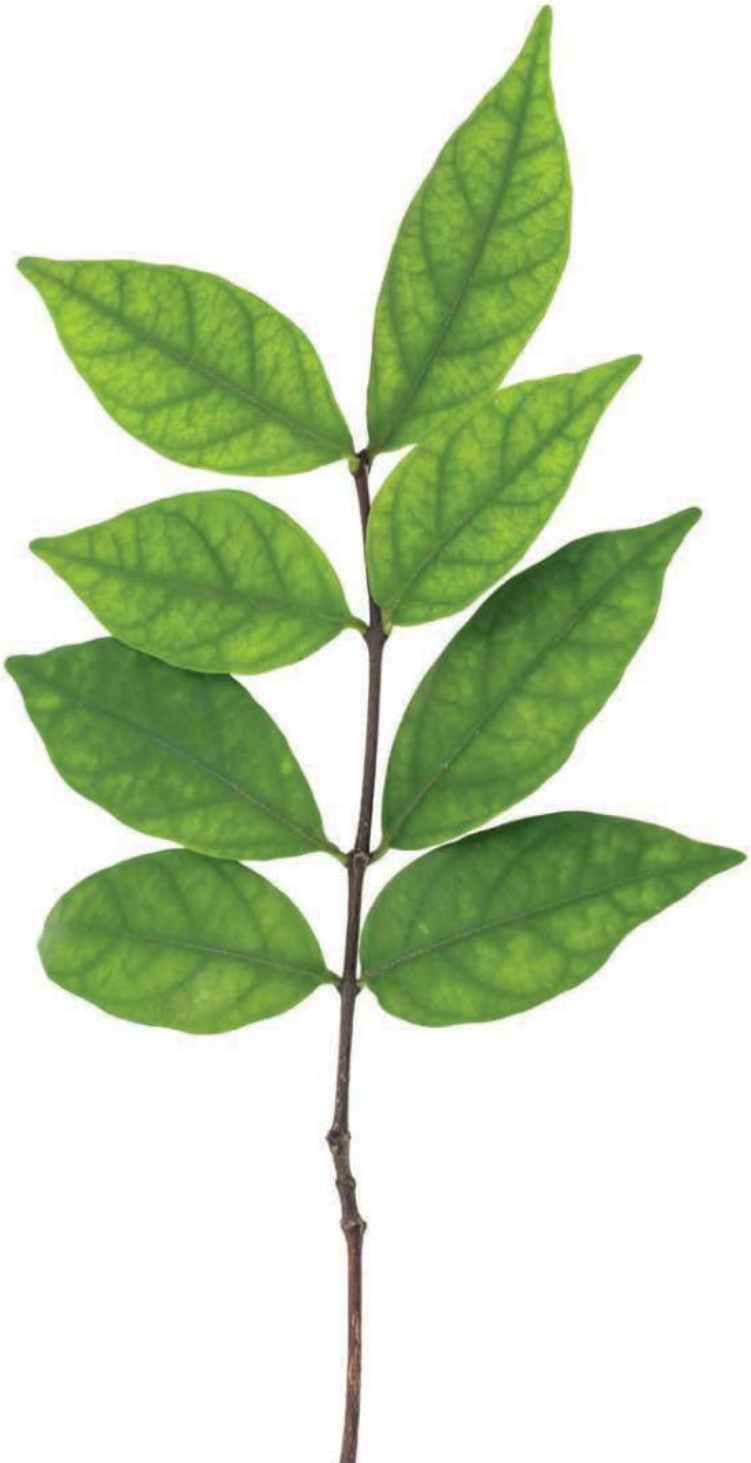
The World Order: 1945–2011

Brad Kelly



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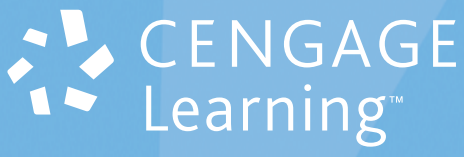

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CONTENTS

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The World Order: 1945–2011

The World Order: 1945–2011 has been developed especially for senior secondary students of Modern History in New South Wales. The book is based on the understanding that History is an interpretative study of the past by which you also come to better appreciate the making of the modern world.

Developing understandings of the past and present in senior History extends on the skills you learnt in earlier years. As senior students you will use historical skills, including research, evaluation, synthesis, analysis and communication, and historical concepts, such as evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy, perspectives and contestability, to understand and interpret societies from the past.


THE WORLD ORDER, 1945–2011

The United States' emergence from its longstanding isolation after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 marks the beginning of a new world order. In what has been characterised as the 'American Century', the US became committed to greater involvement in international affairs. By 1945, with two world wars, 70 million dead and the Great Depression behind it, many hoped that the United Nations would prevent future conflict through its security, economic and political institutions.

Hopes for a universal commitment to a set of liberal values soon faded with the development of the Cold War. An East–West divide opened up at countries in Europe, Asia and Africa lined up behind the communist Soviet bloc or American capitalism. There were also a number of non-aligned countries, including India and Pakistan.

When the Soviet Union collapsed between 1989 and 1991, Russia and Eastern Europe were brought into the global capitalist order. By the end of the decade, however, a Russian oligarchy had emerged and hopes for liberal democracy seemed distant. Russia entered the 21st century with a new president, Vladimir Putin, who was determined to reassert Russian power in the region. The cooperation that Russia enjoyed with the West during the 1990s slipped away as Putin set Russia on a new foreign policy course.

The influence of the United States internationally was mixed. In the Middle East, the Americans commenced a long-running dispute with Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups, following the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. The American use of hard and soft power around the world drew both supporters and opponents, as the US sought to respond to the changing face of conflict. Ethnic and religious tensions emerged as the new challenge to peace, and the US responded in places as diverse as Bosnia and Somalia.

The new century saw China rise to the position of the world's second largest economy. After the attacks of 11 September 2001, America had adopted an increasingly militaristic stance, thus eroding its moral authority. The US seemed to be turning its back on the ideal of the United Nations by engaging in international conflicts without UN Security Council approval. The global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 revealed serious faults in the US and European economies, and marked a turning point for other developing economic powers that were less exposed to the US economy, such as the BRIC countries.

Twenty years after the fall of the Soviet Union, America's economy was in decline, China had the second most powerful economy in the world, the Middle East was experiencing internal warfare, Russia had reasserted its dominance and militant Islam had become an international threat. The world had changed dramatically.

BOOK INTRODUCTION provides a context to the issues that are addressed.


KEY FIGURES

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KEY FIGURES, KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS, AND KEY DOCUMENTS AND EVENTS feature brief biographies, profiles, definitions and summaries of key documents as a ready reference for learning and revision.


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collective security
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neoconservative
A political ideology characterised by free market economics and an interventionist foreign policy.

self-determination
The idea that nations can freely elect their own governments without outside interference.

sovereignty
The idea that all states should be free from outside interference to determine their own political future.

sphere of influence
The demand of a major power to be surrounded by smaller neighbours that are sympathetic to its political system.

superpower
A great power that dominates the international system, has global reach that is underpinned by a strong economy and possesses superior military capacity.

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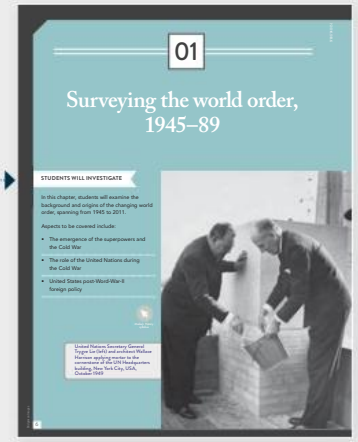
SYLLABUS OUTCOMES are listed at the start of each chapter. These provide a focus for you as you read the chapter.


01

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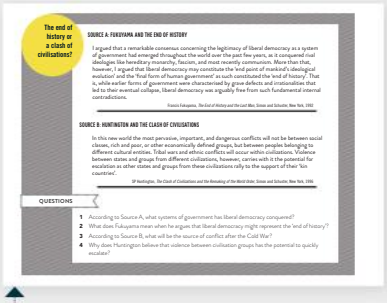
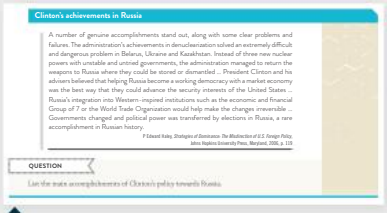


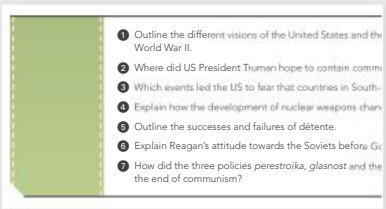
SOURCE STUDIES of visual and text primary sources and secondary literature appear frequently throughout the text and are combined with questions and activities to aid your evaluation and interpretation of evidence from the past.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS are biographical profiles and assessments of key historical figures and frequently include questions and activities.

INFORMATION BOXES contain extended discussions of key events, concepts and historical developments. Many also include questions and activities.



HISTORIAN BOXES introduce key historians and schools of interpretation as a way of making historiography clearer.



QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES are included throughout the text to consolidate content knowledge and hone examination skills.

DIAGRAMS AND LOCATION MAPS are used throughout, to visually summarise complex ideas and locate places and events.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CHAPTER REVIEW ACTIVITIES conclude each chapter. They include a brief precis of the topic, suggestions for further reading and a range of learning activities that consolidate knowledge and understanding of the chapter's content. These tasks incorporate a range of historical understandings and skills.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Please note that complimentary access to NelsonNet is available only to teachers who use *The World Order: 1945–2011* as a core educational resource in their classroom. Contact your Cengage Education Consultant for information about teacher access codes and conditions.

The World Order: 1945–2011 is a premium Cengage title and is fully supported by the NelsonNet platform. NelsonNet includes an eBook edition of the student book, additional worksheets and weblinks. These additional resources are indicated by icons in the student book.

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To Aaron and the ladies at Bill and James in Balgownie, who kept the coffee coming each morning.

To my beautiful children, Emily and Darcy – I love you both.

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The First Gulf War of January 1991 was the first major post-Cold War conflict. The US-led coalition removed Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

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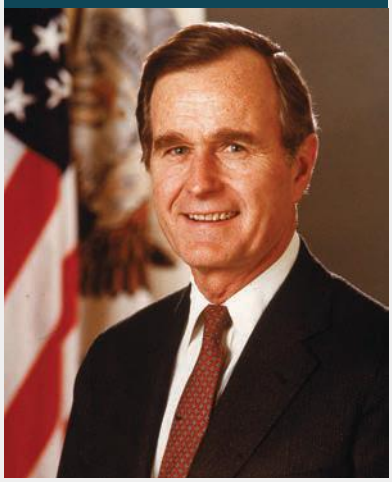

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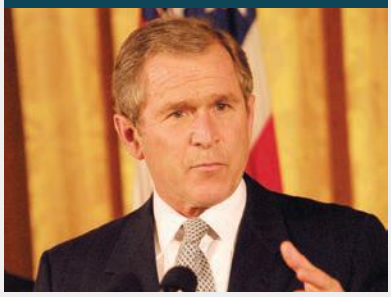

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Clockwise from top left: Imagefolk/Karl Schumacher; Getty Images/Georges De Keerle; Getty Images/Stringer; Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection Historical; Getty Images/Hulton Archive/Staff

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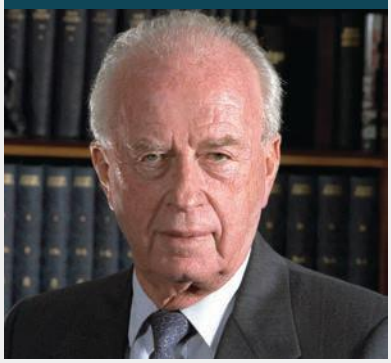
bin Laden demanded the withdrawal of US troops from Saudi Arabian soil after the First Gulf War.

VLADIMIR PUTIN (1952–)

Vladimir Putin was the second and fourth President of the Russian Federation during 2000–08 and 2012–. Putin is a former KGB agent who lamented the collapse of the Soviet Union and sought to reassert Russian power in his region. He resisted the drift towards European and Western values in Russian politics, the economy and foreign policy.

YITZHAK RABIN (1922–1995)



Yitzhak Rabin was Prime Minister of Israel between 1992 and his assassination in 1995. He was determined to find peace for Israel and he famously shook hands with Yasser Arafat on the lawn of the White House. He traded land for peace and gave up Israeli settlements. He was assassinated by an ultra-orthodox Jew in November 1995.

RONALD REAGAN (1911–2004)

Tough-talking anti-communist Ronald Reagan was sworn in as US President in January 1981 and held office until 1989. Reagan proposed an ambitious US trillion-dollar nuclear defence shield in space, nicknamed 'Star Wars', and referred to the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire'. After 1985, his attitude softened once he had built a warm friendship with new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

DENG XIAOPING (1904–1997)

Deng Xiaoping was leader of China from 1978 to 1989. His reforms during the 1980s laid the foundation for China's internal economic reforms and opening up to the world in the 1990s. By 2010, China was the second biggest economy in the world.

BORIS YELTSIN (1931–2007)

Boris Yeltsin was President of the Russian Federation between 1991 and 2000. He oversaw the transition from the Soviet Union to the Russian democracy. His economic reforms caused great chaos in Russia and by the end of the decade had resulted in an oligarchy. Yeltsin also led Russia into a war against Chechnya, after rejecting its calls for independence from Russia.

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federalism
A system of government in which a union of states submit some or all of their sovereignty to a central government.

geopolitical
The direct political influence of the geographic proximity among nations.

hegemony
The dominance of a single power in a region or across the world.

idealist
A theory of international relations that claims that state actors are guided by values and ideas.

interventionist
Willingness (in the case of a powerful nation) to become involved in international affairs.

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multipolar
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neoconservative
A political ideology characterised by free market economics and an interventionist foreign policy.

perestroika
The policy to restructure the Soviet economy after 1985.

realist
A theory of international relations that asserts that state actors are guided by geopolitical factors and conflicts, rather than ideas.

self-determination
The idea that nations can freely elect their own governments without outside interference.

sovereignty
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sphere of influence
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superpower
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unilateral
Conducting foreign affairs with minimal consultation with other nations.

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Modern History syllabus

United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie (left) and architect Wallace Harrison applying mortar to the cornerstone of the UN Headquarters building, New York City, USA, October 1949

Bridgeman Images

Introduction

The first half of the 20th century saw two world wars, the Great Depression, the rise of dictatorships in Europe and Asia, genocide, the use of the nuclear bomb against Japan and the emergence of the Cold War. The combined cost in lives, economic ruin and environmental damage should have awakened politicians and generals to the need for cooperation to avert future destruction of the kind that had been suffered around the globe. But the League of Nations had failed in its charter to reduce conflict and promote peace. The League was founded on the Wilsonian ideal of **collective security**, but it failed because the major powers, including the United States and the Soviet Union, were not members, and Britain and France did not have the capacity to enforce its rulings. After 1945, if history was to teach politicians and policy makers anything, it was that peace and security would have to be sought in greater international cooperation.

In 1945 the United Nations was established to achieve this type of international cooperation. Guided by the principles of state **sovereignty** and equality among all nations, the central organs included a General Assembly, where all member states could debate issues, and the Security Council, which could intervene in disputes that could potentially lead to war. The UN also established a number of institutions and organisations to promote development, and shared similar values to the US, with its liberal, democratic universal outlook, and the belief in freedom for all people.

But the emergence of the Cold War stifled the effectiveness of the UN in its early years. **Superpower** rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union, both of which were trying to shape the world according to their own economic, political and social systems, meant that their aims were often at odds with each other. The **veto** system in the Security Council was often used as a way to block the geopolitical designs of the other side. For example, Security Council approval to go to war against North Korea in 1950 was only achieved because the Soviet Union had temporarily withdrawn from the body and could not exercise its veto.

The period after 1945 heralded the arrival of the 'American Century'. Emerging from its long isolation, the US adopted a more **interventionist** foreign policy. American politicians began to acknowledge that without US participation in the international system, the European recovery would be threatened by communism and the future of free global trade would be less prosperous for the US. The US also began to regard its values – especially the concept of 'freedom' – as universal, and sought to support governments that shared those values. At times, it even removed, or attempted to remove, governments that did not share those values, as was the case in Iran in 1953 and Cuba in 1961.

The postwar period ended in November 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. For months, pro-democracy forces in East Germany had been calling for change as other parts of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union sought to reform the communist system. When the peaceful revolutions of 1989–1991 suddenly ended the seventy-year experiment with communism in Europe, the world entered a new phase in which the US would be the sole superpower.

collective security
The principle that an aggressor state should be opposed by the entire international community

sovereignty
The idea that all states should be free from outside interference to determine their own political future

superpower
A powerful and influential nation usually which possesses nuclear weapons

veto
To stop any decision in an organisation with a single vote

interventionist
Willingness (in the case of a powerful nation) to become involved in international affairs

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Survey: World Order 1945–1989

1945	August	World War II ends
	October	United Nations is established in New York
1949	May	Berlin and Germany become permanently divided into East and West
	October	China becomes communist
1961	August	Berlin Wall is erected
1962	October	Cuban missile crisis
1964	October	China joins the nuclear club by successfully testing an atomic bomb
1972	February	US President Richard Nixon visits China
1973	October	Yom Kippur War
1979	December	Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
1985	March	Mikhail Gorbachev becomes leader of the Soviet Union, marking a shift in Soviet political and economic policy
1989	November	Berlin Wall falls

Smithsonian Institution – The origins of the Cold War

Overview of the Cold War world and superpower rivalry

Our study of world order after 1945 – in which sovereign countries in the international system compete or cooperate to achieve their national interests – finds its roots in the Cold War and the changes that took place when **communism** collapsed in the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991. For over 45 years, the United States and the Soviet Union had been bitterly divided over their incompatible social, economic and political systems. The competition between the ideologies of **capitalism** and communism spilled over into an intense political and military rivalry, as both sides attempted to stamp their influence on the world. It was nuclear weapons that made this conflict more dangerous than the great power rivalries of the past, when alliances sought to bring balance to the international order. The development of nuclear weapons that could be delivered over greater distances with greater accuracy meant that alliances based on the size of conventional forces were made redundant.

communism
The political and economic system in which the means of production are owned by the state

capitalism
The political and economic system in which the means of production are owned by private businesses and run for profit

Rebuilding Europe after World War II

The Soviet Union had made a much greater sacrifice in men, land and resources than the Americans in their fight against German fascism. The Soviet Red Army remained in its Eastern European positions at the end of the war and the United States, still fighting a war in the Pacific, was largely powerless to stop it. The superpower conferences throughout 1945 laid down some basic principles about the organisation of the world and the practical realities of rebuilding. But the obvious fundamental economic, political and social differences between the two sides made cooperation

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difficult. The US believed that the path to recovery and prosperity lay in strong open markets and the self-determination of all people, while the Soviet Union under Stalin was much more focused on maintaining Soviet security and promoting the survival of communism. These basic differences meant that a proper recovery of Europe, ruined by six years of fighting and by Hitler's scorched earth policy, was delayed.

The Soviet Union had very specific postwar aims. It wanted its wartime allies to accept a Soviet **sphere of influence** along its western border, in countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Stalin believed that the war was the result of conflict among capitalist powers and that conflict would inevitably return in the future. He wanted to avoid the Soviet Union being encircled by capitalist powers. Consequently, the countries of the **Eastern bloc** were forced to adopt systems of government sympathetic to communism. Over time, this stance become more entrenched as the Soviets cracked down on any attempt at democratic reforms that threatened communism – as was the case in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

sphere of influence
The demand of a major power to be surrounded by smaller neighbours that are sympathetic to its political system

Eastern bloc
The countries of Eastern Europe, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania

The second demand of the Soviets was over the future of Germany and its capital, Berlin. While the Americans wanted to rebuild a strong Germany, which they saw as a vital component in a Europe-wide economic recovery, the Soviets wanted to keep Germany permanently weak. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, which was attended by the leaders of the US, the Soviet Union and Britain, the Allies agreed that Germany would be divided into four sectors, with the major Allied powers – the US, the Soviet Union, Britain and France – each controlling one zone. Early in the Cold War, disputes over Berlin led to significant tension between the two superpowers. The Americans, the British and the French regarded the division of Germany as temporary, and by 1948 they were arguing for reunification. The decision by the three to introduce a new currency led to a crisis that eventually resulted in a permanent separation between East and West Germany, and Berlin with it. During the crisis, the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin ordered a blockade of Berlin, which was geographically located deep inside the Soviet sector. In response, the Americans introduced airlifts of supplies, which continued for nearly a year. Although Berlin was of no strategic significance in the Cold War, its position as an 'island of capitalism in a sea of communism' meant that it was highly symbolic. More than a decade later, in August 1961, the Berlin Wall was erected – the most visible symbol of the Cold War.

Getty Images/PhotoQuest

SOURCE 1.1 The Yalta Conference, 1945. It was hoped that the cooperation between Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union would continue after the war in the effort to rebuild Europe. But fundamental differences between the capitalist and communist blocs made cooperation impossible.

The Truman Library – Ideological foundations of the Cold War

SOURCE 1.2 The Soviet sphere of influence in Europe, 1947

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Getty Images/Mondadori Portfolio

SOURCE 1.3 On 1 October 1949, a second front was opened in the Cold War when Mao Zedong (centre) declared the People's Republic of China under Communist Party rule.

Containment

One of the key policy aims of the Americans was to contain communism within Eastern Europe. President Harry Truman showed that he was willing to do this with military support and funding, as in the case of Greece and Turkey, and with economic assistance in the form of the US$15 billion Marshall Plan. He believed that without a strong economic recovery in Europe, the threat of communism would hang over the fragile continent.

But a second front was opened in the Cold War when, on 1 October 1949, after a long-running civil war with the Nationalists, the Chinese communists declared the People's Republic of China. In many ways this second front was much more concerning than the situation in Europe. Fears soon spread within the United States government about the potential for communism to spread rapidly throughout Asia. When North Korea also adopted a communist system and tried to press its claims on the South below the 38th parallel (the line of latitude 38 degrees north), a United Nations force led by US troops waged a three-year war, which was inconclusive and resulted in a permanent division between South and North Korea.

The spread of communism in China, North Korea and Vietnam led to fears in the US that, unless the spread of communism abroad was checked, the countries across South-East Asia would fall 'like dominoes'. This led the US to send military advisers to Vietnam and then, by the mid-1960s, to escalate to a full-scale military commitment in what would become at home in the United States an expensive and deeply unpopular war.

One of the unique features of the Cold War, when compared with earlier wars, was the development of nuclear weapons. This meant that a direct confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union would have catastrophic consequences. When the Soviet Union successfully tested its first atomic bomb in August 1949, balance was restored to the international order and a **bipolar** world emerged. Nuclear arsenals grew in size until the mid-1970s, when the two sides had a combined arsenal of 70 000 nuclear warheads. This gave rise to a new type of diplomacy in which both sides needed to take into account the destructive nature of nuclear weapons.

bipolar
A system in which the majority of political, economic and military power is held between two states

Nuclear firepower meant that both sides were deterred from delivering a first strike because they understood that the retaliation would be so great that it would mean virtual suicide. US President Dwight Eisenhower spoke of massive retaliation, and this was to become the central plank in the deterrence doctrine, which later developed into the concept of mutually assured destruction (MAD). In October 1962, the world came close to nuclear war. When a United States U2 spy plane identified the construction of missile bases in Cuba, the Americans authorised a quarantine of international waters around Cuba in an effort to prevent Soviet ships from delivering nuclear weapons to the island. This sparked a confrontation between the two sides, which included an angry exchange of letters between Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev and US President John F Kennedy that give insight into the thinking of both men. Khrushchev accused Kennedy of delivering ultimatums that would be humiliating for the Soviets to accept; Kennedy argued that the Soviets began the dispute. The Cuban missile flashpoint revealed to both sides a fundamental lack of understanding of each other. As a result, a hotline was established between the Kremlin in Moscow and the White House in Washington, DC, and the event started the process of curbing the development of nuclear weapons.

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Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 1.4 US President John F Kennedy addresses the nation on 22 October 1962. The Cuban missile crisis was the most serious dispute between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Détente and beyond

During the late 1960s, both sides in the conflict welcomed a period of **détente**, or a relaxation of tensions. The entry of China into the nuclear club in 1964 made for a so-called **multipolar** world in which the superpowers had to redefine their relationships with each other. Deep divisions between the Soviets and the Chinese also led to the Sino-Soviet split. The United States exploited this conflict when, in 1972, US President Richard Nixon visited China and promised diplomatic relations between the two countries, which had been suspended in 1949. China was beginning to take its place among the family of nations, and the US was recognising the communists as the legitimate rulers of China. China resumed its seat on the United Nations Security Council in 1971.

Perhaps the most significant achievement of détente was in Europe, the cradle of the Cold War. West German leader Willi Brandt adopted a policy known as ***Ostpolitik*** – or 'Eastern policy' – in an effort to build closer economic ties with the Eastern bloc. In exchange for greater cooperation between the Warsaw Pact countries (the Soviet Union and seven satellite countries) and to minimise suspicions, Brandt recognised the borders of the Eastern bloc and, significantly, recognised the division of East and West Germany. The success of Brandt's policy meant that the threat of war on the continent of Europe was diminished. At the same time, the countries of Western Europe were forging closer ties in the early stages of the European Union.

Détente also had its failures. The right wing in the US accused the Soviets of using détente as an opportunity to achieve nuclear parity with the US. Tensions in the Middle East – where the US tended to side with Israel, and the Soviets with Israel's Arab southern neighbours – led to a series of conflicts, including the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. When the American-backed Shah of Iran was ousted in an Islamic coup in 1979, and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the same year, Cold War tensions were renewed. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is generally marked as the moment of the end of détente and the renewal of the Cold War.

détente
A period of relaxation in tensions, such as that between the superpowers from 1962 to 1979

multipolar
An international system that has multiple centres of power

Ostpolitik
German 'Eastern policy', which was a central plank in détente in Europe

WS
Superpower rivalry and the Cold War

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Reagan and Gorbachev

The election of former Hollywood actor Ronald Reagan as President of the United States in 1981 introduced a new set of tensions. Reagan was a tough-talking anti-communist who was elected on the back of his criticism of the Soviets and détente. In 1983, at the National Prayer Breakfast, he labelled the Soviet Union the 'evil empire'. Reagan proposed an extension of the arms race – this time using space-based technology in the building of a missile defence shield. He proposed the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), or the so-called Star Wars program, at a cost to American taxpayers of billions of dollars. The space-based anti-missile defence shield was only at the laboratory stage of development, but it caused a great deal of concern in the Soviet Union. The Soviets did not want to be drawn into another arms race, especially with an ongoing war in Afghanistan. Reagan's commitment to the program was so great, it squandered an opportunity to pursue a 'zero option' to eliminate nuclear weapons during the Reykjavik summit in 1986.

RONALD REAGAN (1911–2004)

Ronald Reagan was President of the United States between 1981 and 1989. He came to office towards the end of détente, after the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Reagan campaigned throughout 1980 as a staunch anti-communist who believed that the Soviet Union had taken advantage of détente to achieve nuclear parity with the US. Over time, Reagan's attitude towards the Soviet leadership changed as he sought greater cooperation with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev after 1985.

All that changed in March 1985, when Soviet reformer Mikhail Gorbachev rose to the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev tried to make a decisive break with the political leadership of the past. He was a firm believer in socialism but argued that it required significant reforms if it were to be saved. His twin policies of ***perestroika*** (economic restructuring) and ***glasnost*** (openness) ultimately led to a pro-democratic movement, which resulted in the fall of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. This was not Gorbachev's intention. He had inherited the leadership of a country that was in a deep economic malaise. Productivity was low, goods of poor quality were being produced, and absenteeism from work and alcoholism at work were rife. Gorbachev encouraged innovation and provided incentives for factory managers in an effort to bring some life back to the Soviet economy. He even banned vodka sales, earning himself the nickname 'Comrade Orange Juice'. *Perestroika* meant introducing modest market forces. Moreover, Gorbachev believed that for too long the people had not had a say in the running of the country. He encouraged *glasnost*, a new openness that would allow freedom of the press and an honest public discussion about the challenges facing the Soviet Union. Political reform would inevitably follow.

perestroika
The policy to restructure the Soviet economy after 1985

glasnost
Social and political reforms that aimed at greater 'openness' in the Soviet Union after 1985

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Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 1.5 Ronald Reagan (left) and Mikhail Gorbachev (right) were able to achieve high levels of cooperation in order to downplay Cold War tensions. They started regular meetings called superpower summits, where the two leaders met face to face.

Gorbachev's foreign policy also led to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. As far back as 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia, the Soviets had shown their willingness to crack down on calls for democratic reform by sending in tanks and troops to quell dissent. Over time, the **Brezhnev Doctrine**, as it came to be called, was an assurance to Eastern bloc leaders of the security of their regimes. When Gorbachev decided that he could no longer afford to fund this guarantee, and instead wanted to divert the budget to pursue an economic and social policy to lift the living standards of Soviet citizens, he repealed the Brezhnev Doctrine. As a result, pro-democracy uprisings in Poland, Hungary and East Germany, as well as other places in Eastern Europe, were given a huge boost. Throughout the summer of 1989, communism was swept away as free, multiparty elections delivered change to citizens who were frustrated by poor living standards and political oppression. For the most part, with the exception of Romania, 45 years of communism in Eastern Europe ended peacefully.

Brezhnev Doctrine
The Soviet guarantee to intervene militarily in any Eastern bloc countries where anti-Soviet democratic or market reforms threatened the stability of the regime

The revolutions in Eastern Europe only made calls for democratic reform within the Soviet Union louder. When Gorbachev relented and allowed free elections in June 1991 – elections in which democrats could stand – Boris Yeltsin was elected President of Russia. Yeltsin's election as head of the largest state in the Soviet Union opened up a number of constitutional questions concerning the real seat of power. To what extent was a democratically elected Russian President subject to the direction of the Soviet leadership? An attempted coup by communist hardliners in August 1991 to oust Gorbachev failed, but the drift towards the end of the Soviet Union was becoming more apparent. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved.

WS
Interpretations

The end of the Cold War left the US as the sole superpower in the world, leading many to speculate on the future of conflict in the world. Two theories by prominent international relations scholars in the US dominated – Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' and Samuel P Huntingon's 'clash of civilisations'.

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The end of history or a clash of civilisations?

SOURCE A: FUKUYAMA AND THE END OF HISTORY

I argued that a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism. More than that, however, I argued that liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and the 'final form of human government' as such constituted the 'end of history'. That is, while earlier forms of government were characterised by grave defects and irrationalities that led to their eventual collapse, liberal democracy was arguably free from such fundamental internal contradictions.

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1992

SOURCE B: HUNTINGTON AND THE CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

In this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations. Violence between states and groups from different civilizations, however, carries with it the potential for escalation as other states and groups from these civilizations rally to the support of their 'kin countries'.

SP Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996

QUESTIONS

1. According to Source A, what systems of government has liberal democracy conquered?
2. What does Fukuyama mean when he argues that liberal democracy might represent the 'end of history'?
3. According to Source B, what will be the source of conflict after the Cold War?
4. Why does Huntington believe that violence between civilisation groups has the potential to quickly escalate?

1. Outline the different visions of the United States and the Soviet Union for the rebuilding of Europe after World War II.
2. Where did US President Truman hope to contain communism? Was this successful?
3. Which events led the US to fear that countries in South-East Asia would fall like dominoes?
4. Explain how the development of nuclear weapons changed the character of diplomacy.
5. Outline the successes and failures of détente.
6. Explain Reagan's attitude towards the Soviets before Gorbachev came to power in 1985.
7. How did the three policies *perestroika*, *glasnost* and the repeal of the Brezhnev Doctrine contribute to the end of communism?

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Challenges of the United Nations during the Cold War, 1946–91

The dream of collective security through the United Nations – the second attempt, after the failures of the League of Nations in the 1920s and 1930s – emerged at the same time as the Cold War. During World War II, the international community witnessed two nuclear explosions, the Holocaust, the deaths of tens of millions of soldiers and civilians, and mass displacement. This cataclysm convinced the world's leaders that a new world order had to emerge in place of the old. Unfortunately, deep divisions among the world's new superpowers meant that the new global organisation would face a series of challenges and agreement on central issues of war and peace would be difficult to achieve. Of course, there were some successes. The development of human rights, international justice and development programs under the organs of the UN assisted many of the world's peoples.

The central aim of the UN was to promote and maintain international peace and security through the principle of collective security. In the context of the two generations prior to its establishment in 1946, where great power rivalries and alliances had led the world into two global wars, the UN sought to provide a body in which disputes between equally sovereign nations could be heard and resolved. It was built on a tradition of international relations where principles such as sovereignty and **self-determination** were respected in the global order. The establishment of its central organ – the Security Council – reflected the great powers of the time: China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The United Nations

self-determination
The idea that nations can freely elect their own governments without outside interference

One of the main challenges the UN faced was that the Security Council members each had the power of veto over big decisions to do with international peace and security. This meant that many of the major conflicts of the Cold War would simply preclude UN involvement. In the UN's first major international action in the Korean War (1950–53), the Soviets were absent after boycotting the Security Council over its failure to recognise the communists as the legitimate rulers of China. Their absence meant that the US could push through a resolution for military action against North Korea without the Soviet veto.

Given the fact that many of the disputes in the early period after the establishment of the UN revolved around the spread and containment of communism, the UN was limited in its ability to act. Ultimately, it was up to the nations to abide by the principle of collective security. The second UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, famously said that the UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.

The other main organ of the UN was the General Assembly, a forum for all member states to have their concerns raised and debated. The first General Assembly session was held in London on 2 February 1946, and its first resolution was to promote the peaceful use of atomic energy and to prevent the spread of atomic weapons throughout the world.

In many ways, the Soviet system was incompatible with the UN system. For example, at the end of the war, Soviet ideology still embraced the idea that the communist revolution would be worldwide in scope. Although the UN attempted to bring the world together, Soviet ideology was firmly rooted in the idea of 'two camps' – of communism and capitalism. This is not to suggest that all nations were lined up behind one side or the other. Indeed, there were a large number of non-aligned states, including Yugoslavia, India and Indonesia.

George Kennan was a high-ranking diplomat in the US Embassy in Moscow, and his 'Long Telegram' of February 1946 argued that the Soviet Union was not serious about participating in the UN and would only do so if it meant extending its own power. He wrote, 'Moscow has no abstract devotion to UNO ideals. Its attitude to that organization will remain essentially pragmatic and tactical'.

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American–Soviet rivalry at the United Nations

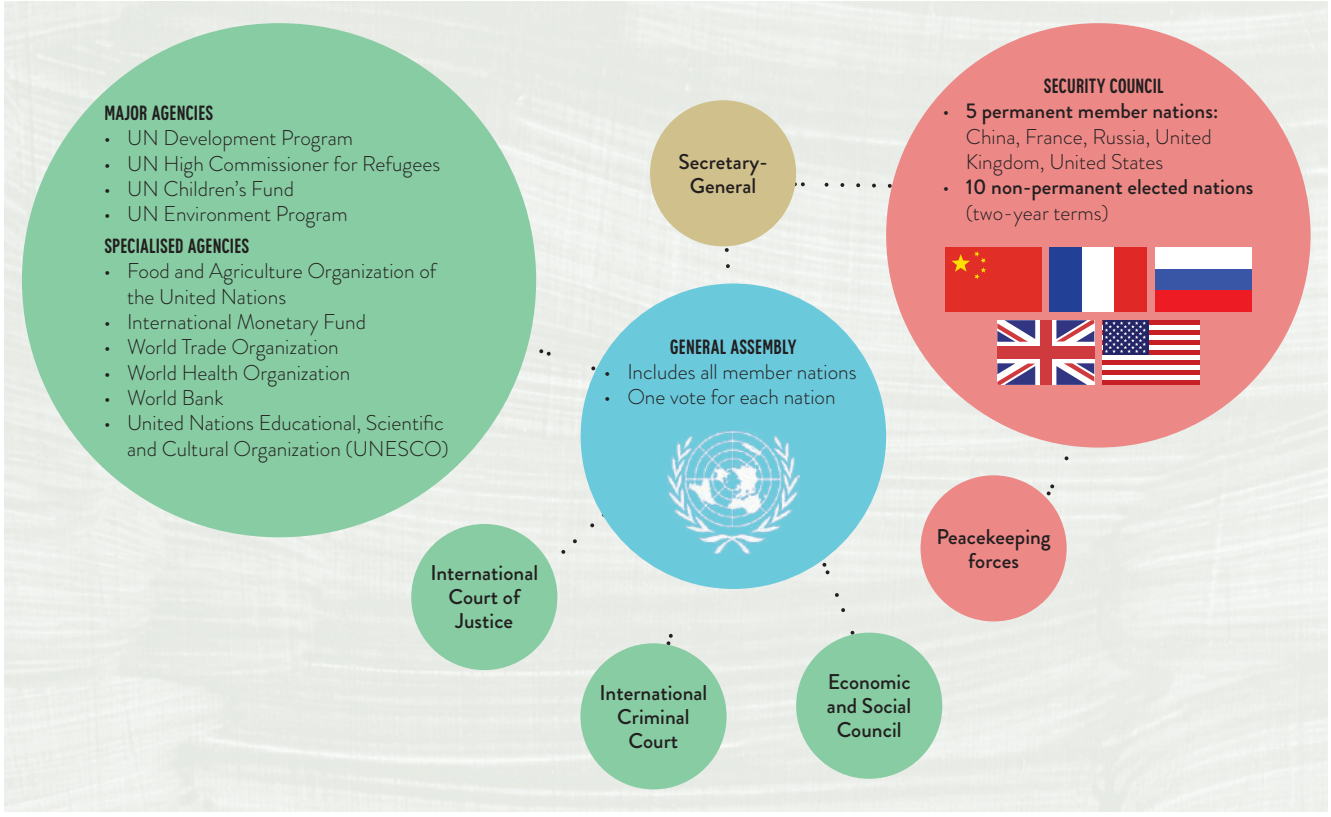
One of the most famous incidents of superpower rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States took place in October 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis. US Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, challenged the Soviet Ambassador, Valerian Zorin, to come clean about the missile program in Cuba.

Stevenson demanded an answer to the following question: 'Do you, Ambassador Zorin, deny that the USSR has placed, and is placing, medium- and intermediate-range missiles and sites in Cuba? Yes or no – don't wait for the translation – yes or no?'

Zorin replied, 'I am not in an American courtroom, sir … you will have your answer in due course', to which Stevenson replied, 'I am prepared to wait for an answer until Hell freezes over'.

Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 1.6 Adlai Stevenson (far right) addresses a UN session in October 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis.



SOURCE 1.7 The structure of the United Nations

The United Nations and development

In addition to promoting peace and security, the United Nations also has a number of specialised agencies to deliver rights, development and humanitarian work across the globe. International declarations created by the UN include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),

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the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1958) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

These declarations are supported by a range of agencies to assist with the development of children (UNICEF), settling refugees (UNHCR), eradicating hunger (World Food Programme), ensuring environmental protections (UNEP) and women's empowerment (UN Women).

In addition to these, there are a number of other global organisations with close links to the UN. These include the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which help minimise conflicts that emerge from financial differences; the World Health Organization, which promotes better health and coordinates responses to global health crises; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), for education, scientific and cultural training and conservation.

WS
Shifting the centre of power – the emergence of the UN

Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations

ARTICLE 1

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Charter of the United Nations, Chapter I, Article 1, 1945

QUESTIONS

1 According to Article 1, what is the central purpose of the United Nations?
2 What are the two principles that support friendly relations among nations?
3 What kinds of problems does the UN hope that international cooperation will solve?

1. Explain what is meant by the term 'collective security' in the context of the United Nations.
2. How is the UN an expression of the idealist school of international relations?
3. Assess the view that all states are equal, as expressed by the UN.
4. Identify the permanent members of the Security Council. Do these powers still reflect the main seats of power in the twenty-first century? Give reasons.
5. Outline the role of the General Assembly.
6. Explain how the Cold War stifled the development of the UN.
7. Outline the ways in which the UN has sought to promote development in the world.

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The emergence of the 'American Century'

It was with great reluctance that the United States emerged from its self-imposed neutrality in December 1941 after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. This attack on the American naval fleet forced the US to enter the war, reversing its long-held policy of abstaining from involvement in international conflict. Of course, the US had pursued its own imperial agenda in the Philippines and Latin America, but it was anxious to remain free of conflict with Europe. Since its foundation, the US had had a long tradition of **isolationism**, avoiding alliances or commitments that would threaten its independence. The first half of the 20th century had cost tens of millions of lives and condemned a generation in the West to grinding poverty. But the failures of 1914–45 would convince the Americans that their future prosperity lay in taking a leading role in establishing and maintaining a stable and peaceful international order. The US would have to permanently abandon isolationism and attempt to spread its own political and economic values around the world. By the end of World War II, the US was a superpower, its currency was a global reserve, and it had a leading hand in the establishment of the United Nations. Such was the emergence of the American Century. However, in order to understand why American involvement in the world was so at odds with its own traditions, we must first uncover where these traditions came from.

isolationism
The political decision to withdraw from unnecessary involvement with other nations

A brief overview of American isolationism

In his farewell letter in 1796, President George Washington encouraged Americans to take advantage of their geographic distance from Europe and questioned why the United States should 'entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice'.[1] President Thomas Jefferson's 1801 inaugural address reinforced Washington's view, stating that his foreign policy would mean 'Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none'.[2] In 1823, President James Monroe warned European powers that North or South America was off limits to further colonial expansion, and that in return the US would not meddle in European affairs. He told Congress, 'Our policy, in regard to Europe … remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers'.[3] The Monroe Doctrine would become a cornerstone of US foreign policy.

While the US managed to maintain its neutrality throughout the 1800s, the forces of national and imperial rivalry were building up in Europe, and eventually unleashed World War I in 1914. It was a conflict that would see the US abandon its longstanding policy of isolation after Germany provoked America into the war by declaring unrestricted submarine warfare against its merchant ships in April 1917. American commercial ships, ferrying supplies across the North Atlantic to Britain, were now the target of German attacks. American troops were sent to Europe to relieve war-weary British and French troops, who had been holed up in trenches on the Western Front for nearly three and a half years.

Towards the end of 1918, as victory over Germany looked imminent, US President Woodrow Wilson outlined the terms for Germany's surrender and the abdication of the country's leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II. Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' formed the basis for an armistice, and many of the points reflected the democratic values of the US. The president argued for a more transparent international system of diplomacy and trade, and his great brainchild was the League of Nations, an international body set up to solve disputes and promote peace and security in the world. To Wilson's bitter disappointment, the US Congress voted against joining the League, and its ineffectiveness would lead some observers to label it a 'toothless tiger'. America retreated back into isolation.

The United States' failure to get involved with the rest of the world took a dramatic turn with the crash of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929. A huge stock market bubble, driven by speculation and fuelled by debt, had capped off the decade of the 'roaring twenties'. Markets were awash with money looking for investment opportunities and returns. Some of this money had made its way to Germany, where it had been invested in the rebuilding of the country after World War I.

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American capital had played a key role in bringing stability and prosperity to a Germany that was sinking under the heavy burden of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Optimism ruled the day. America was booming and Germany was finally recovering.

The stock market crash need not have led inevitably to the Great Depression. But the panic induced by market falls led to American investors calling in what little money they had to cover the debts on stocks that were now worthless. This meant that loans were called in from all corners of the world, including Germany, the rest of Europe and Australia. Confidence in the economy collapsed overnight, investment stalled and waves of unemployment followed. The policy of 'beggar thy neighbour' compounded the problem as countries put up high tariff walls to discourage the purchase of imports, and devalued their own currencies to make their exports more competitive. In practice, 'beggar thy neighbour' meant countries shoring up their own economies at the expense of those around them.

In the end, failure to cooperate resulted in the Great Depression, which persisted across the world right through the 1930s, and the huge economic commitment of World War II was then partly responsible for turning the wheels of industry fast enough to restart investment, spending and employment. The works of 19th-century English economist John Maynard Keynes were also instrumental in leading government intervention in the hope that public spending would aid a recovery. When the guns of World War II fell silent in 1945, Americans were unsure whether the world would relapse into conditions similar to those of the Great Depression.

The American Century

The term 'American Century' finds its origins in an editorial by media magnate Henry Luce – who founded *Time* and *Fortune* and owned *Life* magazine – published in *Life* on 17 February 1941. The editorial is a call to the United States to play a larger role in world affairs. Writing in the months before America's entry into World War II, Luce argued that the US had a moral and practical responsibility to end its isolation. Despite not being in direct conflict at the time of writing, America could not absolve itself of the responsibility for the state of the world. The first half of the 20th century, in Luce's words, was a 'profound and tragic disappointment ... a baffling and difficult and paradoxical century'. World War I and the Great Depression, and now World War II, were in part a result of the United States' failure to embrace its duty as one of the most powerful nations in the world. The big promises of the 20th century had failed to materialise.

Getty Images/Time & Life Pictures

SOURCE 1.8 Henry Luce, author of 'The American Century'

Luce saw a relationship between the state of the world and America's ongoing prosperity. He wrote that the failure to understand this relationship had led to the 'bankruptcy of any and all forms of isolationism' and he condemned the 'virus of isolationist sterility' among America's political class. Luce issued a call for the US to embrace a distinctly American form of internationalism, with the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution at its core. It would be one that would be the 'product of the imaginations of many men'. Luce argued that freedom, growth and individual satisfaction would be the cornerstones of a new American order. In fact, Luce argued, American internationalism could already be seen in the cultural products of Hollywood, clothing, jazz and technology. Luce believed that there were four areas in which American leadership was needed:

- the US as the promoter of global, free trade and of open seas and skies to support it
- the proliferation of American knowledge, skills and artistic expression
- the US as good Samaritan, with a particular emphasis on feeding the hungry
- the promotion of American ideals, including justice, truth and charity.

The American Century

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The American Century

America cannot be responsible for the good behavior of the entire world. But America is responsible, to herself as well as to history, for the world environment in which she lives. Nothing can so vitally affect America's environment as America's own influence upon it, and therefore if America's environment is unfavorable to the growth of American life, then America has nobody to blame so deeply as she must blame herself. In its failure to grasp this relationship between America and America's environment lies the moral and practical bankruptcy of any and all forms of isolationism. It is most unfortunate that this virus of isolationist sterility has so deeply infected an influential section of the Republican Party. For until the Republican Party can develop a vital philosophy and program for America's initiative and activity as a world power, it will continue to cut itself off from any useful participation in this hour of history. And its participation is deeply needed for the shaping of the future of America and of the world.

Henry R Luce, 'The American Century', *Life*, 17 February 1941

QUESTIONS

1. What argument is Luce making about the importance of the relationship between America and the world environment?
2. Identify three words that Luce uses to describe isolation. What does this reveal about his attitude towards isolation?
3. What does he argue will be the consequences if America does not end its isolation?

Getty Images/IWM/Getty Images

SOURCE 1.9 US President Roosevelt (left) and British Prime Minister Churchill (right) jointly signed the Atlantic Charter, an outline of Anglo-American political and economic values.

America in the postwar world

In August 1941, US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill issued the joint Atlantic Charter – a series of principles that they hoped would shape the postwar world. The Charter included eight common values that restated the concepts of sovereignty, self-determination, free trade and collective security. Of course, the principle of self-determination meant that Britain and the European powers would have to give up their empires. The Charter represented a rejection of American isolation and a recognition that the United States would have to participate in keeping the world free from hunger and want.

The eighth principle, which addressed the issue of future peace, began as follows.

> They believe that all of the nations of the world … must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential.
>
> The Atlantic Charter, 1941

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The cataclysm of World War II had convinced the Americans that they had a role to play in the maintenance of peace and the spread of prosperity. At the end of the war, they played a vital role in helping to rebuild Europe through the European Recovery Program, known as the Marshall Plan. The US$15 billion plan sought to assist the economic recovery of Europe through capitalist principles under the shadow of communism in Eastern Europe.

The United States also saw as its responsibility the upholding of what it regarded as a set of universal values, including freedom, self-determination, state sovereignty and free global trade. We have already seen that this was done under the shadow of the Cold War in the postwar period, as the Soviets attempted to block attempts to implement these values across the globe. The Soviets believed that American political values were tied to capitalist exploitation.

1. Outline the United States' tradition of isolation.
2. What were some of the threats to isolation in the 165 years between 1776 and 1941?
3. Find three reasons Luce believed that the US should embrace the American Century.
4. Identify the American values embedded in the American Century.
5. What role did the Cold War play in preventing these values from achieving widespread acceptance in the world?

The fall of the Berlin Wall

The city of Berlin was fundamental to the development of the Cold War. It was the location of the war's early crises, and the wall that divided it after 1961 was of enormous symbolic significance. Throughout the summer of 1989, East Germans began to demand greater freedoms of movement. Their leader, Erich Honecker, was a staunch and inflexible communist who resisted any hint of change.

Tensions had been simmering in East Germany throughout 1989, and they were heightened by the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the East German state in October 1989. Pro-democracy marches and protests, and calls for reform, were growing louder as the neighbouring countries of Hungary and Poland also embraced *glasnost*. Borders had already opened in some Eastern European countries. As early as 1988, Hungary had opened its borders with Austria, leading to a spike in the number of people seeking political asylum in the West German embassy in Budapest. Poland had held its first free elections in June 1989.

It seemed that the ageing, hardline Honecker was becoming increasingly out of step with the attitudes of his fellow Eastern bloc leaders, and even with Gorbachev. The events in Tiananmen Square in China saw the Chinese Communist Party brutally crack down on demonstrators. Honecker approved of this, and one of his leading Politburo members, Egon Krenz, had expressed solidarity with the Chinese.

But it was Gorbachev who gave the East German protestors the impetus they needed to keep increasing their calls for change. At an event to mark the 40th anniversary of the creation of the East German state, Gorbachev remarked that 'life punishes those who come too late'. This seemed to be a swipe at the slow pace of change within East Germany compared with the rest of Eastern Europe. Gorbachev also commented to international reporters that socialist leaders 'who do not react to the realities of life' would find themselves in danger of being overthrown.

At the celebrations, East German protestors chanted 'Gorby! Gorby!' on the streets, much to the anger of Honecker, who was determined to stick with the old state socialism. Throughout October, tensions between the protestors and the regime grew stronger. Mass arrests and beatings of protestors

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Alamy Stock Photo/imageBROKER

SOURCE 1.10 On the evening of 9 November 1989 and into the next day, thousands of Berliners climbed on top of the wall and tore parts of it down with sledgehammers and chisels.

by the East German police marked the beginning of the month. On 9 October 1989, 70 000 people took part in a candlelit parade to call for change. This time, against all expectations, the East German police did not react.

Honecker could not rely on the Soviet troops to step in as Gorbachev had ordered them to remain in their barracks. In mid-October, Honecker was removed as leader of the East German state.

The new East German Politburo spokesman, Günter Schabowski, was holding a press conference in front of international media on 9 November 1989. His answers to a series of questions about the timing of a new law promising greater ease of travel between East and West Germany provided the spark that ended European communism. Schabowski had not read his briefing notes carefully enough, and under persistent questioning from an Italian journalist about the timing, he announced, 'Immediately. Without delay.'

The words were broadcast on Berlin television that evening and hundreds, and then thousands, of Berliners streamed down to the wall around key points, including Checkpoint Charlie and the Brandenburg Gate. East German border guards, settling into another night on patrol, were unsure about the gathering crowds. They were ordered not to fire on the crowd.

East and West Berliners, who had been separated for 28 years, began to climb on top of the wall and proceeded to dismantle it with hammers and picks. On the evening of 9 November 1989, the symbol of the Cold War was torn to the ground in jubilant celebration.

A 1.3-kilometre section of the wall still stands at the East Side Gallery. More than 100 paintings mark the longest remaining fragment of the wall as a tribute to freedom and unification. Perhaps the most famous painting is one by Dmitri Vrubel, depicting Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker locked in a kiss, titled *My God, Help Me to Survive This Deadly Love*.

The Berlin Wall memorial

Alamy Stock Photo/travelstock44

SOURCE 1.11 This famous painting on the remaining section of the Berlin Wall at the East Side Gallery depicts Brezhnev and Honecker's 'fraternal kiss' at the 30th anniversary of the creation of East Germany in 1979.

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Chapter summary

Between 1945 and 1989, the world was shaped by the Cold War. The threat of direct confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union overshadowed much of the work of the newly established United Nations. The existence and growth of nuclear weapons arsenals on both sides made the threat of conflict more perilous. That the values of the UN were closer to those of the US than the Soviet Union added to the tension. During this period, the US emerged from its century-and-a-half period of isolation.

When Mikhail Gorbachev implemented a series of political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union after 1985, these led to the sudden collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The absence of the Soviet Union and superpower rivalry left the US as the sole superpower in the world.

Further resources

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Endnotes

[1] George Washington, Final Address to Congress, in Ireland, TP, 'Creating the entangling alliance: The origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization' in *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 76, 1982, p. 196.

[2] Jefferson, Thomas, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1801, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp.

[3] The Monroe Doctrine, 1823, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Why did the Cold War undermine the functions of the United Nations between 1945 and 1990?
2. How was the Cold War rivalry between the Soviets and the Americans different from traditional great power rivalries?
3. Outline the different values and ideologies of the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Nations.
4. What was the American Century?
5. Explain why the US ended its self-imposed isolation and become more internationalist after 1945.
6. Explain the forces that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.
7. To what extent was the collapse of the Soviet Union the most important event in international relations in the 20th century?
8. Evaluate the view that the participation of the US in the international order was important for both American and global peace and prosperity.
9. To what extent do you agree with the view of Dag Hammarskjöld, who said that the UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save it from hell?
10. In groups of three, create a 10-minute panel discussion, in which each person argues for one of the main developments in international relations after 1991. The three positions could be:
    - **A** The fall of Soviet communism was the most important development in the international order.
    - **B** The US would lead a new world order based on a shared set of universal values.
    - **C** The UN should take a greater role in promoting peace and prosperity.

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02

The collapse of the USSR and the nature of post-Soviet societies

Demonstrators in Latvia stage a peaceful protest against the Soviet Union's occupation of the Baltic States, 23 August 1989.

Alamy Stock Photo/Tiit Veermae

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

In this chapter, students will examine the factors contributing to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the social, political and economic impacts of the dissolution on Eastern Europe.

Aspects to be covered include:

- The Soviet Union and Russia after communism
- The end of communism
- Mikhail Gorbachev
- The impact of the end of communism on Russia and Eastern Europe
- The emergence of Vladimir Putin in Russia

Modern History syllabus

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe at the end of 1989 was one of the most significant geopolitical events of the second half of the 20th century. The experiment in European communism was over, and former communist states had to be transitioned into the liberal, democratic world order that was dominated by the political and economic values of the United States. So, during the 1990s, Russia exchanged one experiment for another – this time the attempt to install Western-style political and economic systems in a country with little democratic tradition. The privatisation of vast natural resources and industrial assets led to widespread corruption.

bipolar
The division of the world into two systems during the Cold War: American capitalism and Soviet communism

Warsaw Pact
The formal alliance of Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union established in 1955

superpower
A great power that dominates the international system, has global reach that is underpinned by a strong economy and possesses superior military capacity

privatisation
The transfer of state-owned assets to private ownership

oligarchy
Rule by a small group; in the Russian context, the new class of ultra-wealthy Russians who benefited from the privatisation of the economy after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s

For nearly 45 years, international relations were oriented around the Cold War and the **bipolar** world that had emerged out of the dominance of the US and the Soviet Union. That the conflict ended with the Soviet Union suddenly and peacefully imploding, as the result of a series of Mikhail Gorbachev–era policies designed to reform communism rather than destroy it, meant that policy makers and thinkers had to grapple with a new set of realities. What would the post-Cold War 'new world order' look like? What forces would shape international relations into the future? How would the USSR and the **Warsaw Pact** transition to a new political, social and economic system and what shape would this system take?

There was no shortage of attempts to explain the new reality. US political scientist Francis Fukuyama declared 'the end of history' and the triumph of Western liberal democracy as the final destination in humanity's political evolution. Samuel P Huntington warned that the next geopolitical threats to peace and security would come from a 'clash of civilisations'. The US emerged as the world's only **superpower** and President George HW Bush optimistically declared the introduction of a 'new world order' based on the rule of law and a set of global principles similar to those that established the United Nations. But in the practical business of transforming Russia's vast state-owned natural and industrial assets into private hands, and thus in shaping the political and economic contours of Russia throughout the 1990s, it was the ideology of market economics that would play a leading role.

The road to market and political reform in Russia would not be an easy one. The painful process of removing 70 years of state planning would be led by the first post-Soviet Russian president, Boris Yeltsin. The transition was characterised by chaos. Reforms that were meant to stabilise the economic and political situation in Russia instead resulted in high inflation, goods shortages, political upheaval, corruption and the threat of resurgent communism. Russia was facing deep economic and political uncertainly, most likely as a result of the speed of the reforms. Historians, economists and journalists now concede that **privatisation** went too fast, and as a result, the process was driven by corruption at the highest levels of government. The 1990s economic transition might be characterised as the mass theft of former Soviet state resources including heavy industry, natural gas and oil reserves, infrastructure and agriculture concentrated in the hands of a few out of which a Russian **oligarchy** emerged. At best, the transition was handled with gross incompetence. Russian President Boris Yeltsin became increasingly embarrassing on the international stage. He drank heavily and became ill, and Russians lost faith in him as the man to steer Russia through the complex transition to post-Soviet prosperity.

When Boris Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned from the presidency on 31 December 1999, his prime minister, Vladimir Putin, was appointed as interim president until new elections could be held in May 2000. A Cold War veteran and former KGB officer, Putin projected an image of Russian strength both domestically and internationally. His style was a significant departure from that of Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Humiliated by the fall of the Soviet Union, which he would later describe as the greatest disaster of the 20th century, Putin wanted to restore the power and prestige of Russia in the region and reassert its role as a superpower. He would reverse the trend to Western political and economic

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values and challenge NATO's increasing move towards the east. He would appeal to nationalist sentiment to bring back into line states of the Russian Federation or former Soviet republics, such as Chechnya, Georgia and Ukraine, that did not toe the Kremlin line.

Putin's critics regard him as authoritarian, anti-democratic and corrupt. But in Russia he has enjoyed an approval rating of over 80 per cent for most of his presidency. Since the ascension of Putin, some observers speak of the renewal of Cold War tensions. While former Soviet states such as Ukraine seek closer integration with the European Union, Putin has resisted the drift in the region towards the West.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the nature of post-Soviet societies

1985	March	Mikhail Gorbachev assumes leadership of the Soviet Union
1989	March	First free elections to the Soviet Congress of the People's Deputies
	November	Berlin Wall falls in Germany
1991	July	Boris Yeltsin is elected President of Russia
	December	The Soviet Union is dissolved
1992	January	Economic 'shock therapy' reforms commence
1993	March	Yeltsin suspends parliament in showdown over powers
1999	December	Vladimir Putin is made acting president after the shock resignation of Boris Yeltsin
2000	May	Putin sworn in as President of Russia
	August	*Kursk* submarine disaster
2002	October	Moscow theatre siege
2004	May	Putin commences his second term as president
	September	Beslan school siege and massacre
2006	October	Putin critic and journalist Anna Politkovskaya shot and murdered
	November	Former Russian FSB officer Alexander Litvinenko poisoned in London
2008	May	Putin steps aside as president after term limits run out and he is made prime minister

Reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union and the role of Mikhail Gorbachev

The collapse of the Soviet Union was the result of long-term structural forces that stretched back to before Gorbachev's time in office, and the unforeseen consequences of two policies designed to reform the Soviet system rather than destroy it: *perestroika* (economic restructuring) and *glasnost* (political openness). These economic, social and political reforms were introduced in an effort to reverse the economic decline of the Soviet Union, which Gorbachev had inherited from the Brezhnev era. This decline resulted partly from huge sums of money being directed towards engaging in an arms race

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against the United States and bolstering the communist states in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, the living standards of ordinary Soviets at home remained poor by Western standards.

By the time Gorbachev came to power on 11 March 1985, the Soviet economy was stagnant – rife with corruption and low in productivity. Determined that the decline should not continue, Gorbachev decided on a plan for decisive action, despite being criticised for having a vision with no real plan to see it realised. Gorbachev's series of economic, social and political reforms eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. A popular Russian saying about the reforms was: 'We are still on the leash and the dog dish is still too far away, but now we can bark as loud as we want.' The 'dog dish' was the promise of economic prosperity, and the 'barking' was any critical comment about the failure of the reforms to deliver on their promises.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV


Getty Images/Georges De Keerle

Mikhail Gorbachev was leader of the Soviet Union from March 1985 until December 1991. As a committed socialist, Gorbachev wanted to reform Soviet communism, which he believed was in deep, long-term structural decline from poor economic practices and lack of political participation. In an attempt to deliver prosperity to Soviet citizens, he wanted to minimise Soviet involvement on the international stage – first by withdrawing from an arms race with the United States and second by reducing the spending and military commitments needed to prop up communist states, particularly in Eastern Europe. Thus, Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, arms reductions and repealing the **Brezhnev Doctrine** had the effect of opening up calls among the masses for greater democratic freedom and economic choice. In the end, Gorbachev's policies, which were meant to reform communism, would instead destroy it.

Brezhnev Doctrine
The Soviet commitment to intervene militarily in Eastern European communist states to stop reform movements

Gorbachev's strongest policy positions were laid out at the 27th Party Congress in March 1986. Writing about the 1970s in his book *Perestroika*, Gorbachev observes that it was an anomaly that great technological advances in this decade had the potential to deliver high living standards, but in the USSR growth was stalling. One of the features of Gorbachev's reforms was that he did not believe that productivity could be lifted through doing more of the same. For Gorbachev, things needed to change. To make them change, he would have to re-examine the nature of socialism and introduce limited market reforms in an effort to get the economy moving.

Perestroika

Gorbachev inherited a Soviet economy in crisis. State-owned companies were poorly run and not producing goods of high enough quality or in sufficient quantity, and productivity was low. Alcoholism was rife in the workforce. Basic consumer items were absent from the shelves of Russian supermarkets. Huge portions of the Soviet budget were being directed towards military spending to allow Russia to keep up with the United States in the arms race and to fight a failed war in Afghanistan, while the living standards of ordinary Russians were low when compared with those in the West. Many of these problems had been inherited from the Brezhnev era. The economic **stagnation** of the communist bloc was deep and would require some market reforms to provide incentive.

stagnation
Low economic growth over a prolonged period

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Gorbachev knew that there would have to be some economic restructuring and introduced the policy of *perestroika*. The policy reflected his commitment to a version of Leninism and drew comparisons with Lenin's 'New Economic Policy' because it included aspects of market capitalism alongside communism. Gorbachev hoped the reforms would help Russia out of its economic troubles and estimated that they would take more than a decade to bring real change.

Gorbachev believed that his reforms would provide greater incentive to work harder and to develop small enterprise. He allowed cooperatives and small businesses to be established. Hairdressers, restaurants and other small businesses began to pop up all over Russia. But the reforms did not fare so well in major industries, and in 1988 worker dissatisfaction led to a general coalminer's strike, which nearly crippled the country.

There are a number of reasons for the failure of *perestroika*. Factory managers and individuals could not really grasp the long-term benefits of the restructuring, and the short-term consequences were painful. The American economist Peter Boettke argues that *perestroika* was not supported by political will. He suggests that economic reform is necessarily painful in the short term because it removes subsidies, creates temporary unemployment and produces inequality of income – all of which would have been politically difficult for the communist bureaucracy to cope with.[1]

Instead of *perestroika* saving the Soviet economy, many citizens actually blamed it for the decline in living standards. At least, before *perestroika*, life was stable. According to economic historian William Moskoff, there were three reasons for the failure of *perestroika*:

- Gorbachev failed to show the same determination in his leadership at home that he showed on the international stage, and he vacillated with the reforms.
- The people were less committed to a market economy than to the production of plentiful goods at low and stable prices – in whatever system produced them. They wanted a painless transition.
- Gorbachev met powerful resistance along the way from the working class, who feared for their jobs, the military, who feared for their budgets, and the economic bureaucrats, who feared for their reputations.[2]

Gorbachev had inherited deep structural problems in the Soviet Union that he had to address. In implementing *perestroika*, he had hoped that he could turn the economy around. However, by 1988 only 750 000 people out of 135 million workers were employed in privately run companies.

Views on *perestroika*

SOURCE A

What specifically did we accomplish as a result of the stormy years of *perestroika*? The foundations of the totalitarian system were eliminated. Profound democratic changes were begun. Free general elections were held for the first time, allowing real choice. Freedom of the press and a multiparty system were guaranteed … Human rights now became an unassailable principle.

Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 57–8

SOURCE B

I read *Perestroika*, the book by Mikhail Gorbachev that outlined his goals for restructuring the Soviet economy … Although he didn't describe it as such, it was a bill of particulars condemning the workings of communism, and it was as damning as anything ever written about Communism in the West. It was an epitaph: Capitalism had triumphed over Communism.

Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*, Threshold Editions, New York, 1990, pp. 702–3

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SOURCE C

Gorbachev's economic incompetence was also serious. It led to his failure to make early progress in reforming the economy. In the first five years his only real accomplishment was the launching of a private, or cooperative, sector of the economy, which began at once to fill in some of the many holes in the state-run system. In many other sectors there was no progress, only deterioration …

… Gorbachev's economic policies had been on the wrong track since the Central Committee plenum of June 1987, he said. The budget deficit had ballooned from three percent of gross domestic product (the Soviet equivalent of gross national product) in 1987 to ten percent in 1989, and higher still in 1990. The money that had to be printed to cover these deficits had dramatically aggravated inflationary pressures, he said. The anti-drinking campaign went out of control when prices for vodka were doubled, stimulating both an enormous black market and the disappearance of sugar, which home brewers used to make their own white lightning. The government had to spend 25 billion rubles to cope with the sugar crisis, Aganbegyan said. Then after the coal miners' strike of July 1989, wages started to rise at a terrifying rate, although workers' productivity fell. This generated more inflationary pressure. And the government's only response to all this, according to Aganbegyan, was to debate and discuss alternative reform plans.

Robert G Kaiser, 'Gorbachev: triumph and failure', *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1991

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Gorbachev wish to introduce *perestroika* at a gradual pace?
2. Make a list of what Gorbachev feels that he achieved as a result of *perestroika*. Why do you think that his list does not include economic success?
3. Describe Ronald Reagan's attitude towards *perestroika*.
4. According to Source C, why did *perestroika* fail?

Glasnost

The second of Gorbachev's major reform policies was *glasnost*, which, translated into English, means 'openness'. The intention of *glasnost* was to establish genuine transparency in the Soviet government. This would include holding multicandidate elections between members of the Communist Party (all other political parties were banned), encouraging political debate and giving the press greater freedom to comment on the actions of the government and the direction of policy.

Gorbachev believed that the communist elites were the most significant barrier to change in the USSR. *Glasnost* would help swing open the doors of democratic reform and this is what the old bureaucracy feared most. They were not used to having their decisions open to public scrutiny.

It would take a while for *glasnost* to establish itself. After all, for many years in the Soviet Union there had been no tradition of open debate or scrutiny of public officials, and little discussion about the future direction of society. The new openness led to the proliferation of organisations that were not under the umbrella of the Communist Party. By 1987 there were some 30 000 of these organisations meeting to discuss topics as varied as liberalism, nationalism and the environment. These groups, which were known as 'informals', were not supposed to offer a political alternative to communism, but Gorbachev knew that their existence would inevitably allow alternative political ideas to flourish.

Gorbachev wanted to go beyond using *glasnost* as a slogan, and he introduced a series of reforms that would encourage public debate. He knew full well that Russians were cynical of the old propaganda

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techniques, and he wanted his reforms to create genuine change. To ensure that *glasnost* would take root within the Soviet citizenship, Gorbachev:

- engaged the support of the country's key intellectuals and writers to help him communicate the serious issues facing the Soviet Union. He wanted the workers to be aware of the problems and a part of the solution
- was interested in hearing about the lives of everyday people in ways that were unmediated by the bureaucracy. For this, he needed a free and open press
- encouraged and allowed intellectual debate about policy from within and outside the government ranks, and encouraged robust disagreement among conservatives and radicals
- enforced a more open government bureaucracy so that there would be no more secrecy. Information would henceforth flow freely.

The need for *glasnost* was tragically revealed on 26 April 1986, when the number 4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl in Ukraine leaked radioactive waste. The Soviet people were not informed of the disaster until Gorbachev relayed the details on television on 28 April. In the previous two days, Chernobyl, only 130 kilometres away from the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, had been under real threat from explosions ripping through the other reactors and threatening the water supplies. Eight thousand lives were lost as a result of the explosion, and radioactivity in the area was not contained because of the veil of secrecy that accompanied the clean-up in the initial stages of the disaster.

In 1988, Gorbachev announced the first democratic elections in Russia, in the hope that his reforms would provide him with broad public support. However, by 1988 ordinary Russians were struggling with reform. The promises of *perestroika* were struggling to take effect, and inflation had gripped the country. There were shortages of consumer products and long lines for food.

The impact of *glasnost* was perhaps most significant in the Eastern European countries of the Soviet bloc. In countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and East Germany, the hope of greater transparency and free speech gave weight to their desire for political freedoms. It was *glasnost* that would allow the pro-democracy demonstrations in those countries that led to the eventual collapse of their Soviet-backed regimes.

Views on *Glasnost*

SOURCE A

Glasnost made its way with considerable difficulty. The **nomenklatura** opposed *glasnost* in every way they could, both openly and secretly … But it was precisely *glasnost* that awakened people from their social slumber, helped them overcome indifference and passivity and become aware of the stake they had in change … *Glasnost* helped us to explain, and promote awareness of the new realities … In short, without *glasnost* there would have been no *perestroika*.

Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 60–1

nomenklatura
Appointed Communist Party officials

SOURCE B

The closed nature and secrecy of the nuclear power industry, which was burdened by bureaucracy and monopolism in science, had an extremely bad effect. I spoke of this at a meeting of the Politburo on 3 July 1986: 'For thirty years you scientists, specialists and ministers have been telling us that everything was safe. And you think we look on you as gods. But now we have ended up with a fiasco … Chernobyl became a difficult test for *glasnost*, openness and democracy … shed a light on many of the sicknesses of our system as a whole … the concealing or hushing up of accidents and other bad news, irresponsibility and carelessness, slipshod work, wholesale drunkenness. This was one more convincing argument in favour of radical reforms.

Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, Doubleday, New York, 1995, pp. 191–3

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QUESTIONS

1. Which group of people had the most to lose from *glasnost*, and why?
2. How did *glasnost* benefit the whole of the Soviet Union?
3. How might Gorbachev's views, as expressed in his books, be regarded as promoting a positive image of himself?
4. Why did the Chernobyl nuclear incident reveal the need for *glasnost*?

1. What problems did Gorbachev inherit as leader of the Soviet Union?
2. Explain how *perestroika* attempted to introduce market reforms into the Soviet Union.
3. What did Gorbachev hope to achieve with *perestroika*?
4. Identify three reasons that *perestroika* failed.
5. Outline the main goals of *glasnost*.
6. What was the significance of the 'informals'?
7. Explain the measures that Gorbachev took to ensure that *glasnost* took root in Soviet society.
8. To what extent was the nuclear incident at Chernobyl a failure of *glasnost*?
9. What impact did *glasnost* have in Eastern Europe?
10. Evaluate the idea that *glasnost* was a success while *perestroika* was a failure.

Political reforms and the break-up of the Soviet Union

The failure of *perestroika* and the freedom to protest allowed by *glasnost* made political reforms seem inevitable. Gorbachev believed that economic and social reforms would need to be accompanied by giving Soviet citizens greater say in the political process, but he could not have anticipated the extent of the hunger for change. Although there were calls for greater independence in the Baltic states as early as 1987, the first signs of mass revolution were to be found in Eastern Europe in the large pro-democracy demonstrations of 1989 and 1990. And, while Gorbachev was happy to support the democratic aspirations of the masses in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, his attitude within the Soviet Union would be another matter entirely. After all, Gorbachev was deeply committed to the communist cause, and the case of Estonia demonstrates the lengths that the Soviets would go to in an effort to prevent the Soviet republics from challenging communist institutions.

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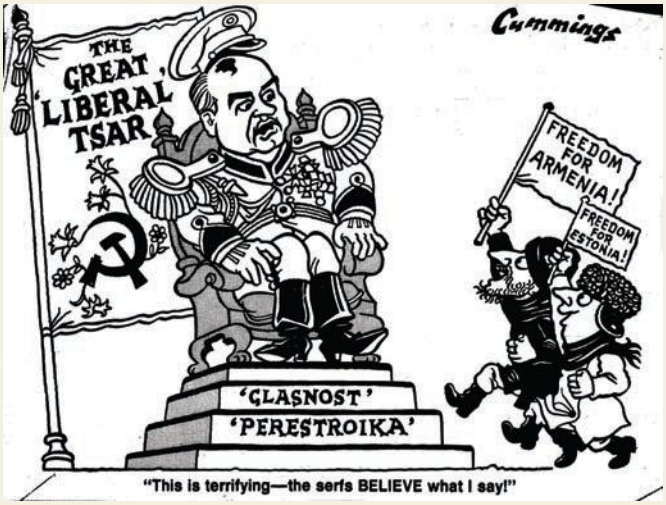
Estonia and the 'singing revolution'

As early as 1987, the people of Estonia, who had long campaigned for their independence, stepped up their calls for greater political and economic freedom. The Estonians used music festivals as a cover for discussing Estonian patriotism and nationalist aspirations. Music festivals had had a long tradition in Estonia, but in *glasnost* they took on such a significance that the Estonians would refer to their pro-democracy calls as the 'singing revolution'. In late 1988, the Estonians issued a Declaration of Sovereignty, which was one of the first acts in the demise of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership immediately rejected the declaration and the Estonians were ordered to annul it.

In May 1989, Gorbachev met a delegation of Estonian representatives from the Congress of Deputies. He insisted that any reforms could not significantly alter the character of socialism, nor would he entertain the idea of the break-up of the Soviet Union and Estonian independence. Instead, the focus of the delegation was on achieving full economic independence from the Soviet Union so they could pursue the introduction of free market principles. The Kremlin relented and, on 27 November 1989, Estonia was granted full economic independence. It was given its own central bank and a new currency.

In the following month, the other Baltic states – Lithuania and Latvia – joined forces. They petitioned the Kremlin to acknowledge the existence of a secret World War II agreement between the Soviet and German foreign ministers to illegally invade the Baltic states. This agreement, known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, became the next ground on which the fight for independence was fought. On 24 December 1989, the Congress of the People's Deputies voted that the pact was legally invalid. The vote effectively meant that the Baltic states were being occupied illegally and independence would soon follow.

In March 1990, the Baltic states declared independence. This was met with threats of military intervention and an economic blockade. But the constitutional damage was done. In May 1990, political violence between communist hardliners and the reformers broke out. In January 1991, Soviet special forces opened fire in neighbouring Latvia. On 20 August 1991, the Congress of Deputies finally voted to grant Estonia its independence. Four days later, Yeltsin gave his support. On 6 September, Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership recognised Estonian independence.



Cummings/Daily Express/N&S Syndication

SOURCE 2.1 Of the growing calls for independence, Gorbachev met those among the Soviet Republics with a much firmer hand than those in Eastern Europe.

In July 1988, Gorbachev pushed the idea of establishing a people's parliament through the Politburo. In an atmosphere of genuine openness, he had hoped to channel the frustrations of the people through a political body that would give them a genuine say in the future directions of the Soviet Union. Elections to the newly created Congress of the People's Deputies were held in March 1989 and represented the first steps towards increasing democratisation in the Soviet Union. There were 2250 deputies from all the republics of the Soviet Union. For the first time, Gorbachev opened up a people's parliament where two-thirds of the seats would be filled by candidates elected directly by the people. Elections would no longer be a box-ticking exercise in which the communist-nominated deputy would be inevitably returned, and for the first time they would involve the discussion of political ideas.

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Getty Images/VITALY ARMAND

SOURCE 2.2 On 20 January 1991, more than 100 000 people marched on Moscow, demanding the resignation of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

But by 1990 *glasnost* had opened a tide of change within the Soviet Union that Gorbachev was powerless to stop. When the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia tried to follow the suit of countries in Eastern Europe by declaring their independence in the spring of 1990, Gorbachev was furious. He denied them permission to secede – but the momentum began to swing against him. The economic problems facing the Soviet Union were dire and political openness had led to growing calls for reform and secession. Pro-democratic forces grew stronger and their numbers were evident in large demonstrations on the streets of the capital.

By 1990, Gorbachev was readying Soviet citizens for a referendum on the future of the Soviet Union. With communism falling apart in Eastern Europe, the Soviet leadership was faced with a number of pressing questions: What would a new federation of the republics that made up the Soviet Union look like? What would be the character of each state's **sovereignty**? Was there even a need for a union?

sovereignty
The right of a state or nation to make its own laws, free from outside interference

The referendum was held in March 1991, and an overwhelming 77.8 per cent voted 'yes' to the question 'Do you consider necessary the preservation of the USSR as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedom of an individual of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?' But this result did not stop the calls for reform.

WS
Policy or historical forces?

The drift towards democratisation became stronger with the rise of the populist Russian politician Boris Yeltsin. This time, the openness went one step further, with the call for multiparty elections. In December 1990, Gorbachev relented and, for the first time in 70 years, non-communist politicians became eligible to stand for elections. In giving ground in this way, Gorbachev hoped to sell the idea that the Communist Party was the party of reform. The pro-democracy movement that was successful in Eastern Europe moved first towards the Baltic states, and by 1991 it was at the centre of the Soviet Union's largest and most powerful state – Russia.

Getty Images/PIKO/Stringer

SOURCE 2.3 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (left) opened the way for pro-democracy movements in the republics of the Soviet Union with his political reforms. In Russia, President Boris Yeltsin (right) asserted that Russian laws would take precedence over Soviet laws.

Constitutional questions emerged over the power of Soviet and Russian lawmakers. In June 1991, the Congress of the Russian Republic declared that Russian laws would take precedence over Soviet laws, and on 10 July Yeltsin was democratically elected to the position of President of the Russian Federation. The idea of sovereign Soviet republics took root. As a result, the political reforms had the effect of undermining the Soviet Union, and a period of dual authority resulted in a power struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

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Yeltsin's election as President of Russia answered some of these pressing constitutional questions for Gorbachev. In the atmosphere of change, it was not clear where Yeltsin's authority began and Gorbachev's ended. Immediately after Yeltsin was elected, he declared that the sovereignty of Russia meant putting the needs of Russia before those of the Soviet Union.

It seemed the pace of reform was getting out of control. *Perestroika* was failing to deliver the promised living standards, while *glasnost* and democratisation were undermining the authority of the Community Party.

With a democratically elected President of Russia now at the centre of power, it seemed that the Soviet Union was slipping away. Communist party hardliners were furious and, on 19 August 1991, they attempted to reassert their authority by staging a coup against Gorbachev while the Soviet leader was on vacation in the Crimea. With the backing of the Soviet secret police, the KGB, tanks rolled into the square outside Russia's parliament building in Moscow, the leaders declared a state of emergency and Gorbachev was placed under house arrest.

Yeltsin was on hand in Moscow. Standing on one of the tanks, he addressed the crowd and called for a general strike until the attempted coup was over. He condemned the conspirators and demanded that Gorbachev be released from custody. Yeltsin came off looking like a champion of reform and a supporter of Gorbachev. He demanded that Gorbachev be released and that the rule of law be restored.

The August 1991 coup

> It is essential to give the country's president, Gorbachev, an opportunity to address the people. Today he has been blockaded. I have been denied communications with him. We demand an immediate [meeting] of an extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of the Union. We are absolutely confident that our countrymen will not permit the sanctioning of the tyranny and lawlessness of the putschists [*sic*], who have lost all shame and conscience.
>
> Boris Yeltsin, addressing the crowd outside the attempted coup on 19 August 1991

> Looking back now at everything that happened, it is evident to me that the main orientation of Yeltsin and his entourage was to pursue a course aimed at the dissolution of the Soviet Union, at taking control of Russia, so as to seize power for themselves ... The August coup caused a breakdown in the process of the formation [of the new union], created complications and spurred on the process of disintegration.
>
> Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 110, 135

QUESTION

Compare and contrast the views of Yeltsin and Gorbachev on the meaning of the August coup.

Although Yeltsin was not involved in the organisation of the coup, he took immediate steps to protect the interests of Russia following it. In the week that followed the coup, a number of large states, including Ukraine and Belarus, declared their independence from the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was becoming increasingly isolated and unpopular. The Russian people blamed him for the failure of *perestroika* but seized on *glasnost* to propel their revolution.

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Getty Images/DIANE-LU HOVASSE

SOURCE 2.4 Russian President Boris Yeltsin stands on top of a tank in defiance of a communist-led coup in August 1991. Although the coup itself was short-lived and non-violent, it eventually hastened the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It is ironic that, in trying to save the Soviet system, Gorbachev was the inspiration of so many who wanted to destroy it. The combined effects of the failure of *perestroika*, the success of *glasnost* and the political reforms that gave power to the pro-democratic forces resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On 25 December 1991, the Soviet flag featuring the hammer and the sickle was lowered above the Kremlin for the final time, and Mikhail Gorbachev was now a leader without a country. With the stroke of a pen, the Soviet Union was dissolved as large republics such as Russia affirmed their independence from the Union. Gorbachev had signed a paper relinquishing all of his duties as President of the USSR.

WS
Photographic exhibition

Mikhail Gorbachev – The man who lost an Empire

1. Why did Gorbachev feel that *perestroika* and *glasnost* should be accompanied by increasing political power for the masses?
2. What was the 'singing revolution'?
3. What was the significance of establishing the Congress of the People's Deputies in March 1989?
4. What was the result of the March 1991 referendum on the future of the Soviet Union?
5. Explain why there was a power struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin after July 1991.
6. What impact did the August 1991 coup have on the future of the Soviet Union?

Political, social and cultural impacts of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in Russia and Eastern Europe

In the majority of Eastern European countries, communism ended with a whimper rather than a bang. In Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, mass demands for democracy overwhelmed the ruling communist parties, resulting in peaceful revolutions. In Romania, the story was different as President Nicolae Ceausescu continued to fight against pro-democracy forces. But the end of communism did not necessarily mean that the transition to liberal democracies and free markets would be smooth. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in Russia resulted in a painful period of transition. Transforming 70 years of state planning would bring with it political and economic difficulties.

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The Russian Federation under Boris Yeltsin

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Boris Yeltsin was responsible for implementing a series of political and economic reforms that would transform Russia into a democratic state with a capitalist economy. While former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev argued for gradual change, Yeltsin's decision to implement reform at a rapid pace meant that the early 1990s were characterised by political and economic chaos.

Seventy years of Soviet state ownership of wealthy natural, industrial and infrastructure assets such as oil and gas reserves, manufacturing plants and state-run banks meant that Russia would have to undergo the mass privatisation of these assets. The main question was: how would ordinary Russians share in the wealth of the former Soviet state? The answer to this question would result in significant political and economic ramifications and give rise to an oligarchy.

Soviet historian and expert Archie Brown underlined the chaos when he wrote, 'The legacy of Yeltsin's years in power was a hybrid political and economic system, combining substantial elements of democracy, arbitrariness and **kleptocracy**'.[3]

kleptocracy
A state that is run based on the theft of national resources

A political and economic crisis

Soon after Yeltsin took power and the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia faced a deep crisis. In the triumphant atmosphere celebrating the end of communism, a power vacuum had been created by the sudden withdrawal of 70 years of state planning in the economy. The new government would have to move fast to design new constitutions and economic structures. States were forced to reorganise millions of people who for two or three generations had had no experience of markets or democratic parliaments. Change occurred in three phases:

1. Yeltsin and economic shock therapy, 1991–92
2. Privatisation and the rise of the oligarchs, 1993–95
3. The Russian financial crisis, 1998.

Phase one: Yeltsin and economic shock therapy, 1991–92

Yeltsin's advisers convinced him that the only way to repair the Russian economy was with a dramatic transition to the market through a process known as economic **shock therapy**. Yeltsin surrounded himself with young economists with new ideas, including proponents of Milton Friedman's 'Chicago school', to lead the transition. Russian media labelled these young reformers, led by Yegor Gaidar and Anatoly Chubais, the **Chicago Boys**.

shock therapy
The rapid introduction of free market economics

Chicago Boys
The group of economists who were influential in the economic shock therapy of the early Yeltsin years

Yeltsin appeared before parliament in October 1991 to present his program of reforms. He admitted that, while the policies would be painful, they would last no longer than six months. The plan, which was known as shock therapy, included the following points:

- massive cuts to government spending that targeted defence, industry subsidies, consumer subsidies and public infrastructure projects
- reducing the government deficit
- the introduction of new taxes
- attempts to control inflation
- removal of government restrictions from prices.

Not everyone shared Yeltsin's faith in the reforms. As far back as July 1991, the former leader Gorbachev had attended a meeting at which leaders of the G7, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank put the program of shock therapy to him. 'Their suggestions', Gorbachev later wrote, 'as to the tempo and methods of transition were astonishing'.[4] It was not the path that Gorbachev would have chosen but, as communism crumbled around him, he had become isolated and by this time his influence had largely slipped away.

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Transitioning the Russian economy

SOURCE A

Perestroika was a reform that aimed at gradual political change to create an infrastructure for market economics. We had several generations with no experiences of markets. You can't just announce the markets and see them appear overnight. I was actually saying it will take a generation for it to start working.

Mikhail Gorbachev, quoted in *Commanding Heights*, Episode 2 'The agony of reform'

SOURCE B

A one-time changeover to market prices is a difficult and forced measure but a necessary one. For approximately six months, things will be worse for everyone, but then prices will fall, the consumer market will be filled with goods, and by the autumn of 1992 there will be economic stabilization and a gradual improvement in people's lives.

President Boris Yeltsin, addressing the Russian parliament on 28 October 1991, quoted in Reddaway and Glinski, 2001, p. 231

SOURCE C

I never believed that Yegor Gaidar was a physician who could cure our sick economy, but I didn't think he was a quack who would finish the patient off, either ... it was quite a brutal but necessary policy. While the other 'doctors' were arguing over treatment plans, Gaidar dragged the patient out of bed. And I think the sick patient took a few steps.

Boris Yeltsin, *The View from the Kremlin*, HarperCollins, London, 1994, p. 146

QUESTIONS

1. From your reading so far, what were the economic, political and social challenges facing Russia at the end of 1991?
2. Compare and contrast the *perestroika* and shock therapy approaches used to address the problems facing the Soviet Union.
3. What metaphor did Yeltsin use to express the situation at the end of 1991? Was it appropriate to the situation?

Picture Media/Reuters/Gennady Galperin

SOURCE 2.5 Yegor Gaidar (left) was the key architect of Russian economic shock therapy through the year 1992. His reforms caused such distress to ordinary people that he was fired by President Boris Yeltsin by the end of the year. Anatoly Chubais (right) oversaw the controversial privatisation of former Soviet state assets.

Yeltsin characterised the reforms as brutal but necessary. On 2 January 1992, the shock therapy commenced with the lifting of price controls. Yeltsin and Gaidar guessed that prices would triple by April 1992 before quickly falling back. However, by the end of 1992 Russia was facing price rises up to 20 times higher than before the reforms. This caused the currency to plummet in value, wiping out the savings of ordinary Russians. While 10 000 rubles once was able to buy a car, it now could only pay for a pair of shoes.[5]

Russian and international media broadcast pictures of long bread queues and increasing poverty. The Russian parliament was furious and removed Gaidar from his post of Deputy Prime Minister at the end of 1992, less than 12 months after the shock commenced. In his autobiography, Yeltsin admitted that the reforms had hurt. He wrote, 'In September 1992, I looked at the economic figures for the preceding nine months. They were cause for alarm. The country was steadily creeping towards hyperinflation, the collapse of industry, the disruption of trade among large plants ...'.[6]

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Yeltsin's view of shock therapy

By choosing the path of shock therapy … I chose this path for myself as well. The first person who would have to suffer this shock … would be me, the president. The debilitating bouts of depression, the grave second thoughts, the insomnia and headaches in the middle of the night, the tears and despair, the flood of criticism from the newspapers and television every day … The hurt from people close to me who did not support me at the last minute … I have had to bear all of this.

Boris Yeltsin, *The View from the Kremlin*, HarperCollins, London, 1994, p. 149

QUESTION

Describe Yeltsin's reaction to the path of shock therapy.

Phase two: Privatisation and the rise of the oligarchs, 1993–95

The second task facing Yeltsin's transition to a market economy was the privatisation of Russia's wealth. The country was rich in vast natural reserves of gas, oil and precious metals, a highly developed industrial sector, and infrastructure, and the key question facing politicians was: what would be the fairest method of distributing the collective wealth of Russia?

In 1992, when ordinary Russians were reeling from hyperinflation, another major economic change was mistimed, resulting in an outcome that would turn Russia into a virtual oligarchy. New Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais distributed 144 million 'privatisation vouchers' to divide the country's wealth among the population. All citizens would be given a voucher worth 10 000 rubles to buy a share of Russian companies in public auctions. The system lasted between December 1992 and July 1994, and 40 million Russians became shareholders through the program. Unfortunately, economic hard times meant that many were forced to sell their vouchers on a thriving black market to buy clothes, food and other essentials. Others were swindled in so-called 'voucher investment funds' that quickly went broke.

Moscow Times journalists Matt Bivens and Jonas Bernstein argued that the first enterprises on offer at the auction block were largely the 'lemons' of Russian industry. The wealthy and profitable state assets were held back. The whole process had a ring of cronyism about it. While ordinary Russian people struggled under soaring inflation and plunging savings, the privatisation of industry was able to proceed without much protest. By mid-1994, nearly 70 per cent of Russian assets were privatised.

In 1995, it was the turn of Russia's vast natural resources and wealthy state industrial assets to be put up for auction. Accompanying this final wave of privatisation was a scandal known as 'loans for shares'. This involved newly created private banks lending the Russian government money in return for shares in rich Russian companies or natural resources. The shares would act as security against the loan, and if the government failed to pay in a few months the shares would be transferred permanently to the bank. Unfortunately for the government and the Russian people, the crippling economic impact of inflation meant that the government could not pay. Assets were transferred to banks.

The private banker Vladimir Potanin hatched the scheme, and Yeltsin and his advisers were forced to accept its terms. The president's approval rating had fallen to an unprecedented low of five per cent and he was facing an election the following year. Yeltsin needed the support of the new business leaders to gain any chance of re-election. The harsh economic reality of shock therapy meant that the Communist Party was achieving strong results in the polls and there was a threat that they would re-emerge as a real political force. The business leaders would use their considerable wealth and

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media ownership to support Yeltsin's re-election. His choice seemed simple: lose the election to the communists, or sell off Russian assets cheaply to the new class of emerging oligarchs.

The government chose a series of banks to deposit its savings, and to prepare and run privatisation auctions. Uneximbank was one such bank and, remarkably, it was able to bid in the auctions it presided over. Bivens and Bernstein of the *Moscow Times* list a series of companies that sold at knockdown prices to the wealthy few of well-connected bankers, politicians and their associates:

- A 40 per cent stake in the Surgutneftegaz oil company sold for US$88 million.
- A 38 per cent stake in Norilsk Nickel, which produces 25 per cent of the world's nickel, was sold off for US$170 million. Three years later, Norilsk was earning US$2 billion per annum. The winning bidder was Uneximbank.
- A 51 per cent stake in Sidanko oil sold for US$130 million. The winning bidder, an affiliate of Uneximbank, paid roughly 2 cents per barrel of Sidanko's oil reserves at a time when oil was selling for US $4 or US $5 per barrel on the international market. [7]

It is not difficult to imagine the astonishing wealth transferred to these individuals, who later became known as the 'oligarchs'.

While one-third of Russians fell below the poverty line, this small group of oligarchs became instant billionaires from the privatisation sales – a perverse reversal of Yeltsin's earlier promise that Russia needed millions of shareholders, rather than a few millionaires. State assets were sold cheaply. Corruption and political cronyism turned the promise of economic reform on its head.

The figures on savings demonstrate the concentration of wealth in the hands of the oligarchs. By 1996, there was the equivalent of US$140 billion in personal savings held in Russia – over US$100 billion of which belonged to the top five per cent of Russians. Of those funds, US$70 billion was held in cash – mostly US dollars – meaning that it was not being reinvested into the Russian economy.[8] The bottom 70 per cent of the population enjoyed a total of US$4.5 billion. Many oligarchs simply fled to London with their newfound riches, buying soccer clubs, newspapers and department stores. By 2013, the Swiss bank Credit Suisse reported that 35 per cent of the entire wealth of Russia was concentrated in the hands of 110 oligarchs. [9]

WS
Speech

Phase three: The Russian financial crisis of 1998 and its aftermath

The effects of economic shock therapy, hyperinflation, privatisation and political corruption left the Russian Federation reeling by the end of the 1990s. It was difficult to see how the hopes of pro-democracy demonstrators to bring greater openness and prosperity to Russia were being realised. During 1998, the economic challenges within Russia spilled out into international markets.

Throughout 1998, a number of economic issues came together, culminating in the so-called Russian financial crisis that began in August 1998.

- During 1998, the Russian ruble was being devalued. This meant that it was not as attractive to international investors.
- Interest rates on loans began to rise.
- There were rumours that the Russian government could not meet its debt obligations.
- Russian government bonds – financial products deemed to be the 'safest' investment available – were selling at interest rates of 200 per cent. This means that investors saw them as extremely risky.
- Wealthy individuals within Russia were so afraid of collapse that they began to move their money outside Russia and deposit it in foreign banks at an alarming rate.
- Shares on the Russian stock market lost 75 per cent of their value between January and August 1998.
- Inflation started again during 1998 and was at 27.6 per cent before the crisis.
- The economy as a whole shrunk by 5.3 per cent.

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All of these factors acted like a financial snowball, and the Russian economy was on the brink of collapse. In early August 1998, approximately 6 rubles would buy US$1. On 17 August, the Russian government defaulted on its domestic debt and declared that it could not meet its international debt obligations. In the following month, the ruble lost two-thirds of its value. It now took 21 rubles to buy US$1.

The impact of the crisis was that inflation hit 84 per cent and unemployment rose. Banks were forced to close their doors as people tried to withdraw what little money they had left. Government tax revenues fell because of unemployment, at the same time as pressure on welfare services increased.

The Russian financial crisis was a low point; the system was on the brink of collapse. There were two factors that aided the recovery. The first was that after 1998 a high price for oil on international markets meant that Russia could sell its vast resources at a premium. This helped significantly. The second factor was that the IMF facilitated the restricting of international loans in 1999 and 2000.

1. What was 'shock therapy' and where did the ideas originate?
2. Outline the economic actions that accompanied shock therapy and describe their impact.
3. Outline the challenges of privatising the vast resources of the former Soviet Union.
4. Explain how Russia came to be in a situation where it became an oligarchy.
5. Explain how the 'loans for shares' plan worked.
6. Do some research on *one* Russian oligarch. How did they acquire their wealth and what did they do with it?
7. To what extent was Russia in August 1998 the victim of a 'snowball effect' of negative economic factors?
8. What was the impact of the Russian financial crisis?

Political and social consequences

Alongside the harsh economic measures and their impact on the people, Yeltsin was trying to build democratic systems and institutions in Russia. The attempts at reform could not have come at a more difficult time. Yet, despite the pain of economic reform, Yeltsin received strong support from the politicians in the West and institutions such as the IMF, even when his authoritarian tendencies emerged against the new democracy he pledged to protect.

During the 1990s, Yeltsin was engulfed in a number of political conflicts with the Russian parliament.

At the beginning of his presidency, the Russian parliament had agreed to give Yeltsin expanded powers in order to push through radical economic and political reforms without parliamentary approval. In March 1993, 15 months after the economic reforms began, the parliament voted to repeal Yeltsin's **rule by presidential decree**. Yeltsin simply was not delivering on the economic miracle promised by the 'Chicago Boys', and the parliament grew impatient.

rule by presidential decree
The temporary granting of powers to a president to rule without parliamentary approval, normally reserved for a crisis

Confident of the support of US President Bill Clinton and other Western leaders, Yeltsin declared a **state of emergency** in response to the parliament's vote of repeal. The IMF threatened to cancel a US$1.5 billion loan, after becoming nervous that the Russian parliament was baulking at the market reforms. Yeltsin dissolved parliament and called fresh elections. In another astonishing move, he issued Decree No. 1400, abolishing the Constitution. In response, the parliament voted 636–2 to remove him as president. Parliamentary faith in Yeltsin had totally collapsed.

state of emergency
The temporary suspension of normal constitutional processes to deal with a crisis

Over the next few months, the crisis deepened into armed conflict. Yeltsin sent troops to block the parliament building, cutting off power, heating and telephone lines. Pro-democracy demonstrators,

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fearful that they would lose their democracy, staged massive demonstrations. Yeltsin resorted to violence. On 3 October 1993, Yeltsin sent tanks to disperse the crowd and 100 people were killed by machine-gun fire. On 4 October, Yeltsin ordered Russian troops to storm the parliament building, resulting in the deaths of 500 people.

Despite Yeltsin having dissolved parliament, abolished the Constitution and set fire to the parliament building, the United States stood by him.

By the end of 1995, the Russian people were tired of instability and reforms, and the Communist Party re-emerged as a political force with 22 per cent of the vote in the December 1995 elections. The loans for shares program had taken a large political toll on the government. Anatoly Chubais, the Russian prime minister and one of the 'Chicago Boys', would later admit that it was a mistake to allow banks to both organise and participate in the auctions.

The Russian people had a word for the privatisation program that translated as 'grabification'. It was remarkable that Yeltsin was able to hold on to power for so long given his plunging popularity and his increasing instability as a leader.

The social implications of the economic reforms and political instability were a tragic episode in Russian history. By 1998, 74 million people lived below the poverty line, in comparison to two million in 1989, and consumption of alcohol had doubled. The number of heroin users rose by 900 per cent between 1994 and 2004. The suicide rate in 1994 was twice that of 1986.[10]

Given Russia's difficult transition to the free market, many people have nursed a longing for the communist past at various times in the country's post-Soviet history. In 2008, Joseph Stalin was voted the third most popular Russian figure in a large-scale television poll. It was not insignificant that the contest drew 50 million responses in a nation of 143 million people.

The beloved Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who had recently returned to Russia after going into exile in 1974, lamented the privatisation program and the emergence of the oligarchs, decrying it as little different from the previous system. In an article published in the Russian newspaper *Obshchaya Gazeta*, he pointed out that the oligarchy of 150–200 people, which effectively decided the direction of the entire nation, was uncontrollable, lacked public accountability and was as immune from prosecution as the communist government had been.

1. Why did the Russian parliament grant Yeltsin rule by presidential decree, and why did the parliament later remove it?
2. How did Yeltsin respond to the removal of rule by presidential decree between March and October 1993?
3. Using your knowledge of the economic reforms and the political crises around Yeltsin, explain why the vote for the Communist Party may have been strong in the December 1995 election.
4. Explain the term 'grabification'.
5. What social impacts did the economic and political reforms have on the Russian people during the 1990s?
6. Outline Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's attitude towards the reforms.

Political, social and cultural impacts of the dissolution of communism in Eastern Europe

The states of Eastern Europe used the policies of Gorbachev – particularly *glasnost* – to exert pressure on their communist governments. The transition from 45 years of communism in the Eastern bloc to predominantly stable liberal democracies and free markets was relatively peaceful.

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As John Lewis Gaddis pointed out, events in Eastern Europe moved very fast throughout 1989.

> At the beginning of 1989, the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe seemed as solid as it had been for the past four and a half decades. But in May, Gorbachev's aide Chernyaev was noting gloomily in his diary: 'Socialism in Eastern Europe is disappearing' … By October, Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet foreign ministry press spokesman, could even joke about it. 'You know the Frank Sinatra song "My Way"?' he replied when asked what was left of the Brezhnev Doctrine, 'Hungary and Poland are doing it their way. We now have the Sinatra Doctrine'.
>
> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War*, Penguin, London, 2005, p. XX

The following examples of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania demonstrate some of the political, social and cultural impacts of the dissolution of communism.

Poland

Poland had enjoyed a longer tradition of protest and reform than its neighbours during the communist era. In the early 1980s, the Solidarity movement led by Lech Walesa protested the excesses of Soviet rule at the shipyard at Gdansk, and as a result Solidarity was banned and its leaders were jailed. But the strength of the trade unions and the Roman Catholic Church made it difficult for the Soviets to totally stamp out the impulse to reform within the country.

Between 6 February and 5 April 1989, the Communist Party and the state-sponsored Polish United Workers' Party engaged with Solidarity and the Roman Catholic Church in the so-called Round Table talks. The willingness of the ruling party to talk to its opposition was in response to the protests against the difficult economic conditions of the 1980s. There were three main results that emerged from the talks: Solidarity was legalised, parliamentary elections were called for 4 June 1989, and an agreement known as Contract Sejm allowed for 161 seats, or 35 per cent of the total number of seats, in the Sejm or lower house of the parliament to be contested by non-communist candidates. Sixty-five per cent would be retained by the Communist Party. A new upper house, the Senate, was also created, with 100 available seats.

The outcome of the election was a shock. The result was a landslide against the communists, and Solidarity took 160 of the 161 available seats in the Sejm. In the Senate, Solidarity won 99 of the 100 seats. It was clear that confidence in the Communist Party had collapsed.

In November 1990, Lech Walesa was elected President of Poland, a vote which marked huge political, economic and social change. With the end of communism, far-reaching free market economic reforms were introduced. The Balcerowicz Plan was an expression of economic shock therapy. It involved privatising government assets, removing international trade barriers and subsidies for state-run enterprises, and removing price controls. The reforms represented a rapid transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy and, while they are widely regarded as a success, they were implemented only with a great deal of pain.

Throughout 1989, the Polish economy had suffered stagnant wages, low productivity and runaway inflation, with prices rising by about 50 per cent per month. The first act of the new government was to attempt to arrest these forces. With support from the IMF, in the form of a US$1 billion loan to stabilise the economy, and from American economists, the reformers set about their work.

Getty Images/Peter Turnley

SOURCE 2.6 Lech Walesa was the hero of the 1981 Solidarity movement. He was instrumental in the peaceful transition of Poland to a liberal democracy, and in 1990 became its first post-communist president.

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They commenced by withdrawing state support from the economy. This resulted in a spike in unemployment of an additional 1.1 million workers, bringing the unemployment rate up to 20 per cent. But these jobs were soon replaced by over 500 000 new businesses that were set up by the end of 1992. Supporters of the reforms argued that the initial pain meant that inefficient state-run enterprises were replaced by new businesses, and that the long-term effects included an annual growth rate of over five per cent until the end of the decade.

The prominent American economist Jeffrey Sachs was instrumental in the reforms. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in the summer of 1990, Sachs defended the reform measures by saying that not only had Poland had to transition from a planned to a market economy, but that the starting point was one of deep economic malaise. He argued that economic prosperity equated with political success.

> The political situation in Eastern Europe remains fragile. If the reform programs of the new democratic governments fail, the meager living conditions in Eastern Europe will fall further, which could in turn provoke serious social conflict and even a breakdown of the new democratic institutions. But there are also profound possibilities for rapid improvements in living standards, if the East European countries can successfully make the transition from central planning to the market economy.
>
> J Sachs and D Lipton, 'Poland's economic reform', *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1990

The economic changes were accompanied by a great deal of social change, as ordinary Poles transitioned to a society that was dominated by free market thinking. Workers who had previously enjoyed the security of a job for life, provided by the state, now had to upgrade their skills to meet the demands of competition in the workforce. Women, former employees of agricultural collectives and older workers were most under threat from this new way of thinking and working.

Of course, it was political change that hastened the introduction of economic reform. The first non-communist prime minister in Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, highlighted the success of the transition to democracy without bloodshed, and he believed that Poland was providing an example for other Eastern European countries.

1. Which two groups had significant support in Poland during the communist era?
2. What were the Round Table talks?
3. Explain the significance of the election results on 4 June 1989.
4. How did the post-communist reforms change the economic and social life?
5. Why did Jeffrey Sachs argue that economic reforms were a political necessity?
6. To what extent was Poland successful in transitioning to a post-communist world?

Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia enjoyed a peaceful transition from communism in the so-called Velvet Revolution, a term reputedly inspired by the music of Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground, which was smuggled into Czechoslovakia after 1968. Initially it did not look as though the ruling communists would tolerate the kind of openness and calls for reform that were on display in Poland and Hungary. Political dissent was punished as the repressive regime sought to hold on to power. This repression included strict controls on the press, purges of communist party reformers and punishment of political activists.

On 17 November 1989, a student march was organised to mark International Students Day. The march soon turned into a protest against the communist government and 167 students were beaten by police and hospitalised. This state-sponsored violence rallied other student groups and unions to march and demand more democratic freedoms for Czechoslovakia.

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The philosophy of non-violence underpinned the Velvet Revolution. In the initial 17 November protest, students offered flowers to the police officers who were beating them. Over the following six weeks, the non-violent protests became larger and the government could no longer deny calls for reform.

The so-called Civic Forum was established two days after the initial protest, and called for the overthrow of the communist government and the release of political prisoners. The group's leader, Vaclav Havel, was a poet and playwright whose plays had been banned since the Prague Spring, an attempted Czech uprising in 1968 that had been crushed by Soviet troops in August of that year. Havel's literary works and plays were primarily concerned with the impact of a repressive government on the individual.

In addition to the growing protests, Havel called a general strike for 27 November 1989. Soon, tens of thousands of workers and protesters were marching. In the two days before the general strike, 750 000 assembled peacefully in the Czech capital, Prague, calling on the government to resign. On 27 November, 75 per cent of the population is said to have participated in the strike.

It was surprising to most, including Havel himself, how readily the communist government tolerated the new movement. On 28 November, the Communist Party announced that it would allow multiparty elections. On 10 December, the communist leader Gustav Husak resigned, and on 29 December Havel was appointed to the position of president until elections could be held in the following June. Havel won that election.

In the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution, liberal economic and political reforms were introduced. Like Poland, Czechoslovakia adopted rapid economic reforms that were painful in the short term. But the political reform took on a life of its own. This gave rise to one of the most significant social and cultural changes, which was the rise of the middle class and a large group of small-business owners who believed in the economic values of the West. Some of this change can be attributed to the rise in globalisation and the changes wrought by technology.

Alamy Stock Photo/CTK

SOURCE 2.7 Vaclav Havel, poet and playwright, had been instrumental in Czechoslovakia's reform movement since as far back as 1968. In November 1989, he led the peaceful Velvet Revolution. In this photograph, Havel addresses a crowd in Prague just before his appointment as interim president.

The cultural and social changes introduced by democratic political institutions in a country that was born out of World War I, suffered Nazi occupation after 1939 and then endured 45 years of communism after 1945 should also not be underestimated.

By 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia had undergone the so-called Velvet Divorce, when it split to become the separate countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic's 10 million citizens were mostly ethnic Czechs, while the 5 million Slovaks were mostly Slovak and Hungarian. Although Slovakia celebrated its independence, the Czechs did not welcome the separation.

The impulse to Slovak independence coincided with the Velvet Revolution. Slovak nationalist groups had argued that the capital, Prague, was Czech-dominated and they called for an independent homeland for the Slovaks. The former communist Vladimir Meciar was a prominent Slovak nationalist. After the fall of communism, arguments began between the two sides about their relative economic and political strength and benefits, given their numbers.

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In 1992, Vaclav Klaus became prime minister of the Czech region of Czechoslovakia and Vladimir Meciar was leader of the Slovak section. The two pursued significantly different policy agendas and this led to high-level discussions about a separation. President Havel resigned at news of the talks, not wanting to oversee the separation but being constitutionally unable to stop it. As with the Velvet Revolution, the separation was swift and amicable. Assets – from embassies to military equipment and property – were divided at the rate of two-thirds for the Czechs and one-third for the Slovaks, to reflect their relative populations.

Significantly, the Velvet Revolution and the Velvet Divorce demonstrated that transitions can be conducted peacefully. In both instances, not a single life was lost. In contrast, events in the former Yugoslavia and, to a lesser extent, Romania showed the potential for violent conflict.

1. What were some of the features of the Velvet Revolution?
2. What was the Civic Forum and who was its leader?
3. How important was the personality of Vaclav Havel to the Velvet Revolution?
4. How did political change lead to a new social structure?
5. Explain the Velvet Divorce.

Romania

While the transition to democracy was peaceful across the rest of Eastern Europe, in Romania it was marked by violence as the hardline leader Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, attempted to cling to power. During the 1980s, in the face of economic stagnation, they pressed ahead with a Stalinist agenda that consisted of rapid industrialisation while their population suffered very low living standards.

The revolution in Romania started when the Hungarian Reformed Church pastor Laszlo Tokes was removed from the pulpit by Romanian government authorities. Tokes had been a vocal critic of the Romanian regime and had written about human rights abuses in the country. He feared that the Ceausescu program of 'systemisation' – whereby small villages were integrated into larger towns and, as a result, populations were forcibly relocated and services removed – would target the minority Hungarian population. In March 1989, Tokes was ordered to stop preaching, which resulted in mass protests in the city of Timisoara. Throughout the rest of 1989, Tokes was harassed by the Romanian security services, who by December had placed him under virtual house arrest.

Getty Images/Terry Smith

SOURCE 2.8 Laszlo Tokes was an ethnic Hungarian pastor in Romania. The protests over his removal from the pulpit for criticising the Romanian regime led to state-sponsored violence against protestors. This outraged ordinary Romanians and led to the fall of the Ceausescu regime. This photograph of Tokes was taken shortly after his release from house arrest.

On 16 December 1989, a growing crowd assembled around Tokes' Timisoara flat and parish church, voicing their support. Security forces threatened to disperse the crowd with water cannons if the assembly did not break up. The Hungarian and Romanian crowd started singing banned anti-regime patriotic songs. Ceausescu's security forces became

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increasingly concerned and, on the following day they fired on the crowd, killing 97 people.

On 21 December 1989, Ceausescu appeared before a large crowd in Budapest, hoping to show television images of widespread support. He was not well received. The crowd chanted anti-Ceausescu slogans and the Communist Party staged a coup, removing him from power immediately. Romania was thrown into chaos. Ceausescu and his wife fled by helicopter but were captured soon afterwards. Pro-Ceausescu forces clashed with the new government, which named itself the National Salvation Front. Over the following days, approximately 1000 people died in the clashes.

Ceausescu and his wife Elena were executed on 25 December 1989. The bloodied, lifeless bodies were broadcast on national television.

Getty Images/ Eric BOUVET

SOURCE 2.9 After the December Revolution, it was revealed that the Ceausescu family enjoyed vast amounts of wealth in a series of palatial homes while the rest of Romanian society lived in abject poverty.

In the months after the downfall, the lavish lifestyle the Ceausescu family had led was broadcast around the world. Images of Romanian orphanages with babies living in abject deprivation were shown alongside the gold-laden official palaces of the leading family. This further stoked anger.

But the Romanian transition to democracy was unlike other, peaceful revolutions, not only in its violence, but in the absence of new leaders who were committed to liberal democracy. In effect, leading Communist Party members simply changed their political colours and continued to rule. Unlike in other countries, in which former Communist Party members were banned, the first president of post-communist Romania, Ion Iliescu, had himself been an active member of Ceausescu's government. Many party members and members of the security forces benefited from the privatisation programs that accompanied the economic reforms of the period. Moreover, no effective justice was handed to the victims of Ceausescu's 25-year reign of terror, and the Communist Party members simply resumed their seats in parliament.

Romania in the years after the communist period remained affected by low living standards and corruption. It was awarded membership of NATO in 2004, and European Union membership in 2007.

The fall of communism

WS

Change: from communism to democratic liberalism

1. In what sense was Ceausescu a Stalinist?
2. Explain how the removal of Pastor Laszlo Tokes started the revolution.
3. How did the Romanian people stage their revolution and what was the response of the Ceausescu regime?
4. To what extent was the Romanian revolution a continuation of communism by another name?

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Nature and role of the Russian Federation under Vladimir Putin to 2011

On 31 December 1999, Boris Yeltsin suddenly resigned from the Russian presidency. The new century would be ushered in with the arrival of a new interim president – Yeltsin's prime minister, Vladimir Putin. Among Putin's first acts as president was to guarantee that Yeltsin and his family would be immune from any criminal charges or investigations arising out of the privatisation program during the 1990s. Yeltsin was able to retire to his property just outside Moscow, and he died in April 2007.

Vladimir Putin rose from relative political obscurity. He had spent the end of the Cold War as a KGB operative in Dresden, East Germany, and then as a high-ranking official to the mayor of St Petersburg, before coming to Moscow in 1996.

The rise of Putin might be seen as part of the resurgence of Russian power. Putin himself in 2005 famously remarked, 'Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century'. To outsiders, it seemed that Putin was determined to regain some of the prestige and power of Russia, and his actions after the year 2000 certainly supported this idea.

Getty Images/SVF2

SOURCE 2.10 Vladimir Putin (centre) emerged from relative political obscurity to become President of the Russian Federation in 2000. His nationalist, anti-Western actions after 2000 represented a break from the drift towards Western values in Russia after the fall of communism.

Despite his relative political inexperience, Putin emerged as a shrewd political operator. US President George W Bush famously said in 2001 that he had looked into Putin's eyes and seen his soul. Bush, like Clinton before him, believed that Russia was becoming increasingly tied to the Western liberal democratic mindset. But in the chaos of the 1990s, Western leaders were not banking on the rise of Putin.

Vladimir Putin successfully contested the 2000 election as interim president and was sworn in as President of the Russian Federation on 7 May 2000. Putin served two terms as president between 2000 and 2008, but term limits prevented him from seeking a third. In a widely criticised deal, Putin was appointed as new president Dmitry Medvedev's prime minister between 2008 and 2012, effectively maintaining his power. This period was known as **tandemocracy** – the idea that, although Medvedev was president, the real power lay with Putin. As prime minister, having pushed through Russian parliament the approval of new term limits, extended from four to six years, Putin successfully contested the 2012 election. Medvedev was made his prime minister. Despite his unpopularity in the West, Putin has enjoyed significant presidential approval ratings at home – often at well over 80 per cent, according to polling undertaken by American news agencies.

tandemocracy
A system of government in which power rests with two rulers or authorities

Political reforms and life under Putin

The nature of the Russian Federation under Putin has been variously described as autocratic, oligarchic and corrupt. Western observers say that Putin holds unparalleled personal control over the organs of the Russian state, including the parliament, industry, the media and the military. He has been labelled a modern-day tsar.

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Putin's first act as president in May 2000 was to reform the administrative structure of the Russian Federation to concentrate more power in his own hands. In 1993, there were 89 'federal subjects of Russia', which were city or regional groupings, all of which had equal status under the constitution with their own heads, parliaments and constitutions. Although Putin did not tamper with the constitutional arrangements, he grouped them into seven federal districts, each with a head who was appointed by, and answerable to, the president. In July of that year, the Russians passed a law giving Putin the right to dismiss the heads of the federal subjects. Finally, in 2004, the direct election of each of these federal subjects was replaced with a nomination of the president. In a slow process of political 'reform', Putin has concentrated a great deal of constitutional power in the hands of the office of president.

Putin and the oligarchs

There are a number of high-profile cases in which the oligarchs who benefited from the privatisation program of the 1990s fell foul of Putin in the 2000s. Many of them, such as Boris Berezovsky, lived in exile overseas in the United Kingdom, where they had significant business interests.

The most famous former oligarch was Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former CEO of Yukos Oil. Khodorkovsky became a political opponent of Putin and, in October 2003, he was arrested and charged with fraud. He was given a sentence of 10 years and released in 2013. The Khodorkovsky case sent a message to other oligarchs that their continuing patronage was dependent on good relations with Putin and the Kremlin.

Political violence

Another feature of life in Russia under Putin has been violence against political opponents, and even against the free press. The journalist Anna Politkovskaya was shot dead in the lobby of her apartment building in October 2006. The Russian government was criticised for not doing enough to protect an independent media and some went as far as to allege Russian government involvement. In London, a high-profile former head of the Russian security services, Alexander Litvinenko, was poisoned after accusing the Russian government of being involved in the Politkovskaya murder. He fell ill on 1 November and died three weeks later in a London hospital. The circumstances around his death were highly suspicious because he was poisoned with radioactive polonium. An independent British inquiry ruled in January 2016 that he was probably poisoned by the Russian security services, and the ruling went so far as to accuse Putin of approving the murder.

Alamy Stock Photo/SPUTNIK

Getty Images/Natasja Weitsz

SOURCE 2.11 Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya (left) was a vocal critic of Putin's presidency. She was murdered in her apartment lobby in 2006. Alexander Litvinenko (right) was a vocal political critic of Putin. He was murdered in London in the same year.

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Putin's response to domestic crises in Russia

Putin demonstrated very early in his presidency that he would resist Western attempts – as he saw them – to meddle in the affairs of Russia, even when it came to disasters and terror incidents. A number of crises showed this, including the:

- *Kursk* submarine disaster in 2000
- Moscow theatre siege in 2002
- Beslan school hostage crisis in 2004.

Sinking of the *Kursk*

In August 2000, Putin's first major test as president came. During a large-scale naval exercise in the Barents Sea, the submarine *Kursk* exploded underwater and sank. The explosion was so great that it registered 4.2 on the Richter scale. The Russian government was criticised for being too slow to respond and for rejecting offers of international expertise to assist in the salvage operation. When Putin finally agreed to accept the help of British and Norwegian engineers five days after the explosion, it was found that all 118 members of the crew had been killed.

The difficulty for Putin in accepting international help was that the *Kursk* was heralded as an unsinkable vessel. In the context of Putin's attempt to reassert Russian strength, the incident was a humiliation to the Russian military and to national pride. It was also a political disaster for Putin himself. Initially, he refused to come back from his summer holiday to deal with the crisis, and when he finally met with the victims of the families on 22 August, they shouted at him and accused him of incompetence. The *Kursk* disaster taught Putin a valuable lesson in public relations. When the famous US broadcaster Larry King asked Putin what happened to the *Kursk*, Putin appeared to smirk as he said the words, 'It sank.' The broadcast was highly controversial at the time and angered many within Russia. From now on, Putin would exert greater control over the media.

Dubrovka Theatre siege

The next major domestic incident was the 2002 siege in a Moscow theatre, which resulted in the deaths of 130 people. On the evening of 23 October, 700 Russians were enjoying the musical *Nord-Ost* when 50 rebels from the Chechen Republic, armed with machine guns and explosives, stormed the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow. Once again, Russian authorities were accused of being slow to act and, when they did, their actions during the botched rescue attempt and afterwards were heavily criticised. On the morning of 26 October, the theatre was pumped full of a dangerous narcotic gas before Russian special forces raided the theatre. It was the gas that killed many of the victims, leaving many to choke and lose consciousness.

Getty Images/ALEXANDER NEMENOV

SOURCE 2.12 Russian special forces entering the Dubrovka Theatre to break the 2002 siege.

The terror attack was in response to the Russian government's war on Chechnya, a breakaway republic to the south of Russia. The war had been renewed in August 1999, and Putin had adopted an aggressive stance against the rebels during the election campaign of May 2000. In retaliation for the siege, the Russians were accused of committing atrocities, such as torture, in Chechnya.

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As with the *Kursk* submarine disaster, the Russian government was accused of covering up vital information about the incident. The main issue has been around the use of gas and its role in killing those inside the theatre. Putin went on Russian television asking for forgiveness from the Russian people for not being able to save all the victims, but Russian officials would not reveal the type of gas used at the time. This failure to identify the gas made it difficult for doctors to treat survivors.

Getty Images/SVF2

SOURCE 2.13 Putin has been accused of being heavy-handed in dealing with domestic crises, resulting in the unnecessary deaths of hostages at the Moscow theatre siege in 2002 and the Beslan school siege in 2004 (above).

Belsan school hostage crisis

On 1 September 2004, Chechen rebels demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces from their Chechnya and recognition of their independence stormed a school in Beslan in North Ossetia. They took 1100 hostages. Three days later, Russian security forces stormed the building, which resulted in the deaths of 385 people – including nearly 200 children. Once again, the Russian security services were put under scrutiny.

In April 2017, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russian forces used disproportionate force in ending the siege, resulting in the deaths of some of the victims. Again, independent Russian investigations into the siege had been stalled and ended, prompting the victims' families to go to the European court.

Foreign policy and the Putin Doctrine

The war in Chechnya would also press heavily on Putin's early years in power. The former Soviet republic had pushed for its independence, but a 2003 referendum declared that it would be a part of the Russian Federation. Chechen rebels had fought against Russia in a bloody war for independence for the largely Muslim state.

One of the central foreign policy initiatives of Putin has been to reassert Russia as the regional power. The integration into NATO of former Soviet satellites, such as Poland, the Czech Republic and the Baltic states, has seen Putin become increasingly suspicious of the Western military alliance and embark on what some observers have called a third Cold War.

Soviet-born American scholar Leon Aron has dubbed Putin's foreign affairs policy the **Putin Doctrine**.[11] Putin is reasserting Russia's superpower status and trying to become the dominant power in the region. One of the key planks in his foreign policy has been his ongoing suspicion of NATO's continuing movement east, which has seen former Soviet states such as the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland become members.

Putin Doctrine
Policy of recovering the economic, political and strategic assets lost by the Soviet state in 1991

At other points, Putin has been willing to go to war to prevent NATO's move east. Russia went to war against Georgia after it made moves to join NATO. Putin has also threatened to halt natural gas deliveries to Ukraine after Ukraine sought closer ties with Europe. In 2006 and 2009, he followed through on the promise. In 2014, Ukraine's attempt to forge closer ties with the European Union resulted in Russian military involvement in that country. In addition, the Russians annexed Ukraine's predominantly Russian-speaking region of Crimea. Putin argued that Russian involvement in the Ukraine was for the defence of Russian-speaking populations in the east.

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Feature: Putin in power

As with the rest of the Western world after 2001, Putin has been able to prosecute a domestic political agenda by claiming that Russia is under siege from terrorists. He pointed as proof to the Moscow theatre siege and the Beslan school massacre, both of which claimed ties to separatist forces in Chechnya.

Under Putin, Russia has strengthened its military capability. The Russian defence budget went from US$29 billion in 2000 to US$64 billion in 2011. In a 2012 campaign commitment for the presidency, Putin promised to spend US$770 billion on defence in the next decade.

1. Identify two facts about Putin's background that shaped his leadership style and presidency.
2. In what ways is Putin a break from Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's relationship with the West?
3. How did Putin's political reforms in his first presidency allow him to concentrate greater power in the hands of the president?
4. Outline the role of violence in Russian political life since the Putin era began.
5. What do the *Kursk* disaster, the Moscow theatre siege and the Beslan massacre reveal about Russia's responses to domestic crises?
6. Explain how the Putin Doctrine is an expression of Putin's intentions to reassert Russia's global power.

Putin in power

SOURCE A

Putin, a product of the country's murkiest intelligence service, has failed to transcend his origins and stop behaving like a lieutenant-colonel in the Soviet KGB. He is still busy sorting out his freedom-loving fellow countrymen; he persists in crushing liberty just as he did earlier in his career.

Anna Politkovskaya, *Putin's Russia*, The Harvill Press, London, 2004, p. 1

SOURCE B

Putin believes in 'sovereign democracy' or 'managed democracy' rather than the Western variety; his democracy is one that operates through a rational, hierarchic system that he calls 'the vertical of power'; in other words, power flows naturally downwards from the presidential office in the Kremlin to the various echelons of offices … and only then down to the masses.

Chris Hutchins, *Putin*, Matador, Leicester, 2012, p. 6

SOURCE C

Vladimir Putin is both a product and producer of this pervasive system of corruption. Of course, he is not the only Eurasian or Western leader to have collected gifts and tributes. But to have created with this clique … is by any account an impressive achievement. I argue that the outlines of the authoritarian and kleptocratic system were clear by the end of Putin's first one hundred days in 2000.

Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2014, p. 12

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QUESTIONS

1. What attitude does the writer in Source A have towards Putin? Give detailed examples.
2. According to Source B:
   - **a** How does Putin's style of democracy differ from the Western liberal version?
   - **b** Explain the meaning of the 'vertical of power'.
3. What is the argument of the writer in Source C?
4. Using all three sources and your own knowledge, discuss how Putin's time in office has shaped the Russian political landscape.

Putin: A personality cult?

Vladimir Putin has cultivated an image of a tough guy. He has famously been photographed riding shirtless on horseback, fishing, hunting, patting big cats, firing automatic weapons, piloting submarines, driving F1 cars, competing in judo and scuba diving.

QUESTIONS

1. Compile a photographic essay titled 'Putin: A personality cult?' in which you gather as many 'action' images of Putin as you can.
2. Explain how visual imagery can help shape the public perception of a leader and discuss how Putin is exploiting that image.

Getty Images/AFP/Stringer

SOURCE 2.14 Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin rides a horse during his vacation outside the town of Kyzyl in Southern Siberia, 2009.

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Chapter summary

- Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin oversaw the transition to a post-Soviet society in Russia, each of them facing unique difficulties.
- Gorbachev wanted to reform a system he deeply believed in, and, although he is ultimately responsible for its collapse, he did everything to prevent it.
- Yeltsin's presidency was marked by a chaotic transition to liberal democracy and free markets.
- Putin challenged the growing Westernisation within Russia and sought to reassert the role of Russia on the international stage.
- The transition to liberal democracies in the Eastern European bloc was largely peaceful.

Further resources

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[7] Bivens and Bernstein, 1998, pp. 627–8.

[8] Figures cited in Bivens and Bernstein, 1998, p. 621.

[9] www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/110-oligarchs-own-a-third-of-russias-wealth-8869725.html, 9 October 2013.

[10] Klein, 2007, pp. 237–8.

[11] Aron, L, 'The Putin Doctrine', in *Foreign Affairs*, 8 March 2013, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2013-03-08/putin-doctrine.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Outline the problems that *perestroika* and *glasnost* were supposed to address after 1985.
2. Explain Mikhail Gorbachev's attitude to change within the Soviet Union, as opposed to reform movements in Eastern Europe.
3. With reference to one Eastern European country, outline the transition from communism to liberal democracy.
4. Outline the key issues in the power struggle between Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin during 1990 and 1991.
5. To what extent was Gorbachev responsible for the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union? Give detailed reasons for your response.
6. Why was the transition to liberal democracy and free markets in Russia after the collapse of communism so chaotic?
7. What political and social impacts did economic shock therapy and privatisation have on Russia?
8. Evaluate the view that Boris Yeltsin failed in his attempt to build strong democratic structures in Russia.
9. Outline the nature of Russian political and social life under Vladimir Putin.
10. To what extent was Putin's foreign policy an attempt to reassert Russia's role as a superpower?
11. To what extent do you agree with the idea that Putin was a success as an autocrat and a failure as a democrat? Give detail in your judgement.

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03

The United States' international influence, 1991–2011

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

In this chapter, students will examine the influence of the United States as the only world superpower remaining post-Cold War.

Aspects to be covered include:

- The United States after the Cold War
- Exercising 'hard' and 'soft' power in US foreign policy
- Supporters and detractors: US foreign policy in Europe, Asia and the Middle East

Modern History syllabus

Then United States President-elect Barack Obama (left), and President George W Bush (right), in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, 7 January 2009.

Alamy Stock Photo/Newscom

Introduction

By 1992, the United States was the world's only **superpower**. Soviet communism and the Eastern European bloc had collapsed with unexpected suddenness, Germany was reunified and Europe was replacing its communist institutions with new liberal democratic political and economic institutions. Yet the end of the Cold War had left American foreign policy makers without an enemy around which to shape their view of the world.

US political scientist Francis Fukuyama declared the 'end of history', stating that American **liberal democracy** represented the culmination of the development of Western political thinking, and President George HW Bush declared a 'new world order', in which the values of freedom and peace would be shared universally under American leadership. Others offered a more sobering view. Political scientist Samuel P Huntington suggested that, while the end of the Cold War might diminish old ideological and political rivalries, a 'clash of civilisations' between various religious and cultural groupings would shape future international relations.

It was not immediately obvious what the United States' role would be in the post-Cold War world. At least the Cold War bought with it a stability and certainty about geopolitics. The transition to a new **multipolar** world threatened to unleash instability and uncertainty. This uncertainty materialised in the challenges that came with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the civil war in Yugoslavia and the rise of China.

But perhaps the most far-reaching consequences of US foreign policy in the early 1990s were tensions in the Middle East. When Iraq, under President Saddam Hussein, invaded its tiny, oil-rich neighbour Kuwait, the US led a United Nations–backed force to expel Iraqi forces from the emirate. The consequences of that conflict still reverberate today. The American decision not to remove Saddam Hussein's regime from power led to a decade-long stand-off in which the United States attempted to curtail the development of chemical and nuclear weapons programs in Iraq.

Throughout the 1990s, America had to deal with the growing threat of Islamic militancy. Groups such as Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda resented the presence of a US military base in Saudi Arabia. As a result, a number of terrorist attacks on high-profile US targets, such as the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in August 1998 and the USS *Cole*, docked in Yemen, in October 2000, made international headlines.

When President Bill Clinton was elected in November 1992, he did not have the kind of existential threat from communism that gave his predecessors a clear foreign-policy focus. He was even said to have uttered, 'Gosh, I miss the Cold War.' However, the central plank of the **Clinton Doctrine** was 'democratic enlargement'. This meant that the Americans tried to impose the kind of liberal democracy of their own institutions onto foreign soil, where it had no tradition or did not necessarily fit. Examples include China, the Middle East and parts of the Balkans and Russia.

But the big turn in global developments in the post-Cold War era was undoubtedly the events of 11 September 2001 – often referred to as '9/11'. One effect of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on that day was a profound shift in American foreign policy.

For George W Bush's administration, the world was clearly divided into two – the good and the evil. Bush declared that those who were not with the Americans were against them, and the administration acted to wage a 'war on terror' in Afghanistan and Iraq. These conflicts raged through the following decade, and international terrorist groups led by al-Qaeda took the fight to major Western cities, including London, Paris and Madrid, with bombings that targeted civilians.

These were the global challenges faced by the United States between 1991 and 2011.

superpower
A great power that dominates the international system, has global reach that is underpinned by a strong economy and possesses superior military capacity

liberal democracy
A broad political philosophy supported by institutions that guarantee the freedom of the individual

multipolar
A world in which there are multiple centres of power

Clinton Doctrine
US foreign policy of 'democratic enlargement', which sought to install American political and economic values across the globe

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1990	August	Iraq invades Kuwait
1991	January	Operation Desert Storm begins, aiming to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait
	June	Slovenia declares its independence, commencing the Yugoslav civil war
1992	January	China opens up to the rest of the world
1995	November	Dayton Accords temporarily end the Yugoslav civil war
1999	December	Putin becomes President of the Russian Federation
2001	September	19 hijackers crash planes in New York and Washington, DC, prompting the 'war on terror'
2003	March	The United States invades Iraq
2007	February	Putin's 'Munich speech' condemns US foreign policy

Nature of US foreign policy in the post-Cold War world, including the use of 'hard' and 'soft' power

In the United States, politicians, think tanks and political theorists grappled with the nature of the post-Cold War world. With only one superpower left in the world, what would the new world order look like? Fifty years earlier, Henry Luce had encouraged Americans to adopt a more **interventionist** stance in international relations, and it looked as though the end of the Cold War would not result in a retreat into isolation. A number of views emerged. These included:

interventionist
Willingness (in the case of a powerful nation) to become involved in international affairs

- Francis Fukuyama's 'the end of history'
- Samuel P Huntington's 'clash of civilisations'
- George HW Bush's idea about a 'new world order'
- William Kristol and Robert Hagan's 'Project for a New American Century'
- Joseph Nye Jr's 'soft power'
- George W Bush's 'global war on terror'.

Mind map: US foreign policy in the post-Cold War world

The end of history

American political scientist Francis Fukuyama wrote an article in the *National Interest* in the summer of 1989 titled 'The end of history?' It was later published in long form and became a bestselling book. In it, he argued that the end of the Cold War seemed to have resulted in the 'unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism …' and that humans had reached 'the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.'

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In writing about the end of history, Fukuyama was not suggesting that the currents of international affairs would be any less unpredictable than in previous eras. Rather, he was borrowing an idea, shared by both Karl Marx and Georg Hegel, that when people's needs are fully satisfied by the social system in which they evolve, then the political, social and economic institutions would have reached their zenith. For Marx, that final condition was the creation of a communist state, and for Hegel, it was a world in which liberalism dominated. By the time Fukuyama's book was released in 1992, the ashes of communism had settled and Western liberal democracy seemed to have met that criterion.

Fukuyama argued that liberal democracy, with its twin pillars of liberty and equality, had conquered the rival ideologies of communism, fascism, theocracy and military dictatorship. Communism had crumpled under the weight of its internal contradictions. Fukuyama argued that, while communism could handle the development of industrialisation, its central failure was its inability to adapt to a post-industrial world that would be characterised by information and technology.

A clash of civilisations

Another prominent view was that promoted by Samuel P Huntington. He believed that the post-Cold War world would be characterised by conflict between civilisations. Huntington argued that conflict among nations in the previous 300 years had been typically between Western powers, and in the next phase it would be between Western and non-Western civilisations. Huntington defined civilisations as the highest and broadest differences between peoples. For example, a resident of Paris might be said to belong to a number of cultural groupings that share broadly the same language, religion, traditions and geographic loyalties. He or she might be Catholic, French and European. This is significantly different from the Chinese, who share a different set of cultural identities based on language, history and Confucian ideas. These distinctions, Huntington claims, are basic, and they would inevitably form the basis of post-Cold War conflict.

Huntington cited eight different civilisations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic–Orthodox, Latin American and African. He said that they have fundamentally different views about the relationship between God and man, different social structures and different ideas about politics, liberty and progress – and therefore, according to Huntington, they are not easily reconciled. Moreover, the potential for conflict becomes greater with globalisation as interactions between cultures increase.

Huntington also argued that economic globalisation would weaken the nation-state as the dominant form of identity, and in its place, as Western power peaked, fundamentalist religion would increasingly fill the gap. Finally, Huntington said that economic regionalism is one of the main forces that reinforce these different cultural groupings.

> … the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.
>
> Samuel P Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 1993, p. 22

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A new world order

President George HW Bush's State of the Union address before a joint session of Congress on 29 January 1991 raised questions about the future of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world. Two weeks earlier, war had broken out in the Middle East as an American-led coalition set about freeing Kuwait from the invasion of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. President Bush declared that the end of the Cold War was 'a victory for all humanity' and credited American leadership with being instrumental in the freedom and reunification of Europe. He also used the term 'new world order' to link American values with universal aspirations. President Bush said:

> It is a big idea: a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind – peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law.

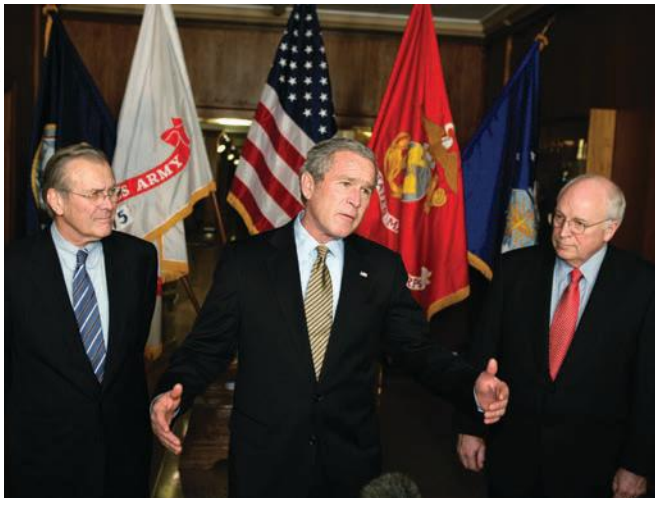
In a similar vein to Fukuyama, the president celebrated the victory of American political values, saying:

> The triumph of democratic ideas in Eastern Europe and Latin America and the continuing struggle for freedom elsewhere all around the world all confirm the wisdom of our nation's founders.

neoconservative
A political ideology characterised by free market economics and an interventionist foreign policy

Importantly, Bush also signalled that Americans would not use the end of the Cold War to retreat back into isolation. He called on the United States to shoulder its burden of responsibility and sacrifice to maintain freedom in the world.

Getty Images/Pool



SOURCE 3.1 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (left) and Vice President Richard Cheney (right) were signatories to the Project for a New American Century and became influential figures in the presidency of George W Bush (centre).

The Project for a New American Century

The Project for a New American Century was a **neoconservative** think tank set up by William Kristol and Robert Kagan in June 1997. It outlined a series of principles under which the United States should project power in the world amid criticisms of President Bill Clinton's foreign policy, which they dismissed as 'incoherent' and 'adrift'. The document was signed by a number of men who would later hold powerful positions in the administration of President George W Bush after the 2000 election, including Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz.

The Project's 'statement of principles' argued that the US needed to consolidate its sole superpower status by building up the military to support its international interests. It should not shy away from identifying and dealing with future threats. The statement celebrated the successes of the Reagan administration and said that the US needed to assume its responsibilities for global leadership.

The statement introduced a new way forward for American foreign policy. It read:

> The history of the 20th century should have taught us that it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire. The history of this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership.
>
> PNAC Statement of Principles, 3 June 1997, http://www.rrojasdatabank.info/pfpc/PNAC---statement%20of%20principles.pdf

The principles of the Project for a New American Century included the need to:

- increase defence spending significantly to carry out current American global responsibilities and modernise armed forces into the future

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- strengthen ties with democratic allies and challenge regimes hostile to American interests and values
- promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad
- accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to American security, prosperity and principles.

The Project for the New American Century has been criticised for being funded by arms companies, and the concept of a pre-emptive war was controversial.

Hard and soft power

The manner in which power is exercised in the world has significant implications for the prospects of maintaining peace and security. Often, when conflict emerges, diplomatic solutions are pursued until military force is judged to be necessary. Economic sanctions might be used to convince rogue nations to suspend weapons programs. Theorists of international relations talk of 'realist' and 'idealist' approaches. Realist approaches consider that nations will pursue their own national interests above any other consideration, while idealists believe nations will act in ways that will abide by the shared principles of the international system, such as state **sovereignty** and **self-determination**. Victorious nations in a war talk of 'winning hearts and minds'. The point is that, in a globalised world that has diverse values, needs and goals, it is not always easy to maintain a peaceful balance.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the United States assumed leadership responsibility over a world in which it was criticised for not doing enough to prevent genocide in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and criticised for doing too much when it bombed Serb positions in Kosovo.

sovereignty
The idea that all states should be free from outside interference to determine their own political future

self-determination
The idea that nations can freely elect their own governments without outside interference

Hard power

Hard power, as the name suggests, is the willingness to use military force rather than diplomacy to achieve international foreign policy aims. Since September 2001, there has been a decline in the use of soft power as the Americans have fought wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the attempt to further their 'war on terror'. In the 1990s, the United States preferred to use intervention as part of a broader coalition – as part of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, or with NATO forces.

The Bush administration's use of **pre-emptive strikes** is one example of hard power. The thinking behind this is that it is better to deal with an enemy while they are still weak, and before they emerge as a real threat. This policy was announced in June 2002 at the West Point Military Academy, when President George W Bush said:

pre-emptive strikes
The policy of striking potential enemies before they become powerful enough to challenge the dominant power

> We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long … Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge.
>
> George W Bush, June 2002, cited in http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/01/international/text-of-bushs-speech-at-west-point.html

While the use of pre-emptive strikes in the 'global war on terror' is a prime example of hard power in action, it is not only limited to military action. Economic sanctions might be regarded as an expression of hard power because they coerce nations to act in line with international norms by restricting trade and stopping supplies. During the 1990s, the Iraqi government suffered under strict sanctions that led to the deaths of millions because the government could not get access to medicines.

Iran, too, has been the subject of strict sanctions in an effort to get the regime there to halt its nuclear development program. The tiny island of Cuba was the subject of US sanctions between 1961 and 2015. Other countries where sanctions or trade embargoes have been applied include Syria, North Korea and Russia.

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Soft power

Political scientist Joseph Nye Jr coined the term 'soft power' in 1990. Soft power refers to the idea of being able to attract states towards sharing your interests and values. Nye suggests there are three main categories under which soft power may be measured:

- the attractiveness of a culture, including education, technology and entertainment
- the virtue of political values
- exercising a fair foreign policy.

One of the most effective instruments of soft power is education. The United States is home to some of the world's most prestigious universities, and America attracts more international students than any other nation. The country also wields soft power in the form of technology. From the mid-1990s, the US led the technology and Internet revolution as companies such as Microsoft, Apple, Google and Facebook dominated the world of technology. And, of course, Hollywood and US television dominate the world of entertainment on a global scale. For example, American television 'normalised' the image of the nuclear family, suburbia and consumption, and in turn fuelled the aspirations of the middle classes in Australia, Britain and other parts of the world to live similar lives. Therefore, it can be argued that the 'American Dream' as a brand is a powerful form of soft power. Other forms of American soft power include tourism and commercial products (such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's).

Nye's 'second pillar' of soft power is political values. These are most pointedly expressed during a time of great need, such as a humanitarian crisis resulting from a famine, earthquake or flood. American financial and humanitarian aid is an example of soft power. The Internet has also been seen as a repository of American political values – particularly the freedom of expression. The rise of social media was a significant factor in the 2011 Arab Spring, and American presidents have been critical of countries, such as China and Saudi Arabia, that attempt to curb Internet use for political purposes.

The 'third pillar' is the use of foreign policy in ways that are fair, moral and legitimate. The classic example of this is the Marshall Plan – the US$15 billion American plan to help the European recovery after World War II. Without the assistance of the US, Europe was faced with the threat of grinding poverty and Soviet communism.

Newspaper search: hard and soft power

> Think of the impact of Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms in Europe at the end of World War II; of young people behind the Iron Curtain listening to American music and news on Radio Free Europe; of Chinese students symbolizing their protests in Tiananmen Square by creating a replica of the Statue of Liberty; of newly liberated Afghans in 2001 asking for a copy of the Bill of Rights; of young Iranians today surreptitiously watching banned American videos and satellite television broadcasts in the privacy of their homes. These are all examples of America's soft power. When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction.
>
> Joseph Nye Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Hatchette, UK ebook, 2009


Understanding soft power in US foreign policy

The 'global war on terror'

The most significant shift in American foreign policy was association with the 'global war on terror' after the attacks on New York and Washington, DC, on 11 September 2001. This meant that the United States would use a combination of covert and overt military operations to chase those responsible for the attacks – particularly Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network. The US announced that it would wage a war on terrorist groups and their networks across the globe.

On 20 September 2001, nine days after the attacks, President George W Bush addressed a joint session of Congress and the American people. He first directed his remarks towards the Taliban government of Afghanistan, which he accused of harbouring al-Qaeda leaders and allowing terrorist training camps to operate in the country. Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over all al-Qaeda

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leaders, close the training camps and hand over terrorists. He then threatened, 'The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate.'

Bush warned Americans that the 'war on terror' would be different from the conflicts of the past. He said, 'Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes visible on TV and covert operations secret even in success.'

It was at this point in the speech that he made the remarkable claim that countries are either for America or against them, saying:

> And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.
>
> George W Bush to Joint Session of Congress and the American people, 20 September 2001, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html

As part of the 'war on terror', the US went to war against Afghanistan in October 2001, and against Iraq in March 2003. These conflicts were highly ineffective, as a wave of sectarian violence and political unrest filled the power vacuum left by the removal of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The justification for the US invasion of Iraq was the US belief that the Iraqis were developing a program of weapons of mass destruction – a claim that was later proven to be false. Moreover, the US accused the Iraqis of hosting al-Qaeda. However, it was clear that the secular Ba'athist regime in power in Iraq was at odds with the fundamentalist al-Qaeda movement. Eventually, in Iraq and Syria, these conflicts gave rise to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – a Sunni sect that took its inspiration (and funding) from the Wahhabi clerics who were dominant in Saudi Arabia. This was complicated by the fact that most of the hijackers of 11 September 2001 were Saudis, and yet Saudi Arabia was the United States' closest ally in the Middle East.

War on terrorism

A coalition of the willing

The United States struggled to get the United Nations to support its intervention in Iraq in the lead-up to the Iraq War in 2003. The UN investigated American claims of an Iraqi weapons program throughout the final months of 2002 and declared that the program was non-existent. The US mobilised a 'coalition of the willing', which supported the US to disarm Saddam. Although 48 countries signed on, only the United Kingdom, Australia and Poland sent troops. It is notable that there were a number of states that did not sign on to the coalition, including France, Kuwait, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Another factor in the 'war on terror' was the use by the US of tactics that were largely outside the established rule of law. These included interrogation methods, such as waterboarding, that bordered on torture. In addition, the US was able to flout international laws protecting prisoners of war by labelling them as 'enemy combatants' and establishing a military prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba where, Bush said, 'the worst of the worst' were imprisoned. These prisoners went for long periods without any due process or rule of law, and this had a negative impact on the reputation of the US, even among other Western countries. No longer was the US the beacon light of democracy.

Getty Images/Shane McCoy/Mai

SOURCE 3.2 The detention camp at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba has been criticised by human rights lawyers around the world for the absence of due process and the rule of law. The United States is able to bypass laws governing prisoners of war by renaming its prisoners 'enemy combatants'.

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1. What is the difference between idealist and realist views of international relations?
2. Outline the main points in Francis Fukuyama's 'the end of history' thesis.
3. Why does Huntington believe that post-Cold War foreign policy would revolve around a clash of civilisations?
4. What values does the term 'new world order' refer to?
5. Identify the key elements in the Project for the New American Century.
6. To what extent does the concept of pre-emptive strikes go against the values of the United Nations and traditional American foreign policy values?
7. Research an example of hard power.
8. Explain the concept of soft power.
9. What are the main values that underpin the 'global war on terror'?
10. Create a table like the one below and explain if each of the theories falls into the idealist or realist school of international relations.

THEORY	IDEALIST	REALIST
End of history		
Clash of civilisations		
New world order		
Project for the New American Century		
Hard power		
Soft power		
Global war on terror		

Supporters and opponents of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world

American foreign policy in Europe

The United States' main foreign policy aim in Europe after the Cold War was to ensure the smooth transition to liberal democracies and market economies in Russia and Eastern Europe. America under President Bill Clinton set out to build a strong **bilateral** relationship with Russia, convinced that Russia's participation in the new order would benefit the security and strategic interests of the US. After all, there was still the matter of securing the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. After Putin came to power in 2000, relations between the two countries deteriorated and old Cold War tensions re-emerged.

bilateral
A system or relationship, for example, involving two parties

The other big foreign policy item concerned the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As the main security umbrella for Western Europe during the Cold War, some wondered if it was still relevant, while others believed that opening it up to new members would lead to a more unified and peaceful continent. The decision to open NATO up to new members in 1993 led to an expansion of the organisation that would eventually bring it into conflict with the Russian Federation, anxious to reassert its power in the region under Putin.


NATO

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The most alarming European foreign policy challenge in the 1990s was the war in the Balkans. The disintegration of Yugoslavia brought with it intense ethnic and national rivalries, which resulted in so-called **ethnic cleansing** by Serb nationalists against their Croat and Muslim neighbours. The push by Serbian nationalists to hold Yugoslavia together led to a breakdown between Muslims and Croats and other ethnic minorities on the continent. The US played a leading role through NATO's involvement as the conflict spilled into Albania and Kosovo.

ethnic cleansing
The mass expulsion or killing of members of one ethnic or religious group by another in a geographical area

American foreign policy and relations with Russia

When the Soviet Union suddenly collapsed in 1991, America had to adopt a different set of foreign policy aims towards Russia. Personalities played a significant part as the United States dealt with two presidents who had different foreign policy aims – Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin.

The 1990s started out on a note of optimism. US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin developed a strong rapport and met on 18 different occasions during the 1990s. Clinton gave Yeltsin his full support in attempting to build democracy in Russia. Their first meeting took place in Vancouver in April 1993, only a month after the Russian parliament repealed Yeltsin's presidential decree rights. Russia was in the grip of an economic and political crisis that was quickly spiralling out of control. Despite this, Clinton believed that Yeltsin was Russia's best hope to build lasting democratic institutions.

Security also played a major part in the early relationship. The existence of Soviet-era nuclear weapons meant that Russia did not have full control over the arsenal, some of which were stored in other parts of the former Soviet state, including Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. By 1994, after prolonged negotiations, the Americans had successfully negotiated these countries' agreement to destroy any remaining nuclear weapons or transfer them to Russia.

Despite largely cordial relations between Yeltsin and Clinton, there were points of disagreement. Clinton regarded the Russian war against Chechnya as unjust, while Yeltsin criticised the NATO bombing of Serbian positions during the Yugoslav civil war.

Clinton's achievements in Russia

> A number of genuine accomplishments stand out, along with some clear problems and failures. The administration's achievements in denuclearization solved an extremely difficult and dangerous problem in Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Instead of three new nuclear powers with unstable and untried governments, the administration managed to return the weapons to Russia where they could be stored or dismantled … President Clinton and his advisers believed that helping Russia become a working democracy with a market economy was the best way that they could advance the security interests of the United States … Russia's integration into Western-inspired institutions such as the economic and financial Group of 7 or the World Trade Organization would help make the changes irreversible … Governments changed and political power was transferred by elections in Russia, a rare accomplishment in Russian history.
>
> P Edward Haley, *Strategies of Dominance: The Misdirection of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Maryland, 2006, p. 119

QUESTION

List the main accomplishments of Clinton's policy towards Russia.

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A significant shift in US–Russian relations occurred when President Vladimir Putin came into office on 31 December 1999. His rise to power was initially met with optimism. US President George W Bush famously commented during their first meeting at the Slovenian Summit in June 2001 that he had 'looked the man in the eye … I was able to get a sense of his soul'. But over the following decade, Putin resisted the Russian drift towards Western-style liberal democracy as he sought to reassert Russian power in the region, leading to what many viewed as a renewal of Cold War tensions.

Perhaps it was inevitable that American and Russian foreign policies would clash, given their contrasting aims. The United States was leading a 'global war on terror' and acting in an increasingly **unilateral** way on the international stage. In March 2003, the Russians did not support the American invasion of Iraq. When the US threatened Iran with sanctions if it did not halt its nuclear development program, the Russians immediately forged closer ties with Iran.

unilateral
Undertaken by one side only

In 2007 and 2008, tensions reach their highest level. When the US announced that it would install missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic, Putin publicly denounced the move and threatened to point missiles at the target.

Putin's Munich speech

On 10 February 2007, Putin gave his infamous 'Munich speech', in which, after warning his audience he would not be holding back, he lambasted American foreign policy. The speech is widely regarded as the turning point in US–Russian relations. It aired a range of complaints about American foreign policy in front of an international audience.

Putin starts by saying that security is equally about economic stability and about military and political stability. He then criticises the concept of a **unipolar** world as unacceptable, undemocratic and immoral, before arguing that the US has acted unilaterally and illegitimately. He accuses them of an 'uncontained hyper use of force … that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts'. He says that international laws are not being followed, before naming the Americans. Putin says, 'First and foremost the United States … has overstepped its national borders in every way'. America's actions, he argues, are making the world feel less safe and this is threatening to turn into another arms race.

unipolar
An international system that is dominated by one nation

In the next section of his speech, Putin argues that emerging economies such as China, India, Russia and Brazil will soon demand more influence on the international political stage, in a move that will strengthen multipolarity. He calls for a return to openness and transparency in international relations and says that only the United Nations should sanction the use of force. He is critical of the fact that the European Union and NATO presume to authorise force.

The speech demonstrated the tensions between the US and Russia, as Russia sought to reassert its role as an equal power in the world.

American foreign policy and NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1949 as an alliance between Western Europe and the United States to counter the threat of the Soviet Union on the European continent. At the end of the Cold War, there was some debate about the future of the organisation. Would it now be a redundant force? Or should it be expanded further as an instrument of **collective security** on the European continent? As it happened, President Clinton decided to expand NATO into Eastern Europe, and this brought it into conflict with the Russians.

collective security
The principle that an aggressor state should be opposed by the entire international community

In the 1990s, NATO had some successes. Its intervention in Kosovo during the war in the Balkans helped to secure a peaceful end to the conflict in the region. At the time, Kosovo was facing a grave humanitarian crisis as forces from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia clashed with the Kosovo Liberation Army. NATO also helped to implement the peace accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the same conflict.

But NATO's expansion has come under criticism. According to US historian Michael Mandelbaum, the eastward expansion of NATO was the single most damaging factor in US–Russian relations in the

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post-Cold War period. By the end of 2011, NATO had invited many former Soviet satellite states into the alliance, including Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and the Czech Republic, in addition to former Soviet Republics such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Mandelbaum was critical of the expansion because the US had earlier made promises to the Soviet leadership that NATO would not be expanded and followed this up with the consistent message to the Russians that they would not be invited to join. Russian presidents Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin both publicly criticised the expansion. Putin's Munich speech accused the US of using NATO to box Russia in.

In 2008, US President George W Bush announced his support for Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO. Putin protested that admitting members that were located right on Russia's doorstep would lead to greater instability in the region, and the issue of NATO continued to be a thorn in the side of US–Russian relations.

US foreign policy and NATO

SOURCE A

By alienating Russia, NATO expansion undercut Western and American goals in Europe. It turned Russia against the remarkably favourable post–Cold War settlement. It made the almost automatic Russian response to any and all American international initiatives one of opposition. It squandered, in short, much of the windfall that had come to the United States as a result of the way the Cold War had ended and led, eventually, to an aggressive Russian foreign policy that brought the post–Cold War era to an end … making NATO expansion one of the greatest blunders in the history of American foreign policy.

Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post–Cold War Era*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, p. 60

SOURCE B

Although the Soviet threat had subsided since the end of the Cold War, no one could be confident that Russia would become part of the new order and would not re-emerge as a threat to the West any time soon. As Secretary of State Warren Christopher observed, if Russian democracy collapsed Washington would face a very insecure future … Thus, former Soviet republics perceived NATO membership foremost as 'an insurance policy against a resurgent Russia'.

Yanan Song, *The US Commitment to NATO in the Post–Cold War Period*, Palgrave, London, 2016, p. 66

SOURCE C

I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our Western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are those declarations today?

Russian President Vladimir Putin, 'Munich speech', 10 February 2007

QUESTIONS

1 According to Source A:
   - **a** What is the author's attitude towards the eastward expansion of NATO?
   - **b** What impact has it had on US–Russian relations?
2 Explain how Source B demonstrates either a negative or a positive attitude towards the expansion of NATO.
3 What was Vladimir Putin's fear about NATO expansion, according to Source C?

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American foreign policy in the Balkans

When Yugoslavia was formed at the end of World War I, it brought together six federal republics, each with its own long history of ethnic and religious traditions. These states were Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. Serbia was the dominant region and contained the capital, Belgrade. After the German occupation in World War II, Yugoslavia became a socialist state under the dictatorship of Josip Tito until his death in 1980, and communist rule kept a lid on ethnic tensions between the six states.

When communism fell in Europe between 1989 and 1991, Yugoslavia was not immune to the calls for change. The Republics of Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence and attempted to break away from the rest of Yugoslavia. The dominant Serbs rejected the move and a conflict broke out, which resulted in thousands of deaths, and an internal refugee crisis, before a ceasefire halted the war in 1992.

By then, the independence movement had gained pace. When Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence in May 1992, two months after a referendum to leave, the conflict became more complex. The mix of Serbs, Croats and Muslims in the Bosnian Republic split loyalties. Although the Bosnian Serbs were a minority, they were linked to their much larger neighbour. Still, Muslims and Croats persisted in their calls for an independent state. The Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić was determined that Bosnia should remain in the Serb Republic, and Serb nationalists called for the development of a Greater Serbia. The President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, also helped to fan the flame of nationalism.

SOURCE 3.3 The former Yugoslavia

At this point, Muslims in Croatia were subjected to ethnic cleansing by extreme Serb militias. Bosnian Muslims were stuck in the besieged Bosnian capital of Sarajevo as Serb forces marched on the city. The siege of Sarajevo lasted three and a half years and cost the lives of 10 000 people as Serb forces bombed civilian areas using long-range missiles. The most infamous attack, on a market, in which 66 people were killed, took place in February 1994. In order to supply the city with food, medicine and other supplies, the United Nations implemented an airlift into the city.

United States foreign policy response

The United States government was deeply concerned about the behaviour of the Serb nationalists, and President Bill Clinton proposed bombing Serb supply lines. Clinton's Western European NATO allies were initially opposed to this solution. Eventually, however, after viewing some of the atrocities committed by Bosnian Serbs against Croat-Muslim civilians, they relented, and NATO began bombing Serbian supply lines and military targets.

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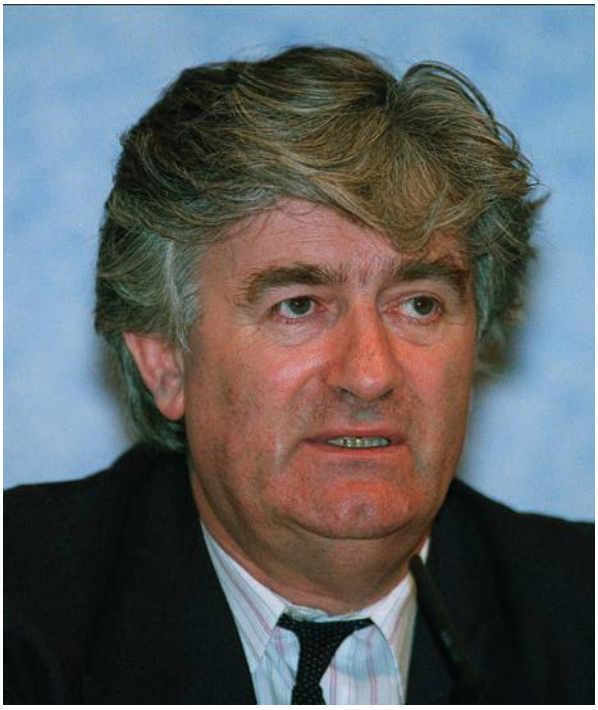
In November 1995, Clinton succeeded in getting both sides to the peace table and the Dayton Peace Accords were signed. Bosnia was divided into two – a Bosnian Serb enclave and a Croat-Muslim Federation. NATO was sent in on a peacekeeping mission and also had a wider brief to hunt down war criminals. An uneasy truce held for a few years.

In 1999, the war in the Balkans took another turn. The small Serb-held area of Kosovo was peopled by ethnic Albanians, most of whom were Muslims. When they pressed for their independence from Serbia, Yugoslav Serb forces moved in to crack down. In response, President Clinton ordered NATO to commence a bombing campaign on Yugoslavia, which lasted from March until June 1999. This episode was perhaps the most controversial of Clinton's foreign policy because he did it without the approval of the United Nations.



Alamy Stock Photo/Allstar Picture Library

SOURCE 3.4 Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić waged a vicious war against Croats between 1992 and 1995 that included ethnic cleansing. In March 2016, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, in the Hague, sentenced him to 40 years in prison for war crimes.

Getty Images/Cynthia Johnson

SOURCE 3.5 Slobodan Milošević (left) was President of Serbia between 1991 and 1997, and then President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between 1997 and 2000. He was indicted on war crimes at the Hague, and was found dead in his cell in March 2006, during his trial. Here he speaks with US President Bill Clinton (centre) in December 1995 in Paris.

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NATO against Serbia

suzerainty
The exercise of control over a dependent state

SOURCE A

> I will argue that Western intervention in Yugoslavia has not been benign but ruthlessly selfish, not confused but well directed, given the interests that the interventionists serve. The motive behind the intervention was not NATO's newfound humanitarianism but a desire to put Yugoslavia ... under the **suzerainty** of free-market globalization.
>
> Michael Parenti, *To Kill a Nation: The Attack on Yugoslavia*, Verso, London, 2000, p. 2

SOURCE B

> As the bombings accelerated and these same Serb people were starting to feel the impact with the loss of water and electricity, they shifted the blame to NATO, an organisation that appeared to them to be impervious to the loss of civilian life. Furthermore, NATO made bombing mistakes that were widely condemned in the West, they were dismissed by the Yugoslav people who, believing that NATO would not make targeting errors, saw these as deliberate attacks on civilian installations, such as hospitals. Finally, as the air campaign continued, it appeared Milosevic decided, correctly, that NATO would not send in ground troops but would continue to bomb.
>
> Joyce P Kaufman, *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict and the Atlantic Alliance*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Maryland, 2002, p. 202

QUESTIONS

1 What does the author of Source A believe was the reason behind NATO's bombing of Serbia?

2 According to Source B, what was the attitude of ordinary Serb people towards NATO? Give detail in your response.

1. What was Clinton's attitude towards the reforms of Yeltsin in the early years of the transition to Russian democracy?
2. Outline the changes in American foreign policy towards Russia after Putin became president.
3. Identify at least five key points in Putin's 'Munich speech'.
4. To what extent was the eastward expansion of NATO responsible for the breakdown in the relationship between the Americans and the Russians?
5. Outline the key events in the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia.
6. Explain American foreign policy towards the Balkans.

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US foreign policy in Asia

By far the biggest foreign policy challenge facing the United States is the rise of China and, more broadly, Asia as the new centre of economic power in the world. In the two decades from 1978, after China opened up to the world, that power was largely confined to the economic sphere. However, in the new century China has emerged as a political and military power to challenge the **hegemony** of the US.

hegemony
The dominance of a single power in a region or across the world

The rise of China

Over the last three decades, China has grown into the second largest economy in the world as it adopted economic reform at home and opened up to the world. This transformation has been driven by consumption, as US consumers have benefited from the manufacture of inexpensive Chinese goods, and American companies have taken advantage of low wages and manufacturing costs.

Yet, despite the economic benefits, China's human rights record has caused unease among American foreign policy makers. The near absence of political reform to accompany the economic transformation has meant that the Chinese Communist Party has kept a tight rein on the population. More recently, China has occupied a more prominent position on the international stage as a political and military power.

China opens up to the world, 1978–89

When Deng Xiaoping emerged as the leader of China in 1978, two years after the death of Mao Zedong, he set China on a course to become the second largest economy in the world. Derided by Mao as a 'capitalist roader', Deng believed in a different set of ideas to lead millions of Chinese people out of poverty. Deng had spent the Cultural Revolution in a tractor factory, having been expelled from the party amid accusations of capitalist sympathies. The experience left him bitter and made him question the wisdom of Mao's road to socialism. Deng came to understand that, if China were to overcome its endemic economic stagnation, this would mean the introduction of some market reform and opening up China to the world.

In Deng's mind, there was no obvious conflict between his deep commitment to Marxist-style Chinese communism and an often-quoted remark he reportedly made in a 1962 address to the Chinese Youth Movement: 'It does not matter whether a cat is black or white. As long as it catches mice, it is a good cat'.[1]

Getty Images/Forrest Anderson/The LIFE Images Collection

SOURCE 3.6 Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping steered China on a course to become the second largest economy in the world, while maintaining the tight political control of the Chinese Community Party.

The term **socialism with Chinese characteristics** came to represent the China of the 1980s. Deng attempted to reduce the role of government in every enterprise and introduced the 'responsibility system', whereby industrial managers and agricultural workers were given greater autonomy, and workers more incentive, in the running of their operations. The Town and Villages Enterprises (TVE) schemes introduced private enterprise into the system and, throughout the 1980s, China seemed to be moving forward.

socialism with Chinese characteristics
Marxist-Leninist political doctrines that have been adapted to Chinese conditions

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Getty Images/CNN

SOURCE 3.7 An unidentified student known only as 'Tank Man' halts a column of Chinese tanks during the Tiananmen Square protests in June 1989.

For Deng, however, the attempt to modernise the economy without compromising the Communist Party was central. The Chinese government's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989 would underscore that commitment.

Starting in April, as many as one million students, encouraged by the mass movements sweeping Eastern Europe and suffering with the previous year's inflation, occupied central Beijing for six weeks. The Party leadership, with Deng at its head, was furious. In response, Chinese troops fired on demonstrators and jailed dissidents. An estimated 443 military personnel and civilians were killed in the crackdown. Footage of a lone protestor known as 'Tank Man' halting a column of Chinese tanks led news bulletins across the globe. The image became an enduring symbol for the West of how far China had to go in developing its international citizenship. Foreign governments led protests about China's human rights record and suspended talks that would lead to greater integration of China in the global economy.

The incident reinforced Deng's refusal to entertain any hope of political or social change to accompany his economic reforms. As far back as 1978, Deng had made it clear that he would not tolerate ideas that would threaten the power of the state. He closed the so-called 'Democracy Wall' – a movement that had hoped for greater democratic freedoms in the wake of Mao's death. For a while, it looked as though Deng might retreat from his reforms. However, developments around the world would soon force China's hand.

China as a global power, 1992–2011

In 1989, Deng retired from office and was replaced by President Jiang Zemin. Jiang was not a particularly visionary leader, but he was politically astute and he steered China through the aftermath of Tiananmen Square. Importantly, he maintained the power of the Communist Party under the weight of international pressure for political reforms and a greater respect for human rights.

The real shift came in January 1992, when China opened for business with the rest of the world. Western companies, attracted by tax-free zones, cheap labour, modern infrastructure and ease of communications, flocked to build products stamped 'Made in China'.

At the Third Plenum of the 14th Party Congress in 1993, the Communist Party signalled an even greater commitment to reform by announcing its intention to establish a 'socialist market economy'. This announcement introduced a flood of foreign investment into the country. Foreign investment in China was US$11 billion in 1992, US$34 billion in 1994, US$61 billion in 2004,[2] and US$95 billion in 2009.

Another major turning point in China's integration into the global economy was its joining of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. This was significant because, to join, the Chinese had to promise a level of economic transparency that was at odds with their political traditions. As confidence is the cornerstone of any business transaction, investors needed to be assured of Chinese adherence to international norms of doing business.

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The lure of one billion consumers and the rise of a wealthy middle class have attracted Western businesses to China. As a result, the world's most populous nation has enjoyed economic growth at annual rates of higher than 10 per cent for much of the last three decades. It is also a global trading hub, with imports and exports both well exceeding US$1 trillion every year since 2010.

With great economic power, eventually the Chinese would want to have a greater say in the region and the world. Thus, the United States had to construct a foreign policy that would maintain its own interests in the face of a rising political and military power.

America's response to the rise of China

The rise of China has been a significant foreign policy challenge for the United States. Since at least 1992, China has asserted its role, first, as an economic power, then as a political power. Increasingly, China has been flexing its military muscle against traditional rival Japan and in the South China Sea. Yet, despite continuing criticism of its political and human rights record, countries around the world are still willing to make trade deals with China.

American policy makers have been uneasy with some aspects of China's human rights record. The incident at Tiananmen Square rallied the US House of Representatives, which voted 403–0 to allow many of the 43 000 Chinese students resident in the US to stay permanently. In 1991, both Houses of Congress voted to link the 'most favoured nation' trading status afforded to China with its performance on human rights. Not wanting to hurt the relationship with China, President George HW Bush used his power to veto the legislation.

China's human rights record was a populist issue that was taken up by politicians, both Republican and Democrat. The fact that President Bush vetoed the bill led the 1992 Democratic nominee for president, Bill Clinton, to take it up as a political issue for the election in that year. When Clinton came to power in January 1993, he pushed forward with linking trade opportunities with the US to China's human rights record by issuing an executive order. But the Chinese would not be bullied.

When Clinton sent his Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, to China in March 1994 to convince the Chinese to comply with the executive order, they resisted. The Chinese leadership told Christopher that they would never accept an American version of human rights, and denounced the American policy towards China. To add insult to injury, the Chinese arrested 13 pro-democracy activists on the very day that the Americans arrived in Beijing. The visit underscored China's commitment to its political system – even at the expense of economic progress. By May, Clinton was forced to abandon his ultimatum.

In June 1995, relations between the US and China were further strained when Clinton invited the President of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui, to visit Washington. Taiwan was established by the defeated Nationalists after the Chinese civil war ended in 1949, but the Chinese communists always regarded Taiwan as still part of mainland China. In response to the visit, the Chinese conducted missile tests near the coast of Taiwan throughout 1995 and 1996.

In May 1999, the American-led NATO mission in Yugoslavia resulted in the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. This left three Chinese diplomats dead and prompted Chinese accusations that the bombing was deliberate. Two years later, a US surveillance plane collided with a Chinese military plane. The US plane made an emergency landing and the Chinese held the plane and its crew for 11 days.

During the **global financial crisis (GFC)** of 2008, the economic relationship between the two nations came into sharp focus when it was revealed that China was owed US$684 billion by the USA. In many ways, the GFC was a turning point in China–US relations. The Chinese came out of the crisis in a stronger position and since then have increasingly asserted their global leadership – particularly in the Asia–Pacific region. In February 2011, China officially became the world's second largest economy, overtaking Japan.

global financial crisis (GFC)
Near collapse of the world's financial system, triggered by the failure of investment banks, insurance companies and mortgage banks in the US and Europe

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US–China relations

SOURCE A

No bilateral relationship is more important to the future of humanity. How America and China choose to cooperate and compete affects billions of lives. We need to understand better how each side views the promise and perils of their relationship because steady, clear-eyed, workaday bonds can be a force for global stability and prosperity while intermittent, fear-based, and confrontational ties will lead to a darker future.

Nina Hachigian (ed.), *Debating China: The US–China Relationship in Ten Conversations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. xi

SOURCE B

With the rapid growth of China's power, influence, and prestige in global affairs, its political elites have gained a great deal of national pride, confidence, or – as some outsiders put it – arrogance. If China's relationship with the United States in the past was based on an asymmetry of power in favour of the Americans, the relationship today should reflect the resurgence of China and increasingly be based on equality … its policy toward the United States in particular should be more assertive … [Chinese policy makers] strongly suspect that the Americans are quietly backing those competitors of China to weaken its international position.

Wang Jisi from Peking University in Nina Hachigian (ed.), *Debating China: The US–China Relationship in Ten Conversations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014, p. xi

SOURCE C

The problem, however, is best summed up by Hillary Clinton when she stated in 2012 that 'we are now trying to find … a new answer to the ancient question of what happens when an established power and a rising power meet.' This is a reference to Organski's well-known observation that historically, where a rising power is confronted by a dominant power, war almost inevitably results, since the dominant power is not likely to easily yield its position to the challenger.

Andrew TH Tan (ed.), *Handbook of US–Chinese Relations*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, 2016, p. xv

QUESTIONS

1. Why does the author of Source A believe that the relationship between America and China is the most important one for the future of humanity?
2. Explain the argument of the author in Source B.
3. According to Source C, what problem must be overcome for a global peaceful future?

Asian economic strength

During the 1980s, Japan enjoyed strong economic growth. Its advanced manufacturing industries produced a thriving export market for its electronics goods and motor vehicles. Japanese companies such as Sony and Toyota were household names in American homes. But at the beginning of the 1990s, a bubble in asset prices had such a negative impact on the Japanese economy that, when it burst, it ushered in a so-called lost decade. In fact, this 'decade' ended up stretching into the 2000s. As well as a collapse in asset prices, Japanese people had to deal with falling wages and living standards. In addition, other East Asian economies such as South Korea made strong productivity gains and built up their export markets.

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America in Asia

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Like Japan, South Korea has relied for its prosperity on a strong export market. It embraced high technology for its manufacturing, and the Hyundai car brand is one of its most well-known exports. South Korea was one of the so-called East Asian Tigers – a term used initially to group four economies with a rapid rate of growth: South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Second-tier countries such as Vietnam and Thailand have more recently followed the path of the East Asian Tigers as cheap labour and liberalised economies have attracted greater levels of investment.

1. Outline the changes Deng Xiaoping made within China between 1978 and 1989 to prepare China for its increased global integration after 1991.
2. Define 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'.
3. Why did the Chinese Communist Party resist political reform during its liberalisation of the economy?
4. What was the Party's response to the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square?
5. Why was China attractive as a destination for foreign investment after 1992?
6. Explain why China's admission into the World Trade Organization gave investors much more confidence.
7. To what extent was the United States successful in getting the Chinese to improve their human rights record?
8. Identify at least three incidents that strained the relationship between China and the Americans after 2000.

United States foreign policy in the Middle East

One of the most significant American foreign policy challenges in the two decades since the end of the Cold War has been the attempt to bring stability to the Middle East. The intractable problems associated with the Arab–Israeli conflict, the rise of militant Islam, the presence of rich oil resources and the political instability of the region have since given rise to a number of costly wars.

There were a number of events in the period that were challenging to American foreign policy makers:

- the Persian Gulf War against Iraq in 1990–91
- the Israeli–Palestinian conflict
- the rise of militant Islam
- the 'war on terror' and the attacks of 11 September 2001
- the war in Iraq
- the Arab Spring.

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SOURCE 3.7 The Middle East today, showing major flashpoints

Alamy Stock Photo/Keystone Pictures USA

SOURCE 3.8 Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq with an iron fist, suppressing ethnic and religious dissent. In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and for the next decade and a half Saddam's regime was subject to UN sanctions.

The Persian Gulf War

On 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait. The Iraqis were making a historical claim on their tiny, oil-rich neighbour, to which they owed US$30 billion. When they formally annexed it on 8 August, they declared Kuwait the 19th province of Iraq. Two days earlier, on 6 August, the United Nations had ordered economic sanctions and a ban on trade with Iraq in response to the invasion.

Fearing that Iraqi aggression would spread in the region, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd requested military assistance from US President George HW Bush and his Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney. The Americans responded over the following months by providing 540 000 of the 700 000 troops of an international coalition that included Britain, Australia and Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria. The Iraqis were significantly outdone in military technology by the Western powers, led by the United States, and also in sheer numbers. The Iraqi military presence in Kuwait numbered only 300 000 men.

In late November, the UN authorised the use of force if the Iraqis did not withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991. When the deadline came and went, the US-led bombardment called Operation Desert Storm commenced in the early hours of 17 January. A ground invasion commenced on 24 February, and the Iraqi forces were defeated within three days and Kuwaiti sovereignty was restored. Retreating Iraqi forces set fire to oil wells.

Attempting to split the Arab coalition amassed against him, Saddam tried to draw Israel into the conflict by firing cruise missiles into the country and demanding that Israel withdraw from

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Palestine. He calculated that Arab forces would not align against an Arab neighbour when Israel was in the conflict. Despite the bombardment, the Americans managed to keep the Israelis out.

US President George HW Bush decided against attempting to remove Saddam Hussein from power and declared a ceasefire on 28 February 1991. The terms of the ceasefire meant that Iraq had to abandon its weapons development program.

The Persian Gulf War was significant for American foreign policy for a number of reasons:

- It was the first major post-Cold War international conflict and it demonstrated the willingness of the United States to behave in an interventionist manner.
- It commenced a decade-long period of economic sanctions against the Iraqi government, which crippled the economy.
- The peace settlement banned Iraq from developing weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, gas and biological weapons, and the continuing cat-and-mouse game between United Nations weapons inspectors and Iraqi authorities became a source of tension.

Alamy Stock Photo/DOD Photo

SOURCE 3.9 Retreating Iraqi forces set fire to Kuwaiti oil wells as retribution for their defeat by American-led forces.

- The conflict sparked religious and ethnic rivalries in the country – in particular, the uprising of the Kurds in northern Iraq and the Shi'ites in the south. Saddam Hussein's brutal crackdown on political opposition included the use of poison gas against rebellious Kurds.
- The continued military presence of the US in Saudi Arabia – home to Islam's two holiest pilgrimage sites, Mecca and Medina – caused controversy among strict fundamentalist Islamic groups. Opponents included Osama bin Laden, who would protest against it by using terrorism against American targets in Africa, in Yemen and, later, on American soil.

The Israeli–Palestinian Conflict

The 1990s and 2000s saw renewed efforts to resolve the longstanding conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. Israel had inherited its occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Syrian Golan Heights from the wars of 1967 and 1973; these were mainly Israeli defensive positions against attacks by Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The United States had been a supporter of Israel's right to exist since the establishment of the Jewish state in 1947 under the auspices of the United Nations – a position that was not shared by Israel's neighbours. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), led by Yasser Arafat, had been using terrorism in its fight for a Palestinian homeland since the 1970s, but in the early 1990s the PLO began to pursue a political solution.

Among the first major agreements to be struck were the Oslo Accords of 1994. In this agreement, Israel agreed to a military withdrawal from the occupied territories and the setting up of a Palestinian Authority. To mark the breakthrough, a ceremony was held on the White House lawn, at which Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat shook hands for the first time.

The elusive search for peace in the conflict often revolved around disagreements concerning the **two-state solution**, whereby Israel and Palestine could exist side by side. This idea had backing from all sides, including the UN; the major obstacle to achieving it has been the question of the location of borders. The Palestinians wanted to revert to the borders that were in place before the Six Day War in 1967; moderate Israelis who favoured this faced political opposition from ultranationalists who opposed yielding any land to the Palestinians.

two-state solution
The proposal that the Israel–Palestine conflict be resolved by establishing two political states

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Despite the Oslo Accords, conflict in the region continued. In November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by an ultranationalist Israeli opposed to the accords. P Edward Haley wrote:

> The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin damaged the peace process so severely that it never recovered. The assassin, a Jewish religious extremist, took from Israel a warrior-president and statesman in whom most Israelis had complete confidence. The Palestinians lost a negotiating partner whom they respected and trusted to a degree not seen before or since.
>
> P Edward Haley, *Strategies of Dominance: The Misdirection of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Maryland, 2006, p. 122

Alamy Stock Photo/mark reinstein

SOURCE 3.10 One of the key challenges of United States foreign policy has been to establish peace in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In 1994, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat agreed to the Oslo Accords with a historic handshake on the lawn of the White House.

President Clinton held the Camp David Summit in July 2000 in another attempt to broker a peace deal. This time, Arafat met with new Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. The Palestinians appealed to Israel to honour a UN resolution from November 1967, which called on the Israelis to withdraw from all Palestinian land taken in the Six Day War.

However, the main challenge to a settlement was around East Jerusalem – home to the Jewish Temple Mount, upon which is located the Dome of the Rock, a holy Muslim site. Neither side could budge on the issue of control of this area.

The Camp David Summit was widely regarded as a failure, and most of the blame has been levelled at Arafat. In September 2000, frustrations gave rise to the second Palestinian **intifada** or 'shaking off' of what Palestinians considered oppressive Israeli rule. The spark for this was a visit by Israeli opposition leader (and later prime minister) Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount site in East Jerusalem with 1000 bodyguards. The subsequent wave of violence lasted until 2005.

WS
US position on Israel–Palestine relations

intifada
The Arabic word for 'shaking off', used to describe the uprising against Israeli occupation of Palestine

jihad
An Arabic word meaning 'struggle', which extremists interpret as meaning violent action

mujahideen
An Arabic term for fundamentalist Islamic guerilla fighters

The rise of militant Islam

Another significant challenge for United States foreign policy in this period was the rise of militant Islam in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Undertaken primarily by non-state actors, organised terrorism has achieved enormous notoriety for its acts of violence on civilian populations at the heart of the Western world, including New York, London and Paris. And while the apex of terrorism can be found on the morning of 11 September 2001, one needs to look further back to understand the reasons that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden sought to wage **jihad** against Western powers.

When Saudi Arabia called for US assistance against Iraqi aggression in 1990, it meant that the home of Islam's holiest sites – Mecca and Medina – would serve as a base for an American military force. The Persian Gulf War ended inconclusively and an uneasy peace meant the US had to maintain its presence in the Saudi kingdom at the invitation of the regime.

Osama bin Laden was no stranger to the kind of political pragmatism that brought the Americans onto Saudi soil. It was no secret that his **mujahideen** were funded and trained by the US during the Afghan war against the Soviet Union during the 1980s. When the Americans failed to remove their military from Saudi Arabia at the end of the Persian Gulf War, however, bin Laden used that training against them. Over the next decade, bin Laden claimed responsibility for a number of high-profile bombings against US targets. The first of these was the coordinated bombing of the US embassies in

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Tanzania and Kenya on 7 August 1998, in which over 200 people were murdered. On 12 October 2000, al-Qaeda operatives used explosives to blow a hole in the side of the USS *Cole*, a US warship stationed in Yemen. On both occasions bin Laden cited American support for Israel and its presence in Saudi Arabia as motives for the attacks.

On the morning of 11 September 2001, 19 terrorists – 15 of whom were from Saudi Arabia – boarded four airliners at airports across New York. Their targets were high-profile and symbolic, representing the economic, military and political hearts of American power. The twin towers of the World Trade Center represented America's global economic dominance, the Pentagon represented its military might and the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania was probably headed for the White House.

In November 2002, bin Laden wrote 'A letter to the American people' in which he provided a wide-ranging explanation for attacking the US. The justifications he put forward included the unresolved conflict in Palestine, American support for Israel and a host of other recent conflicts, including those in Somalia, Chechnya, Kashmir, Lebanon and Afghanistan. He accused the US of economic exploitation by manipulating the price of oil, and of occupying Arab lands. He criticised UN sanctions against Iraq, which he said resulted in the deaths of 1.5 million Iraqi children. He condemned a range of behaviours, including the use of alcohol, gambling, homosexuality and usury. Bin Laden then went on to condemn the US economic, political and justice system as hypocritical – especially the existence of detention camps at Guantanamo Bay.

Getty Images/Stringer

SOURCE 3.11 Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was responsible for a number of terrorist attacks against the United States.

The religious authority for much of the terrorism came from a variety of Islam called Wahhabism – a puritanical, fundamentalist Sunni sect that is the dominant religion in Saudi Arabia. In nearly every respect, this religious movement – with its attitude towards Western morality, civil rights and the status of unbelievers – runs counter to American values. But the economic relationship between Saudi Arabia and the US was based on the trade in oil and arms, and the Americans have been criticised for turning a blind eye to human rights abuses in the Saudi kingdom in order to protect such trade deals.

One of the most challenging aspects for US foreign policy makers has been understanding the complex cross-section of national, ethnic, tribal and religious loyalties that exist in the Middle East. Knowing who are the supporters and who are the opponents of American policy has not been easy. The heady mix of military dictatorships, undemocratic autocrats, ancient tribal loyalties, Western-imposed colonial borders, ethnic and racial groupings, and fundamentalist religious loyalty to either the Shi'a or the Sunni sect led the Arab journalist Said K Aburish to open his 1997 book *A Brutal Friendship* with the words, 'There are no legitimate regimes in the Arab Middle East'.[3]

11 September 2001 and the 'war on terror'

The attacks on the morning of 11 September 2001 brought terrorism from the Middle East and Africa to the home soil of the United States. Nineteen hijackers, most of them Saudi nationals, boarded four airliners at airports in New York and targeted the twin towers at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and, presumably, the White House, although that plane crashed in Pennsylvania before it could reach its target.

The events of that morning would radically alter the direction of American foreign policy. In the days following, the US Congress granted the president extended powers to use 'all necessary and appropriate force' to bring those behind the attacks to justice – which many blamed on al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, even though he denied involvement in a 16 September broadcast on the Arabic news network Al Jazeera.

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REUTERS/Sean Adair

SOURCE 3.12 The second plane hitting the World Trade Center in New York on the morning of 11 September 2001 is among the most televised images in history.

One of the main criticisms of the United States' pursuit of the 'war on terror' has been the flouting of the rule of law, the cornerstone of liberal democracy. The USA PATRIOT Act, passed in October 2001, allowed authorities to detain suspects for an indefinite time if they were being held under suspicion of planning or carrying out a terrorist act. The Office of Homeland Security was also established at this time, and gave authorities unprecedented powers to monitor potential terrorist threats in the name of national security.

On 7 October, the US commenced a bombing campaign against terrorist training camps and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. This was the beginning of the global military action that accompanied the 'war on terror'. In the following months, Islamic militants responded to the US military action by kidnapping and killing Western journalists, contractors and aid workers. Many of these murders were recorded on video, and copies were delivered to television stations. Their bodies were dressed in orange jumpsuits similar to those worn by the detainees at the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay.

On 29 January 2002, President Bush delivered the State of the Union address. In it, he discussed the broad sweep of military action in Afghanistan and for the first time announced the so-called 'axis of evil', consisting of Iraq, Iran and North Korea. He signalled his intention to use pre-emptive strikes, saying, 'I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.'[4] In June, at the West Point Military Academy, he officially announced the policy of pre-emptive strikes.

The 'war on terror' soon turned to Iraq.

Iraq

From early 2002, the administration of President Bush wanted to draw a strong connection in people's minds about the relationship between Iraq, al-Qaeda and the development of weapons of mass destruction. The calls were loud and persistent, despite evidence to the contrary. Underlying the administration's claims was its policy of removing Saddam Hussein from power. There are various explanations for why President Bush was so insistent on removing Saddam. Firstly, he wanted to finish the job of his father, President George HW Bush, who in February 1991 decided not to send American troops to Baghdad and remove Hussein. Secondly, it would be a pre-emptive strike to remould the Middle East and install a US-friendly regime in Iraq. Thirdly, he hoped to secure the peace of Israel by establishing governments sympathetic towards the West across the Middle East. The most plausible explanation seems to line up with the neoconservative Project for a New American Century, in which American hegemony could be secured through taking action early.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and CIA Director George Tenet announced there were links to terrorist groups and accused the Iraqi government of developing weapons of mass destruction. On 5 May 2002, Powell told the ABC News network that one of the central foreign policy aims of the US was the removal of Saddam Hussein as leader of Iraq.

President George W Bush was the architect of the policy of removing Saddam Hussein, and made his case throughout 2002 and into 2003. His Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, also cited intelligence reports accusing Saddam of hosting al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Vice President Dick Cheney accused Iraq of attempting to dominate the energy-rich Middle East.

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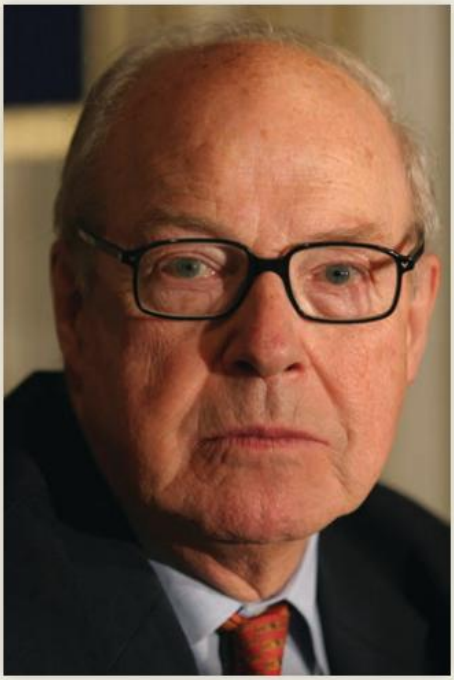
Weapons of mass destruction

Justification for a war against Iraq was based on the supposed existence of an Iraqi weapons program. Although the claim that Iraq had such a program was highly disputed and controversial, and despite evidence to the contrary, the Bush administration persistently repeated it. United Nations weapons inspectors, who had been active in Iraq during the 1990s, could find no evidence of a development program and said so publicly.

Between September 2002 and March 2003, the claims from the Bush administration that there was a relationship between Iraq, al-Qaeda and weapons of mass destruction were loud and persistent. In a press conference in September 2002, President Bush went ahead with his claims that, as far back as 1998, Iraq was six months away from developing a nuclear weapon. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice went on television the next day and said that intelligence services had intercepted 'aluminum tubes' used in the development of nuclear weapons. She then famously said, 'We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.'

The International Institute for Strategic Studies in London responded to the Bush administration's claims, saying that Iraq did not have the facilities to develop a nuclear bomb and was several years way from even getting such facilities.



Alamy Stock Photo/jeremy sutton-hibbert

SOURCE 3.13 United Nations chief weapons inspector Hans Blix (pictured) spent two months in Iraq and declared that Iraq had no weapons program. The administration of US President George W Bush made repeated, loud and persistent claims to have proof of Iraq's weapons programs and of its relationship with al-Qaeda.

Not to be undermined, President Bush addressed the UN on 12 September 2002, pressing his claims that Saddam was close to developing weapons. By late September, Donald Rumsfeld was declaring that the regime of Saddam Hussein represented the most significant threat to the security of the United States and that Saddam had to be removed. As the American campaign for regime change gathered pace, the UN arranged for its chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, to go to Iraq in mid-October 2002.

When the British government released a paper claiming that Iraq had tried to obtain uranium from Niger, President Bush took the claims at face value. However, former US Ambassador to Niger Joseph C Wilson had already discovered that the allegations were false and he informed the CIA. On 26 September 2002, both Powell and Rumsfeld continued to make the link between Iraq, al-Qaeda and the development of weapons of mass destruction.

In November, UN weapons inspectors and a range of other agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), arrived in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. They found no evidence of a weapons program, and at the start of December, Blix called on the American and British governments to reveal their intelligence to the inspectors. In late December, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated that Iraq had been cooperating fully with weapons inspectors and that he saw no reason for military action.

On 9 January 2003, after having been in the country for two months, the IAEA and the UN both declared that they could find no evidence of a weapons program. Despite these categorical denials, the White House press secretary Ari Fleischer flatly asserted, 'We know for a fact there are weapons there.' In February 2003, one month before the invasion, Blix repeated his findings that there was no weapons program.

At the end of January and in early February, Bush and Rumsfeld continued their persistent claims about a weapons program, and the Niger claim even made it into the State of the Union address – an assertion Bush retracted in July after discovering the documents were forged.

In January 2004, David Kay, a former head of the UN weapons inspectors, concluded that there were no nuclear or biological weapons to be found and that the intelligence to the contrary was 'almost all wrong'.

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Getty Images/Guardian Gulf coverage

SOURCE 3.14 The removal of the statue of Saddam Hussein on 9 April 2003

The invasion of Iraq commenced on 20 March 2003, three days after the United States abandoned efforts to gain the endorsement of the United Nations and President Bush gave Saddam Hussein 48 hours to leave the country. The initial invasion was accompanied by a large-scale bombing campaign and was named Operation Iraqi Freedom. American and British forces entered southern Iraq, and by 4 April they had captured Baghdad International Airport.

In the following week, other major Iraqi cities fell, including Mosul and Tikrit – Saddam's home town. On 9 April, one of the most famous images of the war emerged – US soldiers standing by as Iraqis demolished a statue of Saddam Hussein. The toppling of the statue was a propaganda coup for the Americans, who could use the event as evidence of their support within the country. Over the following three weeks, a large-scale invasion of the country by American forces took place. Saddam was on the run. By 1 May 2003, aboard a US Navy boat on a secret mission to the region, President Bush declared 'mission accomplished'.

After the invasion

As history was to show, however, President Bush's declaration that major combat operations were finished was wildly premature. In the following months a series of suicide bombings, the arrival of Islamic militias and US military scandals brought increasing instability to Iraq. In December 2003, Saddam Hussein was captured near his home town of Tikrit. He was found in an underground hide-out and surrendered without a fight.

In 2004 there was an increase in sectarian violence in Iraq as ethnic and religious groups sought to fill the power vacuum left by the removal of Saddam. In February, 100 people were killed when a suicide bomber targeted a Kurdish political group celebrating the Muslim festival of Eid. But it was the depraved treatment of both Americans and Iraqis that was to capture the attention of the world and the militias.

On 31 March 2004, four US military contractors – American civilians – were captured in the Iraqi city of Fallujah. Militants murdered them before burning their bodies and dragging them through the streets. This led to one of the most violent battles of the war, known as the First Battle of Fallujah, as US forces attempted to capture those responsible.

In April, images surfaced that showed the treatment of Iraqi prisoners at the US military prison in Abu Ghraib. In them, Iraqi prisoners were seen being stripped naked, humiliated and tortured by young American soldiers. A US private was later sentenced to three years in jail for her role in the humiliation. A series of tit-for-tat atrocities started in the following month, beginning with the beheading of US contractor Nick Berg. This act was recorded on video and sent to international news outlets for broadcast. Over the following years, aid workers, contractors and journalists were captured by militant groups, paraded in orange jumpsuits similar to those worn by prisoners at the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, and their beheadings filmed and distributed for broadcast.

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In July, President Saddam Hussein made his first appearance in court, charged with war crimes and genocide. Saddam protested the legitimacy of the court but was eventually found guilty and sentenced to death. He was executed on 30 December 2006.

One of the most significant outcomes of the American-led invasion of Iraq was that it unleashed a wave of sectarian violence in the country. Iraq is ethnically diverse, with a majority Arab population living side by side with Kurdish, Assyrian and Turkmen minorities. Its people are just over 60 per cent Shi'a Muslim and 40 per cent Sunni Muslim; smaller groups include Yazidis and Christians. Saddam Hussein had led Iraq under the Ba'athist Party, whose secular nationalist ideology tended to suppress ethnic and religious divisions.

Getty Images

SOURCE 3.15 Saddam Hussein was captured in December 2003 near his home town of Tikrit.

A war on multiple fronts

When the Americans disbanded the Iraqi army, unemployed career soldiers found their way into the militias of religious fundamentalist groups such as al-Qaeda – a Sunni group led in Iraq by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi – or the Shi'a counterinsurgent militia led by Muqtada al-Sadr, or the local Shi'a Badr organisation. Sunni extremist groups such as al-Qaeda opened up another front in the war against the Americans as they entered the country during 2003. Although the ethnic Kurd Jalal Talabani was elected President of Iraq and held the office between 2005 and 2014, the national parliament – dominated by Shi'a groups – was more volatile.

By late 2006, far from the 'mission accomplished' declared by President Bush, the Americans were fighting a war on multiple fronts. Having removed the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein, the Americans were now trying to transition Iraq to democracy. At the same time, international Sunni jihadists had streamed into the country to fight both the Americans and the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi government. In addition, Iran-backed Shi'a counterinsurgent militias were fighting the Sunni groups and the Americans. The United States was trapped in a quagmire of its own making.


AAP Image/AP Photo/David Furst, Pool

SOURCE 3.16 Saddam Hussein faced trial, charged with war crimes and genocide, in July 2004. He was sentenced to death, and was executed on 30 December 2006.

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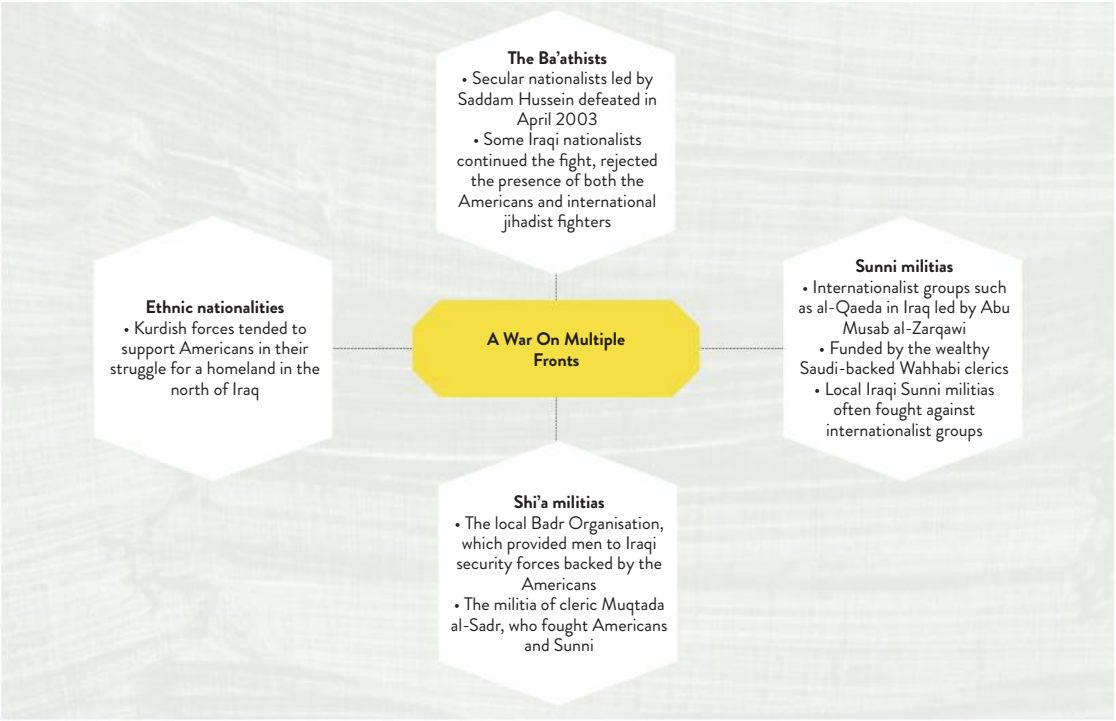

SOURCE 3.17 The Iraqi War was characterised by a diverse mix of ethnic, religious and political loyalties.

AAP Image/AP Photo/US Military

SOURCE 3.18 Sunni fundamentalist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. He was killed in a US airstrike in 2006.

In the years between 2006 and the American withdrawal in 2011, Iraq was rocked by instability. The war was characterised by guerilla attacks on American troops, the use of suicide bombers to attack American and civilian targets, the presence of foreign fighters backed by governments such as those of Iran and Syria, and religious extremists funded by Salafist groups in Saudi Arabia. This unstable situation ultimately led to the creation of an organisation known as Islamic State in the north of the country in 2014. This group, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was so violent that even al-Qaeda is said to have distanced itself from the group.

In June 2009, American forces began to withdraw from major Iraqi cities, handing over control to Iraqi security forces. Their withdrawal was completed in December 2011. The Americans had comprehensively lost the war in Iraq.

The removal of Saddam Hussein from power, the dismissal of his Ba'athist regime and his hanging had significant implications for US foreign policy:

- The US engaged in a unilateral act of war, contrary to the recommendations of the United Nations.
- A huge number of former Iraqi soldiers later made their way into militias.
- There was no evidence of a link between al-Qaeda and the Iraqi regime, but after the invasion al-Qaeda made its way into Iraq to fight against the US.
- The US now had to deal with sectarian violence between Ba'athist, Shi'a and Sunni groups, and it was difficult to tell which group supported the American presence and which opposed it.
- The war became extremely unpopular in the US.
- The invasion of Iraq was by any measure a major failure. It opened up deep division in the country, and eventually led to the rise of Islamic State and brought significant instability to the region.

WS
The Americans in the Middle East

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1. Explain how the Persian Gulf War was significant for American foreign policy.
2. Outline the role of President Bill Clinton in the attempt to try to achieve peace in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.
3. Explain the reasons for the rise of militant Islam.
4. Why is the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States complex?
5. Outline how the events of 11 September 2001 marked a turning point in American foreign policy.
6. Compare and contrast the claim about the existence of an Iraqi weapons program and that of a link with al-Qaeda between the US and the United Nations.
7. To what extent was President Bush's declaration of 'mission accomplished' premature?
8. Why did Iraq become the victim of sectarian violence?
9. Research the goals of both the Shi'a and the Sunni militias.
10. How did the American invasion of Iraq have significant implications for American foreign policy?

Historiography of American foreign policy

SOURCE A

> The United States did not succeed in getting China to protect human rights, or in constructing smoothly functioning free markets or genuinely representative political institutions in Russia. It did not succeed in installing well-run, widely accepted governments in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, or Kosovo. It did not transform Afghanistan or Iraq into tolerant, effectively administered countries. It did not bring democracy to the Middle East or harmony between the Israelis and Arabs.
>
> Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post–Cold War Era*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, p. 10

SOURCE B

Republican politician Henry Hyde had these words to say in March 2001, six months before the attacks on 11 September.

> The principal problem [for the US] is that we have no long-term strategy, no practical plan for shaping the future. The fall of the Soviet empire has removed the central organizing principle of our foreign policy for the past half-century. For all our undoubted power, we often seem to be at the mercy of the currents, carried downstream toward an uncertain destination instead of moving toward one of our own. We must resist the temptation of believing that we can fix every problem.
>
> Fraser Cameron, *US Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff*, 2nd edn., Routledge, London, 2005, p. xvi

QUESTIONS

1. What is the attitude expressed in Source A to the outcomes of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world?
2. According to Source B, how important is it to have a long-term strategy?

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Conclusion

The United States entered the 1990s on a note of optimism. The peaceful end to the Cold War left America as the only superpower in the world. But finding a way to redefine its role in the world also brought challenges. In Russia, the decade was marked by a rocky transition to democracy and painful economic reforms. The war in Yugoslavia brought with it a level of violence not seen in Europe since World War II, as Serb forces engaged in ethnic cleansing. In Asia, the influence of China on a global scale was beginning to be felt as its economic strength grew, but political reform and a commitment on human rights were stubbornly difficult to achieve. In the Middle East, the Persian Gulf War brought a US military presence into the region, and the Americans worked hard to achieve a lasting peace between the Palestinians and Israel.

The events of 11 September 2001 brought about a significant shift in US foreign policy. The American pursuit of war against Iraq meant that it would act unilaterally, much against its traditional values, which placed great weight on its relationship with Europe and the United Nations. The decade also changed the nature of the American relationship with Russia, as Vladimir Putin sought to reassert Russia's role in the world.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, compared with 1991, the world order was significantly different. China challenged the supremacy of the US, Russia was resurgent and Islamic militancy showed no sign of slowing down. American foreign policy makers were being forced to deal with the new realities of multipolarity.

In the 20 years since Francis Fukuyama declared the end of history, President George HW Bush announced the ushering in of a new world order and Joseph Nye surmised that soft power would be sufficient to advance American interests in the world, the world had acquired much harder edges than those promised by a new era of global liberal democratic hegemony. In the context of the 11 September 2001 attacks and President George W Bush's 'global war on terror', it appeared that Huntington's clash of civilisations – at least in relation to the West and Islam – was being realised. The triumph of American capitalism over Soviet communism did not result in the spread of American values such as free open markets and self-determination for all people. Instead, it opened up a series of other challenges that ultimately resulted in the erosion of American economic, military and geopolitical power.

Chapter summary

- The end of the Cold War resulted in the triumph of US-style liberal democracy over Soviet communism.
- During the 1990s, the Americans tried to transition Eastern Europe and Russia to democracies with mixed success, and the genocide in the former Yugoslavia revealed the limits of international cooperation.
- China's increasing economic power challenged American hegemony as China rose to become the second largest economy in the world.
- Peace was stubbornly difficult to achieve in the Middle East as the United States tried to bring peace to Israel, deal with the challenges of terrorism and deal with the loss of a war in Iraq.

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Further resources

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Endnotes

1 Deng Xiaoping, quoted in Deng Xiaoping, 'Obituary', *The Telegraph*, 20 February 1997.

2 Hutton, 2007, p. 114.

3 Aburish, Said K, *A Brutal Friendship: The West and the Arab Elite*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1997, p. 13.

4 US President George W Bush, State of the Union address, 29 January 2002, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Outline the main foreign policy challenges in Europe at the end of the Cold War.
2. To what extent might Russia be regarded as a liberal democratic success between 1991 and 2011? Give reasons.
3. Explain the forces that led to the breakdown of Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1995.
4. How significant was the rise of China in the international order after 1991?
5. How did the United States deal with its main foreign policy challenges in the Middle East between 1991 and 2000?
6. Explain how the events of 11 September 2001 shifted subsequent American foreign policy.
7. In your view, did America abandon its values in pursuing Iraq in the lead-up to March 2003? Why or why not?
8. Outline some of the impacts of American foreign policy in the world after 1991.
9. To what extent has American foreign policy been a success or a failure in the post-Cold War world?
10. In groups of three, explain and justify how the ideas in the table below were realised, or failed to materialise, between 1991 and 2011.

IDEA	EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION
End of history	
Clash of civilisations	
New world order	
Hard and soft power	
The 'global war on terror'	
Project for a New American Century	

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04

New centres of global power, 1989–2011

Revolutionary graffiti on a wall in downtown Cairo

Alamy Stock Photo/Megapress

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

In this chapter, students will examine the challenges that fractured the unipolarity of the United States and saw the emergence of new global powers.

Aspects to be covered include:

- New sources of power
- The European Union
- The rise of Brazil, Russia, India and China
- Modern nationalism
- The influence of non-state actors in world affairs

Modern History syllabus

Introduction

The widely held belief that the end of the Cold War would result in unrivalled, unipolar power for the United States was challenged when new centres of power emerged after 1991. These powers included regional **blocs** such as the European Union (EU), economic blocs such as the so-called BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China – and a host of other **non-state actors**. Islamic militant organisations emerged in this period, and far-right candidates appealed to new forms of nationalism in the West, largely in response to concerns over globalisation and the movement of people. Over the two decades to 2011, the power of the United States diminished as a new multipolar world evolved that would have been difficult to predict at the beginning of the 1990s.

blocs
Groups of countries with mutual regional or international interests

non-state actors
Organisations or individuals with significant political influence that is not aligned with a state

Two events contributed to the wider distribution of power. The first was the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The United States carried out this invasion without United Nations support and it had the effect of eroding American moral authority as the war dragged on through the decade. As a result, the Middle East became increasingly unstable and splintered into different factions. The second event was the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008. Having originated as a banking crisis in the United States, it soon spread to banks in Europe, and it led to a **sovereign debt** crisis as national governments bailed out banks they deemed 'too big to fail'. The Americans and Europeans embarked on a program of **quantitative easing**, which effectively meant printing money in order to support the system. Both of these events demonstrated to much of the world that political, military and economic institutions based in Washington and Europe were powerless to stop the financial crisis and struggled to deal with the realities of the 21st century.

sovereign debt
The amount of money that a government has borrowed

quantitative easing
The creation of new money by central banks purchasing government bonds

At the same time, China was emerging as a power centre of its own, and by 2010 it had overtaken Japan as the second largest economy in the world. Russia was reasserting its strength in the region, and India was now a nuclear power and would soon become the fourth largest economy in the world. The BRIC countries came out of the GFC stronger, at the same time as the United States and Europe were struggling to recover.

The emergence of modern nationalisms and non-state actors represented another disruption to the old centres of power. The trend towards greater regional integration and globalisation, open markets and new technology had a negative impact on traditional Western working class people. Non-state actors such as international media companies and multinational corporations had huge impacts on the political and economic institutions of countries, and in some ways undermined the concept of the nation-state.

But it was the arrival of global militant Islam that had the most significant impact on the world stage. The 'global war on terror' had the effect of inspiring Islamic movements around the world to introduce terrorism into the capital cities of major Western countries. New York, London, Paris and Madrid all suffered significant terrorist attacks as the world became gripped by a new kind of asymmetrical warfare.

Emergence, growth and influence of the European Union

The story of the emergence and growth of the European Union is often buried under the much larger narrative of the Cold War, but the structural shifts that took place in Europe between 1945 and 2011 have been no less significant. The idea of European unity started with the integration of Western European heavy industry in the late 1950s, which attempted to promote prosperity through cooperation. By tying the interests of member states together, it was hoped that future

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conflict could be avoided. But the dreams of its founders were much more ambitious. They hoped that economic cooperation would eventually lead to political union and this dream has been a significant source of tension.

In fact, one of the overarching themes in the history of the emergence and growth of the European Union has been the struggle between **federalists**, who believe in increasing integration of European states, and nationalists, who worry that the independent **sovereignty** of each state is under threat from the overreach of European power. On the federalist side, names such as Jean Monnet, Walter Hallstein and Jacques Delors are prominent. Those who have resisted the drift towards federalism include Charles de Gaulle, Enoch Powell, Jean-Marie Le Pen and Nigel Farage.

At various times these tensions have bubbled up to the surface. One stand-out is the failed 2004–05 referendum process to ratify a European Constitution. By far the biggest threat to the future of the European Union has been the nationalist sentiment that has arisen since the 2008 financial crisis.

federalism
A system of government in which a union of states submit some or all of their sovereignty to a central government

sovereignty
The idea that a state derives its own authority to govern itself

The emergence, growth and influence of Europe

1951	April	The Treaty of Paris establishes the European Coal and Steel Community
1958	January	The Treaty of Rome establishes the European Economic Community
1965	July	The 'empty chairs' crisis – the French boycott the European Commission
1985	January	Jacques Delors becomes President of the European Commission
1987	July	The Single European Act comes into force
1990	October	German is reunified, less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall
1993	November	The European Union is established
1999	May	The Treaty of Amsterdam comes into force, strengthening European institutions
2002	January	The euro currency is introduced
2004		Referendums in some member countries throughout 2004 and 2005 fail to ratify a European Constitution
2008		The global financial crisis grips the EU

The emergence of the European Union, 1951–68

Although the European Union was established on 1 November 1993, its origins can be found much further back in the years after World War II. The defeat of Nazi fascism in Europe presented forward-looking politicians with a painful choice: either continue the tangled system of alliances that had unleashed nationalist forces and led to two world wars and the Great Depression in the first half of the century, or make way for cooperation and closer integration. The path to unity would require visionary leaders to cope with questions of federalism and state sovereignty without surrendering to the nationalist impulse that had shaped Europe's history.

Since the idea of independent **nation-states** was so embedded in European political and intellectual tradition, supporters of the idea of a federal Europe would have a difficult time convincing national populations to unite under a single European flag. Yet, if peace were to hold, politicians would have to give up at least some of their cherished ideas of sovereignty and national identity.

nation-states
Sovereign political entities

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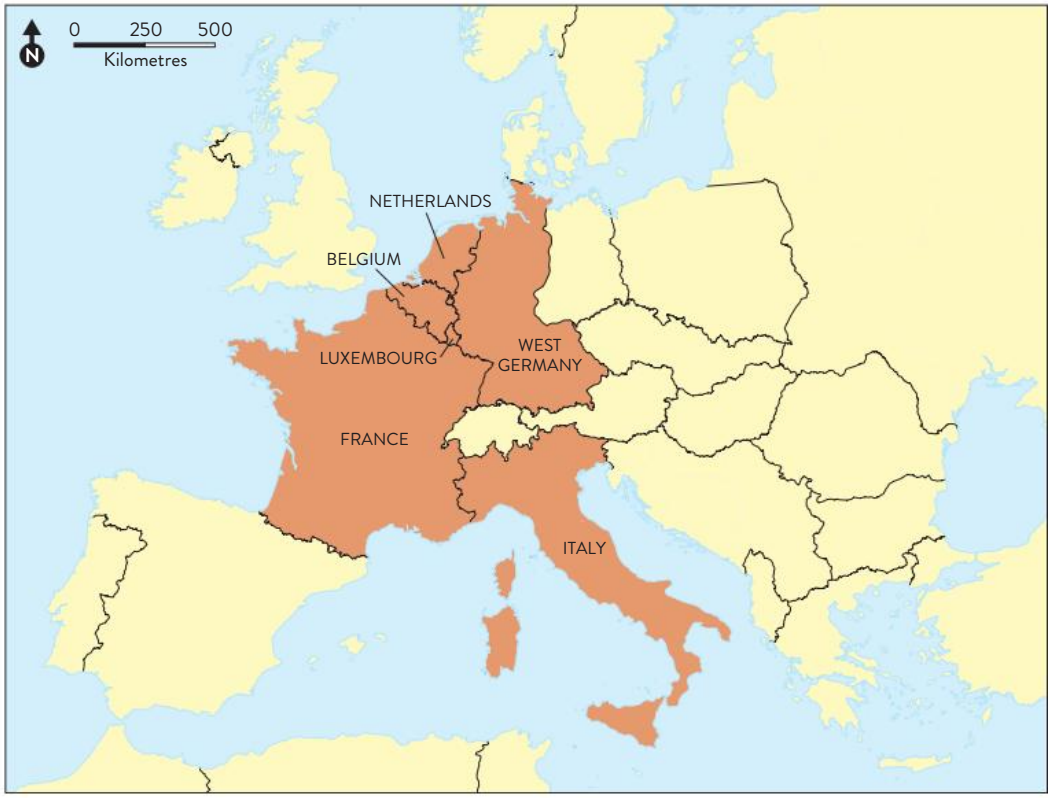
By the 1950s, there were a number of very good reasons for countries in Western Europe to build closer ties:

- The concept of European nationalism had been discredited by the deaths of more than 70 million people in two world wars.
- Soviet communism in Eastern Europe cast a shadow over the social democracies and economic system of Western Europe, and better economic outcomes were to be gained through working together.
- The power of the Western countries had declined, both economically and militarily, and the United States–led NATO and Marshall Plan had been instrumental in European recovery and security.

The first real attempt at integration was the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) agreement, signed at Paris in 1951. Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany – 'the Six' – for the first time entered into an agreement that included submission to a **supranational** High Authority, which existed to ensure the implementation of member agreements. The nine-member High Authority was an institution that could regulate and make legally binding decisions about the coal and steel industries, and override the domestic laws of sovereign states. As a consequence, much trust would be required. It was important that individual member states did not look to extend their own national interest, which was clearly against the spirit of the Community, but, rather, supported integration among states.

supranational
An institution or organisation that exercises decision-making power over sovereign states



SOURCE 4.1 Map of Europe showing the six countries involved in the European Coal and Steel Community

The ECSC confronted Europe with all sorts of constitutional questions. Who would prevail when the interests of the nation-state clashed with those of the Community? Is it possible to have economic integration without political integration? How would disputes be resolved between states or industry participants? Thankfully, a mood of optimism prevailed and the ECSC was driven by the so-called four freedoms: freedom of movement of goods, capital, labour and services. In effect, adherence to the ECSC meant giving up a little bit of sovereignty.

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Frenchman Jean Monnet was the first president of the High Authority and a champion of the idea of a federal Europe. His optimistically titled speech 'The United States of Europe has begun' was delivered on 11 September 1952 to the Common Assembly at Strasbourg. In it, he celebrated the creation of European institutions to overcome national divisions. He said, 'The great revolution of our age, aimed at replacing national rivalries on our continent ... [is] the establishment of the first supranational institutions of Europe'.[1]

The next move towards a federal Europe can be found in the European Economic Community (EEC), which was established by the Treaty of Rome on 1 January 1958. The EEC set out to build a common market among its members, which would include the elimination of **tariffs**, the free movement of workers and capital, and the establishment of the European Commission with much stronger powers. The implementation of its ambitious agenda proved more challenging than the ECSC and it was difficult to reach its goals; the EEC did, however, bring out the federalist impulse in its leaders. By 1962, Walter Hallstein, the President of the EEC Commission, encouraged the founding members to seek closer political ties to complement economic cooperation.

tariffs
Taxes or levies on imports

JEAN MONNET

Jean Monnet was the first President of the High Authority after the 1951 Treaty of Paris. He believed in the idea of the United States of Europe and hoped that the ECSC would sow the seeds for future European political unity. He believed that only in cooperation could Europe put behind it the horrors of World War.


Getty Images/Harlingue/Roger Viollet

WALTER HALLSTEIN

Walter Hallstein was the first President of the European Commission after the Treaty of Rome in 1958. He also was a strong adherent of European unity, and hoped that the forces of federalism would prevail over the nationalist impulse. Hallstein hoped that economic cooperation would eventually lead to full political union. He held the office of President until 1967 but left after failing to overcome the resistance of French President Charles de Gaulle to greater European integration.


Alamy Stock Photo/INTERFOTO

Not everyone was convinced by the idea of a united Europe. Charles de Gaulle became president of France in 1958 and resisted any calls to give up French sovereignty to a supranational power. He instead proposed the Fouchet Plan, which was more of an intergovernmental model than the integrated European model. The plan failed and de Gaulle continued to undermine efforts at unity by using his veto power to block British membership of the EEC in 1963. France was enjoying a period of strong economic growth in what was dubbed the '30 glorious years' and de Gaulle believed that the British economy was incompatible with the European system that had been built by the original Six. In effect, de Gaulle did not want to give up the gains of French power on the continent to Britain. In 1965, as the drift towards federalism gained pace, de Gaulle withdrew the French from the EEC for seven months in the so-called empty chairs crisis, which effectively crippled the EEC until a compromise was reached in the following year.

WS
A United States of Europe? Monnet and de Gaulle

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Federalism versus nationalism

SOURCE A

Some useful lessons can be drawn from [de Gaulle's] trial of strength between national sovereignty and federal reform. The first is that, even if some politicians may have grand notions of abandoning the Community for the principle of national sovereignty, the public is not keen to follow. This has been demonstrated in elections and referendums not only in France, but also in Britain and Denmark. A second is that, with France's participation essential to the Community, neither spillover nor federal reform stood a chance when faced with de Gaulle's stand on national sovereignty. A third, first shown by the grant of budgetary powers to the European Parliament after de Gaulle's departure in 1969, is that the logic of reform can outlast the national leaders.

John Pinder, *European Community: The Building of a Union*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 13

SOURCE B

A favourite metaphor of European federalists depicts the EU as a fragile, delicate craft constantly running aground on the treacherous shoals of national sovereignty and self-interest. With each repair and relaunch the ship gets stronger, while navigational hazards are charted and exposed. Eventually, one supposes, the United States of Europe will resemble a supranational supertanker plying stormy economic, political, and security seas, invulnerable to the perils lurking beneath the surface.

Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, 3rd ed., Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder CA, 2005, pp. 30–1

SOURCE C

Supranationalism would be the main casualty of the empty chairs struggle. Monnet championed the creation of a federal union not as one among several but as the only guarantor of permanent peace and prosperity in Europe.

John Gillingham, *European Integration: 1950–2003 – Superstate or New Market Economy?*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 71

SOURCE D

[Charles] de Gaulle would be relegated to the rogues' gallery of EU villains. For in the popular opinion of many European integrationists, de Gaulle's anachronistic championing of the nation-state destroyed the European Community's development in the 1960s.

Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, 3rd ed., Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder CA, 2005, p. 39

QUESTION

Using Sources A–D and your own knowledge, answer the following question: 'To what extent was the history of the European Community one of tension between maintaining national sovereignty and embracing federal reform?'

1. Name three reasons why greater European integration would be good for Europe.
2. Explain the difference between federalism and nationalism.
3. Why was nationalism the biggest hurdle for the drift towards the European Union?
4. Outline the main mechanisms of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).
5. Identify the four freedoms.
6. Who were Jean Monnet and Walter Hallstein? What were their hopes for Europe?
7. How did the European Economic Community extend the promise of European integration?

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The emergence of the European Union, 1970–92

In the 1970s and 1980s, the struggle continued between the federalist and nationalist impulses. From the original Six, another six members were added to the European Community – Britain, Denmark and Ireland in January 1973, Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986.

In the years before the birth of the European Union, the main orientation of the European Community was economic. In 1979, the European Monetary System introduced an internal currency – the European Currency Unit, or ECU – to deal with internal financial transfers between member states and the internal budget of the European Community. The United Kingdom was against currency union and opted not to join the new monetary system.

Perhaps the biggest boost towards a European Union was the rise of Jacques Delors as the president of the European Commission, a post he held from 1985 to 1994. Delors was responsible for much of the architecture of the EU and he encouraged member states to work towards a single market in Europe. He set the ambitious goal of removing all barriers to the free movement of goods, capital, labour and services by 1992. Delors, a strong advocate of federalism, had hoped that this complete level of economic union would eventually lead to political union.

In 1987, Delors' dream of a union took one step closer to reality when the Single European Act came into force. In a blow to nationalists, it abolished national vetoes on some of the trade issues in Europe, strengthened the powers of the European Parliament and included mechanisms to work towards a European Union. The benefits of such a union for a trade bloc were not to be argued, but there was still the reality that all of the economies were unequally matched. The might of German industrial power, compared to that of some of the smaller member states such as Greece, would be one of the factors that would build nationalist resentment among states in the future after the 2008 financial crisis (see page 98).

Getty Images/Jean-Michel TURPIN

SOURCE 4.2 Jacques Delors was president of the European Commission between 1985 and 1994. An ultra-federalist, he is credited with building the European Union.

iStock.com/hanohiki

SOURCE 4.3 Euro notes and coins were introduced as the physical currency of 19 European economies in 2002.

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The most significant treaty paving the way for the EU was the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed in December 1991. Its major points included:

- the plan to adopt a single currency – the euro – which commenced among 11 member states, initially for non-cash transactions only, in 1999 (Britain opted out)
- the establishment of a European Central Bank
- the concept of European citizenship, with the right to move freely between states
- the right for any citizen to work and vote in any member state
- the intention for Europe to act in concert on issues of foreign affairs.

Europa: The European Union

Xenophobia and far-right nationalism

The struggle between federalists such as Monnet, Hallstein and Delors and those who resisted political unity, such as de Gaulle and, later, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, led to a darker expression of opposition. The emergence of the European Union produced far-right nationalist and **xenophobic** movements.

xenophobic
Fearing and hating foreigners

British conservative politician Enoch Powell was a vocal critic of the UK's entry into the Common Market as far back as 1973. He accused the Europeans of taking away UK sovereignty and the British parliament of ceding its decision-making power to Europe. His famous 'Rivers of blood' speech in April 1968 railed against immigration into Britain and led many to regard him as a racist.

In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen established the Front National (National Front), an anti-immigrant party with far-right ties to neo-Nazi groups. Ironically, Le Pen was elected to the European Parliament in 1984 but rejected immigration into the European zone. He was convicted six times of disputing crimes against humanity and was expelled from his party by his daughter Marine Le Pen in April 2015.

Alamy Stock Photo/Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix

SOURCE 4.4 British conservative politician Enoch Powell voiced early concern about the national sovereignty of member states of the EU.

The arguments of Powell and Le Pen revolved around issues of state sovereignty and race, and played well with voters who feared their livelihoods and national identity would be under threat from an increasingly federal Europe.

1. Make a list of the 15 countries that had joined the European Community by 1992.
2. How were Britain, Denmark and Sweden different?
3. Explain what the introduction of the ECU tried to achieve.
4. Why was Jacques Delors a significant figure in the EU?
5. Outline the main points in the Single European Act of 1987.
6. To what extent was the Maastricht Treaty (1991) a blow to the nationalists who tried to hold back European unity?
7. RESEARCH: Research the arguments of either Jean-Marie Le Pen or Enoch Powell about increasing European power and their fear that it would threaten French or British national identity.

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The growth and influence of the European Union, 1993–2007

The Maastricht Treaty of February 1992 established the European Union, which came into effect on 1 November 1993. The negotiations came at a time of great upheaval in Europe, coinciding with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of European communism.

In particular, there would be implications for the reunification of Germany and its integration into the EU. While the United States encouraged the reunification, in Britain, Italy and France there were fears that a unified Germany would become too powerful. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher voiced concerns about the speed of the reunification process. French President François Mitterrand was more worried that a powerful, unified Germany would undermine the impulse towards greater European integration. German leader Helmut Kohl assured both parties of his commitment to Europe. The leaders were engaged in a delicate balancing act between the desire of the German people for **self-determination** and the needs of Europe, and at times this led to vigorous disagreement. In the end, Kohl convinced EU member states that a unified Germany would strengthen, rather than undermine, Europe because a new Germany would be rooted in the West.

self-determination
The idea that nations can freely elect their own governments without outside interference

REUTERS/Michael Urban

SOURCE 4.5 From left to right, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterrand at the summit of the European Community in June 1988

Over the course of the next three decades, the EU grew in size and power as its membership increased – a process known as enlargement. For nationalists, the history of the EU has been one of creeping power as it was enlarged across the continent and given stronger powers with each new treaty. In 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined, taking the number of member states to 15.

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 was another significant step towards strengthening a federal Europe. Its main points were as follows:

- The EU process was made more democratic in preparation for its eastward expansion.
- The European Parliament was given expanded powers to legislate with member states on social policy, the environment, employment, health and transport.

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qualified majority
The requirement that 55% of member states, representing 65% of the EU population, vote in favour before a motion can pass

- The Council of Ministers no longer had to make unanimous decisions, but instead required a **qualified majority**.
- Border checks between internal states were formally abolished.
- Member states agreed to coordinate their policies in relation to immigration and asylum seekers.

Throughout 1998, the EU extended its reach into Eastern Europe, and countries as diverse as Romania, Latvia and the Czech Republic, among many others, applied to join. Another significant milestone was passed in 1998 when the European Central Bank (ECB) came into being. The ECB was established to oversee the euro and bring stability to the currencies and finances of EU member countries.

On 1 January 2002, 12 of the 15 member states had their internal currencies replaced by euro dollars and cents. The euro would now become the official currency except in Britain, Sweden and Denmark, which had all opted out. In the same year, a draft European Constitution was drawn up, which was really an attempt to simplify its meaning and processes among member states. However, the EU suffered a setback when member states could not agree on the terms and talks collapsed.

In 2004, a draft constitution was finally presented and put forward for national parliaments to vote on. The draft proposed far-reaching powers for European institutions, including a number of powers, in the area of justice, immigration and asylum, that would override national laws.

The constitution never made it past the first few failed referendums. In France, it was overwhelmingly rejected by nearly 55 per cent to 45 per cent and, since the adoption required a unanimous vote among all member states, other states simply cancelled their referendums. This gave the EU an uncertain future, even though it continued to govern on its existing treaties.

1. What was enlargement?
2. How did the fall of communism change the aims of the European Union?
3. Why was the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 so important?
4. In 1998 the European Central Bank was established and in 2002 the euro replaced member states' currencies. How might currency union be a problem if member states did not completely coordinate their economic policies?
5. Why was the 2004 European Constitution a failure? Did Europe attempt to overreach its powers?

The 2008 eurozone crisis and its aftermath

The global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 marked a significant turning point in the history of the European Union, sparking old rivalries between nationalists and those who believed in a federal Europe. What started in the United States as a banking crisis soon became a debt crisis among European banks and governments.

Throughout 2007 and 2008, banking institutions were bailed out by governments, and governments in turn found themselves in large amounts of debt. The US government committed US$700 billion to save its banks, and Europe soon discovered that it was not immune from similar problems. In December 2008, EU leaders agreed to a 200 billion euro **stimulus plan** to protect the eurozone against the unfolding banking crisis in the US. The commitment of these funds to save the economy was just the beginning.

stimulus plan
A plan to kickstart an economy during a recession through increased government spending

Over time, the crisis evolved into a sovereign debt problem – in other words, governments became hugely indebted – and exposed differences between member states in their approach to taxation, wages and budgets. Greece was the first country where the government came under scrutiny, and it was home to the most serious crisis. Nationalist forces and other governments felt a growing

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resentment towards the Greeks, whom they accused of not paying their taxes and of receiving overly generous pensions at too early an age.

But these populist accusations masked deeper problems in the financial and banking systems in Europe, which were exposed to US debt.

In April 2009, the European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) ordered member countries to reduce their budget deficits by cutting spending and raising taxes. In October of that year, Greeks elected George Papandreou's Socialist Party to clean up the mess after it was revealed that the previous government had not been honest with the EU about the true extent of the problems in the Greek economy. As it turned out, Papandreou had been handed a poisoned chalice. The extent of the problem was revealed two months later, in December 2009, when it was announced that the Greek government was carrying 300 billion euros worth of debt – or 113 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). In other words, for every 100 euros earned by the Greeks, they had to pay out 113 euros to cover the debt. Greece was effectively bankrupt. But the problems were not confined to Greece. In 2010, it was revealed that the countries known as the PIIGS – Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain – were carrying huge amounts of debt.

The EU responded to the crisis by introducing **austerity** programs. This slashing of government services resulted in widespread unrest and riots in Greece. In February 2010, Greece was given a 22 billion euro 'safety net' so that it could pay its workers and cover its debt payments. The ECB and the IMF feared that a Greek default would spark panic and lead to other problems. This loan was followed by wave after wave of loans as Greece got further into debt.

On 2 May 2010, the IMF and the EU announced a 110 billion euro **bailout** package, which was to come in parts over three years. In return, the Greeks had to implement strict austerity measures to receive each of the payments. The bailout was very unpopular among other European countries, particularly Germany and its leader, Angela Merkel. The Greeks were unable to control their **budget deficit**, which was running at over 10 per cent.

The next in line for a bailout was Ireland. In return for a tough austerity budget, it could take a bailout package of 85 billion euros. As more states came forward to reveal the extent of their debts, the numbers became dizzying. In February 2011, the European Commission and the ECB established a 500 billion euro permanent fund, which it would use to bail out other countries, such as Portugal.

The crisis was not over. In June 2011, Greece was to receive the second payment of its May 2010 bailout package and this led to a significant crisis. Eurozone ministers said that Greek austerity measures had not gone far enough and threatened to withhold the funding and kick Greece out of the eurozone. In July, the Greeks passed another harsh austerity budget and received the 12 billion euros in promised funding. They had averted a **default**. At the same time, the Europeans wanted to prevent the crisis spreading to other parts of Europe and they agreed to a second bailout for Greece – this time of 109 billion euros.

While Europe was dealing with this crisis – the bailouts, the austerity budgets and the lack of confidence – another crisis hit. This time the trouble spread to the bond markets – a place where governments are supposed to be able to

austerity
A state of shortage in which luxuries are sacrificed; cuts to government services made to save money and balance the budget

bailout
Government payment of private debts to prevent banks from going bankrupt

budget deficit
The shortfall when a government's expenses exceed its income

default
A failure to pay back or meet repayments on debt

REUTERS/Grigoris Siamidis

SOURCE 4.6 Protesters at an anti-austerity march in Thessaloniki, Greece, 28 October 2011

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borrow money cheaply. Bond rates in some European nations, such as Greece and Spain, rose sharply (up to 17 per cent), which further hampered those countries' ability to repay their debts. It looked as though Greece, Spain and others were in a vicious downward economic spiral of soaring debt, high bond rates, austere budgets and civil unrest. In response to this, the European Central Bank agreed to buy government bonds. This was called quantitative easing.

The economic crisis in the EU resulted in a number of challenges:

- It exposed political tensions between the richer countries, such as Germany and France, and the poorer countries, such as Greece and Portugal.
- It resulted in a decade-long cycle of near debt defaults, bailouts and austerity budgets.
- It led to the revival of extreme political parties.
- It threatened the future of the European Union as an entity.

The GFC and the European Union

1. How did the global financial crisis get to Europe?
2. Explain how the debts of the banks became government debts, sparking a sovereign debt crisis.
3. After the GFC became a sovereign debt crisis, how did various economic policies within the member states cause tension?
4. What 'poisoned chalice' did Papandreou inherit from the previous government?
5. What was the policy of austerity and what impact did it have on the Greek people?
6. How did the crisis spread to the bond markets?
7. How did the eurozone crisis impact negatively on the European Union?

The rise and influence of BRIC: Brazil, Russia, India and China


Alamy Stock Photo/ITAR-TASS Photo Agency

SOURCE 4.7 The BRIC leaders in 2008: (from left to right) India's Manmohan Singh, Russia's Dmitry Medvedev, China's Hu Jintao and Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The origin of BRIC

Together, the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China – are home to 40 per cent of the world's population, comprise a quarter of the world's landmass and, during the first decade of the 2000s, contributed more than 25 per cent of the world's economic growth. They emerged as a group in 2001 out of the research of the financial analyst Jim O'Neill at the American investment bank Goldman Sachs. O'Neill was trying to make a long-range prediction about the sources of economic growth up until 2050. What began as a financial exercise at a bank would become a political bloc as the countries formed stronger bilateral and multilateral ties. They would hold formal meetings by 2006, annual summits from 2009, and they were formally organised into a bloc in 2010. More recently, with the inclusion of South Africa, the bloc is sometimes referred to as BRICS.

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The BRIC countries called for a range of reforms in the global system to address what they saw as a world organised around the outdated post–World War II order. They were arguing for the following:

- the development of a more multipolar world
- an alternative economic consensus
- new approaches to conflict resolution.

BRICS Ministry of External Relations

BRIC and a multipolar world

The central aim of BRIC was the introduction of a multipolar world order. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has enjoyed **hegemony** in nearly every sphere, but most notably it has benefited from enormous economic and military power. With the rise of China as an economic power, Russia reasserting its power in Eastern Europe, a rising middle class in India, and Brazil emerging as a leader in South America under its charismatic leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in the 2000s, it was inevitable that these emerging powers would call for a greater share in global governance, especially when it came to issues of security.

hegemony
The dominance of a single power in a region or across the world

One of the major priorities of BRIC was the push for reform in international organisations such as the United Nations Security Council to better reflect current **geopolitical** realities. After all, the Security Council's permanent members – the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain – reflected the great political powers of 1945. By the mid-2000s, even the permanent members had become open to reform of the system. As a consequence, India and Brazil became a part of a group known as the G4 – along with Germany and Japan – whose sole purpose is to campaign for each of the G4 countries to be awarded a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

geopolitical
The direct political influence of the geographic proximity among nations

The argument was that India, as the second most populous nation on Earth, should have a permanent seat on the Security Council. The G4 also made the case for Germany because of its position as the largest economy in Europe. It does not have a seat, while France does. Members also contested that Brazil is representative of a continent with no voice on the Council. But that poses a paradox for Brazil according to historian Oliver Stuenkel.[2] If Brazil is admitted on the strength of giving South America a permanent seat, then the African continent needs also to be represented.

What became obvious to many within BRIC and other parts of the world was that the institutions that wielded the most economic, political and diplomatic power were there by virtue of their powers from another time. The world had evolved and the institutions should evolve with it.

BRIC has not been without its critics. Some observers argue that BRIC makes no sense as a bloc. British journalist Martin Wolf argues that its four members have nothing in common except for a united call for a more multipolar world and the attempt to shift power away from the structures set up after World War II, which were largely dominated by the United States. Apart from that, Wolf says, their values, political systems and aims are all substantially different, and they are geographically disparate. Wolf also argues that there are significant tensions between some of the member states – most notably China and India. He says that Indians are frightened by Chinese encirclement and are concerned by China's relationship with Pakistan, India's most enduring rival.

An alternative consensus?

BRIC's other major call for reform was for the creation of an alternative global economic consensus. The financial arrangements of the international market during the 2000s were established after World War II at the Bretton Woods Conference, where the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were set up. Their aim was to support the world economy and prevent conflict emerging from economic differences. At that time, the US dollar was made the world's **reserve currency** and it was tied to the price of gold until 1971, giving the world economy a certain degree of stability.

reserve currency
A strong currency used to settle international trades

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The 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) was a turning point for the BRIC countries in asserting their economic power, and arguably a turning point in the economic order. At the same time as the United States, Britain and Europe were struggling under the weight of a banking crisis and huge government debt, the relative strength of the BRIC economies gave them added power to help solve the crisis. China, for example, was a creditor of the United States and held over US$1 trillion of US government debt. BRIC members questioned whether the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF were able to cope with the problems that emerged out of the GFC. The European Central Bank also struggled to deal with the sovereign debt crisis that was engulfing the economies of southern Europe.

Moreover, the BRIC countries were critical of the way in which Western central banks tried to deal with the crisis. In particular, they cricitised the printing of money. In the Delhi Declaration of March 2012, they lectured the West about responsible economic management. The statement read in part, 'We believe that it is critical for advanced economies to adopt responsible macroeconomic and financial policies, avoid creating excessive global liquidity and undertake structural reforms to lift growth that creates jobs.' The statement also called for greater global coordination of economic policy.

While BRIC countries were not immune from the effects of the GFC, they were in a stronger position to deal with its impact. Some of the GFC's negative impacts included weaker demand for exported goods from China and Brazil and a fall in demand for Indian services. Russia also suffered from the falling price of oil. But in many ways these countries were in good shape economically to withstand the shock. They had significant reserves of foreign cash, large trade surpluses and growing middle classes, who still had a pool of excess cash for consumption. The GFC also had the added benefit of removing the threat of inflation, which often accompanied high rates of growth in emerging economies.

BRIC countries had benefited from the era of globalisation, with its low tariff walls, access to open global markets, and free trade arrangements. However, they wanted to form a new consensus against some of what they saw as the hard-edged forces of capitalism – most notably, neoliberalism. The neoliberal economic agenda involved privatising government assets, cutting government services and taxation, and deregulating controls on capital and labour. While many in the West thought that this would create demand, stimulate business and consumption, and 'trickle down' to the lowest paid workers, in reality it increased inequality, both within countries and between countries. The GFC had demonstrated that too much trust in a market that had poor government oversight would result in a significant crisis. It was proof that governments needed to take a more active role in the economy.

In the West, the GFC had created a situation in which governments were being forced to slash interest rates to stimulate investment, spend huge amounts of money on bailing out large banking institutions, introduce stimulus packages to get the economy moving and take on huge debts. These effects lasted for a decade in Europe and the United States.

One of the most significant acts by BRIC towards forming a new global economic consensus has been its efforts to establish a new global reserve currency and create institutions that bypass the IMF and the World Bank. In 2015, the New Development Bank (NDB) was set up to promote lending and investment among member states. In addition, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) was established to deal with future economic shocks – in an attempt to exclude the Washington-based IMF from becoming involved in future crises. Although it has been unsuccessful in shifting the reserve currency away from the US dollar, BRIC has set up mechanisms to increase trade among members in local currencies.

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Dealing equitably with conflicts in the world

The other stated aim of BRIC is to address the economic, political and social inequalities in the world. At the 2012 New Delhi summit, BRIC leaders criticised the United States and Europe for using the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to implement unfair monetary practices that benefited the West. They wanted reforms to those bodies that would make them truly representative, including electing members from different parts of the world. Previously, most heads of the IMF and the World Bank were drawn from the United States or Europe.

The Delhi Declaration of 29 March 2012 laid out the plans for the BRIC countries to deal with some key global challenges. Many of these points were at odds with the prevailing American stance on conflicts around the world. They included the call to:

- bring an end to the Arab–Israeli conflict in a way that was 'comprehensive, just and lasting' and took note of UN resolutions
- end the conflict in Syria with a Syrian government–led peace initiative
- be inclusive of Iran, which has 'a crucial role to play for the peaceful development and prosperity of a region of high political and economic relevance'
- work through the United Nations 'in coordinating international action against terrorism'
- tackle climate change and sustainability on an international level.

Each of these points undermined US policy – for example, America's support for Israel's failure to comply with certain UN resolutions, its refusal to work with the governments of Syria and Iran, and its **unilateral** actions in the 'war on terror'. The list also included a veiled criticism of US derivatives markets and their destructive impact on the livelihoods of many in the developing world as food and energy prices soared out of the reach of the poorest.

WS
The emergence of BRIC

unilateral
Undertaken by one side only

BRIC

SOURCE A

There is an obvious tension in values. People can do business with one another, but they are not natural allies because the differences in values are quite important. South Africa, Brazil, and India are very vibrant and complicated democracies, and China is something completely different. There's no doubt Indians are very frightened of encirclement by China. This is a geopolitical security issue. They are concerned about China's relationships with neighbors, particularly Pakistan. They are concerned by the very big imbalance in power between China and India. China is a much bigger powerful economy and military now than India. Obviously they like to be in such a grouping so that they can talk to them; they have lots of economic interests in common. But there's also a great deal of anxiety in India.

Financial Times journalist Martin Wolf in 'Does the BRICS group matter?', Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/interview/does-brics-group-matter, 30 March 2012

SOURCE B

While many criticize the BRICS grouping for its supposed incoherence, a key uniting element was often overlooked: all four initial member countries … have global ambitions – a global project, however vaguely defined, voiced frequently. It is here that the BRICS grouping is indeed an interesting political category – for example, there are no emerging powers outside of it that have a systematic engagement with the UN Security Council, either as permanent members or committed candidates. As Celso Amorim argued prior to the fifth BRICS Summit in 2013, it was 'time to start reorganizing the world in the direction that the overwhelming majority of mankind expects and needs.' To his mind, the BRICS countries were to play a key role in that process.

Oliver Stuenkel, *The BRICS and the Future of Global Order*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2015, p. x

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SOURCE C

BRICS is a platform for dialogue and cooperation amongst countries that represent 43% of the world's population, for the promotion of peace, security and development in a multi-polar, inter-dependent and increasingly complex, globalizing world. Coming, as we do, from Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, the transcontinental dimension of our interaction adds to its value and significance.

Fourth BRICS Summit: Delhi Declaration, 29 March 2012, www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120329-delhi-declaration.html

QUESTIONS

1. According to Source A, what political and geopolitical differences undermine the concept of BRIC/BRICS?
2. Using Source B, highlight the similarities between the BRIC countries and explain why the author thinks it is a useful concept.
3. According to Source C, why is BRIC/BRICS a valuable development in international relations?

1. Outline the origins and development of BRIC between 2001 and 2012.
2. In which three areas did BRIC want more of a voice in international affairs?
3. To what extent was the world becoming more multipolar after 2003?
4. Identify the arguments for increasing the number of permanent seats on the UN Security Council.
5. Provide a detailed explanation of why BRIC was critical of the US-based economic consensus.
6. What criticisms did BRIC have of the way in which the United States and Europe dealt with the global financial crisis after 2008?
7. Why could BRIC countries deal with the GFC better than those in the West?
8. What new institutions did BRIC create in the attempt to establish a new consensus?
9. Explain how the Delhi Declaration offered solutions that were at odds with American foreign policy stances.
10. RESEARCH: Choose one of the items from the list of the Delhi Declaration and research the American view. To what extent was it different from the BRIC position?

The resurgence of modern nationalisms and the influence of non-state actors

One of the great paradoxes of the post-Cold War world from the mid-2000s was the rise of modern nationalisms at the same time as the nation-state was being undermined by the processes of globalisation and technology, and by non-state actors including international media, multinational corporations and militant Islam. The resurgence of populist nationalism was often the result of a loss of faith in the institutions of the nation-state – politics, religion, trade unions and media – and the failure of Western liberal democracies to cushion traditional working and middle classes against the impact of globalisation. One of the central issues for nationalist movements was immigration (particularly from Africa and the Middle East) and its perceived effect on employment, national

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security and identity. Coupled with this lack of faith was the spread of new political or fundamentalist religious narratives that purported to make sense of the changes facing the West. There was no shortage of media outlets, clerics or populist politicians ready to encourage the fears of those who felt their way of life was under siege, and to undermine the nation-state.

Non-state actors that had a significant impact on shaping the modern world included:

- new media, with its impact on modern nationalisms
- multinational technology companies
- militant Islam.

The resurgence of modern nationalisms

There was a resurgence of modern nationalism in the period after 1991, which evolved in response to the global economic and social forces that were shaping the world. Governments that overemphasised nationalism as a political ideology had been largely discredited by its association with war and fascism during World War II. As well, greater regional integration and international cooperation during the Cold War had dampened some of nationalism's more extreme characteristics. Arguably, globalisation, mass migration and regional integration eroded the power of the nationalist sentiment in the West: free trade agreements and international economic cooperation were seen as the most direct path to prosperity. But the end of the Cold War brought a resurgence in nationalism in places as diverse as the former Yugoslavia, the Netherlands, Austria, Russia and India.

Yugoslavia

The resurgence of modern nationalisms was played out in the most violent fashion when member republics of the Yugoslav Federation – a collection of six republics with an ethnic mix of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosnian Muslims and Albanians – pressed for their independence. The Serbian Republic had dominated Yugoslavia from the capital, Belgrade, and had effective control over the Yugoslav Army. When Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in June 1991, the lid was lifted on nationalist tensions as Serbian forces tried to prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from following suit. Bosnia had a large Serbian population, and Serb forces began a systematic **ethnic cleansing** of the region by murdering or driving out Bosnian Muslims and ethnic Croats. Between 1992 and 1995, some 100 000 people died in the war in the Balkans. When tensions flared up again in 1999, this time over the Albanian enclave of Kosovo – a region in southern Serbia – nationalist tensions were again the impulse for the violence. This time, the United States and NATO intervened with airstrikes on Serbia in an attempt to arrest the violence.

ethnic cleansing
The mass expulsion or killing of members of one ethnic or religious group by another in a geographical area

Mass migration and nationalism in Europe

Modern nationalism's resurgence also responded to the fear that mass migration – which was often driven by increasing levels of global conflict – was a threat to national cohesion. The 'war on terror' and instability in Africa had produced a refugee crisis, as conflict and sectarian violence in the Middle East and Africa drove people from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan into the West. That many of these people were Muslim meant that populist politicians were able to exploit fears about national security and manufacture a link between refugees and terrorism.

In France, the National Front, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, railed against large-scale immigration into the country. France had been the destination for immigrants from its former colony Algeria, and over time came to host a large African population. In the wake of the 'war on terror', it has also taken refugees from the Middle East.

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Dutch politician Geert Wilders is the leader of the Party for Freedom and he took his place in the Netherlands parliament in 2002. He was a vocal critic of 'Islamisation' of the Netherlands and made the argument that, since Muslims would not assimilate into Dutch culture, all immigration from Muslim nations should be banned. In an open letter to a Dutch newspaper in 2007, he controversially compared the Koran to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and insisted that there was no such thing as moderate Islam. Wilders' form of nationalism was based on a nationalist fear that Dutch social cohesion was being undermined by Islam.

Similarly, the Austrian politician Jörg Haider – leader of the Austrian Freedom Party – believed that Islam was inconsistent with Western values and he opposed Muslim immigration to Austria. He was a controversial figure who was associated with the far right of politics. In 1999, he received 27 per cent of the vote in national elections, reflecting the mood of Austrians. As a result of the inclusion of his party in government, the European Union placed months of sanctions on Austria, accusing him of being an anti-Semite. Jörg Haider died in 2008.

Getty Images/Bloomberg

SOURCE 4.8 Dutch politician Geert Wilders

Getty Images/DIETER NAGL

SOURCE 4.9 Leader of the Austrian Freedom Party, Jörg Haider

Russia

In other parts of the world, a new form of nationalism emerged. The Russian Federation under the leadership of Vladimir Putin made the concept of patriotism a national ideal. In some respects, Putin's leadership over Russia was a reaction against the increasing Westernisation of the country and its neighbours. This can be seen in Russia's attempt to block Ukraine from forging closer ties with the European Union and its rejection of the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe. The Russian reassertion of power in its region is based on an anti-Western, nationalist sentiment that appeals to a great Russian past.

India and the BJP

In India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a Hindu nationalist party that is driven by the idea that Indian culture should be given precedence over Western secular values. Although India became one of the world's largest economies in the 20 years after the end of the Cold War, with a strong service sector, the BJP attempted to fashion an economic ideology that put the 'human first'. The party advocated globalisation and opening up the Indian economy to the rest of the world. It followed the Western model of privatisation and deregulation in order to make India more competitive in the global economy.

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The influence of new media

At the centre of this mistrust of institutions and fear of immigration and change sat another paradox. At the same time as the Internet delivered a broad palette of news, some news organisations – often out of the commercial need to target a particular audience – began to align themselves politically and promote a set of ideas. In doing so, they created a kind of bubble, in which they interpreted international events through the prism of their own ideology, while at the same time encouraging their audiences to be distrustful of other news sources. This had the effect of polarising audiences between traditional left and right, or liberal and conservative, and of promoting the idea that unbiased, objective reporting was finished.

On the right, the Fox News channel, which operated under the banner of 'fair and balanced' reporting, was an unabashed supporter of the Republican Party and conservative politics. On the left, newspapers such as the British *Guardian* and the *New York Times* tended to attract a more liberal audience. Global news organisations such as CNN, the BBC and Al Jazeera, which consistently stated their commitment to objective journalism, were caught in the crosshairs of a **culture war** in which the idea of objectivity had been all but rejected. Revealing your preferred source of news became akin to sharing who you voted for. Objectivity had been under assault for over a decade, but now it seemed to be condemned to another time.

culture war
The political struggle over the nature and use of knowledge, particularly in the news media and representation

The sides in the war over information offered simple explanations of complex global forces. One consequence of these explanations was a polarising effect within countries; in some cases this polarisation led to violence. The conclusions drawn by populist alternative media organisations sounded plausible, but often they failed to grasp the complex economic, technological and social changes that were shaping the 21st century. They also failed, often, to acknowledge any of the benefits of globalisation. Yet powerful communication tools, including the Internet, gave them great reach and voice, and delivered them an audience that often numbered in the millions.

At the extreme conspiratorial end were Internet-based media organisations such as Alex Jones' Infowars, which railed against incumbent governments, 'globalists' and 'mainstream media' as the enemies of a supposed remnant of loyal Americans. Jones and his followers adopted an intellectual siege mentality. On the other side, there was the fear that the Internet was turning young Muslim men into jihadists. Young, disaffected Muslims, rejected by the populist nationalism in their adopted Western countries (and, often, their countries of birth), became recruiting targets for fundamentalist extreme groups to carry out terrorist acts.

Alex Jones and Infowars

Alex Jones delivers a web-based radio show from Austin, Texas. His daily show attracts millions of listeners. His slogan is 'There is a war for your mind', and he identifies himself as a libertarian. Jones is a strong advocate of the right to own guns. He has consistently claimed that the Sandy Hook massacre, in which 20 children and six adult staff members were murdered at a school in Connecticut, USA, did not happen and was a government conspiracy to disarm Americans. Jones is a conspiracy theorist who believes there was US government involvement in the 11 September 2001 attacks.

Alamy Stock Photo/james cheadle

SOURCE 4.10 Alex Jones, host of Infowars

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Perhaps the most significant challenge to state and media power was Julian Assange's WikiLeaks, which published leaked classified government documents. The organisation gained international notoriety in 2010 when it released film footage of a United States Apache helicopter firing indiscriminately into a van in Baghdad. The van had stopped to pick up the body of a Reuters journalist who was killed minutes earlier by the helicopter.

The context of the incident was that the helicopter was supporting US soldiers in a fight a few blocks away. However, the initial shooting was into a crowd of about 10 men, many of whom were unarmed. When a van pulled up to assist the injured and dying, the helicopter opened fire. It was later revealed that two children were in the van.

A US soldier, Private Chelsea (then Bradley) Manning, leaked the footage and a number of other documents that she deemed to be in the public interest. The US government had her charged for the offence and she was subsequently convicted and sentenced to 35 years in prison. The release of the materials had the effect of supporting the idea that neither the government nor the mainstream media could be trusted to tell the truth. But for some on the conservative side, Manning and Assange were traitors to the United States and their actions were a grave threat to national security.

1. Explain some of the reasons for the resurgence of populist nationalisms.
2. What impact has the new media landscape had on the undermining of the nation-state?
3. What are some of the negative impacts when news organisations become politically aligned?
4. To what extent do you agree with the idea that balanced and objective journalism is a relic of the past?

Multinational corporations as non-state actors

Another centre of non-state power is the multinational corporation (MNC). While MNCs have been around since Coca-Cola and McDonald's took their products into international markets, the new technology companies have emerged with a reach that borders on ubiquity. Household names such as Facebook, Amazon, Google, Apple and Alibaba have powerfully shaped everyday lives in terms of people's ability to form global connections, the way consumers shop, and how people source and consume information. But their success has also raised questions about privacy, the collection of data and the increasing role of technology in our lives.

TABLE 4.1 Top 10 multinational corporations by market value, compared with gross domestic product (GDP) of selected countries, in 2010

COMPANY	MARKET VALUE (US$)	COUNTRY	GDP (US$)
PetroChina (China)	333 billion	United States	14.5 trillion
ExxonMobil (US)	308 billion	China	5.8 trillion
Microsoft (US)	254 billion	United Kingdom	2.2 trillion
ICBC (China)	242 billion	Australia	924 billion
Wal-Mart (US)	205 billion	South Africa	363 billion
China Mobile (China)	199 billion	Greece	304 billion

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TABLE 4.1 *(continued)*

COMPANY	MARKET VALUE (US$)	COUNTRY	GDP (US$)
BHP (Australia/UK)	192 billion	Singapore	222 billion
Berkshire Hathaway (US)	190 billion	Pakistan	174 billion
Petrobras (Brazil)	190 billion	New Zealand	126 billion
Apple (US)	189 billion	Iceland	12 billion

Note: The size of multinational corporations can be seen when comparing their market value (the total value of a company's shares) with the GDP of countries. Only 28 countries were wealthier than the richest company.

'The Global 2000' (2010), *Forbes*, www.forbes.com/lists/2010/18/global-2000-10_The-Global-2000_MktVal.html

'Gross domestic product 2010', The World Bank Group, https://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf

Facebook is the biggest social media company in the world. It was established in 2004, and by 2011 it had 500 million users, 50 per cent of whom logged on every day. By 2017, it had two billion active users who log in at least once per month. Facebook has been a significant challenge to traditional media businesses and some governments. Facebook and Google together share a massive 50 per cent of the total advertising revenue on the Internet, and are increasingly driving down the price of television, newspaper and magazine advertising. Therefore, their economic challenge to traditional business is significant.

Alamy Stock Photo/David Brabiner

iStock.com/kizilkayaphotos

SOURCE 4.11 Facebook and Google share a dominant proportion of the world's total revenue from online advertising.

Facebook has also been a source of concern for anti-democratic countries. It is credited with being the platform for the 2011 Arab Spring – which resulted in the fall of longstanding dictators in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt as well as launching pro-democracy movements in Syria and the United Arab Emirates. In those countries, media restrictions meant that political opposition was often suppressed or silenced. Facebook allowed young dissidents to organise political demonstrations and provided a means to disseminate information without the normal government controls. In 2009, China blocked access to Facebook for its citizens. The ban is thought to be in response to the riots that broke out in July 2009 in Xinjiang, in the north-west of the country, between the Muslim Uighurs and Han Chinese. The ban is part of the Chinese Communist Party's attempts to censor the country's media. Although the Party is committed to economic openness, political expression remains difficult.

Getty Images/John Moore

SOURCE 4.12 An anti-government demonstrator holds a sign during a protest in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2011.

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Aside from the reach of social media, the role of non-state actors in the collection and use of data is one of the key challenges facing 21st-century national governments. The international nature of technology companies means that laws regarding the handing over of data are still evolving. This applies not only to information about policy and national security. Increasingly, data is becoming an important aspect of advertising and marketing, leading to fears about privacy and how that data is used. Companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Alibaba can capture an enormous amount of information about users' browsing habits and history, and sell it to third parties for very large sums of money.

1. Outline some of the main changes that technology companies have made in society.
2. In what ways are social media companies able to undermine the nation-state?
3. What are some of the challenges with the collection of data?

The rise of militant Islam after 1991

A new focus of global conflict emerged in the 1990s and 2000s with the rise of international militant Islamic terrorism. Of course, terrorism was already a high-profile phenomenon in the 20th century. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) used terrorism in its fight against the British occupation of Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s, and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) attempted to undermine the state of Israel by hijacking planes. But the brand of terrorism that emerged after 1991 was more international in character. Although its adherents cited specific geopolitical causes in a wider war against the West, this extreme fundamentalist expression of Islam was not limited to one or two conflicts.

While the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 represented the start of the 'global war on terror', the origins of the conflict can be found in the Persian Gulf War of 1991. The continuing presence of an American military base in Saudi Arabia after the war ended in February 1991 angered fundamentalist Islamic groups, because the same US military power that supported the state of Israel shared the same soil as Mecca and Medina – Islam's holiest pilgrimage sites. Two high-profile terrorist attacks – the African embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and the bombing of the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000 – were carried out partly because of the US military bases.

President George W Bush declared war on terror in his State of the Union address on 20 September 2001, nine days after the attacks on the US. This declaration was problematic. The idea of 'terror' was abstract and ambiguous, and lacked a clearly defined enemy. Any war on terror would probably mean a war without end. In the speech, President Bush identified Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network, which he said practised 'a fringe form of Islamic extremism', as the culprits of the attack, and he offered an explanation for their motives. He declared that they were 'enemies of freedom' and 'heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century' with the 'goal of remaking the world and imposing radical beliefs on people everywhere'. He then declared that 'the civilised world is rallying to America's side'.

President Bush reserved some of his strongest words for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which he accused of hosting al-Qaeda training camps. He demanded: 'The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate.'[3] The speech rallied Americans and their allies in the face of the largest peacetime atrocity in US history. US involvement in Afghanistan stretched all the way back to the 1980s, when the Americans

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funded the mujahideen in their fight against the Soviets. In an ironic twist, the main beneficiary of that funding was Osama bin Laden.

Over the course of the following months and years, an international form of Islamic terrorism would export terror onto the streets of London, Paris and Madrid, in a new type of **asymmetrical warfare** that offered little protection for civilians. The various sectarian groups had become a new centre of power in the world – and it was difficult to separate each group's alliances and loyalties.

asymmetrical warfare
Surprise attacks by small, simply armed groups against powers with vast resources of modern military technology

Middle East complexities

One of the most complex aspects of the 'war on terror' has been understanding the origins of the various groups and the web of alliances in the Middle East. Failure to understand these dynamics, the history of the region and the motivations of each group has had the effect of allowing populist movements in Western democracies to group all Muslims together and represent them as a collective threat. This ignorance masks the fact that the overwhelming majority (estimates are as high as 95 per cent) of terror victims are themselves Muslims.

The Middle East region is an enormously diverse part of the world. It is a complex mixture of history, geography, political and military power, and rich oil supplies, coupled with deep tribal, ethnic, political and religious divisions. In addition, the artificial creation of nation-states in the region since the end of World War I has led to Western sponsorship of anti-democratic, autocratic rulers – or 'strongmen' – to suppress these deep divisions. The situation in the Middle East cannot be understood without attempting to grasp the complex forces that have shaped the region.

Who are the different groups?

RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS

The two main groups in Islam are the Sunni (about 85 per cent of Muslims) and the Shi'a (15 per cent). They are divided by their understanding of who is the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammad. These groups can be further broken down into sects such as the Wahhabi Sunni (a puritanical fundamentalist form, favoured by the ruling family in Saudi Arabia).

Most Shi'ite Muslims live in Iran and southern Iraq, although the group is scattered throughout the Middle East.

The Middle East is also home to Christians of multiple denominations, Jews, Druze, Yazidi and other religious traditions.

ETHNIC DIVISIONS

The Middle East is ethnically diverse and its people include Arabs, Persians (mainly in Iran), Turks, Kurds and Armenians among many others.

QUESTIONS

1 Research and make a comprehensive list of the various groupings in the table below. Some examples are given to get you started.

GROUPING	EXAMPLES
Nations	Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon …
Religious groups	Muslims, Jews …
Sunni sects	Wahhabi …
Shi'a sects	Alevi …
Tribes	Bedouin …
Political groups	Ba'athist, Muslim Brotherhood …
Ethnic groups	Kurds, Persians …

2 What does the size of these groupings tell you about the complexities of understanding the dynamics in the Middle East?

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AAP Image/AP Photo/Petra

SOURCE 4.13 Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was the Jordanian-born Sunni leader who was in charge of al-Qaeda in Iraq. In 2005, he declared war against the Americans and the Shi'a in Iraq. He was killed in June 2006.

Getty Images/Scott Nelson/Stringer

SOURCE 4.14 Muqtada al-Sadr is an Iraqi Shi'ite militia leader who led the counterinsurgency against al-Qaeda in Iraq after the downfall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Getty Images/Anadolu Agency

SOURCE 4.15 Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is the radical Sunni leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Al-Qaeda is said to have distanced itself from the group because its methods were so cruel. Al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate in 2014 that lasted until 2017. The group inspired terrorist attacks across the globe.

The surge in Islamic fundamentalist-inspired terrorism has been a significant force insofar as it has shaped American foreign policy responses. The ambiguity of the 'war on terror' resulted in the US making a huge military and financial commitment in the Middle East, in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. But Western governments also had to respond to homegrown terrorism, with bombings in Madrid, London and Paris.

1. Outline the history of the rise of al-Qaeda since 1991.
2. In what ways has al-Qaeda resisted American power?
3. What problems might there be with enforcing a Western form of nation-state on the various groups in the Middle East?
4. How significant has the rise of Islamic militant groups been as a centre of power in the 21st century?

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Conclusion

The world entered the 1990s with the United States as the sole superpower. By the time the first decade of the 21st century ended, that unipolarity had splintered under the weight of a war against terrorism, a technological revolution, a financial crisis, new emerging centres of power in Asia and the loss of faith in Western institutions. The period marked the beginning of the long decline of American hegemony and the rise of China. The 'war on terror' marked a significant shift in the direction of international relations at the beginning of the 2000s, and the financial crisis that started in 2008 eroded American military and economic power.

The ongoing struggle in Europe between the forces of federalism and nationalism led to growing populism in France, Austria and Germany. The global financial crisis exposed divisions within the European Union and growing resentment between nations. The BRIC countries sought reform in international institutions to reflect 21st-century realities and criticised the national makeup of key leadership bodies as outdated. The 'war on terror' and the GFC eroded US power, while new media and information technology undermined the nation-state. But the biggest new centre of power was the rise of Islamic militant groups. Their ability to wage an asymmetrical war against the West continued to be a threat throughout the decade.

Chapter summary

- The European Union drifted towards closer regional integration between 1951 and 2008, but the global financial crisis and fears over mass migration threatened its viability.
- The BRIC countries emerged as a new centre of global power. Economically strong, they represented a challenge to Western dominance over international institutions.
- Economic globalisation and mass migration fuelled new, modern nationalist movements.
- Non-state actors such as new media and technology companies, and militant Islam, provided a cross-border challenge to traditional nation-state power.

Further resources

- Dinan, Desmond, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, 3rd edn., Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder CA, 2005.
- Fourth BRICS Summit: Delhi Declaration, 29 March 2012, www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/120329-delhi-declaration.html.
- Stuenkel, Oliver, *The BRICS and the Future of Global Order*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2015.

Endnotes

1 Monnet, Jean, 'The United States of Europe has begun', speech to the Common Assembly, 11 September 1952.

2 Stuenkel, Oliver, 'Brazil and UN Security Council reform: Is it time for another big push?', www.postwesternworld.com/2013/06/30/brazil-and-un-security-council-reform-is-it-time-for-another-big-push, 30 June 2013.

3 US President George W Bush, State of the Union address, 20 September 2001, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Make a timeline of the development of Europe from 1951 to 2012.
2. Research one speech by either Jean Monnet or Enoch Powell. What does it tell you about European attitudes towards the outside world?
3. Write a speech in which you argue against the drift towards a more federal Europe.
4. Explain why the 2004 referendums on the European Constitution failed.
5. To what extent is it meaningful to talk about BRIC as a group in international relations?
6. Outline the key aims and goals of BRIC.
7. In what ways have non-state actors undermined the concept of the nation-state?
8. Design an infographic in which you outline the main complexities of the Middle East.
9. Research the origins, alliances and goals of *two* of the following groups:
   - al-Qaeda
   - Daesh
   - Hezbollah
   - the Muslim Brotherhood.
10. To what extent were the 2000s a period of decline in the United States?

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The United Nations in post-Cold War history, 1991–2011

Italian sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro's *Sphere Within Sphere* at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

Alamy Stock Photo/John McKenna

STUDENTS WILL INVESTIGATE

In this chapter, students will examine the post-Cold War role of the United Nations as the central organisation responsible for countering threats to world peace and security.

Aspects to be covered include:

- The United Nations after the Cold War
- New threats to peace and security
- The United Nations – a new role?
- The UN in Yugoslavia 1991–92
- The UN in Cambodia 1992–93
- The UN in Somalia 1993
- The UN in Rwanda 1993–96
- The UN in Timor-Leste 1999–2001

Modern History syllabus

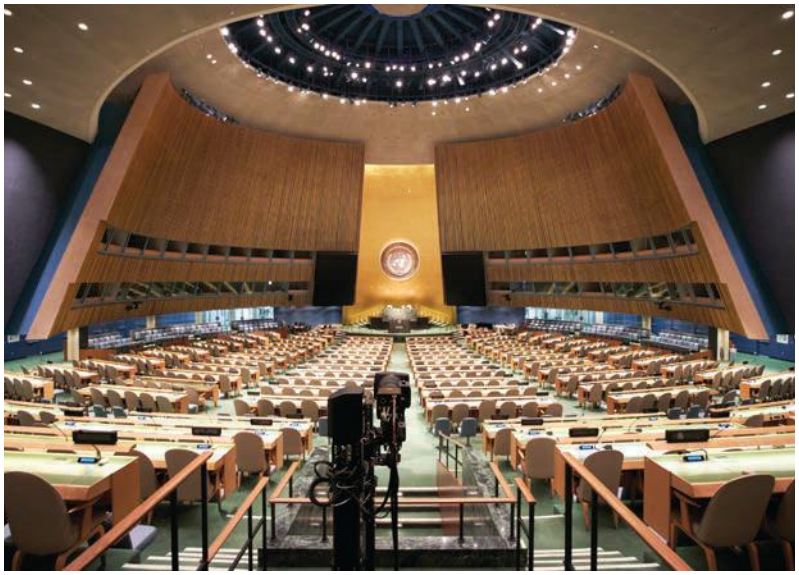
The role and influence of the United Nations

In the decade after the Cold War, the United Nations came to occupy a central place in the strategy for countering threats to peace and security. Many hoped it would finally be able to fulfil its Charter of promoting peace and prosperity in the world. No longer would global security be found under the umbrella of either the Soviet Union or the United States; nations were looking once again to the UN to guarantee their security and promote peace in the world. The UN 'Agenda for peace' paper of June 1992 outlined the impotence of the UN during the Cold War period.

blue helmets
The distinctive blue headgear worn by UN military personnel; the term came to refer to the UN personnel themselves

> Since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, over 100 major conflicts around the world have left some 20 million dead. The United Nations was rendered powerless to deal with many of these crises because of the vetoes – 279 of them – cast in the Security Council, which were a vivid expression of the divisions of that period.[1]

Imagefolk/Joe Fox



SOURCE 5.1 The headquarters of the United Nations in New York houses the UN General Assembly.

Getty Images/Handout

SOURCE 5.2 The distinctive blue headgear of UN workers can be seen as they carry out a range of humanitarian tasks, such as feeding and housing refugees.

The world entered the 1990s on a note of optimism regarding the role of the UN. Not only were the so-called **blue helmets** deployed to keep the peace between mostly internal combatants in civil war situations, the UN also expanded its operations to include overseeing the implementation of peace agreements, disarmament, electoral observation and human rights monitoring. In other words, the UN understood that it was not enough just to keep two sides from conflict. It had to create the institutions and processes to maintain lasting peace.

The expansion of the UN's role can be seen in numbers. At the end of 1989, UN peacekeepers numbered about 11 000. This had risen to 75 000 by 1994 to meet the needs of 20 peacekeeping missions. In the three and a half years after the Cold War, the United Nations operated more missions than it had in the previous 40 years. The budget had risen 18-fold between 1989 and 1992, and then doubled again in the years afterwards.

In addition, the type of conflict shifted from conflicts between nations to national or ethnic conflicts within borders. In the early post-Cold War period, UN peacekeepers were deployed to places as diverse as Angola, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Mozambique, Cambodia and Rwanda. The blue helmets were often forced to intervene in unstable security situations, and conditions were often dangerous. In places such as Rwanda and Somalia, the conflicts were still very much alive.

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As the decade wore on, the international challenges to peace and security became more nuanced than the traditional great power rivalries. This led the UN and the international community to reconsider the UN's role and redefine cherished notions of state **sovereignty** and interference. These debates about the role and influence of the UN in maintaining peace expanded to include humanitarian and peacekeeping work.

After the events of 11 September 2001 and the start of the so-called war on terror, new debates about the role and influence of the UN emerged. Central to these debates were the increasingly **unilateral** actions of the United States and Britain against Iraq, without UN approval, in March 2003. It seemed that the UN was being bypassed by some of its powerful member nations.

sovereignty
The idea that all states should be free from outside interference to determine their own political future

unilateral
Conducting foreign affairs with minimal consultation with other nations

International challenges to peace and security in the post-Cold War world

The end of the Cold War meant that the permanent tensions of the Soviet–US rivalry dissolved and there was more willingness to cooperate in the Security Council. But the post-Cold War period also brought a series of new challenges to international peace and security. Old tensions in various parts of the world that had been masked by the Cold War re-emerged, most strikingly in Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe had turned the world's attention to other parts of the world, including fresh tensions in the Middle East and Africa.

The United Nations: Fifty Years of Keeping the Peace

The First Gulf War

The new commitment to **collective security** was tested after Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. United Nations Resolution 678 demanded that Iraq withdraw its forces, and it set a deadline. When Iraq failed to comply by 15 January 1991, a US-led contingent of a large number of nations helped to restore sovereignty to Kuwait in a short war that lasted from mid-January until March 1991. The operation had the effect of lifting the global prestige of the United Nations.

But the example of the First Gulf War was not without its problems. Critics suggested that, although the United Nations shared in the success, it was largely American-led and without UN symbols or flags. The historian Omayma Abdel-Latif also argues that America overreached the UN mandate by bombing retreating Iraqi forces and assisting Kurdish forces in the north in their attempt to remove Saddam Hussein.

collective security
The principle that an aggressor state should be opposed by the entire international community

The First Gulf War was significant because the United States, as the sole **superpower**, demonstrated its willingness to use the institutions and organs of the United Nations to solve international conflicts. But the conflict in Iraq was a straightforward violation of the sovereignty of one nation by another. As we shall see, the character of conflict in the 1990s changed.

superpower
A great power that dominates the international system, has global reach that is underpinned by a strong economy and possesses superior military capacity

Ethnic conflicts

Increasingly, instead of resolving conflict between two sovereign states, the United Nations had to mediate and offer humanitarian aid to ethnic or religious groups that were under threat from governments or militias in their own country. These conflicts were part of a resurgent nationalism that had been repressed by the overarching rivalry between East and West during the Cold War. Nonetheless, they led to new calls for independence, which often led to civil war.

The conflict within national borders in places such as Yugoslavia, Cambodia, East Timor, Somalia and Rwanda revolved around ethnicity, race and religion. It was not always easy to determine who supported, and who challenged, the UN.

Intervention and state sovereignty

The intervention of the United Nations in domestic conflicts led to new questions about the UN's role and state sovereignty. If the UN was to intervene in intrastate conflict, civil war and differences

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between ethnic groups, then this would go against the longstanding principle, in international relations, of non-intervention in internal disputes. The nature of these internal post-Cold War conflicts meant that questions of state sovereignty needed to be revisited.

This was a difficult discussion to have since the concept of state sovereignty had been the bedrock of international relations. But the UN decided that the concept might be outdated.

> The foundation-stone of this work is and must remain the State. Respect for its fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress. The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality. It is the task of leaders of States today to understand this and to find a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world.
>
> 'An agenda for peace', www.un-documents.net/a47-277.htm, June 1992

Responsibility to protect

In September 2005, the United Nations adopted the principle of the 'responsibility to protect'. The UN's failure to protect civilian populations in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia led to reforms within the UN. Arguments that state sovereignty was inviolable were pushed aside when it came to gross and systematic abuses of human rights. The principle of responsibility to protect extended the idea of state sovereignty by declaring that those countries that wanted to enjoy their sovereignty needed to accept responsibility for the safety and welfare of their populations. If those states failed in this responsibility, the international community would intervene to protect.

At the UN World Summit in 2005, member states officially adopted the principle. Paragraphs 138 and 139 of the summit's outcome document outlined the responsibilities of states and detailed the types of interventions that could be carried out should the state fail in its duty.

The United Nations and the 'war on terror'

The decision of the United States to adopt a unilateral and militaristic response to the events of 11 September 2001 undermined the progress the United Nations had made in the 1990s as an organising force for maintaining peace and security. The US response led international relations experts John O'Neill and Nicholas Rees to conclude:

> The US response in Afghanistan and Iraq has been predictable and consistent with the increasingly unilateralist and militaristic policy pursued by the Bush Administration … Such an approach does not bode well for the UN and suggests that the consensus that existed in the Security Council in the early 1990s is over.
>
> JT O'Neill and N Rees, *United Nations Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 3

By November 2002, it was clear that the US was going to adopt a path that was at odds with the UN. When UN weapons inspectors were sent into Iraq to find evidence of a weapons development program, it was clear that the Americans were not going to accept their findings. The chief inspector, Hans Blix, repeatedly claimed that the weapons program was non-existent and appealed to the Americans to provide evidence that would verify their claims. The UN team withdrew in January 2003, having found nothing, while the Americans insisted on the truth of their claims.

1. How did the prominence of the UN change after the Cold War?
2. Outline the expanded role of the UN in international affairs.
3. How did the nature of conflict change in the post-Cold War world?
4. To what extent was the notion of sovereignty still relevant after 1990?
5. Explain how the war on terror changed the relationship between the UN and the United States.

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Debate over the role and influence of the United Nations

The Cold War prevented the United Nations from fully carrying out its Charter up until 1990. Under the shadow of superpower conflict and a largely bipolar world, the UN's structures prevented it from dealing with some of the crises for which it was designed. For example, the UN Security Council – a body set up to deal with questions of war and conflict – was hampered by the permanent membership of the United States and the Soviet Union. Each had a veto, which they used to block UN involvement in conflicts in which they themselves had an interest. It has been argued that the US used the UN to contain communism during this period and that, in a range of cases, from the Iranian hostage crisis to Northern Ireland and the Iran–Iraq War, participants simply ignored UN Security Council directives.

The UN is active in many fields, including education, sustainable development, environmental protection and many others. Below are three areas where it has been influential during conflict in the post-Cold War era:

- peacekeeping
- humanitarian aid
- upholding international law.

United Nations peacekeeping


Peacekeeping missions

Given the nature of the disputes in which the United Nations intervened during the 1990s, the role of UN peacekeeping has come under intense scrutiny. UN peacekeeping missions were typically deployed to restore peace or maintain agreements, but had no authority to use force. They were carried out by military personnel with orders to remain neutral and impartial. This meant that, in the event of an attack by one group on another, they were often powerless to intervene and, except in cases of self-defence, they could not act. In addition, UN peacekeeping missions were established only if both sides in a conflict agreed to welcome a UN presence. The legal limits to UN peacekeeping operations often revolved around issues of state sovereignty.

The UN would need a strong framework to organise its activities. In June 1992, a paper titled 'An agenda for peace' addressed the new challenges for security and proposed expanded UN powers. The document also committed to the principle of state sovereignty, but with limits. It contained four pillars for the future of UN peacekeeping operations, as set out in the following table.

TABLE 5.1 The four pillars for the future of United Nations peacekeeping

PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY	PEACEMAKING	PEACE BUILDING	PEACEKEEPING
• Resolve disputes before violence breaks out	• Reduce intensity of conflict through diplomatic negotiation	• Build political and legal institutions	• Implement ceasefires and peace agreements • Demobilise and disarm militias • Protect humanitarian personnel

Humanitarian aid

The nature of disputes in the post-Cold War era also meant that the United Nations would have to engage in humanitarian work. This became obvious at the end of the First Gulf War, when the UN intervened to deliver aid to Kurdish civilians in the north who, encouraged by the United States to attempt to overthrow Saddam's Ba'athist regime, were the victims of chemical attack. The UN created safe havens and commenced Operation Provide Comfort.

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Getty Images/Roberto Sschmidt/AFP

SOURCE 5.3 A United Nations peacekeeper in Haiti helps a local woman after the earthquake that hit Haiti on 12 January 2010, which left 170 000 dead and 1 million homeless.

It is not only in conflict that the United Nations has been called in to coordinate humanitarian efforts. Often, the UN comes in after natural disasters to bring urgently needed food aid, shelter and medical help. They are also called in to assist with a refugee crisis when a neighbouring country is overrun by refugees from a conflict across the border.

But by far the largest need for humanitarian aid is in conflict. Often, fighting over land disrupts farming and livestock production and leads to famine. Displaced peoples fleeing conflict zones are also a huge problem. A number of agencies, including the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), coordinate humanitarian efforts.

In the aftermath of natural disasters, the UN has demonstrated a commitment to mobilise resources. For example, in January 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, killing 200 000 people and leaving two million homeless. The UN was among the first responders, setting up field hospitals, leading search and rescue missions and restoring vital infrastructure. It also provided an additional 2000 military personnel and 1500 police to assist with the humanitarian aid.

The United Nations and international law

impunity
Freedom from punishment; the state of being above the law

The 1946 Nuremberg trials of 21 Nazi leaders showed that it was possible to bring war criminals to justice. No longer could autocrats or dictators operate with **impunity**. More importantly, the Nuremberg trials demonstrated that those who carried out orders to commit atrocities would not be exempt from punishment, either.

The main organ in the United Nations for settling disputes between nations is the International Court of Justice. Its 15 judges settle disputes, based on international law. The UN also created special tribunals to prosecute perpetrators of the genocides in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In the case of Yugoslavia, the UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in May 1993 so that it could immediately collect evidence as the conflict was taking place. The first indictment was in November 1994, against a detention camp commander, for atrocities committed against non-Serb civilians in Bosnia. In November 1995, two high-profile Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, were indicted on charges of genocide. The first trial commenced in May 1996. In May 1999, the UN set another standard in international justice when it indicted a sitting head of state, Yugoslavian leader Slobodan Milošević, for his actions against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo in the same year.

The home of the UN's organs of justice is at The Hague in the Netherlands, where high-profile war criminals such as Milošević and Karadžić were prosecuted, and where, in 2017, Ratko Mladić was sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Other notable war criminals to have faced justice through the UN include Charles Taylor from Sierra Leone and a range of leaders of the Rwandan genocide, the most infamous being Jean-Paul Akayesu.

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The United Nations in the former Yugoslavia, 1991–92

The civil war in the former Yugoslavia after the end of the Cold War reinforced to the world just how challenging it was to maintain peace in the post-Cold War world, and represented a new role for the United Nations as an international peacekeeper. Nationalist sentiments that seemed to be a relic of another era fuelled a conflict in the Yugoslav federation that shocked the world and introduced the term **ethnic cleansing** into the geopolitical lexicon. Under the long-running presidency of Josip Tito, who died in 1980, ethnic tensions between Serbians, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, Slovenes and Albanians were largely suppressed in the name of cooperation towards a socialist ideal. Tito's death and the end of the Cold War brought longstanding rivalries to the surface.

ethnic cleansing
The killing of members of one ethnic or religious group or their expulsion from a geographical area

Yugoslavia

1991	June	Two of the six Yugoslav republics, Slovenia and Croatia, declare their independence from the federation
	September	The Yugoslav Army attacks Croat areas
		The United Nations places an arms embargo on Yugoslavia
1992	February	The UN sends a peacekeeping mission to Yugoslavia
	April	Bosnia and Herzegovina declares independence from Yugoslavia
		The siege of Sarajevo commences, lasting four years
	July/August	Bosnian Serbs gain control of 70% of Bosnia, resulting in a refugee crisis

Background to the conflict

The Yugoslav federation was made up of six republics – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Greater calls for independence within the federation following the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe led to tensions within the Serb-dominated federal government and military. Ordinary Yugoslavians were calling for change. Accompanying that desire for change, however, was not a movement towards Western-style liberal democracy, like that being adopted in the rest of the former communist bloc, but an ethnically based **nationalism**. This pre-dated the formation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after World War I and its reconstitution by Tito as a socialist republic after World War II. Nationalism was not the only fuel. An economic and political crisis had gripped Yugoslavia in the final years of the 1980s.

nationalism
The construction of national identity to mobilise support for a political purpose

The anxiety of the other republics was in part a fear that a so-called Greater Serbia would attempt to dominate the rest of Yugoslavia. The basis of this was a renewal of a Serb nationalism that stretched back centuries and looked to more recent history for its justification. Serb nationalists claimed that Tito, who was a Croat, had tried to deliberately weaken the Serb area. In a famous memorandum calling for a Greater Serbia, it was claimed that a 14th-century battle against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo justified Serb ownership of the region. In short, the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav nationalists painted themselves as underdogs against a more powerful Croatia, and their attempt to reassert their power resulted in a virulent strain of nationalism that would give rise to ethnic cleansing.

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SOURCE 5.4 The former Yugoslavia was made up of six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia) in a federation that was ruled from Belgrade, in Serbian territory.

The course of the conflict

When Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1991, the Serb-dominated federal parliament in Belgrade rejected the move. Slovenia declared its independence on 25 June 1991 after a plebiscite resulted in an overwhelming vote to secede from the rest of Yugoslavia. Slovenes feared that Serbia would dominate the federation after the end of the Cold War. After a short, 10-day war against the Yugoslav Army, Slovenia gained its independence.

The situation in Croatia was further complicated by the presence of a large group of Croatian Serbs. Under the pretence of trying to protect local Serbs, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević sent the Yugoslav Army into Croatia, where it occupied one-third of the republic. In September 1991, open conflict broke out between the Yugoslav Army and Croat forces. In February 1992, the UN sent in a peacekeeping mission, and the international community recognised Croatia's independence in the same year.

The struggle between Croats and Serbs turned into a full-blown civil war over disputed areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With Bosnian Muslims making up nearly 45 per cent of the population, Serbs making up over 30 per cent, and a minority of Croats, dividing up the republic would lead to significant conflict. During 1991, in response to free elections in Bosnia, Milošević declared a 'Serb Autonomous Region'. On 5 April 1992, encouraged by the Croatian independence movement, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its own independence. The Serb minority, armed by Milošević, rejected this outcome. Bosnian Serb nationalists also rejected the so-called three-state solution, which would have divided Bosnia into Croat, Muslim and Serb areas, and commenced a program of driving out ethnic Muslims from their area – the process of ethnic cleansing. In April, the Serbs blockaded the city of Sarajevo in a siege that lasted four years.

Alamy Stock Photo/Justin Leighton

SOURCE 5.5 A UN tank shields civilians from snipers as they cross the road in Sarajevo, 1995.

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Under the leadership of the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, Serb forces took some two-thirds of Bosnia in quick time. Their methods were brutal, and included torture, mass rape, displacement and deportation of civilians, and destruction of property. They rounded up ethnic Muslims and Croats, put them in detention centres and murdered them in large numbers. Mass graves were discovered afterwards. It is estimated that about 80 000 Bosnians were murdered in the war between 1992 and 1995.

The UN declared the program of ethnic cleansing a genocide. The most infamous massacre took place at Srebrenica, where Bosnian Serb forces under the command of the Serbian war criminal General Ratko Mladić rounded up and murdered more than 8000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys.

The role and impact of United Nations forces

On 25 September 1991, alarmed by the outbreak of fighting among Serb, Croat and Slovene forces, the United Nations Security Council placed an embargo on the shipment of arms to Yugoslavia. Critics have suggested that this ban favoured Serbia because, as the most powerful republic and seat of the capital, it had control over the military and existing arms. In other words, Milošević was using the Yugoslav Army to further the interests of Serbia.

UN forces first entered Yugoslavia in February 1992, only months after Serbia invaded Croatia. The United Nations Protection Force entered the country to create safe havens for local Croats against Serb forces, and committed to stay for an initial period of 12 months.

Making peace: the Vance–Owen plan

By January 1993, it became clear that Bosnia was in crisis. United Nations Special Envoy Cyrus Vance and a European Community representative, Lord Owen, put forward the UN-backed Vance–Owen peace plan. The plan proposed dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina into 10 separate semi-autonomous regions based on ethnic groups. The Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadžić was behind the plan and signed it on 30 April, but a referendum held in mid-May overwhelmingly rejected the plan when 96 per cent of people voted against it.

The UN's involvement in the civil war cut to the heart of questions of sovereignty and intervention. One of the core principles of UN intervention in a conflict is the agreement of each of the disputing parties. However, in February 1992, the UN had determined that the threat of a new conflagration was more serious than groups expressing objections to the UN plan.

The UN mission was to create safe havens in Croatia to protect civilians from the killing. These United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) needed to be demilitarised. A further goal was to remove all of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav Army from Croatia. Throughout 1992, a series of expansions of the mission allowed the UN to control who came into and out of the UNPAs and allowed peacekeepers to move outside the zones. The role and actions of the UN included securing Sarajevo's airport to allow much-needed food and medical aid to reach those displaced by the war. The UN enforced a no-fly zone of military aircraft in Bosnian airspace and sought to prevent weapons from getting into Bosnia by sending observers to border control stations. In light of the fact that the Serb leadership did not cooperate with the UN peacekeepers, the president of Macedonia invited a contingent of UN peacekeepers into his country out of fear that the war would spill over there.

The failure to stop the murder of people, even in safe areas, was a fundamental shortcoming of the mission. The following source study examines the reasons for the UN's failure to protect Bosnian Croats and Muslims.

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United Nations' failure in the former Yugoslavia

SOURCE A

David Rieff was a journalist working in Bosnia at the time of the civil war. These are his recollections.

> I had put everything else on hold, resolved to write as frankly incendiary a narrative as I could of my journeys to the slaughterhouse that the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina became in the spring of 1992. If the bad news about Bosnia could just be brought home to people, I remember thinking, the slaughter would not be allowed to continue … I say slaughter because to refer to what has happened there as a war is to distort, and more gravely, to dignify the real nature of what has occurred … The Serbs came, they slaughtered, they conquered, while the world looked on.

David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1995, pp. 9, 17

SOURCE B

> Critics charged that the UN had utterly failed in the former Yugoslavia. Key officials of the UN, particularly Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali … were criticised for their reluctance to authorize the use of force (particularly airstrikes) against the Bosnian Serbs and for their concern for the security of UN peacekeepers (as opposed to victims of the Bosnian conflict). Although there may have been some validity to these criticisms, many people pointed out that the responsibility for the UN's failures in the former Yugoslavia lies at least as much – and probably much more – with the member states of the organization (especially the major powers). The permanent members of the UN Security Council repeatedly voted for Security Council resolutions that they did not have the will to enforce. Thus, they authorized the UN-designated safe areas but then failed to provide the military forces that the UN secretary-general argued were necessary to defend those areas. Supporters of the UN's role in the former Yugoslavia argued that, for all its failures, the UN had at least helped to ameliorate or limit the human suffering caused by the conflict.

Andrew S Cotty, 'Bosnian genocide' in P Bartrop and S Leonard Jacobs (eds), *Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection*, ABC-CLIO, California, 2015, p. 384

QUESTIONS

1. What is the attitude and tone of the writer in Source A?
2. How useful is Source A for a historian studying the war in Yugoslavia? In your answer, comment on perspective and reliability.
3. According to Source B, what are the criticisms of the UN mission to Bosnia, and what were its successes?

1. Explain why nationalism was such an important factor in the drift towards war in the former Yugoslavia.
2. What was the concept of Greater Serbia and why did it cause so much anxiety in the republics?
3. Why did the Bosnian claim to independence spark the war, rather than those of Slovenia or Croatia in June 1991?
4. What atrocities accompanied the practice of ethnic cleansing?
5. What were some of the UN's actions and goals in Bosnia?
6. Why did the UN mission fail?

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The United Nations in Cambodia, 1992–93

Since the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot took power in Cambodia in April 1975, the tiny South-East Asian country had been deeply scarred by the experience of a brutal, and arguably genocidal, dictatorship and war. The Khmer Rouge was a brutal communist regime that took the lives of an estimated 1.7 million people by attempting to create a classless society, made up only of peasants, and winding the clock back to 'Year Zero'. Pol Pot was driven from power in January 1979 when the Vietnamese seized Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, and an ensuing war between the two countries lasted until the Vietnamese withdrew from the country in September 1989.

Three main factions struggled for power after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese: the conservative monarchy, a people's national liberation front and the Khmer Rouge. By 1989, the threat of civil war loomed large over Cambodia, and the United Nations took two years of negotiations to broker a peace agreement among the factions. In the meantime, each faction had built up a large supply of weapons to arm its militias, and 350 000 people were driven from their homes.

Getty Images/Bettmann

SOURCE 5.6 Pol Pot's reign of terror lasted from 1975 until 1979 and resulted in the deaths of 1.7 million Cambodians.

In October 1991, the warring factions came together to sign the Paris Agreement, which established the 12-member Supreme National Council. This council was headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, a conservative monarchist and former head of state, but also included Khmer Rouge representatives and representatives from the Khmer People's National Liberation Front. It was an uneasy peace, held together by the United Nations, which had already had a security presence in the country. New elections were set for 23–27 May 1993.

The historian Trevor Findlay points out that one of the more unsettling and morally ambiguous issues surrounding the Paris Agreement was what to do about the genocide committed by Pol Pot in the 1970s. While some argued for war crimes trials, the overwhelming sentiment was to push the issue to the side in the interests of attempting to achieve Cambodian unity.

The Americans denounced the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the council. US Secretary of State James A Baker wanted to ensure that American humanitarian aid did not make it into the hands of the Khmer Rouge, and he was determined to keep them from gaining power – even though they were the strongest of the three factions. By July 1992, the Khmer Rouge had withdrawn from the peace process. During October, the governments of Japan and Thailand attempted to bring the Khmer Rouge back into the electoral process, but failed.

The UN was given the mandate of overseeing the disarmament of the warring factions, but the Khmer Rouge refused to disarm. Throughout 1993, after they announced that the UN was not welcome in Khmer-controlled zones without permission, the Khmer Rouge targeted UN peacekeepers in minor skirmishes.

The Khmer's refusal to disarm meant that the UN delayed disarmament of the other factions after January 1993. The Khmer was active in trying to limit the smooth running of free elections. Between March and the scheduled election date of 23 May 1993, the Khmer was responsible for nearly 200 politically motivated deaths. In April, they had murdered three Bulgarian peacekeepers and some UN civil contractors. Nonetheless, the elections went ahead and the UN mission in Cambodia was widely regarded as a success.

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The role and impact of the United Nations in Cambodia

The United Nations established the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) in October 1991, at the same time as the Paris Agreement was signed. The mission's main function was to create neutral areas where warring factions could disarm and demobilise their soldiers.

In March 1992, UNAMIC had transformed into the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which was established to oversee the elections and enforce the ceasefire. The UN peacekeeping force was large, with some 22 000 personnel from 32 countries – including 600 Australian military personnel and an Australian commander of the international military force, Lieutenant General John Sanderson.

Getty Images/Langevin Jacques

SOURCE 5.7 UN soldiers help Cambodian refugees returning to Cambodia from camps in Thailand remove their belongings from a train in Phnom Penh. The Khmer Rouge genocide and the Vietnamese occupation from 1979 to 1989 forced many people to find refuge in neighbouring countries.

The mission had two main priorities. First, to disarm the different factions, which it did with limited success. The Khmer's refusal to disarm meant that it enforced disarmament with other groups in a half-hearted fashion by the beginning of 1993.

The second priority was to oversee elections and create an environment in which people could register and vote, free of political and government intimidation. That the election went ahead in May 1993 with a 90 per cent participation rate is widely regarded as a success. The UN had provided 50 000 staff to conduct the election and was successful in implementing education programs about the electoral process.

In the weeks after the election, in which Cambodians democratically elected a coalition government made up of the major parties, a constitutional monarchy led by King Norodom Sihanouk was restored. UNTAC was dissolved in September 1993.

The historian Trevor Findlay lists nine roles of the UN in Cambodia:

- supervision of the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Cambodia
- disarmament and demobilisation of the internal factions
- location and confiscation of caches of weapons

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- the conduct of a free and fair election (rather than just observing)
- promotion and protection of human rights
- oversight of military and civil administration until a new government was in place
- resettlement of Cambodian refugees
- assisting with mine clearance
- rebuilding essential infrastructure.

Trevor Findlay on Cambodia

SOURCE A

> UNTAC was to be the most ambitious operation in the history of UN peacekeeping. 'Peacekeeping' indeed seemed a highly inadequate term to describe the totality of the UN role envisaged: the UNTAC operation is better described as a mixture of peacekeeping, peace making and peace building. In its complexity and comprehensiveness it remains the epitome of what have become known as 'second-generation' multinational operations.

SOURCE B

> The Cambodia operation, the UN's biggest ... operation to date, was also its most utopian. Its intention was to help long-standing warring opponents achieve a cease-fire, canton and disarm their forces, and involve themselves in a democratic process never before experienced in the country, with the aim of establishing a united, stable, pluralistic state based on constitutional law ... Never before had the UN organized an election, attempted to supervise and control a functioning government administration or conducted a fully fledged human rights campaign in a member state ... In this context, the international community had set UNTAC an impossible task ... In retrospect, even Gareth Evans [Australia's foreign minister], one of the architects of the Cambodia settlement, acknowledges that UNTAC's mandate was 'overly ambitious and in some respects clearly not achievable'.

(Sources A and B) Trevor Findlay, *Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 14

QUESTIONS

1 In Source A, how does Findlay describe the UN's scope beyond peacekeeping?

2 According to Source B, in what sense was the Cambodia operation 'utopian'?

3 In Source B, does Findlay regard the mission as a success? Explain.

1. Describe the background to the Paris Agreement in 1991.
2. Identify the three main factions vying for power in Cambodia after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese in 1989.
3. What was the role of the Supreme National Council?
4. What were some problems with, and attitudes towards, the Khmer Rouge's participation in the elections to be held in May 1993?
5. Why did the Khmer Rouge withdraw from the peace process?
6. What was the main role of the UN force in Cambodia, and how successful was it?

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The United Nations in Somalia, 1993

failed state
A state without a functioning government, economy or security force

Somalia is often characterised as a **failed state**, as indicated by the absence of a functioning government and public institutions. The collapse of the regime of President Mohammad Siad Barre in January 1991 left a power vacuum in which a broad range of clan-based factions fought to replace the regime. The fighting gave rise to a humanitarian crisis, and starvation, violence and displacement forced the United Nations and the United States to intervene in the country. By 1995, both the US and the UN had withdrawn after rebel groups began targeting and killing their military personnel. What started out as a violent civil war soon became a threat to international peacekeepers and observers. At first, the mission of the US and the UN was to protect the delivery of humanitarian aid, but when it expanded into so-called nation-building, the intensity of the conflict increased. Their mission was a failure.

Background to the conflict

Somalia is Africa's most easterly country. It is geographically positioned along 3000 kilometres of coastline around the Horn of Africa. Its position made it a valuable trading port and the gateway between Africa and Asia. It links the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. In early 1991, President Siad Barre was deposed after a generation of brutal autocratic rule that had begun in 1969. Given the geopolitical position of Somalia, Siad Barre enjoyed the support of both the United States and the Soviet Union throughout his rule. But the end of the Cold War meant that support would be withdrawn.

As was the case with many African nations, Somalia's borders were drawn up as spoils of European imperialism in the second half of the 19th century, in the so-called Scramble for Africa. In 1977, Siad Barre decided to make a historical claim on the Ethiopian territory of Ogaden, a Somali-speaking region to the east of Ethiopia. Siad Barre sent his troops into the country under the guise of a so-called – but probably non-existent – Western Somali Liberation Front, and attempted to **annex** the region. Siad Barre and his forces were defeated after the Soviets intervened in the conflict on the side of Ethiopia.

annex
To claim the territory of another sovereign state as your own

That war was significant for another reason. Over the next decade, the Ethiopian government began to undermine Siad Barre's Somali regime by arming various rebel groups. Any loyalty to the Somali nation was collapsing and **sectarianism** was rife as clans, and ethnic and religious factions, pressed for independence and power. By 1991, groups from the north and south of the country – headed by the United Congress of Somalia and funded by Ethiopia – successfully overran the regime. After 27 years of brutal autocratic rule, Siad Barre was deposed, leading to the collapse of the Somali state and a humanitarian catastrophe. What followed was 25 years without a central government.

sectarianism
Excessive devotion to a particular religious or ethnic group

The course of the conflict

The end of the Siad Barre regime reignited a civil war that had been running since January 1991. During 1991–92, there was intense conflict between factions loyal to interim president Ali Mahdi Mohamed – the successor to Siad Barre – and those loyal to the chairman of the United Somali Congress, General Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The sides clashed over land and resources in southern Somalia.

The clashes between Aidid and Ali Mahdi plunged Somalia into a humanitarian crisis. In the countryside, farming and livestock production was disrupted, resulting in a famine that by December 1992 had cost the lives of 250 000 Somalis and threatened a further 4.5 million people in the countryside. There was widespread destruction and looting in major cities – particularly in the capital, Mogadishu, which was the main site of violent clashes.

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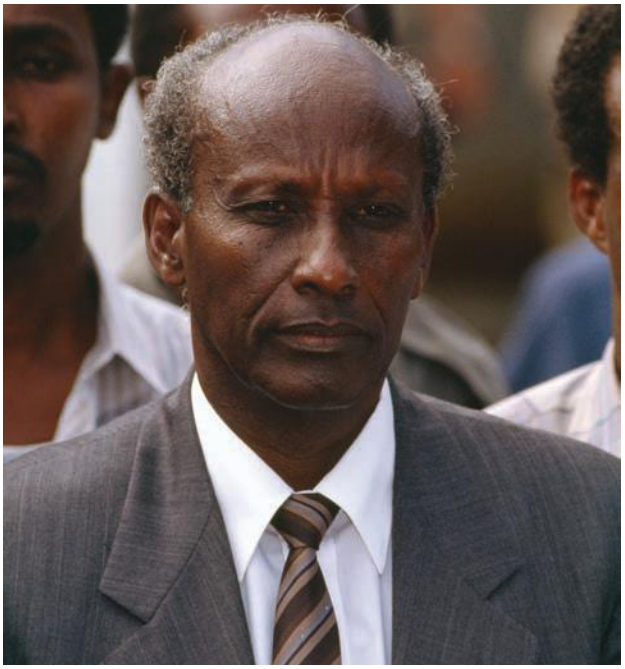
The violence and famine led to a refugee crisis as millions of people both within Somalia and in neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya fled their homes. Somaliland, the former British-controlled area in the north-west of Somalia, had declared its independence in 1991, and it provided limited protection for some of those fleeing the country.

Violence, famine and the movement of refugees led to an urgent humanitarian crisis. The United Nations arrived in July 1992, and aid agencies began delivering hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food aid to a starving population, but shipments were not getting through to where they were needed. A deteriorating security situation, looting and harassment of aid workers crippled the aid efforts. Control over the distribution of food became a major political issue. Factional warlords believed that they could win the loyalty of the regions by handing out food. Opponents could withhold food and starve local regions into submission. Famine had effectively become an instrument of war.



Getty Images/Patrick Robert - Corbis

SOURCE 5.8 General Mohamed Farrah Aidid was the head of the United Somali Congress, which overthrew the regime of President Siad Barre in January 1991. By March 1993, the United States aimed to remove Aidid from power, resulting in a more intense conflict.

US intervention, 1992–94

On 4 December 1992, US President George HW Bush addressed the American people to outline the situation in Somalia. He announced that the United States would commit 28 000 American troops to Somalia to help secure the food supply and make the area safe for a United Nations peacekeeping mission. As a result, Operation Restore Hope was launched. Below is an extract from President Bush's address of 4 December 1992, in which he outlines the scope of the mission.

> Once we have created that secure environment, we will withdraw our troops, handing the security mission back to a regular UN peacekeeping force. Our mission has a limited objective: To open the supply routes, to get the food moving, and to prepare the way for a UN peacekeeping force to keep it moving … Let me be very clear: Our mission is humanitarian, but we will not tolerate armed gangs ripping off their own people, condemning them to death by starvation … To the people of Somalia I promise this: We do not plan to dictate political outcomes. We respect your sovereignty and independence.
>
> President George HW Bush, 4 December 1992, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=21758

By March 1993, the threat of starvation had been averted but the security situation remained fragile. Accordingly, the US should have handed over to the UN peacekeeping forces. However, at the request of the UN Secretary-General, new US President Bill Clinton decided to extend the US mission to help build government structures. A further expansion of the original mission may have caused more conflict when the US adopted the goal of removing Mohamed Farrah Aidid from power. Over the next six months, US forces became targets of Aidid forces. Fighting in Mogadishu became increasingly intense, and between June and October, 19 US soldiers were killed.

In October 1993, two US Black Hawk helicopters were shot down over Mogadishu, killing 18 US Army personnel. Images of dead American soldiers, tied up and being dragged through the streets, were splashed over the front pages of international newspapers and aired on television. President Clinton denounced the act on US television and announced a commitment to withdraw the remaining American troops by the end of March 1994. Despite the US's intention to complete its humanitarian work, it had failed in its mission. Warlords were simply able to resume control over much of the country.

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Getty Images/Scott Peterson

SOURCE 5.9 United States intervention in Somalia began as a mission to bring relief to starving Somalis caught up in factional fighting. When its mission extended to removing Aidid from power, first the Somalis, and then American opinion, turned against the mission. The US withdrew in March 1994. Here, children stand on the wreckage of an American Black Hawk helicopter, shot down by Somali warlords in October 1993.

CNN effect
The impact of television by provoking the sympathies of viewers and influencing foreign policy

The so-called **CNN effect** – whereby television images evoke sympathy and influence foreign policy – was undoubtedly a factor in getting the Americans into Somalia. Images of starving Somalis, the victims of rebel warlords who were blocking UN food supplies, provoked American sympathies. Equally, images of dead American soldiers being paraded through the streets of Mogadishu had the effect of turning American public opinion against US military involvement. The incident left the American public with a strong distaste for getting involved in further conflict. This was to have catastrophic consequences in Rwanda a year later.

After the US withdrawal, fighting between the factions continued. By 1994, there were up to 19 clans attending UN-sponsored attempts at mediation, but they resented the presence of the international community and targeted the blue helmets. The main warlord, Aidid, would not work with the UN to achieve peace. By March 1995, the situation was so dangerous in Somalia that the United Nations could no longer continue its work.

In July 1996, Aidid suffered a gunshot wound during a battle with another factional clan. On 2 August, just before going into surgery, he died of a heart attack. After Aidid's death, the number of factions at war continued to grow. No stable government would emerge and by the late 1990s, regions such as Puntland and Jubaland declared their autonomy from the rest of Somalia.

The UN mission in Somalia was a failure.

The role and impact of the United Nations in Somalia

The first United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) was established by UN Security Council Resolutions 733 and 746 in April 1992 to provide humanitarian aid and monitor a UN-brokered ceasefire. In December 1992, UN Security Council Resolution 794 extended its goal to allow a United States–led military force of peacekeepers to ensure that aid was being distributed. Between 1993 and 1995, UNOSOM II was implemented, with a much broader goal of 'nation building', in an attempt to build a new government. These missions were widely regarded as a failure – and, moreover, an overreach of the United Nations Charter.

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The UN intervention in Somalia was different from conflicts in places such as Yugoslavia. For example, there was no central government after the removal of Siad Barre, there were no official law and order or security services and, most importantly, the UN was not invited into the conflict zone.

Othman O Mahmood offers the following explanation for the failure of the UN mission in Somalia.

> The preliminary reason for the UN operation's failure in Somalia was that the UN intervention in the Somali crisis came one year after the collapse of Somalia's governmental institutions and was too little, too late … Due to its faulty start, UNOSOM I had to be scrapped altogether because the situation in Somalia demanded strong multinational forces (UNITAF) to be assembled under the leadership of the U.S. Central Command … The firepower of UNITAF intimidated the warring factions in Somalia. In less than four months, law and order were restored in most major urban areas in Somalia. Due to this positive development, the US administration demanded that the responsibility for the operation be taken over by UNOSOM II. Because UNITAF did not eliminate the belligerent parties (the aggressors) in the Somali civil war, UNOSOM II could not complete its mission as planned. A major factor making it ineffective was the change from a military to a diplomatic operation. History teaches us that as long as the belligerent party in the conflict is active, diplomacy will not work.[2]

1. Describe the reasons that Somalia is considered a failed state.
2. Outline the main points in the background to the civil war in Somalia.
3. What impact did the removal from power of Siad Barre have on Somalia?
4. What role did sectarianism play in the conflict?
5. Provide a detailed explanation of the role the distribution of food played in the conflict.
6. Read the quote from George HW Bush on page 129 and outline his main goals for the mission to Somalia.
7. How did the mission change after March 1993, and what impact did this have on the intensity of the conflict?
8. Explain the CNN effect as it appears in Somalia.
9. Why was the UN mission to Somalia different from other peacekeeping missions?
10. How does Othman O Mahmood account for the failure of the UN mission?

The United Nations in Rwanda

The conflict in Rwanda between April and July 1994 resulted in the deaths of 800 000 people. It is regarded as a **genocide** perpetrated against the Tutsi people by the dominant Hutu government, and in November 1994 the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda commenced proceedings against the main culprits on charges including genocide. The United Nations has been criticised for not doing enough to prevent the slaughter.

genocide
The systematic killing of people belonging to a particular ethnic or racial group

Long-term causes

As with any conflict, there was a mix of long-term and short-term causes for the conflict in Rwanda. Rwanda was declared a **mandate** of Belgium after World War I, and that country favoured the minority Tutsi people over the majority Hutus, who made up 85 per cent of the population. In truth, there were very few cultural differences between the two groups. Both shared the same language and many traditions. But the longstanding colonial strategy of putting in place subjects loyal to the coloniser suited the Belgians, who supported minority Tutsi rule. As a result, ethnic tensions between the two groups developed over time.

mandate
A territory assigned to another, usually larger, power

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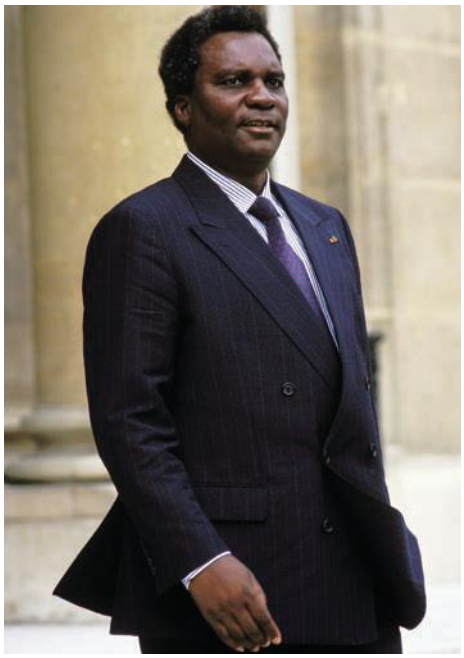
A 1959 uprising by the Hutus resulted in the death of 20 000 Tutsis and forced a further 300 000 to flee the region. Many of these exiles moved north into Uganda, where they settled for two generations. Two years later, the ruling Tutsi monarch was overthrown, the Hutus declared Rwanda a republic and in July 1962 the country was granted its independence.

In 1973, General Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu, was installed by military coup, and then held office for the next two decades. Habyarimana had long been a member of the Hutu government, first as a chief of staff and then as a police and defence minister.



Getty Images/William STEVENS

SOURCE 5.10 Rwandan Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana ruled Rwanda for two decades between 1973 and his death in April 1994. The shooting down of his plane sparked a civil war that resulted in the deaths of 800 000 Rwandans.

Short-term causes

In 1990, Tutsi rebels, led by the future Rwandan President Paul Kagame (since 2000), began to engage in border raids from their northern base in Uganda. The Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Rwanda in October 1990, and over the next two years, negotiations between the RPF and Habyarimana's government resulted in a power-sharing agreement between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, to be implemented in August 1993.

The border clashes and violence led extremist elements in the Hutu political community to turn what was a political issue into one of race. They accused the Tutsi community of being subversive traitors and commenced a campaign of propaganda and hatred against the Tutsis.

The direct cause of the violence was an incident on 6 April 1994. A plane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira, both Hutus, was shot down over the Rwandan capital of Kigali. The call immediately went out from Hutu extremists to murder all Tutsis in the capital – even though it was not clear who was responsible for shooting down the plane. Hutu extremists blamed the Tutsi, while the Tutsi blamed extremist Hutus, who they said had shot down the plane as an excuse to commence the genocide. A French judge put the blame on the Tutsi leader, and later president, Paul Kagame.

The course of the conflict

A variety of extremist groups from the Presidential Guard, Hutu militias and the Rwandan military joined in the genocide – a vicious attempt to remove all Tutsis from Rwanda by murdering them. It should be noted that the slaughter was perpetrated by Hutu **extremists** against both Tutsis and **moderate** Hutus – and, indeed, among the first victims were moderate Hutu politicians, including the prime minister, who were killed in order to make way for the extreme nationalist Hutu faction.

extremist
People who hold extreme political or religious views and advocate violent or illegal action

moderate
In politics, a person who holds balanced views

The genocide spread with unprecedented violence and speed: 800 000 people were killed in 100 days. The killings started in the capital of Kigali after Hutus set up road blocks and demanded to see ID cards, which showed people's ethnicities. Those identified as Tutsis were killed immediately, often with machetes. Hutu husbands killed their Tutsi wives out of fear for their own lives and thousands of Tutsi women were captured and held as sex slaves. At the later trials of the Rwandan Hutus, it was ruled that the mass rapes were a part of the genocide.

The slaughter was also highly coordinated. At the beginning of the conflict, hit lists of political opponents were drawn up and the youth wing of the ruling party – the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development – was delegated the job of carrying out the slaughter. This group numbered about 30 000 and was called the *Interahamwe*, which translates into English as 'those who attack together'. Ordinary civilians also participated in the murders. Neighbour turned against neighbour, Hutu against Tutsi.

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By 4 July 1994, a Tutsi rebel army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, managed to overrun Kigali. Their invasion meant more slaughter. The victims this time were the extremists who had perpetrated the initial massacre. By this time, nearly 75 per cent of the Tutsis within Rwanda had been murdered.

The end of the conflict created a massive refugee crisis, as two million people, mostly Hutus, fled into neighbouring Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The Tutsis now held power and declared a ceasefire. The presence of the Hutus in the Congo led to much conflict there, and this led to five million more deaths in the following decade.

The role of media in inciting anti-Tutsi hatred

Radio played a significant role in the slaughter in Rwanda. Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) was established in June 1993 and produced anti-Tutsi propaganda on a daily basis. Funded by Hutu extremists and directed at a population that was illiterate, it demonised the Tutsi community. When the genocide commenced, radio presenters read out the names of people to be targeted for murder and gave instructions about how to kill.

Likewise, the *Kangura* newspaper incited hatred against the Tutsis. The mouthpiece for the extremist Hutu groups, it created the 'Hutu Ten Commandments', in which moderate Hutus who married, did business with or associated with Tutsis were deemed traitors against Rwanda. Although the paper had ceased publication by the time of the April 1994 genocide, it had a prominent role in shaping the attitudes of many of the killers. Hassan Ngeze was the owner, founder and editor of the newspaper, and he faced trial in October 2000.

In October 2000, the so-called 'Media case' was held at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Ferdinand Nahimana and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza were executives at RTLM who embarked on a propaganda campaign to label Tutsis as the enemy of Rwanda and moderate Hutus as accomplices. Nahimana was Director of the Office of Information and Barayagwiza was Director of Political Affairs at the Foreign Ministry in Rwanda.

On December 2003, Ngeze, Nahimana and Barayagwiza were found guilty of genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, and persecution and extermination as crimes against humanity.

Getty Images/AFP

SOURCE 5.11 Ferdinand Nahimana (left) was an RTLM executive and Hassan Ngeze (right) was the owner of the *Kangura* newspaper. In 2003, the UN criminal court for Rwanda found them guilty of using 'hate media' to incite the killings of up to a million people during the 1994 genocide. They received life prison sentences.

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SOURCE A

The newspaper and the radio explicitly and repeatedly, in fact relentlessly, targeted the Tutsi population for destruction. Demonizing the Tutsis as having inherently evil qualities, equating the ethnic group with 'the enemy' and portraying its women as seductive enemy agents, the media called for the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group as a response to the political threat they associated with Tutsi ethnicity.

Verdict in the 'Media case' of executives from RTLM and *Kangura*, at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 2003

SOURCE B

Rwanda media have been accused of inciting the hatred that led to violence by using an ethnic framework to report what was essentially a political struggle. They also have been accused of spreading fear, rumor, and panic by using a kill-or-be-killed frame, and of relaying directives about the necessity of killing the Tutsi people as well as instructions on how to do it.

CL Kellow and HL Steeves, 'The role of radio in the Rwandan genocide', *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 48, Issue 3, 1998

QUESTIONS

1 According to Source A, what role did the media have in the genocide?

2 Use Source B to explain what 'frames' were used to incite hatred against Tutsis.

Did the United Nations do enough to prevent the genocide?

The United Nations has received sustained criticism for not intervening in the Rwandan conflict once the killing commenced. The UN had been present in Rwanda since October 1993, when the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was established. UN commanders on the ground were instructed not to get involved in conflict, and their role was strictly as a peacekeeping mission.

By 1994, there were already significant sensitivities in the West about involvement in conflicts in Africa. In October 1993, two United States Black Hawk helicopters were shot down in Mogadishu, Somalia. This ultimately led to the US leaving the region and to Somalia becoming a safe haven for Islamic terrorist groups. At the beginning of the conflict in Rwanda, 10 Belgian troops were murdered, prompting the Belgians to leave the area.

The UN has since acknowledged its failure. An independent inquiry into the UN's role during the conflict was tabled in December 1999. It found:

> The failure of the United Nations to prevent, and subsequently, to stop the genocide in Rwanda was a failure by the United Nations system as a whole. The fundamental failure was the lack of resources and political commitment devoted to developments in Rwanda and to the United Nations presence there. There was a persistent lack of political will by Member States to act, or to act with enough assertiveness.
>
> Independent Inquiry [S/1999/1257] into the Role of the United Nations in Rwanda in 1994, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1999/1257

The Canadian Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire was the UN commander in charge on the ground. Since his retirement, he has expressed great remorse for the failings of the UN mission in Rwanda.

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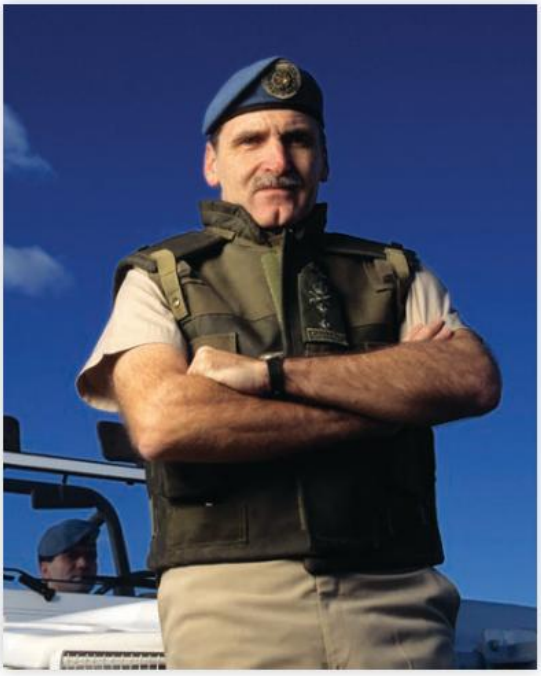
Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire recalls Rwanda

SOURCE A

It took me seven years to finally have the desire, the willpower and the stamina to begin to describe in detail the events of that year in Rwanda. To recount, from my insider's point of view, how a country moved from the promise of a certain peace to intrigue, the fomenting of racial hatred, assassinations, civil war and genocide. And how the international community, through an inept UN mandate and what can only be described as indifference, self-interest and racism, aided and abetted these crimes against humanity – how we all helped create the mess that has murdered and displaced millions and destabilized the whole central African region.



Getty Images/Christopher Morris – Corbis

SOURCE 5.12 Canadian Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire was commander of the United Nations forces in Rwanda during the genocide. He has since been highly critical of the UN and says it is partly to blame for the genocide.

SOURCE B

I know that I will never end my mourning for all those Rwandans who placed their faith in us, who thought the UN peacekeeping force was there to stop extremism, to stop the killings and help them through the perilous journey to a lasting peace. That mission, UNAMIR, failed. I know intimately the cost in human lives of the inflexible UN Security Council mandate, the penny-pinching financial management of the mission, the UN red tape, the political manipulations and my own personal limitations. What I have come to realize as the root of it all, however, is the fundamental indifference of the world community to the plight of seven to eight million black Africans in a tiny country that had no strategic or resource value to any world power.

(Sources A and B) Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, Arrow Books, London, 2003, pp. 5–6

QUESTIONS

1 Read Source A and answer the following questions.

- **a** What does Dallaire want to recount in his book?
- **b** What reasons does he give for partly blaming the international community for the crimes against humanity?
- **c** What has been the outcome of the Rwandan genocide?

2 Read Source B and answer the following questions.

- **a** What is Dallaire's attitude towards the UN mission?
- **b** In Dallaire's view, why did the mission fail?
- **c** What does Dallaire say is the root of it all?

3 How useful are Sources A and B for a historian studying the conflict in Rwanda? In your answer, you should discuss perspective and reliability.

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The United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

Since the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in November 1994, it has indicted 93 people for genocide. Those indicted included a variety of high-ranking officials, military and militia leaders, politicians, media owners, and business and religious leaders. The crimes with which they were charged included a range of crimes against humanity, such as genocide, mass rape and murder.

The court was located at Arusha, in Tanzania, where a detention facility was set up in May 1996 to house those awaiting trial. The first trial, that of Jean-Paul Akayesu, began in January 1997. In October of the same year, Akayesu was found guilty of genocide. This first judgment was to be a significant step in bringing perpetrators to justice, and would lay the groundwork for prosecutions in other conflicts. The court made several landmark decisions, including the following:

- It was the first international court to rule on genocide since the 1948 UN Conventions defined the term.
- It was the first international court to recognise that mass rape represented a form of genocide.
- It held the media to account for spreading hate-filled messages about the Tutsis, and concluded that this played a significant part in fanning the flames of the genocide.

In July 1997, seven suspects were detained in Nairobi in Kenya, including a former Rwandan prime minister, Jean Kambanda. This showed the international reach of the program. Countries around the world signed a treaty to extradite suspected criminals back to Arusha to face trial. In May 1998, Kambanda pleaded guilty – the first to do so. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in the following September.

In order to prosecute effectively, the court provided special assistance to the survivors and witnesses, many of whom had experienced extreme trauma as a result of the war. The Rwanda trials became an important landmark in international criminal law. They showed that the UN was willing to put all of its resources behind bringing the perpetrators to justice. At the time of writing, there are still eight Rwandan fugitives awaiting capture and trial.

1. Outline the criticisms of the United Nations over its handling of the genocide in 1994.
2. To what extent were the sensitivities of the international community about remaining in Rwanda justification for not intervening when the genocide started?
3. Explain the attitude of both the United Nations and Roméo Dallaire to the failure of the UN mission in Rwanda.
4. Identify the landmark rulings that came out of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for the future of prosecuting genocide.

The United Nations in Timor-Leste, 1999–2001

The United Nations was instrumental in bringing Timor-Leste (or East Timor) its independence in May 2002, and helping the young nation take its seat as the 191st member state of the UN General Assembly. The country had a long history of Portuguese colonial rule. When that ended in 1974, Indonesia invaded the country, annexed it as its 27th province and ruled it for the next 25 years. At the same time as the invasion, the left-leaning East Timorese political party Fretilin declared its

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independence, leading to a long civil war between the East Timorese nationalist movement and the Indonesians. The United States backed the Indonesian military in the war.

Background

The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor was the paramilitary wing of the Fretilin party and was led by Xanana Gusmão. The Indonesians jailed Gusmão for life for subversion in 1993, but in 2002 he became Timor-Leste's first president. In 1996, another resistance leader, José Ramos-Horta, who was the leader in exile during the Indonesian occupation, was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Dili's Catholic bishop, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, for their human rights work in East Timor. The award brought further international attention to East Timor's struggle for independence.

Indonesian President Suharto – who had ruled for 30 years – had long resisted calls for East Timorese autonomy, fearing that an independence movement in East Timor would lead to instability in other regions of Indonesia. When a new president, BJ Habibie, was elected in 1998 after Suharto's resignation, he was more sympathetic to the idea of an independent East Timor. Indonesia was reeling from the Asian financial crisis and could barely afford the military commitment to forestall the pro-independence forces. The Australian government had supported moves for more autonomy, and the Indonesian military was spending vast sums of money maintaining its rule.

Course of the conflict

During 1999, a number of key events led to an increasing level of violence. On 5 May it was announced that the East Timorese would be given a referendum to vote for their independence. The vote was set to take place on 30 August, and it was to be administered by the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNMET).

Earlier that year, in an atmosphere of reform, Gusmão was released from an Indonesian prison and placed under house arrest in East Timor. When it became clear that anti-independence forces would attempt to disrupt the referendum and its preparations, Gusmão ordered pro-independence forces to resume their struggle. In the lead-up to the vote, skirmishes broke out between pro-Indonesian forces, trying to intimidate UN forces, and East Timorese civilians. In a number of clashes between April and July 1999, East Timorese were murdered by paramilitary groups. East Timorese leaders such as Gusmão accused Indonesia of training and funding the groups. Threats flew both ways as pro-independence forces promised tit-for-tat retaliation.

The violence could not dampen the demands of the East Timorese for their independence. On 30 August 1999, 98 per cent of East Timorese turned out to vote on the question of whether to remain a part of Indonesia or begin a process towards independence. Of them, 21.5 per cent voted to remain integrated with Indonesia while 78.5 per cent voted for independence.

Ordinary Indonesians were shocked by the vote and blamed the UN and Australia for encouraging the outcome. The vote sparked widespread violence in the country, as Dili came under attack from pro-integration Indonesian forces. Catholic churches and the International Red Cross were attacked, foreign journalists left the country and thousands of East Timorese fled into the mountains. Nearly 1000 civilians were killed in the initial violence, and up to 25 per cent of East Timor's 450 000-strong population fled to West Timor.

Indonesia was condemned internationally for refusing to step in and end the violence, and it later emerged that the pro-integration militias were supported by elements within the Indonesian security forces. Australia rallied the UN to allow an Australian-led international peacekeeping mission into East Timor to bring calm to the situation. Under threat of economic sanctions, and still reeling from the Asian financial crisis, Indonesia withdrew its troops on 12 September – but not without violence.

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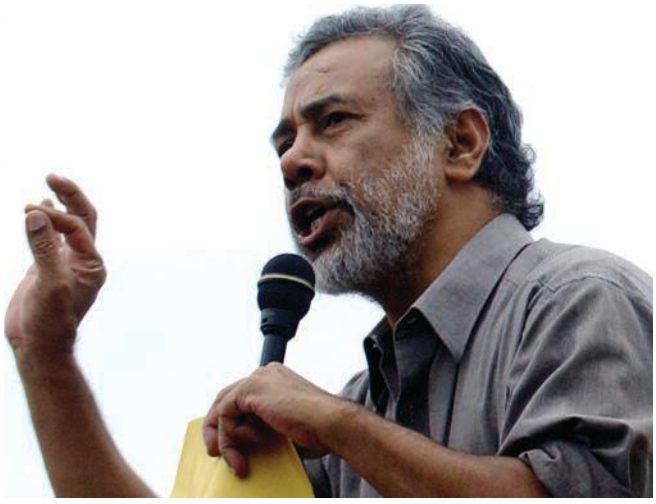
AAP Image/AP Photo/Rob Elliott, Pool

SOURCE 5.13 Australian General Peter Cosgrove commanded the UN-sponsored INTERFET force in East Timor before handing over to the UN mission.

Getty Images/CANDIDO ALVES/Stringer



SOURCE 5.14 Xanana Gusmão was elected the first President of East Timor in May 2002.

One Indonesian army battalion left a trail of destruction, including the deaths of dozens of East Timorese villagers, during its withdrawal.

On 15 September 1999, UN Resolution 1264 was adopted, allowing an international peacekeeping force to be stationed in East Timor to stop further deterioration of the situation. Before a UN force could get there, the Australian General Peter Cosgrove was placed in command of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), an outfit of 5500 mainly Australian troops, until the UN could assemble a force. The Indonesian parliament also recognised the outcome of the referendum. In the following month, the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established to ensure that the result of the independence vote was carried out.

Throughout late 1999 and into 2000, pro-Indonesian militias continued to carry out attacks in East Timor, and many people escaped into West Timor to evade capture. In a period of escalating violence, in September 2000, the United Nations withdrew some of its staff from West Timor after three of its agency workers were murdered. The killers were sentenced to a lenient 20 months in prison for the crime, sparking international outrage.

Despite the ongoing violence, the momentum for nation building was growing. In July 2001, East Timor received an economic boost when an agreement with Australia granted 90 per cent of gas and oil revenues in the Timor Sea to East Timor. The following month, an 88-member assembly was elected to carry out the task of drafting a new constitution for East Timor, which was set up as a democratic republic with a president and parliament.

Despite these gains, the violence in the aftermath of the independence vote still had to be dealt with. In January 2002, a truth and reconciliation committee was set up and the Indonesians set up a human rights court to hold the military accountable for the violence that followed the independence vote.

In April 2002, Xanana Gusmão was elected President of East Timor, and in May the UN Security Council set up the UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMSET) to help East Timorese authorities establish their new nation. On 20 May 2002, East Timor achieved its independence, to celebrations in the capital, Dili. Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri and former US President Bill Clinton joined in the handing-over ceremony.

In September 2002, East Timor became the 191st member of the United Nations.

The role of the United Nations in Timor-Leste

The United Nations established a number of missions in Timor-Leste in order to give a framework for the independence vote, provide peacekeeping operations in the aftermath of the vote, and help to transition the country to a democratic republic.

The first of these was Security Council Resolution 1246, which established the United Nations Missions in East Timor (UNAMET). The principal function of this resolution was to administer the

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independence vote. The resolution stipulated that, should the East Timorese people vote in favour of independence, the mission would be extended to help them transition to peace. The same resolution allowed the non-UN, Australian-led INTERFET force to immediately deploy peacekeepers in light of the escalating levels of violence. A part of the resolution was aimed at highlighting the increasing human rights violations by pro-Indonesian militias.

The second resolution, Security Council Resolution 1272, was passed on 25 October 1999 and established the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). The resolution gave executive and legislative power to UNTAET during the transition from vote to full independence. A draft constitution needed be drawn up and elections for a parliament and a president held. The resolution also set up a justice mechanism for human rights violations. This was the International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor (ICIET), which investigated and prosecuted violence following the independence vote. These investigations led to the creation of a number of special UN-backed panels to deal with the violence, including the International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor, the UN's Serious Crimes Investigation Unit and the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor. The UN was clearly determined not to see the violence of 1999 go unpunished.

After May 2002, when independence was achieved, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) was established by Security Council Resolution 1410 to support and promote political and administrative stability, to provide law enforcement and train a new East Timorese police and security force, and to assist with external security threats.

The role of the UN

1. What challenges did the United Nations face in East Timor between 1999 and 2002?
2. Explain the forces that led to Indonesia accepting an East Timorese vote for independence in 1999.
3. How did the United Nations attempt to deal with the violence that followed the vote?
4. How successful was the UN mission to Timor-Leste?


Reuters/Darren Whiteside

SOURCE 5.15 United Nations election workers count votes after Timor Leste's first democratic election in Dili, 31 August 2001.

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Conclusion

The United Nations was able to carry out its Charter much more effectively without being hindered by superpower rivalry. But this sudden rise in international workload did not come without its challenges. In the three and a half years between 1991 and 1994, the UN completed as many peacekeeping missions as it had in the previous 40 years, during the Cold War.

One of the biggest challenges was that the nature of conflict changed significantly. No longer were threats to international peace and security merely between nation-states, but intrastate conflict fuelled humanitarian crises that called for UN intervention. The UN had to send in troops to protect aid workers delivering urgent food and medical aid, as well as cope with displacement and provide safe havens for those under threat.

The role and influence of the UN reached its high point in the 1990s, but after 2001 and the beginning of the United States–led 'global war on terror', the UN was sidelined once again, as the Americans adopted an increasingly militaristic and unilateral foreign policy. Although the UN has done much to help in the developing world through children's rights, education, health and food aid, it has been largely ineffective in countering threats to international peace and security – especially when non-traditional forms of conflict are concerned.

Chapter summary

- The United Nations had a much larger role in maintaining peace and security in the post-Cold War period.
- Peacekeeping missions brought the principle of state sovereignty into focus as the UN intervened in a series of disputes in which nations were violating human rights.
- The character of UN involvement changed again, as the United States and its allies bypassed the UN Security Council and General Assembly in their prosecution of the 'war on terror'.
- The UN had mixed success in its operations around the world.

Further resources

- 'An agenda for peace', June 1992, www.un-documents.net/a47-277.htm.
- O'Neill, JT, and Rees, N, *United Nations Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era*, Routledge, London, 2005.

Endnotes

[1] United Nations, 'An agenda for peace', June 1992, www.un-documents.net/a47-277.htm.

[2] Mahmood, Othman O, *The Root Causes of the United Nations' Failure in Somalia*, iUniverse, Bloomington, 2011, p. xx.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

1. To what extent were the 1990s a mix of failure and success for the United Nations?
2. Outline some of the positive work of the UN in developing countries during the 1990s.
3. To what extent did American unilateralism mark a shift in the UN after 2003?
4. In a globalised world, is the concept of state sovereignty as strong as it was?
5. Outline the key operations of the UN in peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and international law.
6. For your case study:
   - **a** Outline the key historical forces that led to the conflict.
   - **b** Explain the motives and actions of the various groups involved in the conflict.
   - **c** Make a timeline of the key events in the conflict.
   - **d** Evaluate the role and actions of the United Nations in the conflict.

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CONCLUSION: THE CHANGING WORLD ORDER, 1945–2011

What conclusions can be drawn from the often chaotic and changing shape of the world order in the 66 years between 1945 and 2011? Three key forces stand out. First is the central role of the United States in influencing the shape of the modern world when it emerged from its self-imposed isolation in 1941 to shoulder its share of global responsibility, in what is often referred to as the American Century. Second, the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc in Eastern Europe brought an end to the Cold War and ushered in a new global order that was characterised by the triumph of liberal democratic values. This period coincided with a renaissance of the United Nations during the 1990s. As it turned out, this period was short-lived and the advent of the 'war on terror' meant that the nationalist impulse was once again revived. Third, the rise of China and other centres of power challenged the unchecked economic, military and political power of the United States.

The US emerged from World War II as one of the two superpowers. Its industrial capacity and strong economy gave it a central role in the European recovery, and at the same time it had to check the expansion of the Soviet Union in the east. Over time, the Cold War developed into a dangerous superpower rivalry that was overshadowed by the threat of nuclear weapons. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the US as the only superpower in the world. Throughout the 1990s, it seemed that US political and economic

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values had become universal, as liberal democracies were created around the world. Whether this was an opportunity to consolidate American power in the world or to promote the universal ideals of the United Nations is unclear. For the uneasy peace of the final decade of the century was shattered on the morning of 11 September 2001.

When 19 hijackers crashed four planes into locations around New York and Washington, DC, killing more than 3000 people, US foreign policy took a more militaristic turn. What followed was the prosecution of the so-called war on terror – a problematic term for a conflict that lacked a clearly defined enemy. It involved a war in Iraq that lacked UN support and eroded American moral authority in the world. In the 2000s, the US's role in the world changed. The promise of freedom offered by liberal democracies was being rejected by countries in the Middle East, as America unsuccessfully attempted to impose its social system in the region. The US ended the period with a financial crisis, which originated in the American banking system but spread throughout the world. The crisis caused a deep recession, and economic centres of power emerged to counter American financial might.

The second major event of the period was the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. Much-needed political and economic reform of the communist system by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev after 1985 sparked a series of political upheavals that resulted in the end of the system. By the end of 1989, the Berlin Wall had fallen; by the end of 1990, East and West Germany had been reunited; and by Christmas Day 1991, the Soviet Union had dissolved. The consequences in Eastern Europe and Russia were significant. A series of rapid political and economic reforms brought lasting changes to the social systems of the Warsaw Pact countries, but in Russia, the corrupt and chaotic manner in which state industries were privatised led to the emergence of an oligarchy. After 2000, new leader Vladimir Putin rejected the cronyism of the 1990s as well as the trend toward Westernisation of Russia. He sought to reassert Russian power in Eastern Europe with a new nationalism and anti-Westernisation.

The third major trend of the modern world has perhaps been most surprising of all. By 2011, China had risen to become the world's second largest economy, with a growing middle class and an expanding military and political presence on the global stage. If the rise of one power and the decline of another were to be marked on a calendar, then the global financial crisis of 2008 could be regarded as a key moment in the shift away from the United States and towards China as a global force. Since the fall of communism in Europe, China – itself a communist country – has opened up to become the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods. Countries around the world are eager to sign trade deals with China.

In the chaotic world of international relations, nations rise and fall, and it is difficult to make predictions too far into the future. Over the course of decades or centuries, new historical forces shape the contours of the modern world. How statesmen and stateswomen respond to these forces can lead to war or to peace. Perhaps the final word in dealing with the tides of history should be given to the 19th-century German politician Otto von Bismarck, who said, 'A statesman … must wait until he hears the steps of God sounding through events, then leap up and grasp the hem of His garment'.

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ACTIVITIES

1. What impact did the Cold War have on the functioning of the United Nations between 1945 and 1991?
2. To what extent was the United States' rejection of isolationism a factor in shaping international relations between 1945 and 2011?
3. To what extent did ideology play a part in the leadership of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin between 1985 and 2011?
4. How important was the end of communism to the international order after 1991?
5. How did American foreign policy change after 11 September 2001?
6. Explain the significant challenges to American hegemony in the 21st century.
7. Outline the main challenges to the survival of the European Union in the 21st century.
8. How has conflict in the Middle East been shaped by global forces?
9. Evaluate the success of the UN as a peacekeeper in the post-Cold War period.
10. To what extent are the core values of the UN – to promote peace and security – possible in the 21st century?

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