Major issues facing the nation during Obama’s second term include the following:

- The standstill between Congress and the president on the nation’s budget led to the invocation of the sequester, $1.2 trillion in cuts in domestic and military expenditures affecting everything from air traffic control to unemployment benefits. The sequester is the ultimate result of tension between the branches on economic issues, including raising the federal debt ceiling and budget allocations to domestic programs, the military, and foreign aid.

- In 2013, the Supreme Court handed down important decisions striking down part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, a seminal accomplishment of the civil rights movement, as well as ruling DOMA unconstitutional, allowing states to decide their own policies on same-sex marriage and extending federal benefits to these couples.

- Environmental issues—and the debate over global warming—remain a significant concern, as major storms and natural disasters affect large swaths of the country and prove tragic and deadly.

- Gun control, a long time issue with both sides firmly entrenched in their positions, came to the forefront as instances of massive gun violence escalated, including the deaths of twenty-six elementary schools students and staff members at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in December 2012.

- The nuclear threat from hostile nations like North Korea and Iran remains a major foreign policy concern as the international community debates the best course of action.

Content Review Questions

1. Which of the following presidents reflected a comprehensive conservative approach to government in the post–World War II era?
   (A) Harry S Truman
   (B) John F. Kennedy
   (C) Ronald Reagan
   (D) Lyndon Johnson
2. In *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court ruled that
   (A) the government cannot provide economic or military aid to
eweakness in open rebellion against their government.
   (B) abortion is legal.
   (C) the president and Congress are required to balance the federal
budget.
   (D) Florida’s electoral votes were won by George W. Bush in the
2000 election.

3. The Iran-Contra affair is associated with the presidency of
   (A) Ronald Reagan.
   (B) George W. Bush.
   (C) Bill Clinton.
   (D) George H. W. Bush.

4. The Tea Party supports
   (A) Obama’s stimulus plan.
   (B) increased presidential powers.
   (C) strict interpretation of the Constitution.
   (D) the same ideas as the Republican Party.

5. Which of the following did NOT occur during the presidency of
   Bill Clinton?
   (A) North American Free Trade Agreement
   (B) The passage of the Brady Bill
   (C) The federal attack on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco,
       Texas
   (D) The U.S. military invasion of Afghanistan

6. Jerry Falwell is associated with
   (A) pro-abortion rights.
   (B) the Oklahoma City bombing.
   (C) opposition to the Family and Medical Leave Act.
   (D) the Christian fundamentalist movement.

7. Geraldine Ferraro
   (A) is the first female to run for the vice presidency for a major
   political party.
   (B) is associated with the Reagan Democrats.
   (C) was President Reagan’s secretary of state.
   (D) was a White House intern implicated in an affair that ultimately
led to Bill Clinton’s impeachment.

8. The controversy over the 2000 presidential election revolved
around contested ballots in which state?
   (A) Georgia
   (B) Michigan
   (C) Ohio
   (D) Florida
9. President George W. Bush ordered a U.S. invasion of Afghanistan to
   (A) secure that nation’s oil fields during a civil war.
   (B) topple the Taliban government, which had aided and abetted
       Al Qaeda terrorists.
   (C) restore to power a U.S.-backed government that had been
       overthrown by the Taliban.
   (D) topple the regime of Saddam Hussein.

10. Operation Desert Storm refers to
    (A) the U.S.-backed military operations in Kuwait.
    (B) the U.S. military operation in Somalia.
    (C) the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.
    (D) the U.S. effort to capture Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

11. Many conservatives oppose the Patient Protection and Affordable
    Care Act because they
    (A) believe the national government is taking too much power.
    (B) do not see any problems in the current health-care system.
    (C) support building up entitlement programs like Medicare and
        Medicaid.
    (D) proposed a less expensive plan that President Obama vetoed.

12. The economic recession that began in the United States in 2007
    was caused in large part by
    (A) increased social spending by the Bush administration.
    (B) a failure to initiate tax cuts.
    (C) enormous taxes placed on corporations and the wealthy by the
        Bush administration.
    (D) the collapse of the housing market and banks that provide
        home mortgages.

13. Those responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995
    (A) carried out the attack in response to the federal government’s
        assault on the Branch Davidian religious sect in 1993.
    (B) were members of Al Qaeda.
    (C) were members of a racist organization who blamed the federal
        government for passing civil rights legislation.
    (D) carried out the attack in preparation for a larger attack on the
        White House and the Pentagon.

14. The attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, were
    perpetrated by
    (A) the Taliban.
    (B) Saddam Hussein.
    (C) the nations referred to by President Bush as the “Axis of Evil.”
    (D) Al Qaeda.

15. The 2008 presidential election was unique in the nation’s history
    because
    (A) for the first time since 1980 a presidential incumbent failed to
        be reelected.
    (B) a woman was selected as a presidential candidate.
    (C) a third-party candidate received more electoral votes than one
        of the major-party candidates.
    (D) an African American was the presidential candidate of a major
        party.
Short-Answer Questions

1. In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries U.S. foreign policy became increasingly concerned with the Middle East. Though the Cold War ended, U.S. military presence abroad remains strong.
   (a) Choose one of the following presidents and identify and discuss one major action his administration took in or regarding the Middle East.
   Ronald Reagan
   George H.W. Bush
   Bill Clinton
   Barack Obama
   
   (b) How are the U.S. hostilities with the Middle East today an extension of events from the 1970s on? Provide at least one historical example to support your answer.

Question 2 is based on the following passage.

"I think that we are at an extraordinary moment that is full of peril but full of possibility and I think that’s the time you want to be president....[T]here’s something about this country where hard times, big challenges bring out the best in us. This is when the political system starts to move effectively. This is when people start getting out of the petty and the trivial debates. This is when the public starts paying attention.... When things are going well...they’ve got better things to do than to think about public policy.”

—Barack Obama, 2009

2. Barack Obama came into office amid two wars and a major economic crisis. The policies he advanced and enacted in his first term were designed to address these issues, among others.
   (a) Choose one of the following and discuss how the Obama administration addressed that issue.
   The Great Recession
   Health-care
   Environmental issues
   
   (b) Did the solution to the issue you chose live up to the optimism that Obama expressed in his quote? Support your answer with historical evidence.

Long Essay Questions

1. The period between 1980 and 2008 was marked by an increased conservative presence and influence in the U.S. government. Discuss the extent to which TWO of the following contributed to the growth of conservative ideology and policies during this time:
   ■ Presidency of Ronald Reagan
   ■ the Contract with America
   ■ Presidency of George H. W. Bush
   ■ Presidency of George W. Bush
2. President Obama’s administration failed to deliver the significant changes in domestic and foreign policy that he promised during the 2008 presidential campaign.

To what extent is the above statement true?

Answers

CONTENT REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. (C) Ronald Reagan is considered one of the most conservative presidents in the past sixty years (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 944–945/16th ed., p. 935; Learning Objective POL-4).


3. (A) The Iran-Contra affair was a scandal that broke when the Reagan administration engaged in a highly controversial—and probably illegal—effort to transfer weapons to the Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 950–951/16th ed., pp. 940–942; Learning Objective POL-6).

4. (C) The Tea Party formed in opposition to President Obama and his policies. Although Tea Party members were embraced by the Republicans, not all of their goals are the same. Tea partiers believe in a strict adherence to the powers established by the Constitution (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 986/16th ed., p. 994; Learning Objective POL-4).

5. (D) In 2001, President George W. Bush ordered an invasion of Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban government, which had given refuge to members of Al Qaeda (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 975/16th ed., p. 981; Learning Objective WOR-8).

6. (D) Jerry Falwell was leader of the Moral Majority, a conservative Christian fundamentalist organization that has played a significant role in helping to elect candidates that reflect the views of its members (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 951/16th ed., 942, 945; Learning Objective CUL-7).


9. (B) The Taliban, a fundamentalist Muslim group, controlled Afghanistan and had provided refuge and assistance to Al Qaeda terrorists (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 975/16th ed., p. 981; Learning Objective WOR-8).

11. (A) Social Security was a key program in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Although costly, it provides retirement pensions, unemployment insurance, insurance for the disabled, and public assistance. President Bush's plan to privatize part of the program was met with suspicion and concern by many Americans (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 979/16th ed., p. 987; Learning Objective WXT-8).

12. (D) There is no one reason why the U.S. economy has experienced such a significant downturn, but among the leading causes is the collapse of the subprime mortgage industry (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 984/16th ed., p. 992; Learning Objective WXT-8).

13. (A) Perpetrated by Gulf War veteran Timothy McVeigh, the attack on a federal office building in Oklahoma City in 1995 claimed the lives of 168 Americans. It was in direct response to what McVeigh believed was the ever-encroaching power of the federal government, as exemplified by its attack on the compound of the Branch Davidians, a fundamentalist religious sect, killing many (The American Pageant, 15th ed., p. 967/16th ed., p. 959; Learning Objective WOR-4).

14. (D) Led by their virulently anti-Western leader Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda terrorists used hijacked airplanes to destroy the World Trade Center and seriously damage the Pentagon. One hijacked airplane crashed in a Pennsylvania field, brought down by its passengers (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 974–975/16th ed., p. 981; Learning Objective WOR-8).

15. (D) U.S. Senator Barack Obama was the first African American to be nominated as the candidate of one of the two major parties. In November 2008 he became the first African American to be elected president of the United States (The American Pageant, 15th ed., pp. 983–985/16th ed., pp. 989, 993; Learning Objective POL-7).

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. You can choose any of these presidents and discuss significant interaction in the Middle East. For Reagan, you should discuss the Iran-Contra scandal and the issue of negotiating with terrorists. For Bush you should discuss Operation Desert Storm. For Clinton you should discuss the bombing of Iraq. For Obama, you can discuss the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan or the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden. These events are the latest chapters in a saga that includes the OPEC embargoes of the 1970s and the Iran hostage crisis, as well as issues between the United States and Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon and Libya in the 1980s.
2. The Obama administration signed into law acts to counter all of these issues. The American Relief and Recovery Act, as well as acts that targeted Wall Street practices, were designed to alleviate the effects of the economic crisis. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act became the first comprehensive bill to deal with health care since the Great Society. During Obama’s first term Congress repealed “don’t ask, don’t tell.” The Obama administration also dealt with the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and climate change resulting in major storms like Hurricane Sandy. There is a great deal of tension between the executive and legislative branches and the two political parties, which detracts from the effectiveness of many laws. Thus, the optimism that Obama described is not as potent as it might be.

**LONG ESSAY QUESTIONS**

1. As with any assignment that asks you to evaluate, you need to use all other levels of thinking before you can judge the quality of, in this case, a political ideology. To that end, brainstorm factual information, then proceed to organize and analyze the information you’ve brainstormed, being sure to explain the significance of the information you’re presenting in the body paragraphs of your essay. Next, synthesize this information—give some coherent organization to your information while possibly presenting a new meaning as it relates to the assigned question or topic. Finally, you will then be ready to apply your own judgment or perspective to the topic in the form of a thesis statement.

   In developing an essay that responds to the assignment above, be prepared to discuss conservatism as an ideology and method of governing. Then take into account the reasons for the reemergence of conservatism at the federal level with the landslide victory of Ronald Reagan and the success of Republicans in recapturing Congress. Be sure to discuss not only the reasons for Reagan’s victory, but also the factions that identified with his presidential campaign and two terms in the White House, such as religious fundamentalists and the New Right. Key to Reagan’s economic agenda was Reaganomics, or supply-side economics. Evaluate the success of this economic approach in the 1980s. Reagan also promised to reduce the role of, power of, and funding for the federal government substantially. To that end, he sought to deregulate the savings-and-loan industry, in keeping with his conservative ideology. Take note of the consequences of this action by analyzing and evaluating whether he was successful in this regard. In foreign policy, Reagan took a hard line against the Soviet Union and engaged in massive military expenditures to compel the Soviets to end the Cold War. This fact may also play a role in your essay.

   As for the Contract with America, once this became the nucleus of the Republican Party’s agenda after it reclaimed Congress in 1994 under the leadership of Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, the Republicans proceeded to dismantle some of the reform programs associated with previous, liberal
administrations. Be prepared to discuss the Republican “reforms” in your essay.

The one-term presidency of George H. W. Bush is often associated with, though not limited to, the first Gulf War and his promise not to raise taxes—a consistent conservative theme in post–World War II American politics—though raise taxes is exactly what he was ultimately compelled to do.

President George W. Bush’s two terms reflect his strong conservative ideology. In fact, the president was not content simply to establish a conservative agenda and programs; he attempted to roll back key reforms of the twentieth century, such as welfare, and privatize a part of Social Security. To reduce the role of the federal government, Bush further deregulated business and relied on, for example, federally funded faith-based organizations to address societal needs that had been the responsibility of local, state, and federal governments. His tax cuts were seen as an essential component of conservative fiscal policy. The role that neoconservatives played in his administration is seen most visibly in the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the subsequent process of nation-building. (Historical Thinking Skills: I-2: Patterns of Continuity and Change Over Time, I-3: Periodization, III-7: Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, IV-8: Interpretation, and IV-9: Synthesis)

2. To thoroughly answer this question you must include information on President Obama’s policies as well as compare these policies to those that were in place during President George W. Bush’s administration. Domestically, President Obama increased the government’s influence on people’s daily lives with the passage of the Affordable Care Act and reversed a nearly two-decade-old policy with the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell.” The Obama administration also enacted tighter restrictions on banks and large businesses. The Obama administration has not boosted the economy to the extent promised or expected nor has the nation seen significant change in policies related to the environment or gun control. In terms of foreign policy, President Obama has withdrawn many troops from Iraq and continues to promise an end to U.S. presence in Afghanistan by 2014. Despite appeals to many Middle Eastern nations at the beginning of his presidency, Arab Spring and the ongoing crises and civil wars in the Middle East have resulted in unstable relationships and questions about the U.S. role in that region. Thus, one can argue for either side of this “to what extent” question. (Historical Thinking Skills: II-4: Comparison, III-6: Historical Argumentation, III-7: Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence, IV-8: Interpretation, and IV-9: Synthesis)