

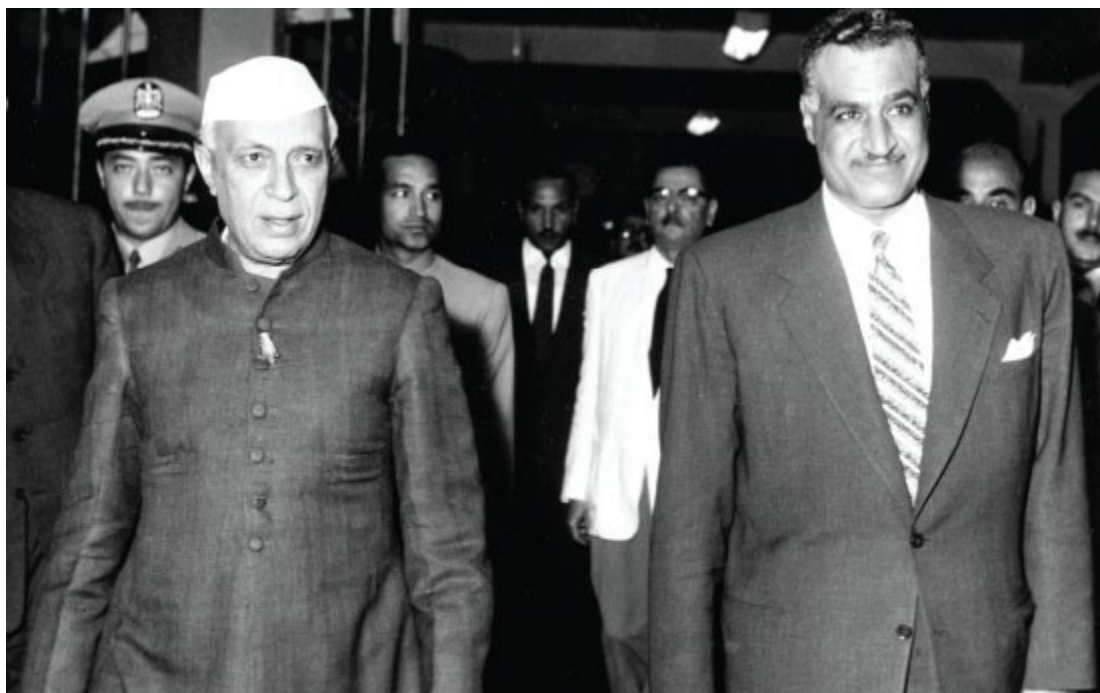
Chapter 18: The Promises and Realities of Decolonization: 18-3c Economic Reforms and Restraints in Nonaligned Nations  
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## 18-3c Economic Reforms and Restraints in Nonaligned Nations

After World War II, governments of newly independent states often took on a strong role in guiding economic life to promote development. Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser successfully manipulated the two superpowers of the Cold War for the benefit of his nation's economic development (see [Chapter 17](#)). In India, Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi became prime minister in 1966 two years after her father's passing and faced the challenge of reviving the nation from its deepest economic crisis since independence. A war with Pakistan had left the treasury strained and droughts had induced famines. In addition, diplomatic tensions with the West—particularly the United States—over demands that India liberalize its economy as a condition for loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the Vietnam War added to those tensions) made Gandhi suspicious of foreign aid. Instead, Gandhi embraced the promises of the Green Revolution (see the Environment & Technology feature in [Chapter 17](#)) and pursued policies of nationalization, economic planning, and social reform, such as equal pay for women. High inflation and other economic difficulties continued to plague India's economy as Gandhi moved the nation effectively into socialism and toward rule by decree during an extended state of "emergency."

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visits with Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser,  
Premier of Egypt

India's Jawaharlal Nehru (in white hat) was a central figure in the nonaligned movement, also known as the "Third Force." In 1966 Nehru traveled to meet Nasser in Cairo to try to recruit the Egyptian leader to the nonaligned movement.



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Keystone Pictures USA/Alamy Stock Photo

To India's south, Sirimavo Bandaranaike pursued similar objectives in Sri Lanka, the former British colony of Ceylon. Born into an aristocratic family, Bandaranaike became the world's first female prime minister and epitomized the approach of nonaligned countries with her nationalization of banking, education, industry, and parts of Sri Lanka's trade. Her adoption of Sinhala as Sri Lanka's official language (instead of English) further alienated the dispossessed and stateless native Tamils. Lack of economic development and continued dependence on food imports fueled opposition against Bandaranaike, who was ousted in 1977. A protracted civil war followed. Bandaranaike returned to political life in 1986 and her third term as prime minister in 1996.

Economic nationalism also existed elsewhere along the Indian Ocean Basin. In Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere combined the nationalization of major economic sectors along with authoritarian abuse of power during his terms as prime minister and president from 1962 to 1985. Son of a high Bantu tribal chief, Nyerere pursued a controversial "villagization" policy, concentrating rural populations in settlements for the sake of improved industrial output. Economic disruptions resulted instead.

#### Section Review

- Lázaro Cárdenas fulfilled some of the promises of the Mexican Revolution and nationalized the oil industry.
- After World War I, Argentina and Brazil prospered but were still dependent on the United States and Europe for advanced technology.
- Brazil and Argentina suffered greatly from the depression; in the 1930s dictatorships modernized the two nations but left the majority in poverty.
- Nonaligned nations in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Basin pursued economic nationalism, often with authoritarian rule.
- Despite the often hostile and violent separations of colonial subjects from their imperial rulers, postcolonial economic ties most often remained closest to the foreign nation boosted from power.

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## 18-3d Postcolonial Relations—Colonies and Metropoles

The migration of former colonial subjects to imperial metropolises, usually in the major cities, maintained cultural and economic ties between the colony and the metropole even after the dissolution of the empires. Algerians had fought a bitter war for independence against France but many still emigrated there, forming substantial communities in Paris. Elites in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka were often deeply invested in their nation's independence movements but nonetheless sent their children to Oxford, Cambridge, and other elite universities in Britain. South Asian emigrants to England established "Little Indias" in London neighborhoods like Southall and Hounslow. And following their national independence from United States domination, Filipinos continued to seek work as maids, nurses, and farmworkers along the United States' distant West Coast.

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## 18-4 Global Resistance to Established Power Structures After 1900

Although conflict dominated much of the twentieth century, many individuals—and states—opposed this trend. Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela promoted the practice of nonviolence as a way to bring about political change. At the same time, however, other groups and militarized states responded to proliferating conflicts by accelerating violence and suppression. For state as well as non-state actors, the targets were often civilians. This was particularly prevalent in Latin America, although the ruthless regimes of Uganda's Idi Amin and Spain's fascist dictator Francisco Franco similarly sustained their power with the claim that they resisted the pervasive powers and influences of the United States, Western Europe, or the Soviet Union. In Iran and Afghanistan, such resentment against foreign intrusion and a growing religious hostility to the West's secular culture led to revolutionary transformations. Here again, superpower ambitions and regional political instability helped provoke war and economic decline.

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Chapter 18: The Promises and Realities of Decolonization: 18-4a Nonviolent Resistance  
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## 18-4a Nonviolent Resistance

An inspirational figure for nonviolent resistance was Mohandas Gandhi. Many times during the 1930s Gandhi threatened to fast “unto death,” and several times he came close to death, to protest the violence of both the police and his followers and to demand independence. He was repeatedly arrested and spent a total of six years in jail. But every arrest made him more popular. He became a figure of adulation not only in his own country but also in the Western media. In the words of historian Percival Spear, he made the British “uncomfortable in their cherished field of moral rectitude,” and he gave Indians the feeling that theirs was the ethically superior cause.

Activists in the American civil rights movement against racial segregation, discrimination, and disfranchisement picked up Gandhi’s strategies with good effect, but also much sacrifice. In the 1960s, the Baptist minister and talented orator Martin Luther King, Jr. led a heroic campaign for voting rights and racial integration that brought about the

### AP® Exam Tip

Consider how individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr., promoted the practice of nonviolence as a way to bring about political change.

Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. Nonviolent resistance was also the guiding principle of a massive antiwar movement that—combined with growing economic problems—prompted President Lyndon Johnson not to seek reelection in 1968. Elsewhere that year, nonviolent protesters briefly raised the prospect of a democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia’s capital of Prague before Soviet forces crushed the protest movement. Around the same time, the decades-long incarceration of the stoic leader of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, in a South African prison island became an antiapartheid rallying call among peace and justice activists around the world.

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Chapter 18: The Promises and Realities of Decolonization: 18-4b Revolutions, Repression, and Democratic Reform in Latin America

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## 18-4b Revolutions, Repression, and Democratic Reform in Latin America

In the 1970s Latin America entered a dark era of political violence. When revolutionary movements challenged the established order, militaries in many countries overturned constitutional governments and instituted repressive measures. A region of weak democracies in 1960 became a region dominated by military dictatorships with little patience for civil liberties and human rights fifteen years later.

The ongoing confrontation between Fidel Castro of Cuba and the government of the United States (see [Chapter 17](#)) helped propel the region toward crisis. The fact that the Cuban communist government survived efforts by the United States to overthrow it energized the revolutionary left throughout Latin America. Fearful that revolution would spread across Latin America, the United States increased support for its political and military allies in that region, training many of the military leaders who led coups during this period.

This period also witnessed a great increase in world population and in levels of international immigration. Population growth and the spread of industrialization had a dramatic impact on the global environment, with every continent feeling the destructive effects of forest depletion, soil erosion, and pollution. Wealthy nations with slow population growth found it easier to respond to these environmental challenges than did poor nations trying to meet the challenge of rapid population growth by expanding their mining and commercial agriculture sectors.

Brazil was the first nation to experience the region-wide conservative reaction to the Cuban Revolution. Claiming that Brazil's civilian political leaders could not protect the nation from communist subversion, the army overthrew the constitutional government of President

AP® Exam Tip

Understand the impact of the development of military dictatorships in the twentieth century.

João Goulart (ju-wow go-LARHT) in 1964. Once in power, the military suspended the constitution, outlawed all existing political parties, and exiled former presidents and opposition leaders. Death squads—illegal paramilitary organizations sanctioned by the government—detained, tortured, and executed thousands of citizens. The dictatorship also undertook an ambitious economic program that promoted industrialization through import substitution, using tax and tariff policies to successfully compel foreign-owned companies to increase investment in manufacturing, especially in the auto industry.

This combination of dictatorship, violent repression, and government promotion of

industrialization came to be called the “Brazilian Solution.” Elements of this “solution” were later imposed across much of the region. In 1970 Chile’s newly elected president, [Salvador Allende \(Socialist politician elected president of Chile in 1970 and overthrown by the military in 1973. He was killed during the military attack on the presidential palace.\)](#) (sal-VAH-dor ah-YEHN-day), undertook an ambitious program of socialist reforms and nationalized Chile’s heavy industry and mines, including the American-owned copper companies that dominated the economy. From the beginning of Allende’s presidency the administration of President Richard Nixon (served 1969–1973) sought to undermine the Chilean government. Afflicted by inflation, mass consumer protests, and declining foreign trade, a military uprising led by General Augusto Pinochet (ah-GOOS-toh pin-oh-CHET) and supported by the United States overthrew Allende in 1973. President Allende and thousands of Chileans died in the uprising, and thousands more were jailed, tortured, and imprisoned without trial.

### The Nicaraguan Revolution Overturns Somoza

A revolutionary coalition that included Marxists drove the long-serving dictator Anastasio Somoza from power in 1979. The Somoza family had ruled Nicaragua since the 1930s and maintained a close relationship with the United States.



John Giannini/Getty Images

Once in power Pinochet rolled back Allende’s socialist innovations, dramatically reducing state participation in the economy and encouraging foreign investment. In 1976 Argentina followed Brazil and Chile into dictatorship. Juan Perón had been exiled in 1955 after a

military uprising, but with Argentina torn by rising levels of political violence he was allowed to return and was then elected president in 1973. Perón had insisted that his third wife, Isabel Martínez de Perón (EES-ah-bell mar-TEEN-ehz deh pair-OWN), be elected vice president, and she inherited the presidency after his death in 1974. Her weak administration faced a potent leftist guerrilla insurgency, a wave of kidnappings, high inflation, and labor protests. Impatient with the policies of the president, the military seized power and suspended the constitution in 1976. During the next seven years it fought what it called the [Dirty War \(War waged by the Argentine military \(1976–1983\) against leftist groups. Characterized by the use of illegal imprisonment, torture, and executions by the military.\)](#) against terrorism. More than 10,000 Argentines lost their lives, and thousands of others endured arrest and torture before democracy was restored.

The authoritarian regimes of Central and South America often procured their weapons from international trade and sometimes directly or indirectly from the United States where a massive military industrial complex had not only prepared for conflict with the Soviet Union, but also profited from arming other conflicts worldwide. U.S. president Jimmy Carter (served 1977–1980) championed human rights in the hemisphere and stopped the flow of U.S. arms to the military regimes with the worst human rights records, like Argentina. Carter also agreed to the reestablishment of Panamanian sovereignty in the Canal Zone at the end of 1999, but his effort to find common ground with the Sandinistas of Nicaragua failed due in large measure to their intransigence. Carter was defeated in the next election by Ronald Reagan, who was committed to overturning the Nicaraguan Revolution and defeating a revolutionary movement in neighboring El Salvador. With the memory of the Vietnam War still strong (see [Chapter 17](#)), the U.S. Congress resisted any use of U.S. combat forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador and put strict limits on military aid. As a result, the Reagan administration tried to roll back the Nicaraguan Revolution through punitive economic measures and the recruitment and arming of a proxy force of anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans, called Contras (counter-revolutionaries).

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## 18-4c Islamic Revolutions in Iran and Afghanistan

Although the Arab–Israel conflict and the oil crisis concerned both superpowers, the prospect of direct military involvement remained remote. When unexpected crises developed in Iran and Afghanistan, however, significant strategic issues for the superpowers came to the foreground. Both countries adjoined Soviet territory, making Soviet military intervention more likely. Exercising post–Vietnam War caution, the United States reacted with restraint in Iran to avoid military intervention. The Soviet Union chose a bolder and ultimately disastrous course of direct intervention in Afghanistan.

Muhammad Reza Pahlavi (REH-zah PAH-lah-vee) succeeded his father as shah of Iran in 1941. In 1953 covert intervention by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped the shah retain his throne in the face of a movement to overturn royal power. Even when he finally nationalized the foreign-owned oil industry, the shah

### AP® Exam Tip

Explain how a variety of factors, including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, led to the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

continued to enjoy American support. As oil revenues increased following the price increases of the 1970s, the United States encouraged the shah to spend his nation's growing wealth on equipping the Iranian army with modern American weaponry. By the 1970s popular resentment against the ballooning wealth of the elite families that supported the shah and the brutality, inefficiency, malfeasance, and corruption of his government led to mass opposition.

[Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini \(Shi'ite philosopher and cleric who led the overthrow of the shah of Iran in 1979 and created an Islamic republic.\)](#) (A-yat-ol-LAH ROOH-ol-LAH ko-

MAY-nee), an exiled Shi'ite (SHE-ite) philosopher-cleric who had spent most of his eighty-plus years in religious and academic pursuits, became the leader of the Iranian opposition. Massive protests forced the shah to flee Iran and ended the monarchy in 1979. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, which replaced the monarchy, Ayatollah Khomeini was supreme arbiter of disputes and guarantor of the government's religious legitimacy. He oversaw a parliamentary regime based on European models but imposed religious control over legislation and public behavior. The electoral process was not open to monarchists, communists, and other opposition groups. Shi'ite clerics with little training for government service held many of the highest posts, and stringent measures were taken to combat Western styles and cultural influence. Universities were temporarily closed, and their faculties were purged of secularists and monarchists. Women were compelled to wear

modest Islamic garments outside the house, and semi-official vigilante committees policed public morals and cast a pall over entertainment and social life. Many sectors of the Iranian economy were also placed under the direction of clerically controlled foundations, leading to massive capital flight. Clerical mismanagement and inflation have contributed to decades of economic stagnation and isolation in Iran.

President Carter had criticized the shah's repressive regime, but the overthrow of a longstanding ally and the creation of the Islamic Republic were blows to American prestige. The new Iranian regime was anti-Israeli and anti-American. Seeing the United States as a "Great Satan" opposed to Islam, Khomeini fostered Islamic revolutionary movements that threatened the United States and Israel. In November 1979 Iranian radicals seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held fifty-two diplomats hostage for 444 days. Americans felt humiliated by their inability to rescue the hostages or negotiate their release.

In the fall of 1980, shortly after negotiations for the release of the hostages began, [Saddam Hussein \(\(1937–2006\) President of Iraq from 1979 until overthrown by an American-led invasion in 2003. Waged war on Iran from 1980 to 1988. His invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was repulsed in the Persian Gulf War in 1991\)](#) (sah-DAHM hoo-SANE), the ruler of neighboring Iraq, invaded Iran with the intention of toppling the Islamic Republic. His own dictatorial rule rested on a secular, Arab-nationalist philosophy and long-standing friendship with the Soviet Union, which had provided him with advanced weaponry. He feared that the fervor of Iran's revolutionary Shi'ite leaders would infect his own country's Shi'ite majority and threaten his power. The war pitted American weapons in the hands of the Iranians against Soviet weapons in the hands of the Iraqis, but the superpowers avoided overt involvement during eight years of bloodshed. Covertly, however, the United States used Israel to transfer arms to Iran, hoping to gain the release of other American hostages held by radical Islamic groups in Lebanon and to help finance the Contra war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. When this deal came to light in 1986, the resulting political scandal intensified American hostility to Iran. Openly tilting toward Iraq, President Reagan sent the United States Navy to the Persian Gulf, ostensibly to protect nonbelligerent shipping. The move helped force Iran to accept a ceasefire in 1988.

### Enormous Crowd Mourns the Death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989

An Islamic revolution overthrew the shah of Iran in 1979. Ayatollah Khomeini sought to lead Iran away from the influences of Western culture and challenged the power of the United States in the Persian Gulf.





Kaveh Kazemi/Getty Images

While the United States dealt with Iran, the Soviet Union faced even more serious problems in neighboring Afghanistan. In 1978 a Marxist party with a secular agenda seized power. Offended by the new regime's efforts to reform education and grant rights to women, traditional Afghan ethnic and religious leaders led a successful rebellion. The Soviet Union responded by sending its army into Afghanistan to install a communist regime. With the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan paying, equipping, and training Afghan rebels, the Soviet Union found itself in an unwinnable war like the one the United States had earlier stumbled into in Vietnam. Facing growing economic problems and widespread domestic discontent over the war, Soviet leaders withdrew their troops in 1989. Three years later rebel groups took control of the entire country and then began to fight among themselves over who should rule. In this chaotic situation a radical Islamic party with close ties to Pakistan, the Taliban, took power in 1996. They installed a harsh religious regime and soon faced armed opposition. The Taliban had received financial support from the Saudi Arabian Osama bin Laden during their rise to power and later provided him with protection as he organized the militant organization al-Qaeda that later attacked the United States on September 11, 2001.

### Section Review

- During the 1970s and 1980s, political violence grew in Latin America, sponsored in part by U.S. fears of communist subversion.
- The United States opposed revolutionary movements in Nicaragua and El Salvador.
- A radical anti-American Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini triumphed in Iran in 1979 and led to a ten-year war with Iraq.
- The Soviets intervened in Afghanistan in 1979 but failed to defeat local opponents backed by the United States and Pakistan, leading ultimately to Taliban government.

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## 18-5 The End of the Cold War

After the end of World War II, competition between the alliances led by the United States and the Soviet Union created a polarized world (see [Chapter 17](#)). Every conflict, no matter how local its origins, had the potential of engaging the attention of one or both of the superpowers. The Korean War, decolonization in Africa, the Vietnam War, the Cuban Revolution, and hostilities between Israel and its neighbors all increased tension between the nuclear-armed superpowers. Given this succession of provocations, politics everywhere was dominated by arguments over the relative merits of the competing systems.

Few in 1980 predicted the startling collapse of the Soviet Union. Western observers tended to see communist nations as both more uniform in character and more subservient to the Soviet Union than was true. Long before the 1980s, deep divisions had appeared among communist states. Similarly, nationalism had reappeared as a powerful force among the once-independent nations and ethnic groups brought together within the Soviet Union itself. By the late 1980s these forces threatened the survival of this communist world power.

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## 18-5a Crisis in the Soviet Union

Under U.S. president Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union's general secretary Leonid Brezhnev (leh-oh-NEED BREZ-nef), Cold War rhetoric remained intense. Massive new U.S. investments in armaments placed heavy competitive burdens on a Soviet economy already suffering from shortages and mismanagement. Obsolete industrial plants and centralized planning stifled initiative in the Soviet Union and led to a declining standard of living relative to the West, while the arbitrariness of the bureaucracy, the manipulation of information, and material deprivations created a crisis in morale. Despite the unpopularity of the war in Afghanistan and growing domestic discontent, Brezhnev refused to modify his unsuccessful policies, but he could not escape criticism.

Self-published underground writings (samizdat [sah-meez-DAHT]) by critics of the regime circulated widely despite government efforts to suppress them. In a series of powerful books, writer Alexander Solzhenitzyn (sol-zhuh-NEET-sin) castigated the Soviet system. Although he won a Nobel Prize

### AP® Exam Tip

Explain the factors that contributed to the end of the Cold War and its effect on global politics.

in literature, Soviet authorities charged him with treason and expelled him in 1974. By the time [Mikhail Gorbachev \(Head of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991. His liberalization effort improved relations with the West, but he lost power after his reforms led to the collapse of communist governments in eastern Europe.\)](#) (GORE-beh-CHOF) came to power in 1985, weariness with war in Afghanistan, economic decay, and vocal protest had reached critical levels. Casting aside Brezhnev's hard line, Gorbachev authorized major reforms in an attempt to stave off total collapse. His policy of political openness (glasnost) permitted criticism of the government and the Communist Party. His policy of [perestroika \(Policy of "restructuring" that was the centerpiece of Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to liberalize communism in the Soviet Union.\)](#) (per-ih-STROY-kuh) ("restructuring") was an attempt to address long-suppressed economic problems by moving away from central state planning. In 1989 he ended the unpopular war in Afghanistan.

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## 18-5b The Collapse of the Socialist Bloc

In 1980 protests by Polish shipyard workers in the city of Gdansk led to the formation of [Solidarity \(Polish trade union created in 1980 to protest working conditions and political repression by the Polish communist government allied with the Soviet Union. It began the nationalist opposition to communist rule that led in 1989 to the fall of communism in eastern Europe.\)](#), a labor union that grew to 9 million members. The Roman Catholic Church in Poland, strengthened by the elevation of a Pole, Karol Wojtyla (KAH-rol voy-TIL-ah), to the papacy as John Paul II in 1978, gave strong moral support to the protest movement. The Polish communist government imposed martial law in 1981 in response to the growing power of Solidarity and its allies, giving the army effective political control. Seeing Solidarity under tight controls and many of its leaders in prison, the Soviet Union decided not to intervene. But Solidarity remained a potent force with a strong institutional structure and nationally recognized leaders. As Gorbachev loosened political controls in the Soviet Union after 1985, communist leaders elsewhere lost confidence in Soviet resolve, and critics and reformers in Poland and throughout eastern Europe were emboldened.

Beleaguered Warsaw Pact governments vacillated between the relaxation of control and the suppression of dissent. Just as the Catholic clergy in Poland had supported Solidarity, Protestant and Orthodox religious leaders aided the rise of opposition groups elsewhere. This combination of nationalism and religion provided a powerful base for opponents of the communist regimes. Communist governments sought to quiet the opposition by turning to the West for trade and financial assistance.

They also opened their nations to travelers, ideas, styles, and money from Western countries, all of which accelerated the demand for change, rather than stabilizing the communist regimes. By the end of 1989 communist governments across eastern Europe had fallen. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall vividly represented this transformation. While communist leaders in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria decided that change was inevitable, dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (nehkoh-LIE chow-SHES-koo) of Romania refused to surrender power and was overthrown and executed. The comprehensiveness of these changes became clear in 1990, when the Polish people elected Solidarity leader Lech Walesa (leck wah-LEN-sah) as president and the people of Czechoslovakia elected dissident playwright Vaclav Havel (vah-SLAV hah-VEL) as president in 1989.

### The Fall of the Berlin Wall

The Berlin Wall was the most important symbol of the Cold War. Constructed to keep residents of East Germany from fleeing to the West and defended by armed

guards and barbed wire, it was the public face of communism. As the Soviet system fell apart, the residents of East and West Berlin broke down sections of the wall.



Régis BOSSU/Corbis via Getty Images

Régis BOSSU/Corbis via Getty Images

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, a tidal wave of patriotic enthusiasm swept aside the once-formidable communist government of East Germany. In the chaotic months that followed, East Germans crossed to West Germany in large numbers, and government services in the eastern sector nearly disappeared. The collapse of the East German government led quickly in 1990 to the reunification of Germany. Soviet leaders knew that similarly powerful nationalist sentiments existed within the Soviet Union as well. The year 1990 brought declarations of independence by Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia, three small states on the Baltic Sea that the Soviet Union had annexed in 1939.

The end of the Soviet Union then came suddenly in 1991 (see [Map 18.4](#)). After communist hardliners botched a coup against Gorbachev, disgust with communism boiled over. Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian Republic, emerged as the most powerful leader in the country. Russia, the largest republic in the Soviet Union, was effectively taking the place of

the disintegrating USSR. In September 1991 the Congress of People's Deputies—the central legislature of the USSR—voted to dissolve the union. Then in December a weak multistate successor with little central control, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), was created and Gorbachev resigned. Facing economic and political challenges, Boris Yeltsin resigned the Russian presidency in January 2000. His successor, Vladimir Putin, still dominates Russia. While efforts to achieve democracy and a modern capitalist economy have stalled, Russia has modernized its military and continued to assert an aggressive foreign policy under Putin.

### Map 18.4

#### The End of the Soviet Union

When communist hardliners failed to overthrow Gorbachev in 1991, popular anticommunist sentiment swept the Soviet Union. Following Boris Yeltsin's lead in Russia, the republics that constituted the Soviet Union declared their independence.



Why was nationalism a greater threat to the Soviet Union than to NATO?

The ethnic and religious passions that fueled the breakup of the Soviet Union also overwhelmed the Balkan nation of

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Yugoslavia. In 1991 it dissolved into a morass of separatism and warring ethnic and religious groups. Slovenia and Croatia, the most westerly provinces, both heavily Roman Catholic,

Explain how the rise of extremist groups in power led to acts of genocide and ethnic violence.

became independent states in 1992. The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was more mixed: 40 percent were Muslims, 30 percent Serbian Orthodox, and 18 percent Catholics. Following the declaration of Bosnian national independence in 1992, the nation's Orthodox Serbs attempted to rid the state of Muslims in a violent process called [ethnic cleansing](#) (Effort to eradicate a people and its culture by means of mass killing and the destruction of historical buildings and cultural materials. Ethnic cleansing was used by all sides in the conflicts that accompanied the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.) . After extensive television coverage of atrocities that included mass murders and wanton property destruction, the United States intervened and eventually brokered a settlement in 1995 that effectively created two ethnically separate political entities.

In 1999 new fighting and a new round of ethnic cleansing occurred in the southernmost Yugoslavian province of Kosovo. Seen by Serbs as their homeland, Kosovo had a predominantly Muslim and Albanian population. When Serbia refused to stop military action, the United States, Britain, and France acted on behalf of NATO by launching an aerial war on Serbian targets in Kosovo and in Serbia itself that forced the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. Serbia's president during this violent period, Slobodan Milosevic, was forced from power and turned over to a war crimes tribunal in The Hague, where he died in prison.

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Chapter 18: The Promises and Realities of Decolonization: 18-5b The Collapse of the Socialist Bloc

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## 18-5c The Persian Gulf War

The Persian Gulf War was the first significant military conflict to occur after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Iraq's ruler, Saddam Hussein, had borrowed a great deal of money from neighboring Kuwait and failed to get Kuwait's royal family to reduce this debt. He was also eager to control Kuwait's oil fields. Hussein believed that the smaller and militarily weaker nation could be quickly defeated, and he wrongly suspected that the United States would not react. Iraq then invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The United States decided to use military force to roll back Iraq's invasion. Saudi Arabia, an important ally of the United States and a major oil producer, also supported intervention. With his intention to use force endorsed by the United Nations and with many Islamic nations supporting military action, President George H. W. Bush ordered an attack in early 1991. Iraq's military defeat was both quick and comprehensive, but Bush decided to leave Hussein in power. When his rule was challenged by a Shi'ite uprising just months after his defeat, Hussein crushed his opponents. The United States imposed various conditions on Iraq that kept tensions high, helping create the conditions for a new, larger war in 2003 (see [Chapter 20](#)).

### Section Review

- The Cold War ended when growing unrest and criticism led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and allied socialist nations. Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policies accelerated this process.
- The rise of ethnic nationalism and effects of religious divisions led to war and genocide in Yugoslavia.
- After Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the United States and its allies defeated Iraq in the first Gulf War of 1990.

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## 18-6 Conclusion

The First and Second World Wars and the intervening period of economic depression, fascism, and militarism constituted the great dramas of the first half of the twentieth century and shaped much of the global political development of the twentieth century. In the context of these wars, political and cultural independence became a realizable goal in India, where Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent movement pioneered an entirely new form of political activism.

In Latin America superpower rivalry transformed limited conflicts over political rights, social justice, and economic policies into a violent cycle of revolution, military dictatorship, and foreign meddling. In Iran and Afghanistan resentment against foreign intrusion and a growing religious hostility to the West's secular culture led to revolutionary transformations. The Free French had promised greater autonomy to African colonies, the United States had mobilized nationalist forces to fight against the Japanese in the Philippines and in Vietnam, and Britain also had used forces recruited throughout its empire to fight the war. Once organized and set in motion, these nationalist energies eventually overwhelmed colonial rule. The most powerful force in the postwar era was nationalism, the desire of peoples to control their own destinies.

In Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America, this desire to throw off foreign controls led to the creation of scores of new nations by the 1970s. Each nation's struggle had its own character. While in India these passions led to independence, similar sentiments led in China to the overthrow of a government seen as weak and subordinate to foreign powers and to the creation of a communist dictatorship. In much of Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, nationalism overturned colonial rule. In the Middle East the desire for self-government was complicated by the creation of the state of Israel.

The world was profoundly altered between 1975 and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Both the United States and the Soviet Union feared that every conflict and every regime change represented a potential threat to their strategic interests, and every conflict threatened to provoke confrontation between them. As a result, the superpowers inserted themselves into a succession of civil wars and revolutions. The costs in lives and property were terrible, the gains small. As defense costs escalated, the Soviet system crumbled. By 1991 the Soviet Union and the socialist Warsaw Pact had disappeared, transforming the international stage.

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