**CHAPTER 29**

**Globalization and Its Discontents**

**Learning Outcomes**

* 1. Describe the initial events of what came to be called “the War on Terror.”

**Objectives**

1. Describe the political situation that George W. Bush had to face as he assumed the presidency in early 2001.

2. Describe the events of September 11, 2001, and explain how Bush’s plans for his presidency changed because of them.

3. Explain the Bush Doctrine, and analyze its necessity and its degree of success so far.

4. Discuss the most significant domestic policies pursued by Bush after September 11, and analyze their necessity and usefulness.

* 1. Describe George W. Bush’s plans for democracy in the Middle East, including his declaration of a “War on Terror,” and assess the degree of his success.

**Objectives**

1. Explain Bush’s reasons for invading Iraq in 2003, and provide justification for that invasion.

2. Discuss how the actions at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad and Guantanamo Bay demonstrated the falseness of America’s commitment to freedom and democracy to the rest of the world.

* 1. Discuss the domestic problems that America faced during George W. Bush’s second term.

**Objectives**

1. Discuss the various domestic problems that affected the American economy and proved to be a challenge for Bush and the country.

2. Describe the impact of Hurricane Katrina on America’s Gulf Coast in 2005, and assess the degree to which the federal government was able to deal with the catastrophic problems it created.

* 1. Explain some of the hopes and frustrations of Barack Obama’s two terms in office and some of the persistent divisions within the United States.

**Objectives**

1. Describe the backlash that Barack Obama had to face from the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street movement.

2. Discuss the legalization of gay marriage following Obama’s re-election.

* 1. Explain the rise of Donald J. Trump and the increased political polarization within the U.S.

**Objectives**

1. Describe the rise of hate groups in the US during the past 20 years, and how they seemed to mobilize around Donald J. Trump.

2. Discuss the various events that led to the election of President Trump.

**Chapter Summary**

When George Bush was sworn into office in 2001, no one could have foreseen how his first year as president would end. The events of September 11, 2001, changed America, and the world, forever. Bush’s agenda, of necessity, changed overnight, and America became much more focused on the Middle East and its enemies there and elsewhere. Declaring a “war on terror,” Bush sent troops to Afghanistan in search of Al Qaeda operatives and Osama bin Laden, who was the presumed mastermind of the attacks on America. He then pushed for major tax cuts and the intrusive and controversial USA PATRIOT Act.

While most nations strongly supported the American-led invasion of Afghanistan, they were not supportive when Bush sent the military into Iraq, who then deposed Saddam Hussein in a futile search for weapons of mass destruction. In an experiment whose long-term outcome remains to be seen, Bush embraced the concept that a democratic Iraq would help export democracy elsewhere. Instead, Americans became mired in what was eventually a civil war, although some post-Saddam elections, mired by violence, were held. U.S. efforts to that effect were hampered by the disclosure of the torturous treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the indefinite detention of terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay.

Like his father before him, George W. Bush faced some serious economic challenges. He came into office with an economy that was humming, and when he left office it was sputtering along with difficulty. However, unlike his father, “W” won a second term when facing John Kerry in the 2004 election. The following year, in a nationally televised tragedy that lasted for days, incompetence at all levels of government became apparent during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This massive storm that struck the Gulf Coast killed hundreds of people in the flooded city of New Orleans. The economy continued to slide as banks began to collapse leading to a credit crunch. The historic 2008 presidential campaign was between Barack Obama, an African American senator, and John McCain, a conservative senator. Women made historic gains in this campaign as Hillary Clinton almost captured the Democratic nomination and Sarah Palin became the second female Vice Presidential candidate. Obama’s message of change, in contrast to McCain’s embrace of failed Bush economics, appealed to a clear majority of Americans, and he thus became the first minority president.

The Obama administration managed to prevent a further economic decline by drawing down the war on terror, by passing the nation’s first comprehensive health care bill, and by handling the Great Recession and the collection of protestors surrounding it. Obama’s withdrawal of troops from Iraq and the order to kill Osama bin Laden marked the beginning of the end of the war on terror.

The aim of the health care bill was to ensure that all Americans had some form of health insurance. The law allowed parents to extend coverage to their children until they turn 26 years old. On the economic front, in July 2010, Obama modestly increased banking regulations, attempting to prevent further financial crises. He also passed a large stimulus bill that initiated more than 75,000 projects across the nation. This growth, however, has been uneven. The growing sectors of the economy have largely favored the well educated, but manufacturing has continued to decline.

Immediately upon Obama assuming office, a new movement, the Tea Party, voiced their concern over large federal deficits, and they called for greater fiscal responsibilities and fewer taxes. Meanwhile, a grassroots anti-corporate movement on the left challenged the political establishment in the form of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Despite the challenges from the right and the left, in 2012, Obama was easily re-elected.

A major transition following Obama’s re-election was the widespread acceptance of gay marriage. The United States was the twenty-first and most populous country in the world to allow same-sex marriage.

Obama was also troubled by a seeming increase in racialized violence in 2014 and 2015. To call attention to the violence, a protest campaign under the banner “Black Lives Matter” held marches across the country. However, it wasn’t these marches but more violence that led to perhaps the most substantive change.

Issues such as environmental degradation, political gridlock, and increased income inequality continue to plague the country, as does a broader sense that the nation is unified in any significant way.

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However, it wasn’t these marches but more violence that continued to shock the nation. This included a deadly attack at a historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015, where nine people were shot during a prayer service by a man claiming to be a white nationalist. While much of the nation was shocked, it did not stop the rise of hate groups throughout the United States, which multiplied throughout the Obama years.

Members of these hate groups, along with many other Americans frustrated with the economic and social conditions in the United States, and with politicians' seeming inability to mitigate them, led to a true outsider candidate winning the 2016 election. Although real estate mogul and reality television star Donald J. Trump lost the popular vote by more than three million votes to the Democratic candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Trump's victories in key states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin propelled him to victory in the electoral college.

Since becoming president, Trump has had difficulty meeting many of his election promises, including building a gigantic wall along the southern border of the United States, repealing Obamacare, and bringing jobs back to middle-class Americans. He has, meanwhile, been plagued by a scandal involving alleged collusion with Russia during the 2016 election and with stoking the fire of white nationalist hate groups. Outbursts such as those in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 shocked many Americans, who seemed increasingly concerned by what President Trump meant by his campaign promise to "Make America Great Again."

As always, Americans continue to debate the major issues, including dramatic increases in economic inequality, the role of the government in a republican democracy, the increasing speed of climate change, and locating the delicate balance between the individual and society. And the question of what it means to be an American resounds as loudly as ever.

**Chapter Outline**

I. The War on Terror

A. September 11

B. War in Afghanistan and War on Terror

C. USA PATRIOT Act

II. Remaking the Middle East?

A. Regime Change in Iraq

B. A Democratic Middle East?

C. Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay

III. Domestic Woes

A. Corporate Scandals

B. The Election of 2004

1. The Candidates

2. The Election

C. Hurricane Katrina

D. The Financial Crisis of 2008

IV. President Obama

A. The Election of 2008

B. Obama’s Presidency

1. Drawing down the War on Terror

2. The Health Care Act

3. Continued Divisions of Wealth

C. Backlash from the Right and the Left

D. Obama’s Second Term

1. Gay Marriage

2. Black Lives Matter

V. The Election of Donald J. Trump

A. The Rise of Hate Groups

B. The 2016 Presidential Campaign

C. President Trump

VI. Looking Ahead…

**Suggested Lecture Topics**

1. The Events of September 11, 2001: America Meets Its Enemies on Home Ground

2. George W. Bush and the Bush Family’s Plans for a Political Dynasty

3. Enron: The Anatomy of Greed in Action

4. Hispanic Americans: America’s Largest Minority Group

5. The Burst of the U.S. Housing Bubble

6. Hurricane Katrina Devastates the Gulf Coast: The Ineptitude of the Federal Government Devastates Americans

7. The Historic Election of 2008: An African American, A Former First Lady, A Vietnam Hero, A Gun-Toting Hockey Mom Governor from Alaska

8. The Arab Spring—A Threat or a Promise?

(P. 29-1a). There were several reasons why Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network were so angry at the United States:

1. Cold War blowback
2. American involvement in the Middle East
3. Israel
4. Islamic justifications

Using each of the four aforementioned reasons, have students examine what the United States has done in response to 9/11. Has (or should, in some cases) the United States changed its policies in the Middle East or concerning Israel? After this, have students reflect, perhaps in small groups, on whether the United States implemented the best policies after 9/11. What alternatives or other solutions could have been pursued?

**The Reasons Why…**

**Research Topics—Projects and Papers**

Students might choose to complete a project to be presented in class or to write a more traditional research paper. Or, the instructor could assign the topic to the students. Below are a few topics that are relevant to this chapter. Instructors may, of course, choose to develop their own topics.

1. Select one of the candidates who ran for president in 2008 (including the primaries). Ask students to compose a biographical sketch of that candidate, and then be prepared to give reasons why they think that candidate should have become president.

2. Research Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005. Ask students to compile the following statistics for each of these states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama.

Number of deaths

Number of injuries

Number of homes lost

Number of homeless: As of January 1, 2006; August 29, 2006; August 2007; and August 2008

Number of FEMA trailers and/or travel trailers sent to each state

Estimated amount of damages in each state

Percentage of increase or decrease in crime for each city in the four states

Percentage of increase or decrease in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in each state

Any other business or social statistics they can find

Then ask students to bring their findings to the class, presenting them in a way they think will be most enlightening. Also, let them discuss in class any personal experiences they may have had with family, friends, or evacuees.

3. The Bush Doctrine: Some Americans were unaware that there was such a thing as a “Bush Doctrine” until Charles Gibson asked vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin about it during the 2008 campaign. Ask students to find out how many people in their area know about the doctrine. Then, ask them to survey students on their campus to see if they have heard of the Bush Doctrine and if they can describe it. Ask them to bring their collective findings back to class. The instructor might want to have someone from the class write an editorial piece for the campus newspaper disclosing what was found. [Students need not limit themselves to campus. They may ask people by going to malls, supermarkets, etc.] Students might also consider asking people if, despite their potential ignorance of the Bush Doctrine, knowledge of a major aspect of the president’s foreign policy is essential for a potential vice president.

4. Bailouts and the Great Recession: Split students into three groups to discuss government financial rescue operations for one of the following industries: automobile, housing, or banking. Let the groups decide through argument and majority vote why they would bail out or abandon their specific industry. Have them present their reasoning to the class. Urge them to think how they could apply historical lessons from the Great Depression or the economic crisis of the 1970s.

**Additional www Resources**

“Brief History of al Qaeda,” *Bill Moyers Journal.* PBS.org

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/07272007/alqaeda.html>

“FEMA Wasted Millions in Katrina Recovery,” CBS News online, 10 September 2008.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/09/10/national/main4438066.shtml?source=RSSattr=U.S._4438066>

“War in Afghanistan,” Roger Lee.

<http://www.historyguy.com/war_in_afghanistan.html>

**Primary Source Discussions**

**Assignment Name: The *Observer’s* Biography of Osama bin Laden**

*Introduction:* This series ran in the London *Observer* on October 28, 2001. Since then, of course, much has changed. The Taliban no longer rules Afghanistan, though there has been a resurgence of its members recently. Mullah Omar, like Osama bin Laden, remains in hiding; as of this writing, a disagreement over leadership of the Taliban seems to have emerged, and we do not know what the outcome will be. Mohammed Atef was killed in a bombing raid near Kabul, Afghanistan, on November 15, 2001, less than three weeks after this article appeared. Most people still believe that bin Laden is alive and that he is still making plans to attack America again. The article contains a few inaccuracies, but most articles written that soon after the attacks on America *did* contain errors.

[Read a revealing biography of Osama bin Laden published by the *Observer* of London](http://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/oct/28/world.terrorism) and then take a brief quiz, by using the player at the left, to check your understanding.

*Reflection Questions*:

1. What kind of man was Osama bin Laden’s father? How did he become so fabulously wealthy?
2. How did Osama gain his wealth? How did he feel about money? What was his main focus in life?
3. When and how did the United States become involved with bin Laden?
4. How did he feel about the Americans coming to Saudi Arabia to liberate Kuwait?
5. What sorts of rumors have been passed around concerning the whereabouts, health, and future plans of Osama bin Laden?

**Assignment Name: Secretary of State Colin Powell to UN General Assembly Advocating War in Iraq**

*Introduction:* Now a part of the public records of the U.S. State Department, Secretary of State Colin Powell’s presentation to the UN Security Council is reprinted here. It includes slides, video clips, and audio tapes, all used by Powell to make the case for war with Iraq in 2003. Read through Powell’s remarks; with the benefit of hindsight, can you envision scenarios other than the one that Powell returns to time after time?

The Powell document is about ten web pages long. The full video takes too long to load, but there are video clips you may watch. The script is verbatim, so reading it is sufficient, especially if you click on the various slides Powell refers to. Did he make his case for war?

[Secretary of State Colin Powell spoke to the United Nations General Assembly in February 2003, making the Bush administration’s case for war](http://edition.cnn.com/2003/US/02/05/sprj.irq.powell.transcript/). Read his speech and then take a brief quiz, by using the player at the left, to check your understanding.

*Reflection Questions*:

1. Powell begins his presentation by listing what? What does he request of the UN Security Council?
2. What is your assessment of the first few messages that Powell presents? Do you think they sound as serious as Powell makes them sound?
3. Refer to Powell’s question: “Why would Iraq suddenly move equipment of this nature before inspections if they were anxious to demonstrate what they had or did not have?” Can you think of alternative reasons why the Iraqis might have taken the actions they did?
4. Do you believe that Saddam Hussein still had weapons of mass destruction that he was moving and hiding while the inspectors were in his country? What do you think happened to them?
5. Did Secretary of State Powell make a sufficient case for going to war with Iraq? Without considering our current knowledge, do you think you could have, or would have, voted with the United States on this issue?

**Assignment Name: BBC’s Examination of the Enron Scandal**

*Introduction:* BBC News is a well-respected publication. Its synopsis of the Enron scandal is, indeed, clipped British journalism, but nevertheless interesting, in that we can find “the facts” more easily in a British publication than in an American one.

[Read the BBC’s examination of the Enron scandal](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/1780075.stm) and then take a brief quiz, by using the player at the left, to check your understanding.

*Reflection Que*stions:

1. In these articles, what words are missing that publications in America insert just in front of accusations such as “stole” or “bribed”? Are we too concerned with the rights of the accused, or are the British too unconcerned?
2. Glance over the headlines on the right side of this site. How might some of these phrases be written in an American publication?
3. What *was* the Enron scandal all about? Who were the major players?
4. According to this article, what were the main political implications of the Enron scandal?