The New Geopolitics

How did the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, affect global politics?

Vocabulary

Glossary Vocabulary Cards

war on terror

weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

nation building

Arab Spring

Introduction

An annual “Tribute in Light” memorializes the victims at Ground Zero, the site of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, a series of delays made Richard Moller late to work. His office was on the 100th floor of the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Before Moller reached his office, an airplane hijacked by terrorists smashed into the North Tower. Moller realized that the delays that morning had saved his life. “If I had gotten in an elevator just a few minutes earlier,” he recalled, “I would be dead.”

Most Americans can recall exactly where they were when they heard the news. Many people turned on their televisions just in time to see a second passenger plane slam into the South Tower 17 minutes after the first. As fire began consuming the upper floors of both buildings, most people in the towers managed to escape down stairwells. But many did not. Shock turned to horror as the Twin Towers collapsed. The South Tower was the first to fall at 9:59 a.m. The North Tower collapsed at 10:28 a.m. Less than an hour before, a third hijacked passenger jet had crashed into the Pentagon building near Washington, D.C. Soon after

came news that a fourth hijacked plane had crashed in Pennsylvania.

As Americans watched the tragedy unfold, they reacted with emotions ranging from bewilderment and dismay to anger and outrage. Most sensed that life had suddenly changed. The deaths provoked both an outpouring of grief and tremendous anxiety as Americans all around the country asked one another, “Are you all right?” In just two hours, nearly 3,000 people lost their lives.

In this lesson, you will learn about how the terrorist attacks of 9/11 had shattered the sense of security Americans had built after the Cold War. You will also discover how the hopes for a more peaceful world were displaced by a resurgence of international conflict.

1. The Immediate Impact of 9/11

With the most powerful military in the world, most Americans had believed that the United States was secure from outside threats. But after 9/11, there was a mixture of stunned disbelief and fear. No one knew how many terrorists might still be in the country. Muslim Americans faced harsh and racist attacks by people who wrongly believed that al Qaeda was supported by Islam and the majority of Muslims. The fear of possible future attacks affected U.S. policy at home and abroad. These changes spread across the world, inciting fear in other Western countries, such as the UK, and shaping a new geopolitical age.

The Start of the War on Terror Americans quickly learned that the international terrorist network al Qaeda had carried out the 9/11 attacks. The organization’s leader was Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian and Muslim extremist. Al Qaeda sought to rid Muslim countries of Western influence and establish a “pan-Islamic caliphate.” Bin Laden believed that all Muslims had a duty “to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian or military.” While the vast majority of Muslims rejected bin Laden’s words and believed terrorism was counter to Islamic values, some felt that the United States did not respect Islam or threatened Muslim interests. Bin Laden used those bitter feelings to promote his cause and to recruit terrorists throughout the world.

Bin Laden’s goal for the 9/11 attacks was to provoke the United States into a costly war that would destabilize the world and “hemorrhage” the U.S. economy. He believed that a global, ongoing war between the

West and the Islamic world would allow him to seize power and establish the pan-Islamic caliphate.

The United States reacted strongly to 9/11. It created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to protect the United States at home. President Bush also declared a **war on terror**. In a speech to Congress, Bush explained that the war would be waged not only against the terrorists themselves, but also against any governments that sponsored them.

Confronting the Taliban in Afghanistan The war on terror began in Afghanistan. At the time, a radical group called the Taliban controlled the nation. These ultraconservative Muslims were known for their harsh punishments and their rules barring women from working, receiving an education, or enjoying other basic rights. The Taliban also permitted al Qaeda to operate terrorist training camps on Afghan soil.

After 9/11, airports increased security to try to prevent future terrorist acts. Security officials carried out more rigorous searches and began to use full-body scanners. Other measures included banning containers of liquid larger than 3.4 ounces, requiring the removal of shoes, and scanning all baggage.

U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians toppled this statue of Saddam Hussein after he was overthrown. In 2006, Hussein was executed.

President Bush asked the Taliban to turn Osama bin Laden over to the United States after 9/11, but the Afghan leaders refused. The United States then formed an international coalition, which included anti-Taliban Afghan militias, to overthrow the Taliban and capture bin Laden. By mid-November 2001, Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, and other major cities had fallen, and Taliban rule in Afghanistan ended. U.S forces then began to hunt for bin Laden and his followers, who had gone into hiding.

Fighting the Iraqi Regime After 9/11, President Bush urged that Iraq be included in the war on terror, even though the Arab nation had taken no direct action against the United States. Since taking power in 1979, Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein, a Sunni Muslim, had murdered many thousands of Shi'ites and other Iraqis. The Sunni and Shi'a branches of Islam have a long-standing conflict in the Muslim world. Hussein had also used chemical weapons against the Kurds, an ethnic group in northern Iraq. After the Persian Gulf War, Hussein had gone back on promises to allow UN inspectors to search for **weapons of mass destruction** (WMD) in Iraq. WMD include chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, which the coalition forces had banned.

Bush was ready to act unilaterally without the approval of U.S. allies or the UN. Normally, the UN would be responsible for inspecting and policing issues regarding weapons of mass destruction. This foreign policy of taking action to head off trouble became known as the Bush Doctrine. In October 2002, persuaded by Bush's arguments, Congress authorized the president to send troops to Iraq if necessary. In March 2003, the United States launched an invasion of Iraq supported by

some three dozen nations who pledged to also send troops. But several European allies, including France and Germany, opposed the invasion, and the UN failed to approve it.

Coalition forces toppled the Iraqi government within a month. Hussein escaped, but was later captured, tried in an Iraqi court, and executed. U.S. inspection teams searched for banned weapons but discovered, to their surprise, that Iraq had no significant weapons of mass destruction.

Since this discovery, many have questioned whether the United States was justified in the initial invasion of Iraq and raise doubts about Bush's motives for pushing war. David Kay, who led the U.S. search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, called for an investigation of the flawed intelligence regarding Iraq's weapons. In 2005, the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States concluded that "the Intelligence Community was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgements about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction . . . What the intelligence professionals told you about Saddam Hussein's programs was what they believed. They were simply wrong."

2. The War Continues

The United States' vision for a short conflict that would resolve the issues and fears of terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq turned into decade long conflicts. The longer the United States remained involved, the more complex the situations became and the harder it was to withdraw U.S. troops from the area. In toppling the current regimes, the United States left these areas with a large amount of political instability. U.S. leaders believed that the continued presence of U.S. troops would help stabilize the governments.

U.S. soldiers operated checkpoints throughout Iraq. This checkpoint in Makhmur, in northern Iraq, was at the site of a refugee camp.

Rebuilding Iraq Although most Iraqis welcomed the end of Hussein's regime, some resented having foreign troops in their country. After the invasion and short period of intense warfare that overthrew the Iraqi government, many major cities experienced a period of severe violence and looting. Some saw the U.S. overthrow of the Iraqi government as a new type of imperialism, especially as the occupation of Iraq stretched from months into years. Others believed that Iraq was better without the brutality of Hussein's government. Many religious leaders who had been persecuted by Hussein's regime were able to return to Iraq and the holy cities that they had been barred from entering.

The removal of Hussein's regime, however, did not lead to a stable Iraq. An armed resistance, including insurgent forces from both inside and outside of Iraq, soon rose up to battle the coalition forces. Meanwhile, armed conflicts between rival Sunni and Shi'a militias increased, especially in Baghdad. Many analysts began calling the conflict in Iraq a civil war. Civilian casualties from violence grew into the tens of thousands.

The United States and Iraq began the difficult task of **nation**

building—the construction of political institutions and a stable government within a country. The United States helped create transitional governments. In 2005, as political violence increased, Iraqi citizens around the world elected Jalal Talabani as the president of Iraq. The political violence finally began to decrease in 2007, and in 2010, President Obama announced that all U.S. troops would leave Iraq by the end of the following year. The withdrawal went as scheduled, and U.S. troops formally left the Arab nation in December 2011.

The War in Afghanistan Continues The Taliban, aided by advisors from al Qaeda, resurfaced in Afghanistan and were able to take back territory that they had lost earlier. In late 2009, Obama sent about 30,000 U.S. troops to help NATO forces and the Afghan army thwart the Taliban assaults. Despite this increase, the Taliban and al Qaeda were able to remain operational by hiding across the border in Pakistan. NATO began the process of transferring military and security responsibilities to the Afghan forces in 2011.

New technology, like the Predator B unmanned aircraft, have drastically changed the landscape of war. However, the increase in drone strikes has led to an increased number of civilian casualties.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military also launched a campaign of drone attacks against al Qaeda, killing a number of al Qaeda officials in Pakistan. The drone strikes carried out by the United States grew in frequency and caused an increasing number of civilian casualties. Public outrage over these deaths caused the Pakistani government to protest that the United States was violating its sovereignty. Pakistan reacted even more strongly in May 2011, when a U.S. assault force on the ground finally located and killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. Pakistan had claimed that bin Laden was not in Pakistan. However, his location in a compound near the Pakistan Military Academy brought these claims into question. This strained the already fragile relationship between the United States and Pakistan.

With bin Laden dead and the Taliban apparently in retreat, Obama

decided to begin reducing the number of U.S. soldiers in the region. However, some U.S. forces stayed past Obama's 2014 withdraw date, mainly to train more Afghan forces in counterterrorist and insurgent operations.

The Rise of Cyber-Terrorism Cyber-terrorists use digital technology to disrupt business, affect services, or block access to needed information. Some nations use cyber-terrorism as a weapon. There is widespread belief that groups with ties to North Korea, as well as agents of the North Korean government, are responsible for launching global attacks of cyber-terrorism. These often include strikes against targets like financial institutions, subway systems, and networks that hold military information. Experts also warn that terrorist groups like ISIS are developing similar capabilities.

3. The Arab Spring

Mohamed Bouazizi was a Tunisian street vendor who was constantly harassed by corrupt Tunisian officials. On December 17, 2010, Bouazizi was beaten, his property was confiscated. When he went to complain to the governor of his unfair treatment, he was denied a meeting. That afternoon, Bouazizi set himself on fire outside of the governor's office. His actions highlighted the public's feelings toward ongoing corruption, underemployment, and authoritarianism both in Tunisia and across the Middle East and North Africa. A wave of protests broke out in Tunisia and spread throughout the region. Bouazizi became the catalyst for the Arab Spring.

Days of Rage Bouazizi died on January 4, 2011 as protests continued throughout Tunisia. Protesters called for the removal of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, the president of Tunisia, and an end to the corruption and authoritarianism of the Tunisian government. Attempts made by the Tunisian government to suppress the protesters were met with harsh international criticism. Within one month of Bouazizi's act of self-immolation, Ben Ali resigned and left Tunisia.

During the Arab Spring, protests in Cairo were held in Tahrir Square. Between January 25 and February 11, 2011, when the first wave of protests occurred, an estimated 2 million people attended protests there.

Citizens of countries across the Middle East and North Africa were inspired by the events happening in Tunisia. In early 2011, protests and revolts erupted in this largely Arab Muslim region. This series of revolts became known as the **Arab Spring**.

Some of the largest protests of the Arab Spring took place in February 2011. These large protests were called a “Day of Rage.” Tens of thousands of protesters across the Middle East and North Africa took part in a Day of Rage. In Egypt, activists chanted, “Revolution until victory.” In Amman, the capital of Jordan, protesters cried, “The people want to reform the regime” and “We want a fair electoral law.” Protesters in Bahrain waved the flag and shouted, “For Bahrain’s future, we are not afraid to be killed.”

In many of these protests, social media played a key role. Activists used Facebook and Twitter posts to help organize and spread information about the uprisings. Demonstrations took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Lebanon, Iran, Syria, and elsewhere. The level of violence during these protests varied.

The People Overthrow Authoritarians The demonstrations that took place during the Arab Spring left a lasting impact on the region. Massive, largely peaceful protests in the capital city of Cairo led to a dismantling of the government and the arrest of Egypt’s president, Hosni Mubarak. In Libya, anti-government actions took the form of an

armed rebellion. With the help of NATO air strikes, the rebel army managed to gain control of the country in August and oust the Libyan dictator, Muammar al-Gaddafi. He was killed by the opposition shortly after his capture.

This picture shows empty tear gas containers used by police officers during the Bahrain protests. These protests took place in February 2011 as a part of the Arab Spring.

Syria's dictatorship government, led by Bashar al-Assad, responded to antigovernment unrest with military force. Although the United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom called on Assad to step down, Assad's crackdown continued. By early 2012, more than 7,000 Syrians had died.

At least ten governments underwent changes as a result of the Arab Spring. Some governments were completely overthrown, while others underwent reforms. However, overthrowing authoritarian rule is not easy. Neither is replacing it with a democratic government. Many countries were thrown into crisis. In Syria, the protests quickly turned into a civil war which has continued through 2019.

Countries in transition to democracy, however, do not need to go it alone. Just as NATO supported Libyan freedom fighters, other global

organizations stand ready to help in the transition to democratic rule. The United Nations made clear its intention to promote justice, human rights, and political security in the region. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) promised aid as a way of encouraging economic security and stability. Even with this support, the future of democratizing countries is uncertain.

4. Historical Tensions Reemerge

The end of the Cold War brought an era of relative peace to the United States. Many hoped that the fear they experienced during that time was over, and that the peace that they enjoyed would last. Since 9/11, however, the world has seen a resurgence of violence and tension. International relationships have become strained and hostile, and old resentments have resurfaced.

Protesters gathered near Washington, D.C., to call for an investigation into Trump's involvement with the Russian interference in the 2016 elections. Protests were held across the country demanding that an impartial investigation take place.

A Strained Relationship Between the United States and Europe After World War I, the United States became a global power and influential force for democracy. It overtook Europe as the leader of the Western world.

After 9/11, countering terrorism became the priority of U.S. foreign

policy. The war on terror worked to eliminate potential threats against the United States, something that was suddenly at the forefront of the public's minds. However, the war on terror came with heavy costs that many in the West did not agree with. For example, many European countries, as well as the UN, did not agree with the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

The United States has further parted ways with its traditional allies on other matters. For example, in 2017, President Trump announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement, an international agreement aimed at slowing down rapid climate change. He took an "America First" approach, claiming that the efforts to improve our global environment would be harmful to the U.S. economy. Many European leaders were outraged by this decision, as the issues of climate change affect the entire world. Policies like this strained the United States' relationship with Europe.

Because of these policies, the United States has slowly been stepping away from its place as an international leader. As a result, several European countries have taken the lead.

Tensions Between Cold War Rivals Grow Tensions have also grown between Russia and the United States and its European allies. As the Cold War came to a close, the United States, as well as U.S. allies in Europe, felt relief. The threat of nuclear war fell as peace talks occurred and treaties were signed. But the United States and Russia still have a precarious relationship. Clashing ideals and struggles for political and economic influence have shaped U.S.-Russia relations for decades.

During the 2016 presidential election, fears arose that the Russian government had interfered with the election. Through a series of multiagency investigations, it was revealed that the Russian government was involved in hacking efforts against the Democratic Party. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence reported that "Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency . . . We have high confidence in these judgments." Despite the initial apparent friendship between President Trump and President Putin, other government officials have continued to point out the ongoing issues between the United States and Russia. Former House Speaker Paul Ryan stated that the Russian government "remains hostile to our most basic values and ideals." With the information that Russia actively worked toward undermining democracy in the United States, tensions between the two countries increased.

In another echo of the Cold War era, the United States and North Korea also have a strained relationship and a threat of nuclear war. Since the Korean War, North Korea has viewed the United States as an active enemy. It worked with the Soviet Union in the 1980s to develop nuclear power and, after failed attempts at disarmament agreements, tested its first nuclear weapon in 2006. Throughout the next ten years, relations between North Korea and the United States became more strained. Many fear that the ideological differences between these nations, combined with North Korea's advancement in nuclear technology, could lead to a new Cold War.

Summary

In this lesson, you read about how the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, changed U.S. foreign policy. This policy shift affected global politics, and started conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. relations withand Europe, Russia, and North Korea have weakened or become strained.

Cultural Interaction After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, clashes between ideals have increased. Throughout North Africa and the Middle East, protests have pushed against authoritarianism and toward democracy. As U.S. foreign policy has changed, tensions between the United States and and Russia have reemerged, while tensions have grown between the United States and Europe.

Economic Structures Economic inequality, marked by underemployment and corruption, has been prevalent in authoritarian regimes throughout North Africa and the Middle East. It was one of the factors that led to the Arab Spring.

Social Structures Conflicts between religious sects and ethnic groups destabilized areas and helped lead to the formation of terrorist organizations. In the Middle East and North Africa, authoritarian regimes have created divisions in society between the rulers and citizens of these nations.

The Impact of Globalization

What have been the costs and benefits of globalization?

Vocabulary

Glossary Vocabulary Cards

globalization

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)

cultural imperialism

climate change

Introduction

Cargo ships bring in goods to the United States from all over the world.

Apple is an American company headquartered in California that prides itself on designing its products in the United States. Although most of its products are labeled “Designed by Apple in California,” Apple manufactures most components for its products, including those for the iPhone, in other countries.

So, where does the iPhone actually come from? Two hundred suppliers from around the world provide Apple with the materials, manufacturing, and assembly for all of its products. The components for a specific iPhone model may come from dozens of manufacturers in several countries. For instance, to create the iPhone 7, Apple required 34 different components made by two dozen companies in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. These suppliers must also obtain resources, including natural resources, to make the components for the iPhone. Some of these components are mined. The phone itself then needs to be assembled. The majority of Apple’s iPhones are assembled in China.

With such a complicated supply chain, wouldn't it be more cost-effective for Apple to produce iPhones differently or in one country? Not necessarily. Samsung, the largest smartphone maker, manufactures a greater percentage of its parts than Apple, and does so in around six countries. Despite this, some of Samsung's models cost more to produce than comparable iPhones. Therefore, Apple's production model enables it to minimize costs.

In this lesson, you will explore the growth of economic interdependence. You will then consider how certain economic relationships, such as the international manufacture of the iPhone, have influenced cultural change in the developed and developing world. Finally, you will examine how global economic activity affects different groups in society.

1. Economic Interdependence

Global economic interaction is not a new phenomenon. By 1600, European states were carrying on a brisk trade with lands all over the world. However, modern countries depend on one another more than they have previously. They do not just trade—they form trading partnerships. They rely on the same communications and transportation systems. They are served by the same corporations. Their economies are, in effect, intertwined.

The process of increasing the interdependence of the world's economies is called **globalization**. In a fully globalized world, goods and services, money, and information would flow freely across national boundaries. Today, corporations buy and sell goods whose parts often come from several different countries. Information travels across borders via the internet and other high-speed communications networks. This enables companies to control the production of goods from afar. It also enables multinational banks to make international financial transactions entirely online.

The British Nationality Act allowed people from the former British colonies to move to the United Kingdom. This ship, filled with people from the West Indies, docks in England following the signing of the act.

Creating New International Connections Although many associate globalization with the movement of things—goods, money, and information—the movement of people has played a significant role as well, creating new connections between different parts of the world. After World War II, people who had been displaced by the war, as well as those who were fleeing communism in Eastern Europe, sought better economic opportunities abroad.

Additionally, post-war legal changes in several countries helped increase immigration. For example, both the United States and Australia removed racial and nationality barriers to immigration. From the late 1940s until 1973, Australia ended its White Australia policy. The United States passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which created a preference system for immigrants that favored professionals and people with specialized skills.

The British Nationality Act of 1948 granted citizens of British colonies the right to settle and work in the United Kingdom, enabling immigration from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Although the act aimed to settle issues related to citizenship in the British Commonwealth, it also helped relieve post-war labor shortages.

New technologies, such as larger, more powerful jet engines, have made the transport of goods over long distances easier, cheaper, and faster than ever before.

In other regions, the need for labor drove changes to immigration law. West Germany and countries in northern Europe established “guest worker” programs to recruit workers from places with high unemployment, such as North Africa and Turkey. Initially, workers were meant to stay for only a limited time. Eventually, however, this changed because of the costs of hiring and training new workers. In the 1960s and 1970s, around 400,000 Turks immigrated to West Germany and remained in the country. Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, sought labor to build infrastructure with the oil wealth they had gained in the 1970s. They turned to South Asia to find workers for oil and construction jobs and to meet the growing demand for domestic workers. These countries remain reliant on imported labor. Today, around 90 percent of the Emirates’ population is foreign.

In the same period that these major changes to immigration law occurred, developments in transportation began to better facilitate the movement of goods around the world. One of these major developments was the introduction of the jet engine in airplanes in the 1950s. In contrast to earlier engines, jet engines are faster and more reliable. Jet engines also reduced the cost to ship goods. In 1955,

shipment costs were $3.87 per ton-kilometer shipped, but by 2004, the cost was only $0.30 per ton-kilometer.

Large standardized shipping containers have been essential to maritime shipping's dominance. They can accommodate large products and high volumes of goods. Since businesses began regularly using these containers in the late 1960s, the containers have also prompted significant changes to the transportation industry. Standardized containers were designed for use with multiple modes of transportation: trucks, trains, and ships. This eliminates the need to unload and reload goods. When a ship arrives in port, a container remains loaded and moves to its next transport vehicle. Using containers cuts the amount of time ships remain idle in port and reduces storage and loading costs.

Governments Work to Improve Economic Interactions

Decreases in transportation costs were not only the result of new technologies. **Deregulation**, or the removal or reduction of government regulations, helped reduce costs as well. In the 1970s and 1980s, industrialized nations began to deregulate industries. This movement started in the United States. By eliminating and simplifying regulations, governments aimed to increase competition, productivity, and efficiency while lowering prices. The market, they hoped, would then regulate itself.

Supporters of deregulation argue that it increases competitiveness by reducing **barriers to entry**, making it easier for new businesses to enter the market. Deregulation has occurred around the world in industries such as agriculture, utilities, communications, transportation, and finance.

These union members are protesting against the North American Free Trade Agreement. Many unions feared that the creation of this common market would lead to jobs being moved to Mexico, especially, and Canada.

Deregulation of finance has allowed new firms to enter foreign markets as well. Companies now compete for clients on an international level. For example, the European Union permits banks and financial institutions to operate across member nations. This expansion has been further facilitated by the internet. Not only does the internet enable firms to serve clients regardless of location, it has reduced the cost of doing so.

In addition to reducing barriers to entry through deregulation, many governments have sought to limit barriers to international trade, such as tariffs. In doing so, they have embraced **free trade**, the unrestricted movement of goods and services across borders. This quest for free trade has served as one of the main drivers of globalization.

After World War II, the United States and many European nations came to believe that free and open trade would benefit world economies and help prevent future conflicts among nations. In 1947, the first trade agreement to involve a large number of countries, the General

Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), was signed. Initially adopted by 23 countries, GATT lowered tariffs on tens of thousands of goods when it came into effect in 1948.

The United States promoted free trade as a strategy to help European economies recover from the war and to keep nations out of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. In 1951, six countries in Europe formed the European Coal and Steel Community to create a **common market** for those two products. A common market is a grouping of countries that promotes lower trade barriers among its members.

European success at stimulating trade sparked other moves toward free trade. In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect. Under NAFTA, the United States, Canada, and Mexico agreed to create their own common market. Their purpose was to get rid of trade barriers, especially tariffs, on goods and services traveling from one of the three countries to another. The United States has since negotiated free trade agreements with more than a dozen other countries.

Similar agreements have blossomed among countries all over the globe, often with the help of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Founded in 1995 to replace GATT, the WTO is an international organization run by more than 150 member-nations. Its main goal is to reduce trade barriers throughout the world. It does so by offering a forum for countries to negotiate trade agreements and by providing a set of rules to guide international trade. If a trade dispute arises, the WTO will help settle it.

Trade agreements tie countries together in a dependent relationship. A key requirement for such an agreement is that all participants must be able to profit from that relationship.

The Role of International Financial Institutions Toward the end of World War II, the Allies, led by the British and Americans, established two international organizations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to develop the post-war monetary management system. The World Bank was founded to provide loans for post-war reconstruction in Europe, whereas the IMF initially worked to rebuild the world's battered international banking system. Although these institutions laid the foundations for the post-war recovery effort, their aims were also long term. They sought to promote economic cooperation by restoring and sustaining the benefits of global integration. Over time, their mandates focused less on recovery and more on development and support.

Today, the World Bank works to end extreme poverty and foster income growth by funding infrastructure development, supporting institution-building, and addressing social and environmental issues. The IMF continues to monitor and stabilize the international banking system, and it offers advice and technical assistance to countries seeking to modernize their economy. Additionally, it provides loans to countries experiencing a financial crisis, particularly related to the inability to repay a foreign debt.

Both institutions face criticism for imposing Western-style capitalism and one-size-fits-all solutions on developing nations without dealing with the negative social, environmental, and economic effects. Critics argue that the IMF, in particular, tries to dictate policy based on unrealistic assumptions about an economy with little regard for a country's sovereignty. Despite this, around 190 countries are World Bank and IMF members.

After World War II, large parts of France and other parts of Europe were left in ruins. The World Bank was initially created to provide loans to these countries to help them rebuild.

The Role of Transnational Organizations Some organizations work outside of government and across nations to affect change and influence government policy. **Nongovernmental organizations** (NGOs) are one type of such organization. NGOs are nonprofit organizations that often focus on issues related to antipoverty, education, health care, public policy, the environment, and human

rights. These organizations function and provide assistance at local, national, and international levels. Funding for NGOs typically comes from both member contributions and grants from private foundations.

Greenpeace is an NGO that works to conserve the environment. The organization investigates and confronts environmental abuses committed by governments and corporations around the world.

The number of NGOs began growing in the second half of the 20th century, particularly from the 1970s on, and many address transnational issues related to globalization. For example, some NGOs, such as the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, are concerned about the effects of global trade on the environment. Other NGOs, such as Amnesty International, Oxfam International, CARE, the Global Fund for Women, and Save the Children, speak out on social issues associated with globalization, including poverty and human rights.

However, some governments want to curb the growth and influence of NGOs, accusing them of being undemocratic and unaccountable to the public. Moreover, some countries have restricted the operations of NGOs that are critical of the government or that promote alternatives to government policy. For example, in Russia, NGOs that receive foreign funding and attempt to influence public policy must register as “foreign agents,” leading the public to view them as spies or traitors.

Despite government attempts to limit the work of NGOs, new ones continue to emerge. In recent decades, the growth of NGOs has been

bolstered by improved communications technology, which can link groups and people around the world, as well as the spread of democracy, which has enabled NGOs to operate more freely.

In contrast to NGOs, **multinational corporations**, also known as transnational corporations, are companies that have a home base in one country and operations in other countries. Multinational corporations are both central players in the globalization process and prime targets of globalization critics. These large companies promote globalization by moving goods, capital, information, and people across national borders to do business.

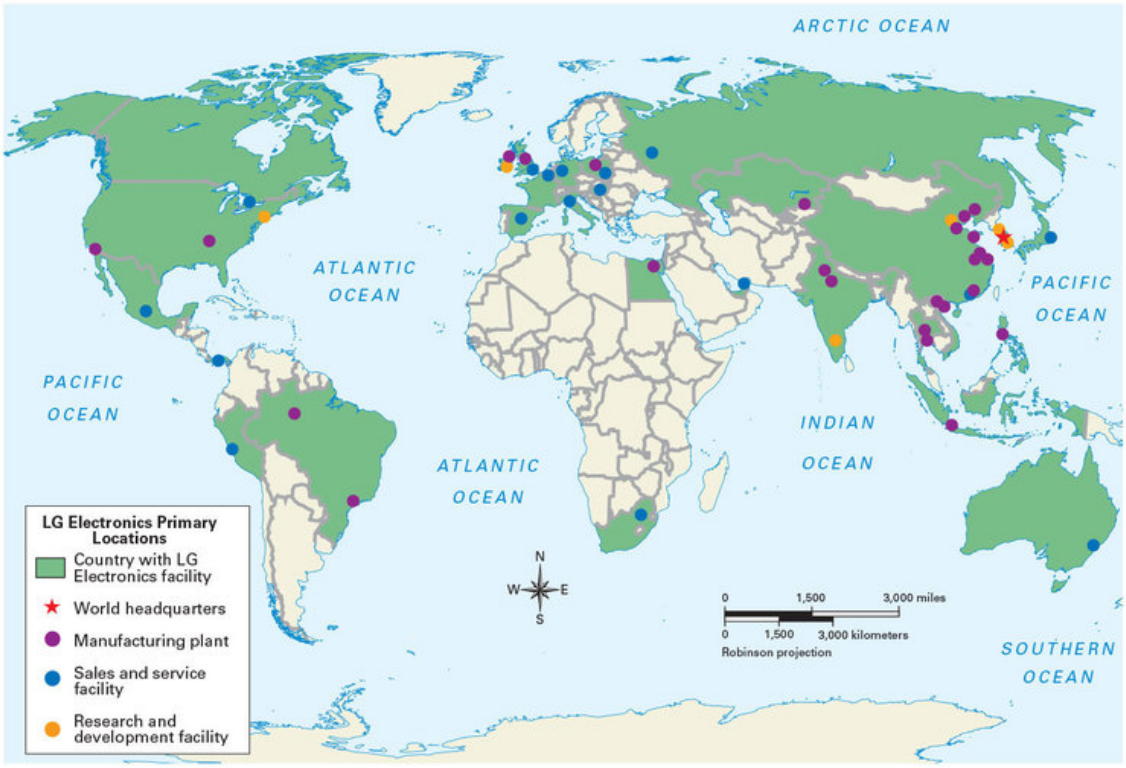
Multinational corporations are not a new concept. In the early 1600s, the English and the Dutch each formed an East India Company to carry out long-distance trade with Asia. Like these early multinationals, modern multinationals are often headquartered in one or two countries but operate in countries around the globe. However, modern corporations often conduct business by establishing subsidiaries, or companies they control, or by partnering with existing companies in foreign countries. Rather than focusing primarily on trade, corporations license their products for local production, open manufacturing facilities, and make investments to support their subsidiaries' growth. General Motors, for example, has subsidiaries and joint ventures with local car companies around the globe. It produces and sells cars in Canada, Brazil, and South Korea, and does so with local partners in Egypt, China, and Russia.

Critics fear that multinationals have become too economically powerful in too many parts of the world. These critics worry that in their search for profits, multinationals will move their operations to countries that are unable to protect their workers or the environment from abuse.

Supporters of globalization counter that multinational corporations generate trade, investments, jobs, and other economic benefits in countries where they do business. They also train workers in new technologies and business methods, increasing the host country's human capital.

In the 1970s, for example, Daewoo, a South Korean multinational, decided to expand its garment-making business to Bangladesh. The company invited 130 Bangladeshi workers to Korea to learn how to make shirts. Over time, 115 of those workers left Daewoo and used what they had learned to set up their own garment companies. Clothing soon became Bangladesh's leading export.

Locations of a Multinational Cooperation ▼



Although most multinational corporations are based in Western Europe or the United States, Asia has its share as well. LG Electronics is a large company based in South Korea. It makes televisions, computers, and other products, and began to expand overseas in the 1970s. The countries shown in color on this map all have LG Electronics facilities today.

2. The Globalization of Culture

Globalization extends beyond financial transactions and the exchange of goods. In many ways, globalization has led to the emergence of a global culture, one that often makes the world seem smaller. **Cultural diffusion**, or the sharing of ideas and knowledge across cultures, has always occurred, but in recent decades, communications technology has helped increase this process. As countries build and improve advanced communications systems, they connect themselves more effectively with the world—and the products, ideas, and values that it offers.

Nike can be found in countries all around the world, like this Nike store in Beijing, China. Its success comes in part from the universal messages in the branding.

Changing Tastes and Expectations Through cultural diffusion, consumers' tastes and expectations have changed. Exposure to the same television programs, music, movies, and websites has driven some of these changes. However, changes have also been driven by multinational corporations and their marketing efforts, especially branding, or differentiating a product based on its brand.

In communities all around the world, a brand aims to create an emotional connection with consumers. Nike launched its "Just Do It" campaign in 1988 with this vision of a brand in mind. As the company itself has noted, the idea is "both universal and intensely personal . . . It invited dreams. It was a call to action, a refusal to hear excuses, and a license to be eccentric, courageous, and exceptional." Around the world, consumers connected with this message and, thus, Nike and its products. Given that consumers have seemingly infinite choices, this type of connection is essential for global brands to reach and sustain a worldwide audience.

Concerns About Cultural Diffusion Although many appreciate the

interconnectedness that globalization offers, some worry that cultural diffusion occurs primarily from developed countries to developing countries. The developed world dominates global commerce as well as the mass media—television, radio, movies, and the internet. Through these channels, goods, as well as ideas and values, can flow. They can alter local cultures, changing the foods people eat, the way people dress, and even the way people think. With globalization, some cultural shift is inevitable, but globalization's long-term effects on cultures in developing countries, particularly on traditional cultures, remain a concern.

Critics specifically point to the rapid extinction of languages as one major cost of this form of globalization. As languages such as English spread across the world alongside Western cultural influences, many smaller, local languages are dying out. Language experts predict that more than half of the world's 7,000 languages will disappear by the end of the century.

Language is an important vehicle for the preservation of culture. This is especially true for native peoples in the developing world who may not have a written language. When a language dies, it takes with it a wealth of human knowledge, especially about the natural world. "Most of what we know about species and ecosystems is not written down anywhere," observed linguistics professor David Harrison. "It's only in people's heads. We are seeing in front of our eyes the erosion of the human knowledge base."

Along with the loss of language, many peoples are seeing their own traditions crowded out by cultural imports. In many villages, for example, people have swapped their traditional clothing for jeans and T-shirts. Teenagers are more interested in television shows and popular music from abroad than traditional folklore and music. They choose hamburgers and pizza over traditional foods.

Unease about cultural diffusion is not unique to the developing world. For decades, one source of cultural diffusion has frustrated both developed and developing countries: the United States. Many critics view globalization as synonymous with Americanization—the spread of American customs and culture to other countries.

Since the 1920s, Hollywood films have dominated the world's media markets, and from the 1950s and 1960s, American rock and pop music reached listeners around the world. However, with the end of the Cold War and the advent of the internet, American fads, foods, and fashions have spread even more rapidly around the world.

Many argue that the growth of shops from American brands, as well as from brands elsewhere in the developed world, have a homogenizing effect. In other words, because cities across the world have many of the same shops and restaurants, they have lost their individuality. They are no longer diverse.

Commercial interests are not the only force driving the spread of American culture. Language also plays a part. English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, used by as much as one-fifth of the world's population. Nevertheless, the spread of American culture concerns many critics of globalization. Some see it as a form of **cultural imperialism**, or the imposing of one country's culture or language on another country.

Starbucks, a company that originates in the United States, has spread throughout the world, including to this location in Mumbai, India. The spread of American stores to other countries has often drawn criticism out of fears that they will dilute the traditional culture of an area.

The different types of food available in the United States, such as Ethiopian food, are one example of how globalization affects our communities.

The Benefits of Globalization for Local Cultures Supporters of globalization see a different result from the interaction of world cultures. They contend that globalization enriches local cultures by exposing people to new ways of doing things. Rather than a homogenized culture, they say, the result is a “global village,” where cultures share ideas and customs but retain their distinct identities.

“Critics of cultural imperialism charge that rich cultures dominate poor ones,” wrote economist Tyler Cowen. However, he goes on to explain that “local culture commands loyalty.” In India, for example, domestic recordings dominate the music market. “Western culture often creates its own rivals,” Cowen observed, “by bringing creative technologies like the recording studio or the printing press to foreign lands.”

Although globalization is often seen as a one-way flow—from rich to poor nations—it goes the other way, too. Customs and traditions from developing nations also influence the developed world. Restaurants in the United States that serve food from Thailand or Ethiopia are one sign of globalization. So is the fact that Americans watch Bollywood movies from India, listen to Afro-pop music from Nigeria, and furnish their homes with crafts from Indonesia.

Artists and artisans in developing countries benefit from the chance to sell their products in the developed world. By gaining a larger market for their work, many are able to preserve their art, music, and traditional crafts.

The idea that cultures should be protected from change is

wrongheaded, say supporters of globalization. “China has become more open partly because of the demands of ordinary people,” observed James L. Watson, an anthropologist. “They want to become part of the world.”

In Nepal, the people who live near Mount Everest have adopted new customs through contact with foreign tourists. Mountain climber Jon Krakauer sees some of these changes as negative, but he also says that local people have benefited from global contact. Money from tourism and grants from international organizations have funded new schools, medical clinics, and many other improvements. Krakauer wrote,

Most of the people who live in this rugged country seem to have no desire to be severed from the modern world or the untidy flow of human progress. The last thing [they] want is to be preserved as specimens in an anthropological museum.

—Jon Krakauer, *Into Thin Air*, 1997

3. Globalization’s Effects on Society

Over the last century, capital and goods have moved relatively freely between different parts of the world, particularly across the Atlantic. So has labor. While minimal laws restrict the movement of capital and goods, modern immigration laws prevent the free movement of workers.

Globalization and Standards of Living Most economists believe that by increasing trade and investment across borders, modern globalization has helped countries make economic progress and raise their standards of living. It has also lifted millions of people out poverty.

Economic progress and higher standards of living have brought improvements in social welfare, including better nutrition, health care, and education. Greater interconnectedness and modern communications technology have enabled scientific knowledge, medical advances, and new technology to pass easily across borders. In turn, these innovations have helped improve health and longevity worldwide.

Innovations have helped increase access to essential resources. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Green Revolution bolstered food security around

the world by greatly increasing agricultural production. The Green Revolution is often associated with Norman Borlaug, an American scientist who selectively bred grains to create high-yield varieties. He crossbred grains based on their desirable characteristics, such as fungus resistance and ability to withstand extreme weather. The growth of these high-yield varieties was aided by irrigation, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers, which were not widely used in the developing world. The support of governments and nonprofit organizations changed this, however.

New developments, such as solar panels, have made electricity more cost effective in rural places around the world. These solar panels power a health clinic in western Tanzania.

In recent years, new developments have helped provide access to electricity and water, which can improve health, education, and income. Many people in the developing world have generally lacked electricity due to cost or to living too far from the power grid. Although some countries have extended their electrical infrastructure, others have turned to low-cost, efficient renewable energy options to get electricity to more people. Electricity may be generated by solar power, biofuels derived from plants and wastes, or micro-hydropower systems.

Although it can be collected from rain, fog, and the air, water cannot be created. As such, innovations have focused on improving collection, safe storage, and purification methods. This is especially important because hundreds of millions of people walk for miles every day to get water for their household, and that water is not always from a clean source. Efforts to ensure that people have clean water have been supported by international aid organizations, governments, and

intergovernmental organizations. These groups also promote related public health initiatives on sanitation and hygiene, which aim to reduce illness and death.

Globalization and Inequality Although globalization has improved the lives of many, its benefits have not been spread uniformly among the world's more than 7.7 billion people. Many argue that globalization has increased income inequality. In this way, today's globalization contrasts with the globalization that began in the 19th century.

Globalization in the 19th century was characterized by the mobility of labor, particularly from Europe. Restricted by few immigration controls, Europeans were able to emigrate to the Americas and Australia. With land and jobs scarce in Europe, the movement of people helped improve opportunities for those who remained. Income inequality between rich and poor countries in Europe and the Americas declined. However, inequality between these regions and the rest of the world grew.

Modern immigration policies limit the ability of workers to move to a new country. Instead, jobs now move to workers. To reduce costs, companies move the production of goods to and invest their resources in low-wage countries. This has resulted in economic growth in many parts of the developing world and increased income equality between nations. However, it has also resulted in growing income inequality within both developed and developing nations.

In developed countries, income inequality is at its highest level in 50 years, with the richest 10 percent earning around nine times that of the poorest 10 percent. In the United States in 2015, the top 1 percent of families earned more than 26 times what the bottom 99 percent did. Even as millions emerge from poverty in the developing world, the same patterns of income inequality are occurring there as well. For example, in China, around 1 percent of citizens own one-third of the country's wealth.

This inequality is reflected in the growth of slums in the developing world. With few jobs in rural areas, especially as agricultural productivity increased, people moved to cities to find work. Frequently, only unskilled, low-wage jobs without any legal protections were available. Low pay and insufficient affordable housing made slums migrants' primary housing option. Slums are often characterized by poor-quality housing, overcrowding, and a lack of basic services such as electricity, water, and sanitation.

The rapid growth of many urban areas has led to the rise of slums, even in otherwise wealthy areas. These slums in Mumbai, India, can be found on the outskirts of the city center.

Income inequality also affects the quality of health care that many people receive. In low-income areas of the world, such as Africa and some parts of Asia, health care remains inaccessible to many. These regions often lack skilled professionals, as well as the resources and technology to educate new workers. Additionally, most health care research focuses on preventing and curing diseases in the developed world. However, people in the developing world are more likely to have unclean water, poor sanitation conditions, and a high risk of contracting infectious diseases.

In the textile industry, multinational corporations often establish their own factories abroad or hire local manufacturers. Countries with these textile factories, such as China, may have laws that attract multinationals as well as unenforced regulations.

While the developing world struggles with scarcity, the developed world now struggles with overabundance. As people have developed sedentary lifestyles and consume more processed foods, conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease have become more common.

The Social Costs of Globalization One of the impacts of globalization is the export of jobs to low-wage countries in the developing world. However, some argue that this is necessary to keep costs down to ensure that products are affordable. Regardless, as developed countries focus increasingly on the service economy instead of manufacturing, many people are left behind. Workers may lack the skills or education necessary to find jobs in growing economic sectors, particularly jobs that pay enough to support a family. Alternatively, workers may have to move long distances for jobs that match their skills.

In the developing world, critics contend that countries often focus on

the needs of multinational corporations while ignoring the needs of citizens. Some argue that employment practices, particularly those used by multinational corporations' suppliers, are exploitative because of low pay. For example, starting pay at Foxconn, one of the manufacturers of iPhones in China, is $300 per month. Established workers who do overtime can earn as much as $785. Although Chinese law places monthly limits on overtime, reports suggest that this is disregarded, especially during peak production. Often in the developing world, labor laws may not exist or be enforced.

Child labor has been a major issue related to rapid urbanization caused by globalization. Many countries fail to enforce laws that prevent companies from hiring children to work in dangerous conditions.

Child labor is illegal in most countries, but it continues to occur in the poorest parts of the world, where families may depend on that income. Suppliers to global automotive, tech, and textile companies in developed nations have been found to employ children. Other suppliers sometimes subcontract work to outside companies without their clients' knowledge.

In several developing countries, the textile industry relies on women who often have few protections and work in unsafe conditions. Although poor conditions in certain countries, such as Bangladesh and Guatemala, are known, production for large corporations continues. Additionally, women in the garment industry, as well as foreign domestic workers in wealthier countries, face physical or sexual abuse at the hands of employers.

Globalization and the Environment Economic development is hard on the environment as well. As countries and multinational corporations develop industries to promote economic growth, they also may cause pollution, destroy landscapes, and endanger wild species.

Almost all human activity has some impact on the environment. When farmers clear forests and grasslands to plant crops, they are also destroying the habitats of plants and animals. As developing countries shift from agriculture to industry, their environmental problems multiply. If left unregulated, factories spew smoke into the air and pour toxic waste into waterways.

The latest environmental challenge confronting the world is **climate change**. This term refers to variations in Earth's overall climate over time, ranging from decades to millions of years. Historically, climate change was caused by natural processes. Such processes include volcanic eruptions and variations in the intensity of sunlight reaching the planet's surface.

Many scientists now believe that human activity is causing the global climate to become warmer. The main culprit is the burning of fossil fuels in power plants, factories, and vehicles—all of which have increased with globalization. When coal, oil, and natural gas are burned, they release carbon dioxide and other gases. These gases act like a greenhouse in the atmosphere, trapping energy from the sun near Earth's surface. Alone, moving people and goods around the globe by air and sea produces more than 6 percent of the world's carbon emissions.

If nothing is done to reduce these emissions, environmentalists warn that the effect on the environment could be devastating. "In this century, human activity could trigger an irreversible melting of the Greenland ice sheet and Antarctic glaciers," wrote Fred Pearce, an environmental writer. "This would condemn the world to a rise in sea level of six metres—enough to flood land occupied by billions of people."

Environmentalists do not blame all of these problems on global trade, but they worry about the effects of rapid economic growth on the environment. Moreover, they do not oppose economic development, but they believe development should be sustainable over time. **Sustainable development** is designed to meet people's present needs without having a negative impact on future generations' ability to meet their needs. For example, a lumber company that plants as many trees as it cuts down each year is practicing sustainable

development. Unfortunately, say environmentalists, most current development is not sustainable.

This logging operation replants trees after it has cut down others. This makes the logging in this region sustainable.

Supporters of globalization recognize that development has environmental costs. They argue, however, that the best way to address those costs is not by slowing economic growth, but to speed it up. They contend that when incomes start to increase, people become more interested in raising their living standards than in controlling pollution. However, this attitude begins to change as they grow wealthier. People become concerned about dirty air and waterways, and demand that their governments do something about it.

The wealthier that people become, the more resources they seem willing to devote to improving the environment. The city of London, for example, had far worse air pollution a century ago than it does today. Lake Erie was pronounced “dead” in the 1960s. Today, the lake has one of the world’s largest freshwater fisheries. And in 2008, China’s government announced that it was shifting from growth at the expense of the environment to “putting equal emphasis on both,” which has led to reductions of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Given this history, some economists describe a clean environment as a luxury good. However, they also note that the relationship between

income and environmental protection is strongest for visible pollution, such as smoggy skies and sewage-choked rivers. The relationship is weaker for problems that people do not see every day, such as carbon emissions and loss of forests. According to economics writer Andrew Leonard, “The quick and dirty rule seems to be that if you can’t see it or smell it in your local urban neighborhood, then, no matter how rich you are, you aren’t going to do much about it.”

The Walmart Corporation made over $500 billion in 2018. Each year, it makes more than almost every nation in the world.

The Implications of Globalization on the Nation-State The modern nation-state developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in response to societal changes. Once established, nation-states expanded their power as they created laws and policies to address industrialization, class conflict, and economic changes. Over time, they assumed greater responsibility for the well-being of their citizens and economic stability.

Today, leaders in many nation-states believe multinational corporations provide necessary economic benefits, regardless of the costs. This was not always the case. In the past, the traditional multinational

corporation was based in one country—mainly in the United States, Western Europe, or Japan. It did business in other countries through subsidiaries. Government policies in a base country often helped corporations, but also restricted their business practices. These policies generally encouraged corporations to keep jobs in their home country.

The 1990s and early 2000s saw a rise in mergers between companies based in different countries. The resulting global corporations essentially decoupled themselves from any one nation's resources—and their often restrictive government policies. Global corporations made business decisions based on their own priorities, thus increasing their economic power and geographic reach.

The economic assets of some multinationals now dwarf those of many nations. In 2016, the world's top-100 economies, as measured by GDP and total revenue, consisted of 29 countries and 71 corporations. For example, the economic output of Walmart, which came in at number 10, was slightly larger than that of Spain and Australia, nearly double that of Sweden at number 19, and around five times that of Greece at number 98.

The economic power of these giant corporations concerns critics of globalization. Critics argue that governments give up some of their sovereignty to powerful multinational corporations, which make economic decisions that can have a huge impact on a country. Moreover, multinationals might become a law unto themselves, wielding power with little restraint from national governments. In many ways, globalization today favors multinational corporations over governments, as well as over individuals.

Summary

In this lesson, you learned about globalization and its economic, cultural, and social effects around the world. Globalization has helped raise the standard of living for millions of people worldwide, but at the same time, it has eroded local cultures, increased economic inequality, and harmed the environment.

Cultural Interaction Globalization has exposed people throughout the world to different cultures. Although cultural diffusion often seems to flow primarily from developed to developing nations, it flows the other direction as well.

Political Structures Governments view multinational corporations

as providing important economic benefits to their countries. Many worry that as the economic power of these corporations grow, they could undermine governments' power.

Economic Structures Globalization has increased the movement of goods and capital around the world. It has created economic interdependence, with companies manufacturing, buying, and selling goods across multiple nations as well.

Social Structures Although globalization has increased income equality between nations, it has increased inequality within nations as well.

The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Managing Resources

An NGO (non-governmental organization) is a group formed by private individuals in order to provide a service or pursue a public policy. Most of them, like the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and CARE, are nonprofits. They are funded by charitable foundations, corporations, and governments and by donations from individuals. More than 6,000 NGOs operate internationally, and many thousands more exist at the national and local level. Their tasks vary greatly, from supplying food and medicine to disaster victims to fighting for human rights.

A country's water, soil, minerals, plants, animals, and other natural resources are precious. Sometimes, governments do not manage those resources effectively. When the need arises for better management of a natural resource, a non-governmental organization might step in to help. NGOs which concentrate on resource protection work to educate local populations about the resource. When needed, they put pressure on governments to develop policies to safeguard that resource. Three such NGOs are the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, the Waterkeeper Alliance, and the Rainforest Alliance.

A number of NGOs devote themselves to protecting populations of wild animals. One of them, the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, focuses on rare and endangered species. These include the black rhino (often killed for its horn, which traditional healers use as medicine), Grevy's zebra, and a variety of birds and other African wildlife. Its stated mission is to "work as a catalyst for the conservation of wildlife and its

habitat."

The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (or Lewa) is located on more than 60,000 acres of land in central Kenya. Some of the land is part of a national forest, but most is privately owned. Lewa also promotes wildlife conservation elsewhere in Kenya. It helped to create community-owned conservation areas that cover close to 2 million acres to the north. Those lands are connected physically to Lewa, which allows animals to migrate throughout their natural range. Lewa continues to help communities manage this natural resource.

Lewa's work extends beyond the borders of its land and into the surrounding communities. Lewa supports a dozen schools where children are offered a basic education, including instruction in wildlife protection issues. It maintains and staffs three community health clinics. It gives local farmers hands-on training in managing their land. Lewa has also undertaken water development projects that provide clean water to thousands of people and their domestic animals.

The Waterkeeper Alliance calls itself "the voice for rivers, streams, wetlands, and coastlines." It focuses on water management and conservation. The Alliance's work began with the cleanup of the Hudson River in New York, and many of its clean-water campaigns have taken place in the United States. But its goal is to establish and maintain fishable, swimmable, and drinkable waterways around the world. To move toward that goal, this NGO supports more than 200 Waterkeeper organizations on six continents. Individual Waterkeeper groups go by many different names, including Baykeeper, Canalkeeper, Deltakeeper, and Riverkeeper. The job of each one is to protect its community's right to clean water. That may call for tracking down polluters, publicly promoting strong environmental laws, and teaching young people about water conservation.

A Waterkeeper group in northern India, for example, led a campaign to clean up the Yamuna River. This major river carries freshwater south out of the Himalayas. But as it passes Delhi, India's second largest city, its waters turn foul. In 2010, Delhi discharged nearly a billion gallons of sewage directly into the river every day. To clean up the Yamuna, the Waterkeepers made plans to monitor the pollution level and work to persuade Delhi's residents of the value of a safe, clean river. They also began a program to educate the community's schoolchildren about their environment. As one Waterkeeper said, "Our river's survival depends on this generation of young people. They must turn what seemed impossible into the possible."

Forests are an important source of oxygen, fuel, food, clean water, and shelter. With this in mind, the Rainforest Alliance works to protect all forests, not just tropical rainforests. One of its guiding principles is sustainable development. This is an approach to achieving economic growth while at the same time preserving the environment for future generations. The Rainforest Alliance encourages the sustainable development of forests. It works with loggers, local communities, and the forest industry to develop responsible forestry practices that protect ecosystems. But its program for forest conservation also involves the agricultural and tourism industries.

The expansion of farmland is the major cause of deforestation—the permanent clearing of large swaths of forest. The Rainforest Alliance fights to reduce deforestation. It also encourages farmers to grow crops in a way that limits soil erosion, water pollution, and the destruction of wildlife habitat. Tourism, too, can lead to deforestation and pollution, as well as the inefficient consumption of energy. The Rainforest Alliance offers the tourism industry tools for running their businesses in a sustainable manner. Ultimately, this NGO aims to show that preserving healthy forests is profitable for the tourist industry and other businesses.

The consensus of the scientific community is that healthy forests play a role in stabilizing the climate by storing carbon. The burning of forests releases carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere. By reducing deforestation and by encouraging the planting of trees, the Rainforest Alliance hopes to combat climate change.

The State of Agriculture in the Modern World

The purpose of agriculture is to produce food. Farmers all over the world achieve that goal largely through a process of tilling the soil, planting seeds, and harvesting crops. They also tend orchards and raise animals. Farmers have been doing all this for around 10,000 years. Today, agriculture faces many challenges. As the population of the world soars, so does the demand for food. Arable land, or land that is or can be successfully cultivated, is decreasing. Soils are being degraded. Water in many regions is becoming scarce. Yet in most parts of the world, agricultural productivity continues to rise.

Science and technology have helped farmers continue to increase their food production. In the late 1960s, Western nations began introducing

chemical fertilizers and pesticides, along with high-yielding varieties of plants, to the less developed countries of the world. These advances, which included improvements in irrigation, led to amazing growth in agriculture—a “Green Revolution.” Asia, Latin America, and, to a lesser extent, Africa benefited from these new ways of increasing the production of food. The Green Revolution continues today. Industrialized countries invest heavily in agricultural research and development. Their farmers drive efficient combine harvesters, machines that can perform multiple harvest-related operations. They use sophisticated satellite technology to monitor their fields. Some have also turned to biotechnology.

Farmers in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, and elsewhere have begun planting genetically modified crops. These crops have had their genetic makeup artificially altered to give them a new property, such as disease resistance or greater nutritional value. Corn, soybeans, and cotton, for example, have been bioengineered so that their seeds are capable of producing their own pesticide. The cultivation of genetically modified food, animal feed, and fiber crops is spreading throughout the world. This scientific advance promises to increase the availability of food for growing populations, especially in developing countries. However, genetic modification of crops is controversial. Several European governments have banned the sale or use of genetically modified products, fearing that they may be harmful to humans or the environment.

As the global population rises, humans are consuming more and more food. Providing enough food is not as straightforward as growing more corn or more wheat or more rice. The issue is not just quantity but also quality. In developing countries, where populations are growing most rapidly, many people are still malnourished. But average incomes are also slowly on the rise. As people move out of poverty and into the middle class, they demand improved diets. They want to eat fewer simple grains and more meat, which is more expensive than grain. Meat comes from livestock which is raised to be eaten. Cattle, pigs, chickens, and other livestock are often fed grains such as corn to improve the quality of the meat. A given amount of grain, if eaten directly, can feed a lot more people than the same amount of grain fed to animals to produce meat. As meat-eating increases, the amount of grain produced will have to increase as well.

In the United States, corn is a popular food for both humans and animals. Humans eat what is called sweet corn. Animals eat field corn. In 2020, American farmers grew field corn on more than 99 percent of the land planted with corn. Of that field corn, more than a third went to

feed livestock. Nearly a third was either exported or used in a variety of food or industrial products. But the remaining third was consumed neither by humans nor by animals. It was processed into ethanol—a renewable “biofuel” for automobiles that is often mixed with gasoline.

Some people question whether so much of the corn crop should go to producing livestock feed and ethanol rather than food for a hungry world. Others see ethanol as a home-grown fuel that can help wean the United States off imported oil. The ethanol question is just one of many agricultural issues subject to debate in the modern world.

Many people are also concerned about the depletion of groundwater (water under the ground) and surface water. More than three quarters of the fresh water that humans use goes to agricultural production. Yet water is a scarce resource in many places. That can lead to conflict over how to distribute limited supplies of water. Industry, consumers, and others all want their share. Pollution is another worrisome issue. Irrigation water and rain can wash nitrogen-rich fertilizers into waterways, making them unfit for aquatic life. Toxic pesticides sprayed on fields are a major poisoning hazard for farmers and field workers. Pesticides can also pollute drinking water, and some pesticide can remain on fruits and vegetables that humans consume. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides allow farmers to produce more on the same amount of land. An alternative to pesticides is to cultivate more land, but expansion often calls for the cutting and burning of forests. Such deforestation is a global problem. By removing habitat, it reduces the Earth’s biodiversity— its variety of animals and plants. Also, when trees burn, they release carbon dioxide—a greenhouse gas—into the atmosphere. Deforestation thus adds to the potential for climate change.

Climatic factors, especially drought, can lead to desertification, or the spread of a desert environment into neighboring areas. Drought lessens the amount of groundwater available to plants. If a drought lasts long enough, the land may no longer be able to support vegetation. Poor agricultural practices in dry regions can hasten this process. Problematic practices include allowing livestock to overgraze, irrigating in a way that causes soil erosion, and exhausting the soil through overuse.

Degrading natural resources in these ways threatens the future of the global food supply. This potential problem has led to a movement for sustainable agriculture. Sustainability, in general, calls for meeting present needs without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The goal of sustainable agriculture is to establish

farming practices that satisfy humankind's food, feed, and fiber needs while keeping the environment healthy. Sustainable practices would conserve soil fertility, limit erosion, protect water resources, and maintain biodiversity. With such a system in place, agriculture could sustain itself far into the future.

The Globalization of the Sneaker

The first sneakers—footwear with canvas tops and rubber soles—appeared in the mid-1800s. People engaging in leisure activities and athletics wore them instead of bulky leather shoes. By 1917, companies such as Keds and Converse had begun mass-producing sneakers. They also designed sneakers for specific sports, such as tennis and basketball.

Until the late 1960s, sneakers were relatively simple shoes. Some had high tops. Others were cut low. But all had the standard canvas upper and rubber sole. Today they are far from simple. Modern sneakers are designed for a wide variety of purposes. Serious athletes still wear them, of course, but so does just about everyone else. Consumers all over the world buy sneakers for jogging, for rock climbing, for boating, for bicycling, for dancing, for skateboarding—and even for just walking around.

To compete in the global marketplace, multinational makers of athletic shoes have come up with innovative designs for their sneakers. These have resulted in improvements in performance and comfort. Some sneakers now have air pockets, gel pads, or memory foam for cushioning. Others have technologically advanced lacing systems or Velcro fasteners. The visual design of sneakers has also become more elaborate. Some come bearing stripes or stars or tassels or the company's logo. Others come in a mix of wild colors or equipped with flashing lights. The focus on style and color has given sneakers more fashion appeal. To increase that appeal, shoe companies often hire popular athletes and musicians to promote their sneakers to a global audience of consumers. For example, in 1985, U.S. shoe company Nike released the Air Jordan 1 as part of a contract with, at the time, upcoming basketball superstar, Michael Jordan. These shoes quickly became one of the most financially successful sneaker lines ever as the Air Jordan 1 sneakers evolved into a cultural icon. People were enamored with the product as its association with the NBA phenomenon, leading it to become a national and global sensation.

Sneaker companies today also make use of a variety of materials. Some of them are found in only a few places in the world. All of the materials come together at factories, mainly in Asia. Workers in those factories create a shoe with three main parts: the upper, the midsole, and the outer sole.

The upper is the top part of a sneaker. Some uppers are made of natural materials, such as cotton or leather. The cotton comes mainly from farms in the United States, India, Uzbekistan, and Australia. The leather comes from the hides of cattle that are raised in Texas, Argentina, and other livestock centers. Other uppers are made of synthetic, or human-made, materials such as nylon. Nylon fabric is light and dries easily. The midsole is the part of the shoe that cushions the bottom of the wearer's foot. The typical midsole consists of shock-absorbing plastic and foam padding. Factories in South Korea, China, and elsewhere use chemicals derived from petroleum (petrochemicals) to produce the midsoles. The petroleum itself comes from Saudi Arabia, Russia, and other oil-rich countries. The outer sole, or tread, of a sneaker needs to be tough but also flexible enough to put a spring in the wearer's step. Sneakers used to be manufactured with natural rubber soles. The rubber came from the sap of rubber trees grown in such tropical countries as Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. Today most soles are formed from synthetic rubber, which is made mainly from petrochemicals. Taiwan is a major producer of the synthetic rubber used in sneaker production.

Globalization has also changed where sneakers are manufactured. Most sneakers used to be made in the countries in which they were sold. In the 1960s, simple canvas and rubber sneakers were still being produced in the United States, Britain, and Germany. As styles of sneakers multiplied and designs became more complex, so did the cost of labor needed to produce them. Eventually, most makers of athletic shoes decided that it was too expensive to make sneakers in high-wage countries. They moved their production offshore, mainly to Asia. By offshoring, or outsourcing, production to low-wage countries such as South Korea and, later, China, Indonesia, and Vietnam, these companies were able to reduce production costs. This made it possible for them to sell sneakers for lower prices and still make a profit.

In 1990s, a ship carrying sneakers from South Korea to the United States was hit by a fierce storm. Eighty thousand pairs of shoes spilled into the Pacific Ocean. A year later, the shoes were still washing up on American shores. Normally, though, sneakers have a smoother journey from Asia. Companies use several methods of transportation to move their shoes from the factory to the store.

Typically, sneakers are transported by container ship from Asia. This is the least expensive way to move goods over long distances. The trip to the United States takes about two weeks. The sneakers make this journey in freight containers, which are large, weatherproof steel boxes that are easy to stack on the deck of a ship. Huge container ships can accommodate 8,000 of these boxes.

When a ship arrives on the west coast of the United States, the containers are unloaded onto trains or trucks. In some ports, train tracks run right up to the docks to make unloading easier. Train or truck transport across the United States can take a week or longer. Most of the sneakers end up in Memphis, Tennessee, which is a major distribution center, where rail lines and highways meet. The sneakers are stored in warehouses in Memphis and then delivered by truck to retail stores around the country. A truck leaving Memphis in the morning can reach approximately 75 percent of the nation’s population by the following day. Sneakers are distributed to approximately 18,000 stores throughout the United States. By the time a pair of sneakers makes the trek from an Asian factory to an American consumer’s feet, it may have traveled more than 7,000 miles.

Rights, Religion, and Identity

How have views about human rights, religion, and identity changed in the modern world?

Vocabulary

Glossary Vocabulary Cards

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

intergovernmental organization

Introduction

President Gerald Ford signs the Helsinki Accords alongside 34 other world leaders.

On August 1, 1975, leaders from the United States, Canada, the Soviet Union, and most European countries signed the Helsinki Accords. The accords were a non-binding agreement designed to reduce Cold War tensions between the Eastern Bloc and the Western countries. The 35 signatory countries agreed to respect human rights and to cooperate in economic, technological, social, cultural, and humanitarian fields.

The accords were drafted over two years, and the process inspired U.S.

leaders to emphasize human rights in their interactions with the Soviets. Some leaders, such as President Jimmy Carter, named political prisoners to help secure their release. President Ronald Reagan used the issue of human rights to attack the legitimacy of the Soviet Union, and even met with Soviet dissidents. In a speech to dissidents in Moscow, Reagan confirmed U.S. support for human rights: “whatever the future may bring, the commitment of the United States will nevertheless remain unshakable on human rights.”

Despite the increased attention, communist governments punished those who tried to shine a light on human rights abuses. For example, in the Soviet Union, Andrei Sakharov, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning activist, was exiled in 1980 for criticizing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He was sent to a closed city—a city for which authorization is needed to visit— in order to silence him. Efforts to silence critics at home failed, however. The work of civil resistance campaigns and opposition groups helped bring down Eastern Europe’s communist regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ultimately ending the Cold War.

In this lesson, you will examine the post-war emphasis on human rights and how this affected international relations and government policy. You will also consider why efforts to establish modern, secular societies had varying outcomes in different parts of the world. Finally, you will explore why and how religion continues to affect identity and attitudes toward societal change.

1. The Campaign for Human Rights

During the Enlightenment, philosophers such as John Locke supported the concept of natural rights—inalienable rights that all people enjoy, particularly the right to life and liberty. In the late 18th century, these rights were enshrined in the U.S. Bill of Rights and France’s Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. However, they were not incorporated into international law until 1948, when the UN adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Limitations of the United Nations In the wake of World War II, there was increased concerned about the protection of human rights. When the UN Charter was created, the writers incorporated the Four Freedoms outlined by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom

from fear.

The UDHR was dedicated to affirming basic human rights. Here, Eleanor Roosevelt holds a copy of the UDHR, which she helped the UN create.

To oversee this mission, the UN Commission on Human Rights, led by former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, created the UDHR. The UDHR consists of 30 articles that affirm basic civil and political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Civil and political rights include the rights to life, liberty, and equality before the law, as well as to the freedoms of religion, expression, and assembly. Economic, social, and cultural rights include the right to work, the right to form unions, the right to education, and the right to food, housing, and health care. As its Preamble states, the UDHR established “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.”

However, the UDHR is not legally binding and does not have a mechanism for enforcement. Moreover, it has been the subject of disagreements since its inception. Debates over a variety of issues, including the meaning of “human rights,” occurred during the writing process and have continued since its adoption.

In particular, Cold War ideological differences affected how countries implemented the UDHR. Western countries highlighted their protection of civil and political rights, whereas communist countries viewed economic, social, and cultural rights as their strength. In this way, the two sets of rights came to be seen as independent of one another. However, many of the rights are deeply intertwined. For example, the

right to education is dependent upon the right “to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas.”

The end of the Cold War did not end issues relating to the divisibility and application of the UDHR, however. State sovereignty has continued to limit the UDHR. Although many non-Western delegates were instrumental in its writing, some countries still claim that the UDHR institutes Western values over their own.

Here, the UN Security council is discussing the humanitarian crisis of children in armed conflicts. However, the Security Council often does not have the ability to enforce the decisions it makes.

Additionally, the limits on the UDHR are similar to those generally faced by the UN. The sheer size and complexity of issues that the UN works to address, such as poverty, environmental destruction, and human rights, make them difficult to resolve. Countries are also reluctant to cede any of their sovereignty to the UN. Most resolutions approved by the **General Assembly** or **Security Council** lack enforcement. In general, only decisions related to collective security are legally binding on all members. Moreover, the UN’s lack of a standing army means it must rely on member states to carry out peacekeeping missions. For Security Council decisions, the council itself is a hurdle. Its five

permanent members have the power to veto any action by the council. As these nations often have different foreign policy agendas, it is sometimes difficult for the UN to react effectively to problems.

Human Rights and Intergovernmental Organizations

Organizations such as the UN, as well as the WTO, World Bank, and European Union, are examples of **intergovernmental organizations** (IGOs). Such groups work to help members achieve common objectives and settle disputes related to a variety of issues. IGOs may address, alone or in combination, economic concerns, trade, political issues and governance, and security.

Some IGOs have a narrow focus, whereas others focus on a range of related issues. For example, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a UN agency that works to protect trademarked, patented, and copyrighted material. In contrast, the NATO military alliance has more complex aims. NATO was established as a security organization and a system of collective defense, but its mission has expanded in recent decades. It now supports humanitarian missions and improving democratic institutions.

IGOs have also been created specifically to address and protect human rights. Many of these human rights IGOs work as a part of large regional organizations. They are part of systems with bodies that hear complaints, interpret and apply regional agreements, and monitor and promote human rights. Under these systems, only member states can be held accountable for human rights violations. Regional systems exist in Europe, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

In the Americas, human rights issues are monitored by the Inter-American Human Rights System. This organization has two main bodies: the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, founded in 1959, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, founded in 1979. These IGOs monitor, promote, and protect human rights in the 35 member states of the Organization of American States. These bodies are responsible for overseeing compliance with 1969 American Convention on Human Rights and its subsequent protocols.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees is an IGO dedicated to the protection of refugees and helping them resettle in another country. Here, the UNHCR is holding a ceremony for Afghan refugees on World Refugee Day.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the commission documented and processed petitions from abuse victims and their families. It also raised awareness about widespread human rights abuses in Nicaragua and Argentina. In doing so, it helped facilitate the transition to democracy in many Latin American nations. Today, it works to draw attention to emerging human rights issues and seeks precautionary measures to request that governments take protective action to prevent human rights violations.

Additionally, the commission and the court continue to strengthen the case system and have decided on precedent-setting cases, expanding the scope of the Inter-American Human Rights System. The case system has helped bring justice for victims, with some receiving compensation from their government. In other cases, governments have changed domestic laws to comply with commission and court decisions. For example, a 1994 commission decision ruled against criminal contempt and libel laws, prompting nearly a dozen countries to change laws related to freedom of expression. However, countries' full compliance with decisions remains a challenge. Moreover, the

increasing number of cases coming before these bodies demands greater human and financial resources, which must be contributed by member states.

Despite the Inter-American Human Rights System's accomplishments, not all members of the Organization of American States have ratified the American Convention on Human Rights and its subsequent protocols. The United States, Canada, and several English-speaking Caribbean countries have not ratified this convention. This represents a downside to IGO membership. IGO members are expected to abide by decisions, even if they conflict with a nation's foreign policy, national interests, or domestic law. Going along with the majority may mean surrendering a bit of national sovereignty or the power to act independently.

Human Rights and Nongovernmental Organizations Since the middle of the 20th century, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have formed in increasing numbers. NGOs specifically dedicated to monitoring, promoting, and protecting human rights have been established too.

Two of the most prominent human rights NGOs that formed in the middle of the 20th century are Freedom House and Amnesty International. In 1941, a group of bipartisan Americans—including Eleanor Roosevelt—founded Freedom House in response to Nazism. It aimed to spread democracy to fight totalitarian ideologies and expand freedom. After World War II, it turned its attention from Nazism to communism, and sought to improve human rights and civil liberties in the United States.

In contrast, Amnesty International was established in 1961 to publicize violations of the UDHR and fight for the release of political prisoners. Its founder, Peter Benenson, recognized that many people, like himself, were angered by stories of human rights abuses that they read in the newspaper. They wanted to effect change but lacked the means to do so. By becoming a member of Amnesty International, individuals could join together to engage in common action.

Both Freedom House and Amnesty International continue to work to protect human rights. However, as human rights became a more significant focus in the 1970s, their missions expanded. Freedom House began to focus on Marxist regimes and military dictatorships in the developing world. It established advocacy programs and began to provide assistance in crisis areas, as well as conducted research and surveys on political and civil rights. Freedom House was also involved in

the defense of Andrei Sakharov and other Soviet dissidents. Amnesty International increasingly worked to address the right to a fair trial and to combat detention without trial and torture. In 1972, it began a campaign against torture, working with the UN and other IGOs to apply and create relevant human rights agreements. Amnesty International won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 for this campaign. Subsequently, in 1984, the UN drafted the Convention against Torture.

CARE is one of the many NGOs providing relief to people living in poverty-stricken countries. At times, CARE works with other organizations to address global issues. Here, CARE workers distribute food provided by the World Food Programme to the people of Burundi.

While existing NGOs broadened the scope of their work in the 1970s, new organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders and Helsinki Watch, were established. Doctors Without Borders formed in 1971 in the wake of the Nigerian Civil War and famine in Biafra. The founders aimed to deliver emergency medical aid quickly and effectively to people in need, especially those affected by conflict, epidemics, and disasters. It also works to raise awareness about conditions it encounters, such as extreme need and suffering or violence. The nature of Doctors Without Borders' work has not changed greatly, but it has expanded, providing aid in more than 70 countries.

Similar to other NGOs, Helsinki Watch was founded in response to world events, specifically the Helsinki Accords, in 1978. Helsinki Watch supported citizen groups in Eastern Europe to monitor government

compliance with the accords. However, the organization's mission changed over time. Groups were established to investigate and expose war crimes and to examine the role of foreign governments, particularly the U.S. government, in supporting abusive regimes. Changing its name to Human Rights Watch, the NGO continues to focus on human rights abuses in conflict zones. Now, it also works on issues such as human trafficking, domestic violence, and the rights of women, children, migrants, and the LGBTQ community.

Freedom House, Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, and Human Rights Watch are just four examples of human rights NGOs. Today, hundreds of human rights NGOs exist on national, regional, and international levels. Additionally, some NGOs work to educate others about human rights by creating educational materials and programs. For example, Human Rights Education Associates works with governments and organizations to implement educational programs, whereas Human Rights Educator USA advocates for human rights education in schools and provides resources for educators. Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Cross promotes the teaching of international humanitarian law at colleges and universities.

Human Rights and Government Policy Since the signing of the UDHR and other conventions and treaties in the decades that followed, human rights have been a foreign policy consideration for many nations. In particular, Western countries have portrayed human rights as an important foreign policy objective. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, U.S. presidents repeatedly expressed concerns about political dissidents in Eastern Europe. However, support for human rights does not always align with the aims of foreign policy.

Doctor’s Without Borders in an international NGO that sends doctors to conflict zones and countries affected by diseases. These doctors are providing aid to Serbian families fleeing Croatia.

During the Cold War, stopping the spread of communism often trumped protecting human rights. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the U.S. government supported right-wing dictatorships in South America that worked to eliminate communist influence. With U.S. military aid and training, these governments sought to silence suspected opponents by killing tens of thousands and imprisoning hundreds of thousands. Evidence indicates that France also supported some of these regimes. In Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom supported abusive regimes, such as apartheid-era South Africa, to limit communist influence. Likewise, France fostered relations with its former African colonies and often helped install dictators in order to maintain economic advantages and political influence while deterring communist expansion.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is located in The Hague, Netherlands. It is responsible for hearing cases related to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

With the end of the Cold War and the communist threat, human rights once again became a larger focus of the international system. The first international tribunals following World War II were held to address war crimes and genocide in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia. In 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established to hear cases related to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. More than 120 countries have ratified the ICC agreement, and the court has indicted people, issued arrest warrants, and jailed convicted offenders.

A shift in the global political order in the past decade, however, has undermined these developments. China and Russia have increasingly exerted their power on the world stage while greatly restricting dissent at home. Both have also fostered relationships with countries that have similar attitudes toward human rights. As part of this, China has increased its financial support for many developing countries, including some with authoritarian leaders. This has meant that leaders are no longer dependent on Western governments critical of human rights violations. They can receive support with no strings attached.

At the same time, Western governments have been accused of neglecting human rights, particularly with regard to migrants. For instance, many European governments have been criticized for their handling of the arrival of large groups of migrants in 2015. Some countries refused to accept asylum seekers or limited asylum applications, leaving thousands of people with nowhere to go. Other migrants have remained in overcrowded refugee camps.

Both the United States and Australia have faced similar criticisms. Since 2017, the United States has reduced the number of refugees it accepts. It has also detained asylum seekers while denying them access to legal counsel, or refused asylum seekers entry along the border with Mexico. Australia has confined asylum seekers who tried to reach the country by boat to offshore processing centers. Some who made it to Australia have been returned to their home countries, and others have been placed in indefinite detention.

In the United States, migrants may be sent to an Immigration Detention Center, like this former prison in Eloy, Arizona. Many advocate that this type of detention center is inhumane.

NGOs, such as Amnesty International, have also criticized Western governments for policies that fail to protect or restrict citizens' rights.

In Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, minorities—both adults and youths—are often imprisoned at disproportionately high rates. Indigenous children in Australia face relatively high rates of abuse in custody, and U.S. police violence has disproportionately affected African Americans and people with mental illnesses. In Belgium and Italy, prisoners are overcrowded and lack basic services. Multiple countries in Europe, including France, Spain, and Germany, have also been accused of enacting laws to restrict freedom of assembly in order to prevent anti-government demonstrations. Some have engaged in mass surveillance and data collection, raising concerns about privacy rights.

Despite these issues, some institutions have been making strides toward expanding human rights. At the UN, the Human Rights Council has increased pressure on regimes that abuse human rights—often over the objections of powerful members such as China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. In cases where the Security Council has failed to act, the Human Rights Council has taken steps to build cases for future prosecution. Similarly, ICC members have pressured the court to open investigations into crimes in other member states.

In the EU, individual governments are taking stands against abusive regimes. For example, in 2018, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany ceased weapon sales to Saudi Arabia over its ongoing military intervention in Yemen, where war has led to a massive humanitarian crisis. Despite the shifting global political order, IGOs, NGOs, and individual nations—even those that have faced their own allegations of human rights abuses—are still finding ways to address human rights.

2. Religious Identity in a Global Community

The campaign for human rights has aimed to protect the rights of individuals, but those protections are not based solely on citizenship or nationality. In fact, how people identify themselves may go beyond national borders. Individuals often belong to transnational identity communities based on commonalities, such as ethnicity, race, and religion. In the 1960s and 1970s, identity in terms of religion began to emerge as an influential factor in politics, government, and international relations in several parts of the world.

Many courthouses around the United States have statues or plaques dedicated to the Ten Commandments. Because the Ten Commandments are tied to religion, many secularists have fought to have them removed. This has ignited protests on both sides.

Rationalization and Secularization From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, many viewed religion as being in decline, a change known as **secularization**. **Modernization**—the process of society becoming urban and industrial—was viewed as one of the driving forces behind secularization. Some believed that modernization broke the social bonds, such as religion, that held traditional communities together. Others argued that the spread of science, education, and technology challenged religious institutions, beliefs, and practices. Rather than phenomena being attributed to gods and spirits, the scientific method and rational standards now provided evidence-based explanations.

These societal changes did not occur rapidly. In some ways, secularization has its roots in the emergence of nation-states in Europe in the 1400s and 1500s. Monarchs sought greater control over their territory and worked to weaken religious interference in their governance. From the 1500s to the 1700s, governments gradually granted equal status to people regardless of religion. This equal treatment of religions was a key step in the development of secular states.

The rise of nationalism continued the process of secularization. First in France and then in other parts of Europe, nationalism created a form of secular loyalty. It placed the nation above religion, further eroding the power of religious institutions. It also offered a common identity for all citizens, which made it easier to grant equal rights irrespective of religion.

The Resurgence of Religion Outside of Western Europe and the United States, secularization was a different type of process. While secularization in the West has occurred over centuries and has generally had societal support, in other parts of the world, secularization has often been enforced by leaders, implemented over a short period, or both. Some argue that the resurgence of religion in recent decades has been a reaction to these societal controls.

In Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia, secularization was a top-down process that occurred over centuries. Beginning with Peter the Great, Russian czars tried to erode the power of the Orthodox Church and gain control over it. Although these measures were supported by some in urban areas, the rural majority of Russians remained religious.

The fall of communism brought an end to official persecution of the Catholic Church and its members in Poland. Here, people march down the street in celebration of Corpus Christi.

When communists came to power in Russia in 1917, leaders encouraged atheism and worked to eliminate religious beliefs. The state took the Orthodox Church's assets and led violent campaigns against the Church and its clergy. Leaders of other religions were also persecuted. Later, Soviet authorities allowed the Church and other religions to operate with restrictions, but clergy members and religious adherents still faced persecution. After World War II, Soviet authorities treated religion and religious institutions in the Eastern Bloc in a similar manner.

Since the end of communism in Europe, religion has experienced a resurgence in some countries. For instance, in Poland, one of the leading political parties, Law and Justice, has worked to legislate according to conservative Catholic values. In Russia, President Vladimir Putin has worked with the Orthodox Church, which has become one of the country's most respected institutions, to help promote Putin's political agenda at home and abroad. Additionally, surveys indicate that the majority in more than ten former communist states view Christianity as a key component of national identity.

In the Middle East and South Asia, secularization was implemented from the top-down in a short period, and many people viewed it as a Western movement. After the founding of modern Turkey, the first president, Atatürk, launched a series of reforms to force Turkey to secularize and westernize. The reforms were accepted by educated urban elites, but not by the majority. Some historians have argued that Atatürk and other leaders misjudged the deep-seated nature of Islam and that secularization was only superficial.

In recent decades, Islamist parties have emerged and gained power in Turkey, with party leaders serving as president and prime minister. These parties have found success by appealing to the population’s underlying conservativeness and by promoting the relationship between religion and cultural identity. However, critics contend that these leaders have become authoritarian. As a result of these changes, Turkey’s relationship with the West has declined, while its relations with Middle Eastern nations have improved.

People gather to pray in front the the Imam’s Mosque in Iran every Friday. Because Iran is a theocracy, much of everyday life is dictated by religion.

Similar patterns were followed in other countries, such as Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Iran, with leaders forcing secularization on a resistant public. In Iran, the Pahlavi dynasty worked to modernize the country starting in the 1920s. Like Atatürk, the Pahlavis promoted a secular nationalist rule that was supported primarily by elites. However, the Pahlavi shahs were autocratic rulers who cracked down on dissent. Moreover, many viewed Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the final shah, as being subservient to the United States and its interests.

In the 1970s, as the economy declined and sociopolitical repression increased, Iranians sought outlets to oppose the regime. With opposition parties banned, many began to look to the exiled populist religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini. This included secularists, who viewed the removal of of the shah as more important than limiting the power of the Shi’a religious authorities. Opposition groups joined with Khomeini and his followers to oppose and ultimately overthrow the

Pahlavi regime.

With the Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic republic, conservative social values were enforced and Western cultural influences suppressed. These changes also affected Iran's relations with both the West and other Muslim nations. Although Iran had long been Shi'a, the new leadership's militancy threatened other countries in the Muslim world. For example, Iraq invaded Iran in 1980 in part to prevent it from inciting a Shi'a rebellion in Sunni-led Iraq. It has also supported Lebanon's Hezbollah guerillas, a Shi'a group that regularly attacked Israel, and the Palestinian struggle against Israel.

In the face of Khomeini's accusations of corrupt and un-Islamic rule, Sunni Saudi Arabia sought to improve its religious credibility to compete with Iran's revolutionary ideology. It became stricter with regard to religion and enacted anti-Shi'a policies. These developments were reflected in the education received by students at Saudi-funded schools around the world, and in the training received by soldiers who went to fight the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The Shi'a-Sunni conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia remains a significant issue in the Muslim world, with each nation supporting opposing sides in wars in Syria and Yemen, as well as disputes in Nigeria and Pakistan.

In South Asia, particularly in Sri Lanka and India, similar conflicts have emerged between secularists and religious nationalists. Under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi, the Congress Party was instrumental in India obtaining its independence from the British. The party's Jawaharlal Nehru served as the country's first prime minister, and subsequent leaders during much of the first 50 years after independence were also from the Congress Party. However, critics contend that Nehru and others implemented secularism using a top-down approach and did little to address the concerns of religious people. Since the 1990s, the Congress Party's dominance has been challenged by Hindu nationalist parties, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

These Spanish people gathered in in Trafalgar Square to remember a Spanish citizen who was killed in a London terrorist attack. While terrorist attacks by different groups have increased, many people hope to spread a message of hope and unification instead.

Religious Extremism The resurgence of religion has created divisions both within and between countries in recent decades. These divisions are particularly prominent between the Muslim world and the secular West. In the face of perceived injustice, imbalanced power, and increased globalization, those in the Muslim world have often rejected Western societal and governmental influences.

Although the emergence of Muslim extremism is associated with postcolonial developments, it has its roots in older movements, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood advocated using the Qu'ran as a guideline for modern Islamic societies. Within two decades of its founding, it had around 500,000 members in Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and North Africa. However, secular authoritarian governments in the Middle East banned the organization and forced it underground. It began to re-emerge in the 1980s as religious activity grew in the

Muslim world.

Today, the Muslim Brotherhood's primary aims are the introduction of shari'ah as the main form of law, the unification of Arab states, and liberation from foreign imperialism. Its main state backers are Turkey and Qatar. It also has branches or affiliates, including Hamas, in countries throughout the Muslim world, as well as in Europe and the United States. However, the Muslim Brotherhood is currently banned in Egypt, Russia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia.

The growth of fundamentalist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s and 1980s stems from the politics of the Cold War. Fearing that secular progressives and moderates would align with the Soviet Union, the United States empowered religious conservatives to undermine communist influence. For example, it supported the jihadists fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, as well as Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's efforts to crush secular opponents.

Without secular or moderate movements, many people turned to movements based on religious identity. And despite U.S. support for religious groups, their leaders were hostile to the United States. Both U.S. and Soviet ideologies clashed with postcolonial aims of economic prosperity and independence.

Since the events of 9/11, anti-Western violence committed by fundamentalist Muslims has further contributed to the idea that there is a deep conflict between the Islamic and Western worlds. Followers of groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS have led violent attacks in the United States, France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom, as well as in the Philippines, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

Both ISIS and al Qaeda have worked to establish a caliphate ruled by shari'ah law, and ISIS succeeded in doing so in 2014 in Iraq and Syria. Although ISIS has since lost all of its territory amid declining support in the Muslim world, it continues to inspire followers around the globe.

Summary

In this lesson, you learned about how modern nations have shifted their focus toward the spread of universal human rights. In addition to individual nations, international and non-governmental organizations have also arisen to fight for different human rights causes. Modern nations also have become more secular, but this push toward secularization has led to a resurgence of religion in several places.

Cultural Interaction Since the Renaissance, many believed religion would slowly be replaced by the ideas of rationalism. While many places have become more secular over time, areas that have been rushed toward secularization have often become more religious as a result.

Political Structures Countries around the world have joined together to establish human rights instruments. These governments work alone or together to address humans rights issues affecting the global community.

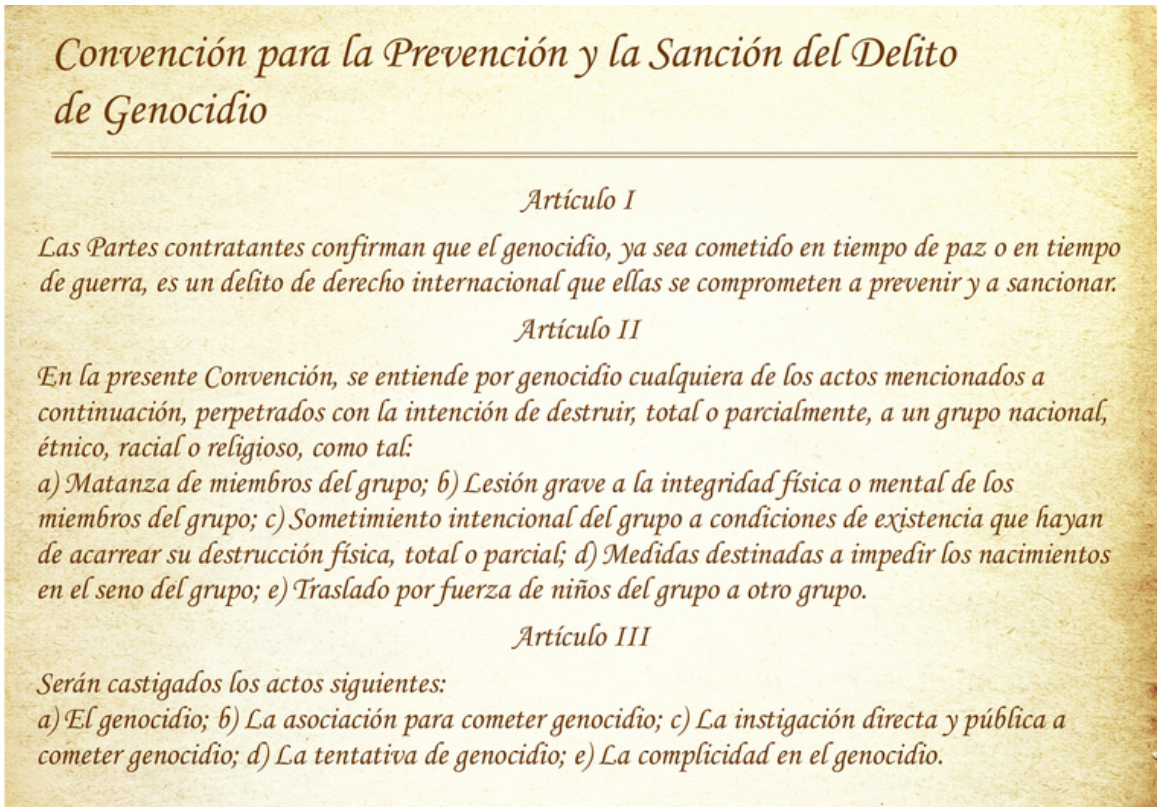
Social Structures The way in which secularization was implemented has determined how individual societies have accepted it in the long term. As a result, some nations have embraced secular ideas while others have ultimately rejected them.

How Has the International Community Responded to Genocides?

The international community has discussed many ways to prevent and end genocides. However, different genocides have been met with varying levels of active response from the rest of the world. You will examine primary sources to determine how the international community has responded to genocides.

On December 9, 1948, the United Nations held the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. At this meeting, the United Nations drafted an official definition for genocide and established punishments for countries found guilty of genocide. The United Nations vowed to hold nations accountable for their actions and to protect the rights of people all over the world.

According to the following excerpt from the convention, what is the definition of genocide? Would you change or add anything to this definition?



Convención para la Prevención y la Sanción del Delito de Genocidio

Artículo I

Las Partes contratantes confirman que el genocidio, ya sea cometido en tiempo de paz o en tiempo de guerra, es un delito de derecho internacional que ellas se comprometen a prevenir y a sancionar.

Artículo II

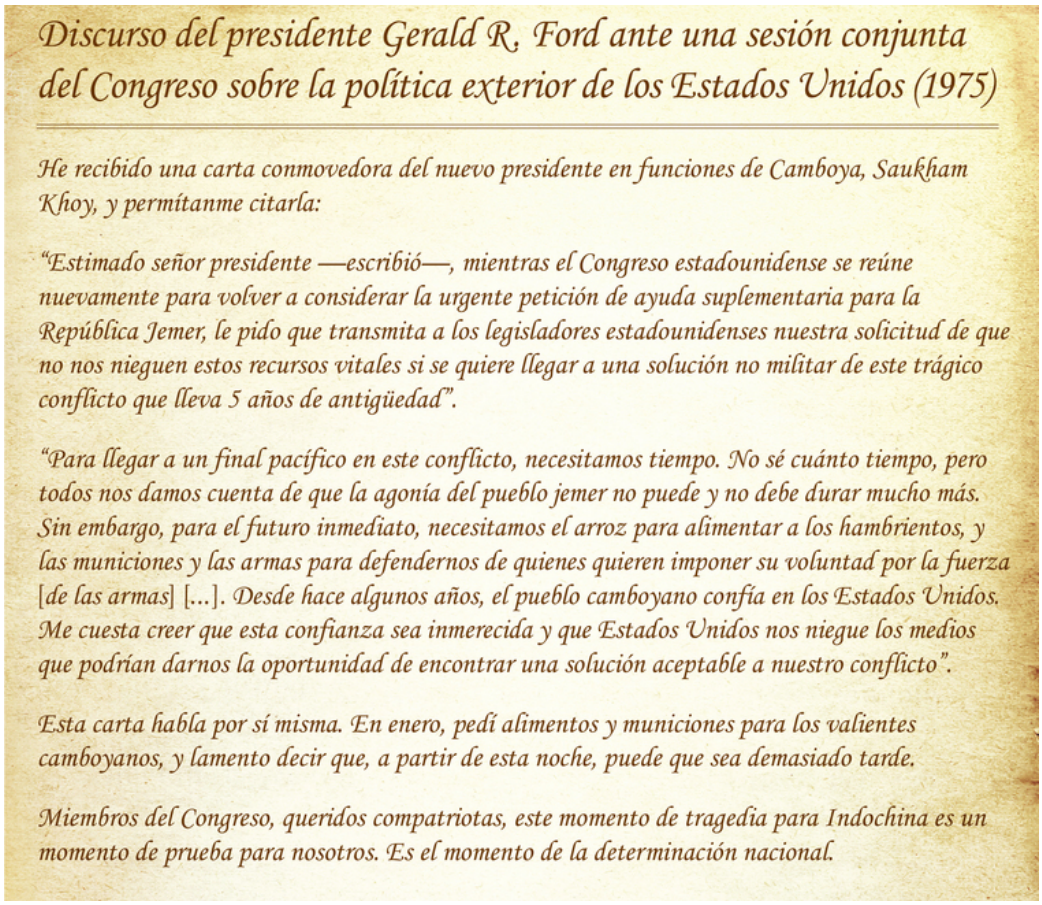
En la presente Convención, se entiende por genocidio cualquiera de los actos mencionados a continuación, perpetrados con la intención de destruir, total o parcialmente, a un grupo nacional, étnico, racial o religioso, como tal:
a) Matanza de miembros del grupo; b) Lesión grave a la integridad física o mental de los miembros del grupo; c) Sometimiento intencional del grupo a condiciones de existencia que hayan de acarrear su destrucción física, total o parcial; d) Medidas destinadas a impedir los nacimientos en el seno del grupo; e) Traslado por fuerza de niños del grupo a otro grupo.

Artículo III

Serán castigados los actos siguientes:
a) El genocidio; b) La asociación para cometer genocidio; c) La instigación directa y pública a cometer genocidio; d) La tentativa de genocidio; e) La complicidad en el genocidio.

The Khmer Rouge was a brutal communist regime that controlled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. Led by Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge killed over 2 million people through overwork, torture, starvation, and execution. Today, this is known as the Cambodian Genocide. At the time, however, the international community grappled with how to respond. This proved an early test of the UN definition of genocide and how countries would react to such atrocities.

In the following primary source, President Gerald R. Ford speaks in front of Congress, urging them to give aid to Cambodia during the Cambodian Genocide. What arguments does President Ford make in his plea to Congress? Why might Congress support or reject Ford’s request? What justifications could support either decision?



Discurso del presidente Gerald R. Ford ante una sesión conjunta del Congreso sobre la política exterior de los Estados Unidos (1975)

He recibido una carta conmovedora del nuevo presidente en funciones de Camboya, Saukham Khoy, y permítanme citarla:

"Estimado señor presidente —escribió—, mientras el Congreso estadounidense se reúne nuevamente para volver a considerar la urgente petición de ayuda suplementaria para la República Jemer, le pido que transmita a los legisladores estadounidenses nuestra solicitud de que no nos nieguen estos recursos vitales si se quiere llegar a una solución no militar de este trágico conflicto que lleva 5 años de antigüedad".

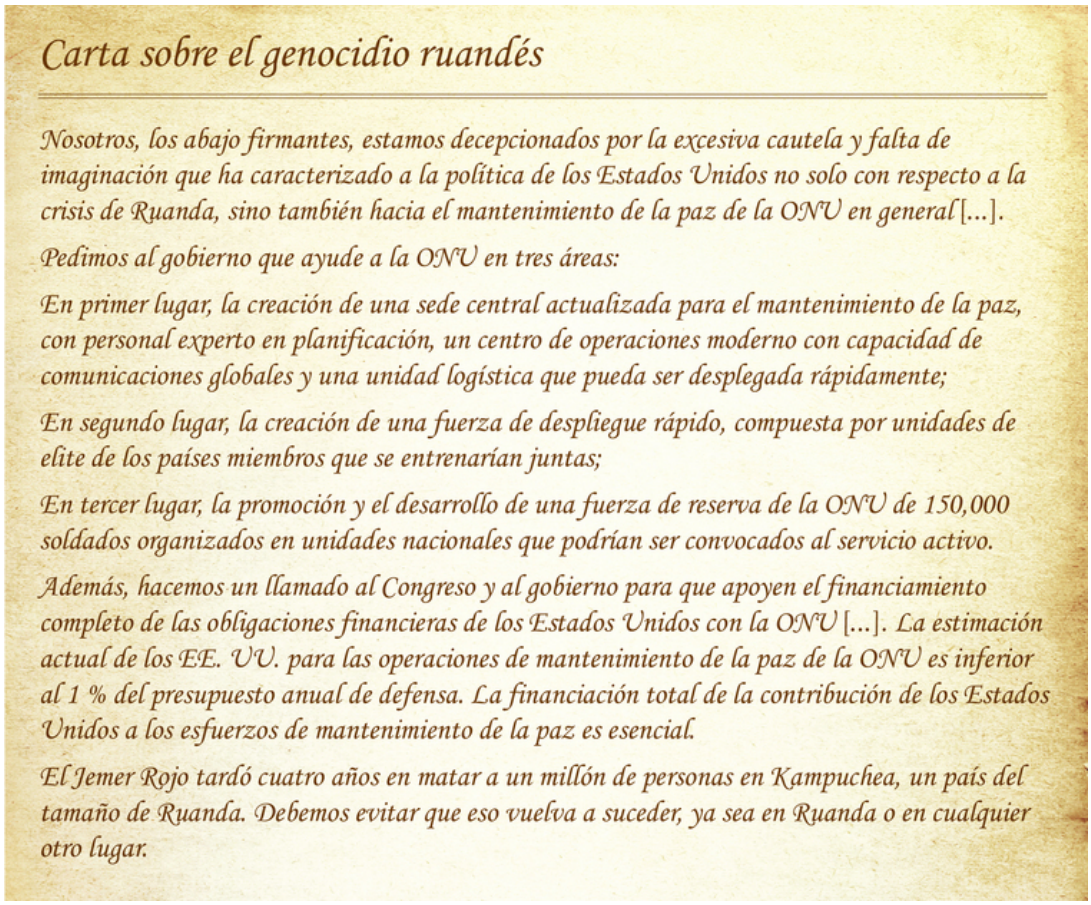
"Para llegar a un final pacífico en este conflicto, necesitamos tiempo. No sé cuánto tiempo, pero todos nos damos cuenta de que la agonía del pueblo jemer no puede y no debe durar mucho más. Sin embargo, para el futuro inmediato, necesitamos el arroz para alimentar a los hambrientos, y las municiones y las armas para defendernos de quienes quieren imponer su voluntad por la fuerza [de las armas] [...]. Desde hace algunos años, el pueblo camboyano confía en los Estados Unidos. Me cuesta creer que esta confianza sea inmerecida y que Estados Unidos nos niegue los medios que podrían darnos la oportunidad de encontrar una solución aceptable a nuestro conflicto".

Esta carta habla por sí misma. En enero, pedí alimentos y municiones para los valientes camboyanos, y lamento decir que, a partir de esta noche, puede que sea demasiado tarde.

Miembros del Congreso, queridos compatriotas, este momento de tragedia para Indochina es un momento de prueba para nosotros. Es el momento de la determinación nacional.

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 spurred from a long history of ethnic tensions between the majority *Hutu* and the minority Tutsi groups. After a plane was shot down over the capital city of Kigali, killing everyone aboard, the Hutu majority reacted swiftly and brutally. The culprit of the plane attack was unknown, yet the Hutus used this attack to take revenge on Tutsis. This genocide quickly spread throughout all of Rwanda. The Hutu majority slaughtered as many as 800,000 people, mostly of the Tutsi minority, in only three months.

The following primary source is from a group of citizens sharing their disappointment in the United States' lack of response to the Rwandan Genocide. Forwarded by a member of Congress, the letter was then sent to President Bill Clinton. What arguments does this letter make? Suppose you were a member of Congress at this time. What would you have done in response to this letter?



Carta sobre el genocidio ruandés

Nosotros, los abajo firmantes, estamos decepcionados por la excesiva cautela y falta de imaginación que ha caracterizado a la política de los Estados Unidos no solo con respecto a la crisis de Ruanda, sino también hacia el mantenimiento de la paz de la ONU en general [...].

Pedimos al gobierno que ayude a la ONU en tres áreas:

En primer lugar, la creación de una sede central actualizada para el mantenimiento de la paz, con personal experto en planificación, un centro de operaciones moderno con capacidad de comunicaciones globales y una unidad logística que pueda ser desplegada rápidamente;

En segundo lugar, la creación de una fuerza de despliegue rápido, compuesta por unidades de elite de los países miembros que se entrenarían juntas;

En tercer lugar, la promoción y el desarrollo de una fuerza de reserva de la ONU de 150,000 soldados organizados en unidades nacionales que podrían ser convocados al servicio activo.

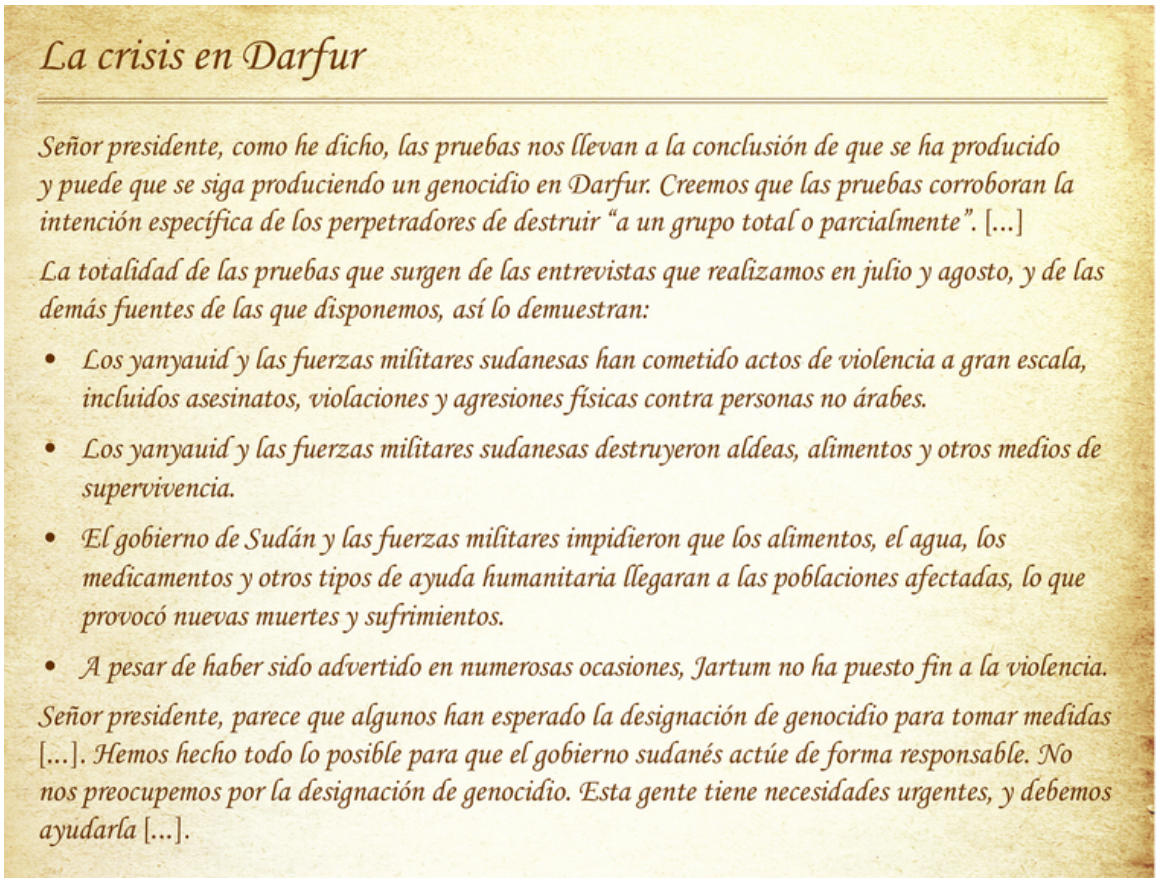
Además, hacemos un llamado al Congreso y al gobierno para que apoyen el financiamiento completo de las obligaciones financieras de los Estados Unidos con la ONU [...]. La estimación actual de los EE. UU. para las operaciones de mantenimiento de la paz de la ONU es inferior al 1 % del presupuesto anual de defensa. La financiación total de la contribución de los Estados Unidos a los esfuerzos de mantenimiento de la paz es esencial.

El Jemer Rojo tardó cuatro años en matar a un millón de personas en Kampuchea, un país del tamaño de Ruanda. Debemos evitar que eso vuelva a suceder, ya sea en Ruanda o en cualquier otro lugar.

The Darfur Genocide is an ongoing tragedy consisting of the mass murder and rape of Darfuris in western Sudan by the *Jinjaweid forces*.

The *Jinjaweid* have brutally attacked, murdered, and displaced Darfuris in what is now known as the first genocide of the 21st century. The following excerpt is from Secretary Colin Powell's remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, addressing concerns about the Darfur Genocide. What arguments does Secretary Powell make? What evidence does he use? Why is it important to the Committee that the conflict in Darfur be called a genocide?

Consider the primary sources you have just examined and what you have learned about global genocides. Then, select one of the genocides in this section and write two to three paragraphs to answer the question: If you had the ability to influence the international response to this particular genocide, what would you have done, and why? Explain how the primary sources informed your decision.



La crisis en Darfur

Señor presidente, como he dicho, las pruebas nos llevan a la conclusión de que se ha producido y puede que se siga produciendo un genocidio en Darfur. Creemos que las pruebas corroboran la intención específica de los perpetradores de destruir "a un grupo total o parcialmente". [...]

La totalidad de las pruebas que surgen de las entrevistas que realizamos en julio y agosto, y de las demás fuentes de las que disponemos, así lo demuestran:

- *Los yanyauid y las fuerzas militares sudanesas han cometido actos de violencia a gran escala, incluidos asesinatos, violaciones y agresiones físicas contra personas no árabes.*
- *Los yanyauid y las fuerzas militares sudanesas destruyeron aldeas, alimentos y otros medios de supervivencia.*
- *El gobierno de Sudán y las fuerzas militares impidieron que los alimentos, el agua, los medicamentos y otros tipos de ayuda humanitaria llegaran a las poblaciones afectadas, lo que provocó nuevas muertes y sufrimientos.*
- *A pesar de haber sido advertido en numerosas ocasiones, Jartum no ha puesto fin a la violencia.*

Señor presidente, parece que algunos han esperado la designación de genocidio para tomar medidas [...]. Hemos hecho todo lo posible para que el gobierno sudanés actúe de forma responsable. No nos preocupemos por la designación de genocidio. Esta gente tiene necesidades urgentes, y debemos ayudarla [...].

Conflict in Northern Ireland

Policies that England put in place in the seventeenth century set the stage for Northern Ireland's violent clash of cultures three centuries later. In the early 1600s, England's King James I decided to colonize the province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland. His goal was to establish stronger control of Ireland, an English possession with a long history of rebelliousness. As a result of this project, known as the Ulster Plantation, around 120,000 Scottish and English settlers migrated to Ulster by the mid-1600s. Mainly Protestants, they took over land formerly held by Irish Catholics. In a Catholic Ireland that despised its English overlords, these settlers retained their Protestant religion and their loyalty to England. Conflict was inevitable. The first major clash came in 1641, when Catholics rose up against the Ulster Plantation. This bloody rebellion took 12 years to quell. Then, in 1688, England's Glorious Revolution toppled its Catholic king, James II, and sent him into exile in Ireland. There, with the support of a French army, he marched against the Protestants in the north. England's new king, William of Orange, came to the rescue. In 1690, he defeated James and cleared most of the remaining Catholics out of the northern province.

Ulster remained fairly peaceful for the next century, although Catholic Ireland and Great Britain continued to battle. A brief Irish rebellion in 1798 led to the Act of Union, which, in 1801, officially joined Ireland to the United Kingdom of Great Britain. Sporadic uprisings against British rule continued.

After World War I, Britain gave limited independence, or “Home Rule,” to Ireland. Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists in Ulster opposed Home Rule. Unionists, who backed political union with Britain, feared being absorbed into Catholic Ireland. Nationalists wanted Ulster to be part of a united and independent Irish republic. In 1921, the British government decided to partition Ireland. The six largely Protestant counties of Ulster would remain part of the United Kingdom and become known as Northern Ireland. The remaining counties would become the “Irish Free State.” That state gained full independence in 1949. The partition of Ireland did not resolve the hostility between the Protestant Unionist majority and Catholic Nationalist minority in Northern Ireland. In fact, it became the focus of the violence and political unrest that beset the region from 1968 to 1998. The Irish refer to this 30-year period as “the Troubles.”

By 1968, the religious split in Northern Ireland had intensified. Catholics and Protestants generally lived, worked, worshiped, and socialized separately. Protestants ran the state. They discriminated against Catholics in housing and jobs, and they severely restricted their political power, both locally and in Northern Ireland’s parliament. To protest, Catholics marched for civil rights, imitating similar campaigns by African Americans across the Atlantic. Starting in 1968, however, authorities cracked down harshly on civil rights rallies, and Protestant troublemakers launched assaults on Catholic demonstrators. Catholics fought back. The two sides thus unleashed an era of hostile street confrontations and urban warfare. Before it was over, more than 3,500 people would be killed. Extremists on both sides organized paramilitary forces, illegal armies that initiated much of the violence in Northern Ireland. Protestants supported groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Catholics backed groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Paramilitaries used terror tactics, including assassinations and bombings. Radicals in the IRA saw terrorism as a necessary tactic to achieve its goal—cutting off Northern Ireland from Britain and joining it with Ireland. The IRA directed much of its violence against the 20,000 or so British security forces sent in to keep the peace. It even exported its terror tactics to Britain itself.

In the 1980s, the political wing of the IRA—known as Sinn Féin (shin-FAIN)— increased its involvement in the Nationalist struggle. The

leaders of Sinn Féin sought to end the violence and secure Catholics' civil rights through the political system. By then, conditions for Catholics had improved somewhat. Britain had suspended the Northern Ireland parliament in 1972 and now ruled the region directly. The government had taken steps to reduce discrimination in jobs, housing, and other areas of life. In addition, all sides had begun to realize that the conflict in Northern Ireland could not be won militarily. In 1994, a series of indirect, behind-the-scenes negotiations led to a cease-fire. It ended just a year and a half later when the IRA bombed a wharf in London. In 1997, after the IRA again agreed to a cease-fire, the British government opened direct talks with Sinn Féin. Those frank discussions proved fruitful. In April 1998, the leaders of Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionist Party, along with officials from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, reached an agreement. In May, the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic voted overwhelmingly to accept it. The pact became known as the Belfast Agreement, or the Good Friday Agreement (it was signed on Good Friday, the Friday before Easter). The details of the agreement involved not just the people of Northern Ireland but also the governments of Britain and Ireland. A council was set up to coordinate policies between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Another council linked lawmakers from the Irish Republic with their counterparts from Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. But the most important part of the agreement scheduled elections for Northern Ireland's assembly and set up a power-sharing arrangement between Protestants and Catholics.

More than a decade after the signing of the Belfast Agreement, Northern Ireland still enjoyed peace. But differences—religious and political—continued to keep Protestants and Catholics apart. In fact, in some cities, notably Belfast, Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods were kept isolated by walls. These "peace walls," as they are known, were erected over the years in areas prone to violence. As long as the people of Northern Ireland see a need for them, the walls will remain. To help assure citizens that the era of violence was over, the Belfast Agreement called for the removal of illegal weapons from the hands of paramilitary groups. The process of eliminating those weapons was known as decommissioning. As of 2010, all the major Unionist and Nationalist paramilitary groups had officially decommissioned their weapons. Nevertheless, the members of some groups remained active. In June 2011, for example, some 200 Unionists thought to be part of the Ulster Volunteer Force attacked a Catholic church and nearby homes with gasoline bombs, paint bombs, and stones. Catholic as well as Protestant leaders strongly denounced the attack. Their mutual condemnation of the attack was itself a sign that real progress had been made toward closing the gap between Northern Ireland's main

ethnic groups.

A New Role for the West

Has the West entered a phase of historical decline?

Vocabulary

Glossary Vocabulary Cards

Great Divergence

trade deficit

Great Convergence

Introduction

This multistory shopping mall demonstrates the growing wealth in China.

In 1947, the United States devised the Marshall Plan to help European countries economically recover after World War II. However, the plan also served as a foreign policy tool to promote democracy while opposing the spread of communism. During the second half of the 20th century, many countries followed this pattern of using aid programs as a foreign policy tool. Western European countries used aid to support and maintain influence on their former colonies. The Soviet Union provided aid to communist and nonaligned countries to gain influence. Japan provided aid to ensure access to raw materials. Even China, when it was still largely isolated internationally, provided aid to friendly countries in Africa.

In this system of aid, donors often retain control over the funds. The use of the funds, thus, becomes contingent on the recipient addressing the donor’s concerns, such as human rights and governance. Many recipients, however, view such conditions as interfering with national sovereignty. But until recently, they have not had many alternative ways to obtain funding and resources.

The increased wealth of nations like China and India has changed this

dynamic, however. In contrast to the United States and other Western European countries, these growing economies do not condition aid on issues related to human rights, democracy, and good governance. This presents a challenge to the established international order that has been created over the last century. Moreover, this new dynamic has separated political interests from economic interests.

In this lesson, you will examine geopolitical and economic changes that have occurred in recent decades. In particular, you will consider how these changes have eroded the power and influence of European countries and the United States. You will then explore how these changes have affected parts of the developing world in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

1. The Decline of European Influence

World War II had devastating effects on Europe. Millions of soldiers and civilians were killed. Governments and economies hardly functioned. Cities were left in ruins, leaving countless people homeless.

European countries were left with the challenge of rebuilding, and many hoped to do so with raw materials and resources from their colonies. However, the end of the war and the start of the Cold War brought major geopolitical changes for Europe and the rest of the world. Soon, European countries would no longer control vast territories in Asia and Africa.

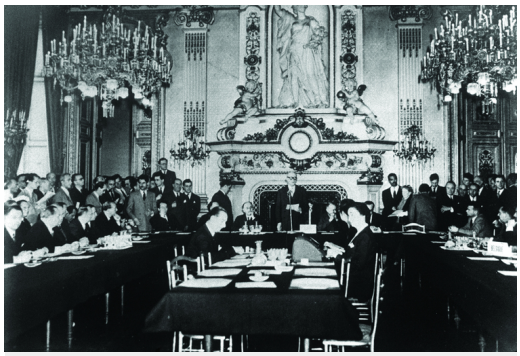
Decolonization World War II changed life not only in Europe, but also in its colonies. The war had increased the determination of people living under colonial rule to gain independence. These emerging independence movements were often supported by the new superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—which opposed colonialism. At the same time, the war-weary public in Europe did not want further bloodshed or sacrifices for the sake of overseas colonies. For European countries, decolonization, and a decline in global standing, became unavoidable.

These policemen are watching over a crowd of people silently waiting for the the declaration of Rhodesia's, later called Zimbabwe, independence from the United Kingdom without a formal agreement. Since then, several other former colonies have declared their independence.

Decolonization represented significant losses for Europe—a loss of power, a loss of prestige, and a loss of resources. Europeans had spent centuries building their continent into a global center of power. Events during the Age of Discovery, the Renaissance, and the Commercial Revolution helped raise Europe's geopolitical and economic position. By the 18th century, there was a growing wealth gap between the nations in Asia and Europe, particularly Britain, the Netherlands, and Belgium. But it was the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century that made Europe far wealthier than the rest of the world.

This large wealth gap, known as the **Great Divergence**, continued to bolster Europe's dominance into the early 20th century. However, two world wars and emerging anti-colonial nationalist movements took their toll. In the 10 years after World War II, most colonies in Asia and the Middle East gained their independence. Most remaining colonies, especially in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, were independent by the late 1970s. Yet, independence did not necessarily reduce the wealth

gap. It was not until globalization increased in the 1980s that the wealth gap between the West and the rest of the world began to close.



Here, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman announces his plans for the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC created a common market for steel and coal products in Europe.

Despite the changing geopolitical situation after World War II, European countries still needed resources for manufacturing, especially from Africa. They viewed these raw materials and protected markets for European goods as essential to reconstruction and recovery.

In the 1950s, European powers sought ways to maintain links with their colonies. While establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) to create a common market in Europe, France and Belgium pushed to include overseas territories in its free trade area. Although some EEC members viewed this as a neocolonialist arrangement, the EEC approved it and also created the European Development Fund to invest in economic and social infrastructure in these regions.

After African countries achieved independence, this relationship continued throughout the 1960s. In the 1970s, the relationship changed to one that focused on trade and aid. The growing EEC agreed to permit duty-free agricultural and mineral imports from more than 70 African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries. The EEC also committed to providing billions of dollars in aid. Decolonization ended direct European control over territories around the globe. However, the economic, political, and cultural links between European powers and their former colonies remained.

European Nations Band Together Europeans wanted to make sure that the horrors they had experienced during World War II never happened again. On May 9, 1950, a French leader named Robert Schuman gave a speech in which he put forward ideas for bringing a lasting peace to Europe. In his speech, he said, “World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.”

Schuman believed that if countries learned to cooperate, they would not be as likely to make war with each other. Six countries—France, Italy, Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands—agreed with Schuman. By 1952, they had all ratified a treaty that formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and created a common market for steel and coal products. In 1958, these same six countries founded the EEC, also known as the Common Market. By 1993, the Common Market and the ECSC were incorporated into the newly established European Union, or EU.

The main goal of the EU is to promote peace and prosperity, or economic well-being. The EU works toward this goal by seeking to create jobs, protect citizens’ rights, and preserve the environment. It has programs to promote freedom, security, and justice for its members. The EU also has a common currency, the euro, which has replaced the national currency in many member states. These efforts have made EU member states among the most highly developed in the world.

Additionally, the EU has its own government composed of several institutions: the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament (the largest EU body), the European Commission, and the European Court of Justice. Both the Council and the Parliament are legislative bodies. The Council consists of national leaders from each member country, whereas members of parliament are directly elected by citizens of EU countries. These two bodies share the job of approving the EU budget and thus determining how money should be spent.

The European Commission, the executive body of the EU government, is made up of commissioners appointed by member governments. The Commission proposes new laws to the Council and Parliament, and handles the day-to-day business of carrying out EU policies. It also ensures that members abide by EU treaties and laws, and takes those who violate the law to the EU’s judicial branch, the Court of Justice, if needed.

Since its creation, the EU has grown in size. As of the middle of 2019,

the EU had 28 member countries spread across Europe, with several other countries hoping to join.

Challenges Faced by the EU As it has grown and evolved, the EU has faced a variety of challenges resulting from internal changes, as well as from political and economic changes around the globe. One of the most pressing issues has been the dependence of EU members on outside resources. Today, the EU turns to other parts of the world, including the United States, Norway, and Qatar, for resources, particularly energy resources such as natural gas.

The European Union Map ▼

Before 2004, all of the European Union countries were in Western and Central Europe. In 2004, ten new member countries put Eastern Europe and more of Central Europe on the EU map. Two more countries joined in 2007 and one in 2013. The EU promotes cooperation among member countries.

Many EU members depend primarily on Russia for gas, with others relying entirely on Russian imports. This has led to issues, however. Some critics argue that Russia undermines the EU's role in energy

markets, as well as unity within the EU, by negotiating gas deals with individual countries. Moreover, some contend that this dependence potentially exposes the EU and its member states to Russian political and economic pressure. However, others note that Russia depends on income generated from European gas sales and that the EU has taken steps to address security and supply concerns.

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom held a referendum in which voters indicated whether they wanted to leave or remain in the EU. The British exit, called Brexit, vote won. The vote and its outcome were controversial. In the years since, the controversy remained, with many continuing to protest both for (pictured) and against Brexit in 2019.

Similarly, the EU depends on U.S. commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for military security. Some argue that this dependence was by design. NATO's structure has worked to support American military hegemony while also preventing both a single nation from dominating Europe and major power conflicts among members. In recent decades, there has been debate within the EU about improving its military capabilities, but these talks have largely been abandoned. Discussions continue about whether European nations should contribute more funding to NATO.

EU members have also looked outside the EU to develop infrastructure to facilitate international trade. China has responded by directly

approaching cash-strapped EU nations to provide loans to expand and modernize infrastructure. Although Italy and Greece have made deals, China has sought to engage countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which have fewer regulatory restrictions than those in Western Europe. China's relationships with its European partners have already enabled it to influence EU policy, undermining relations among member states. Moreover, critics worry that if countries default on their loans, China will gain control over strategically important assets, such as airports and telecommunications systems.

The EU has also increasingly relied on immigrants to bolster its declining workforce. Not only does a growing workforce support economic growth, but it also generates tax revenue to support social services such as health care and pensions. However, some worry that immigrants will drive down wages. More significantly, some EU members want greater control over their immigration policy. They are concerned about the influx of immigrants from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Specifically, some view increased Muslim immigration as a threat to European culture and security. An influx of migrants in 2015, which became known as the European migrant crisis, exposed major differences both within and between EU countries. Besides concerns about cultural issues, several member states had difficulty with the administrative and financial burdens of hosting tens of thousands of refugees.

The European migrant crisis exacerbated tensions that had already existed in the EU, and political parties skeptical of the organization have gained power in several countries. These parties have varying criticisms of the EU, including that it lacks transparency, is overly bureaucratic, and serves business elites. Moreover, they argue that the EU deprives nations of their political and economic sovereignty. Government leaders or political parties in several member states, such as France, Italy, and Greece, would ultimately like to leave the EU. In 2016, Britain held a referendum in which voters indicated that they wanted to leave the EU, and the government began the exit process the following year.

2. A Changing Role for the United States

The end of the Cold War left the United States as the world's lone superpower. The U.S. victory seemingly proved that its model of government, characterized by democracy and free markets, was the

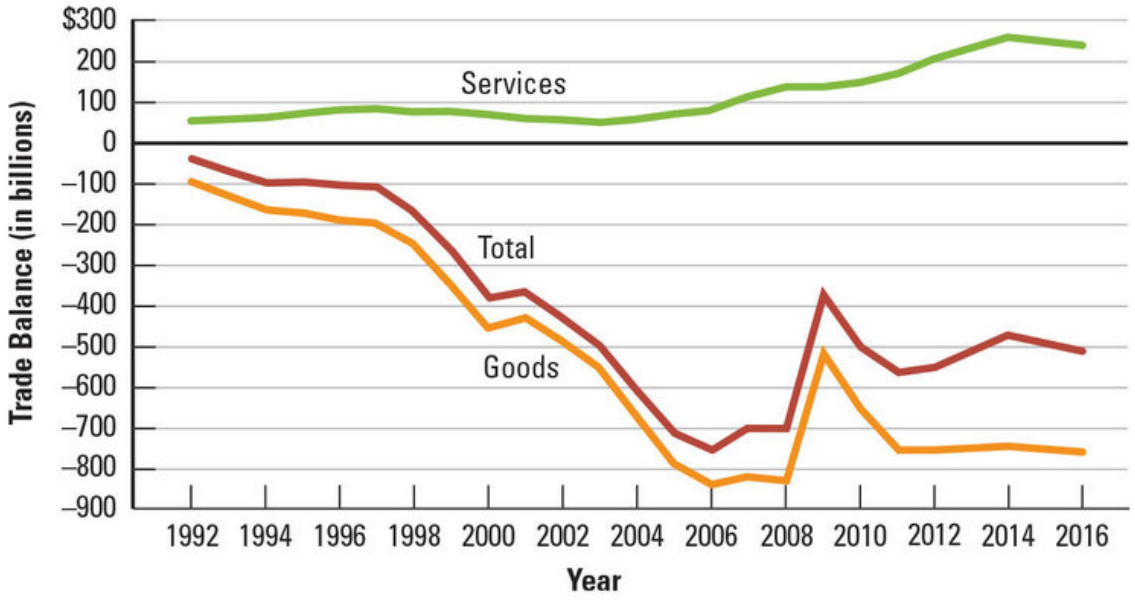
best. Former Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet republics sought to ally themselves with the United States by joining NATO. This led many to view the United States as the leader of the free world. However, over time, the United States has not retained the level of power and influence that it once had. Its status has declined while that of other nations' has increased.

Uncertainty About the U.S. Economy Between the 1890s and 1970s, the United States was a net exporter of manufactured goods to the rest of the world. Today, the country is the world's leading importer of goods and services, many of which are relatively low priced.

This influx of low-priced goods into the United States has led to an increase in the **trade deficit**. A trade deficit is a negative balance of trade, meaning that imports exceed exports. The United States has run a trade deficit with many nations since 1975. The country finances its trade deficit by borrowing dollars from foreign lenders and by selling U.S. assets to foreign investors. These lenders are willing and able to do this because they have surplus dollars from selling goods to the United States.

The trade deficit is in part a result of demand. The U.S. GDP is largely driven by consumers. More than 68 percent of the GDP comes from consumer purchases. This figure is much lower in other large economies such as China (39 percent) and the EU (54 percent). For this reason, exporters view the United States as a consumer of last resort—a country that still buys goods when everyone else has stopped. However, the United States can sustain this role only as long as it has access to financial credit.

U.S. Balance of Trade, 1992–2016 ▼



This graph shows the U.S. balance of trade in goods and services from 1992 to 2016. Note that the area in which the United States has a positive balance of trade is in services.

Although a trade deficit does not necessarily signal a struggling economy, it can create problems in the long term, especially if lenders demand that the debts be repaid. Also, if economic growth becomes too dependent on consumer spending, it could drive up inflation. Moreover, the combination of the trade deficit and lenders with large surpluses of U.S. dollars could destabilize the global economy. In the 2000s, the U.S. deficit-to-GDP ratio climbed while dollar surpluses existed in other countries. These both contributed to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Lenders also affect their own economies by focusing on foreign consumer spending and limiting domestic investment. As such, the pattern of borrowing and buying cannot continue forever.

Domestically, the United States also faces economic challenges. Like countries in Europe, it needs to generate sufficient tax revenue to support social services, such as Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security programs. As post-war baby boomers retire, more stress will be placed on Medicare and Social Security. Financial shortfalls are likely to occur in the 2020s and 2030s, respectfully, under current taxation and funding programs.

The Decline of the United States' Global Influence Since World War II, the United States has worked to influence other countries, often through the use of foreign aid. It has done so to create allies, influence government behavior, and gain access to markets around the world. However, this use of power by the United States has not been universally welcomed, with many viewing it as an unjust way of undermining sovereignty.

Additionally, U.S. efforts to influence other countries have been tied to globalization in recent decades. Although this globalization has arguably provided benefits, critics often focus on its negative impacts, including economic inequality, environmental damage, and cultural imperialism. These people fear this Americanization will ultimately replace their own traditions and values with American one.

Because of this, some countries, such as Turkey and the Philippines, have turned away from globalization and embraced strongman leaders. These leaders emphasize economic expansion and being tough on crime while undermining democratic ideals supported by the United States.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is a large organization that aims to build infrastructure throughout Asia and the Pacific region. Each year, new nations become members, drastically expanding China's influence. Here, the president of the AIIB meets with President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

The policies and actions of the United States, however, are not solely responsible for its loss of influence. As the United States' status on the global stage has declined, other nations have seen their own profiles rise. Economic development has helped increase the power of countries such as China and Russia. Like the United States, these countries have recognized that providing foreign aid can enhance their status, as well as their access to trade and investment deals. For this reason, India, Brazil, and South Africa are aid donors, though they still receive aid. Moreover, India has given aid to countries with a GDP per capita higher than its own.

The power and influence of the United States could further decline if its policies remain unchanged and current trends continue. To bolster its influence, China established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to help fund BRI projects. The AIIB aims to compete with the World Bank and IMF. U.S. allies, such as the UK, have joined the AIIB, and others, including Canada, have applied for membership. According to Kishore Mahbubani, a Singaporean professor and former diplomat, the UK's decision to join "may have heralded the end of the American century and the arrival of the Asian century."

At the same time of these events, the United States had been losing its military edge. A 2018 report commissioned by Congress found that "America's military superiority [had] eroded to a dangerous degree." Rivals, particularly Russia and China, have modernized their militaries while exploring ways to counter the United States. The report indicated that to compete, the United States must bolster innovation, become more cost-effective, and expand capabilities. Moreover, the U.S. must follow the lead of Russia and China and integrate the tools of national power, including diplomacy and economics. The nature of war is changing, and the United States may be ill-prepared for the future.

3. The Great Convergence

The wealth gap between the developed world and the rest of the world that had existed after the Great Divergence began to close in the 1980s as globalization increased. However, the seeds of what has become called the **Great Convergence** were planted earlier. Between the 1950s and 1970s, economic development occurred in many countries, particularly in Asia and the Middle East. Their wealth grew and living standards improved. The power of these countries also increased on the international stage. Ultimately, economic and industrial developments have transformed these countries, such as China, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, into regional and global influences.

Asia's Booming Industry Today, many people think of China as Asia's economic and industrial powerhouse, but this was not always the case. Between the Communist Revolution in 1949 and 1980, China's economy was largely closed to the rest of the world, with the government pursuing economic self-sufficiency. While China focused on being self-sufficient, other Asian countries began to develop economically.

As communism took hold in China, democracy did the same in Japan. Further social and economic reforms were made, which supported democratization, and the country worked to rebuild its industrial base. By 1953, Japan was undergoing rapid economic growth. These changes contributed to the development of a mass consumer society in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s.

As Japan's economy grew rapidly after World War II, Shizuoka Prefecture (pictured) underwent industrial development. As of 2019, Japan had the third largest economy in the world.

With expansion, Japanese industry increasingly focused on creating high-quality, high-tech products for consumers at home and abroad. Moreover, Japan sought trade partnerships with economically advanced countries. In the late 1950s, the economy grew by around 10 percent

per year, and in the 1960s, Japan's exports expanded by more than 15 percent annually. This era of rapid expansion continued until 1973. Throughout this period and into the 1980s, incomes grew and the middle class thrived.

Growth continued until the 1990s, albeit at a slower rate, and Japan's economy became largely export-driven over time. In the 1980s, Japan became the world's second largest economy after the United States. It retained this position until 2013, when China's economy surpassed Japan's.

Asian countries that developed after Japan focused primarily on exports and, moreover, benefited from globalization. Among those that benefited the most were the countries nicknamed the Four Asian Tigers—South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. In the 1960s, all four were relatively poor, but now, they rank among the world's developed economies.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Tigers adopted an economic model known as **export-led development**. This model emphasizes the production of goods for export as a way of expanding an economy. The sale of exports brings in money to buy machinery for factories. With the new machines, more goods are produced, which adds to economic growth.

Adopting the export-led development model resulted in two decades of spectacular economic growth. Between 1970 and 1989, the average annual GDP growth in the Tigers ranged from 7 to 10 percent. In contrast, the world average growth rate hovered between 3 and 4 percent.

As their economies grew, the Tigers invested heavily in education and other services to improve the lives of their citizens. As a result, living standards rose rapidly. Their success was so impressive that the IMF and World Bank began recommending the export-led development model, and developing countries embraced it. By the 1990s, the Tigers faced fierce competition from countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Special Economic Zones ▼

The map shows some of China's special economic zones (SEZs) along with the cities around which they developed. It also shows open cities, which operate like SEZs. In these open zones, businesses are not as tightly controlled as in other parts of China.

While China did embrace export-led development, it first started to do so after Mao Zedong's death in 1976, when leaders decided to seek economic growth. In the 1980s, China began to permit foreign investment in newly established special economic zones (SEZs). Unlike in the rest of China, the laws in SEZs enable foreign businesses to produce and price goods without government input. Currently, there are six SEZs and fourteen open cities, which operate similarly to SEZs.

SEZs have brought tremendous economic growth to China. Since 1991, China's GDP has grown by more than 5 percent annually, and in some years, it was more than 14 percent. This growth and the new jobs it has

brought have lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty, leading to expansion of the middle class. In 2002, only 4 percent of the population was middle class, but a decade later, that figure was 31 percent, or more than 420 million people. The Chinese government under President Xi Jinping hopes to further expand the middle class to 800 million people by 2025.

Oil-producing Countries Gain Global Power In some parts of the world, but especially in the Middle East, oil has been key to increasing wealth and power. Worldwide demand is high for oil and natural gas. Developed countries depend on these fuels to meet most of their energy needs. Modern forms of transportation run mainly on oil, and power plants burn oil and natural gas to generate electricity. Oil is also a raw material that is used to make plastics, medicines, and other goods.

The Middle East provides much of the oil that is used in the world today, and this region has some of the world's largest known oil reserves. Half of the top-10 countries with the largest oil reserves are in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates. The region also has large reserves of natural gas. Some of these countries have grown rich meeting the world's ever-growing demand for oil and gas, with income used to improve infrastructure and standards of living.

In addition to earning great wealth, oil-exporting countries have significant power because they control the supply and price of oil. To ensure a steady supply of oil, as well as a steady income, several countries formed the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960. In 2019, OPEC had 14 member countries, including the five Middle Eastern countries with the largest oil reserves. The other nine members are from outside the region. OPEC members produce around 40 percent of the world's crude oil. The rest comes from non-OPEC countries such as Russia, Brazil, and Mexico. To maintain competition among buyers and keep prices steady, OPEC members have agreed to regulate how much oil they will sell.

Demand for oil continues to grow. Although developed countries still rely largely on oil, demand there has stalled. In contrast, since around 2000, oil consumption has nearly doubled in developing countries. Increased industrialization and growing consumer markets have driven demand. At some point in the future—possibly in the 2020s or 2030s—demand for oil will peak. Demand will decline as renewable resources, such as wind and sunlight, decrease in price and become more widely available.

Before 1990, Pudong was boggy farmland on the outskirts of Shanghai. Today, the Pudong New Area receives special economic and development support from the government. Like SEZs and open cities, Pudong has attracted many foreign businesses.

Summary

In this lesson, you read about shifts in power and influence among countries. Internal and external factors have eroded the power and status of the United States and the EU. At the same time, economic development has helped increase the wealth and status of developing countries. With increased power, these countries have challenged the existing norms about how countries interact and influence one other.

Cultural Interaction The United States and countries in Western Europe have used foreign aid to promote human rights and democracy in the developing world. In contrast, other donor countries, such as China, focus on return on investment rather than shared values.

Political Structures The geopolitical and economic influence of the United States and the EU has declined. As middle-income countries, like China and Russia, have gained wealth and power, their global influence has increased.

Economic Systems Regardless of development level or political system, countries use foreign aid for financial benefit. Aid supports economic, as well as political, relationships between donor and recipient countries. Aid can help donor countries gain entry to markets, ensure access to natural resources, facilitate trade, and influence policy—all while promoting development.

Social Structures With aging populations and falling birth rates, developed countries face the prospect of shrinking workforces and, therefore, declining tax revenue. To prevent shortfalls in social welfare spending, EU countries and the United States have expanded their workforce through immigration.

Human-Environment Interaction Developed countries have long depended on other countries to obtain raw materials. With industrialization and economic development, developing countries' needs for these resources, especially oil and other fossil fuels, also increases.

Population Challenges: Russia

Russia, like many other industrialized nations, has an aging population. The number of elderly Russians has been rising since the mid-1900s. Then, just 6 percent of the population was 65 years of age or older. By 2018, the figure had climbed to 15 percent. Demographers expect the pace to pick up in the future. Projections from 2017 predict that 28.8 percent of Russians will be 60 or older by 2050.

Another way to illustrate how a population is aging is to track changes in its median age. The median age splits the population in two—half of the people are older and half are younger. In Russia in 1960, the median age was 27 years. By 2018 it had risen to 38.9 years, and it is expected to increase to 42 years by mid-century. As it is aging, Russia's population is also shrinking. In the years since 1992, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, deaths have exceeded births. If this trend continues, the country's 2018 population of 146.3 million will decline to 111 million by 2025. That is a population decrease of more than 20%.

One cause of Russia's aging population is a rise in life expectancy. In

2018, Russian newborns could be expected to live 72 years. This is the same as the world average and 8 or more years less than that of most other developed countries. Still, this figure is significantly higher than it was just a decade earlier, and it is expected to continue rising.

A low total fertility rate (TFR) also helps explain why Russia's population is aging. In 2018, the average number of children that a Russian woman could expect to bear in her lifetime was 1.8. For births to replace deaths and keep the population growing, this figure would need to be higher than 2.1 (the "replacement rate"). Russia's TFR has risen fairly steadily since the year 2000, when it was among the lowest in the world. But it is still too low to create a robust population of young Russians. Only 18 percent of Russia's population is under age 15, compared with 26 percent in the world at large.

A rapidly aging population like Russia's can have a strong impact on the economy and society. That impact is intensified when the total population is declining. One effect relates to the supply of labor. The retirement age for men in Russia is 65, and for women it is 50. Thus the aging population subtracts from the labor pool. Also, because of Russia's historically low fertility rate, the percentage of young working age Russians is dropping. Economic growth is harder to achieve with an aging—and shrinking—labor supply.

Another effect of aging is its cost. The elderly often require more health care and general assistance related to physical and mental decline. As more and more Russians become eligible for social welfare programs, costs will escalate. Many Russians, for example, will need expensive long-term care in nursing facilities.

The growing population of retired Russians also threatens to undermine the country's pension system. A pension consists of benefits paid to an employee after retirement. In Russia, retired workers' benefits come largely from taxes paid by current workers. This is known as a "pay-as-you-go" system. Because the number of those workers is declining, the flow of funds into the pension system is declining as well. Meanwhile, the demand for funds continues to increase as the pool of retirees expands.

The Russian government has taken some steps to deal with the challenges of the country's aging population. In 2001, it began reforming Russia's pension system. Now, in addition to the pay-as-you-go arrangement, many current workers also contribute part of their wages to personal retirement funds. This money will come back to them when they retire, rather than going into the national pension

system. Russia has also placed a high priority on increasing fertility rates. To encourage larger families, the government makes cash payments to mothers who have more than one child. It has also provided other incentives, such as modern maternity hospitals.

Russia could improve its labor supply in several different ways. One approach would be to raise the retirement age for both men and women. Another would be to allow millions more young workers to immigrate into the country. Yet another would be to encourage higher education and to offer opportunities for retraining and upgrading skills. This last approach would also make workers more productive. Boosting productivity would help offset declines in the working-age population. Fewer, but more productive, workers can produce as many goods as a greater number of less productive workers.

Another issue that needs attention is health care. Far too many Russians, especially men, die prematurely from alcoholism, cancer, and heart disease. In Russia the life expectancy at birth for a female is 77 but for a male is just 67. A focus on preventive care could improve health for all Russians. That would boost labor productivity and the size of the workforce by lowering the death toll among working-age Russians. It would also lessen the need for expensive long-term care for the elderly.

Population Challenges: Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has a large population of young people. Just 3 percent of its people are 65 years of age or older. Around 46 percent are under age 15. These figures are typical of the poorest, least developed countries of the world. Many of those countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are located in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo was once a colony of Belgium. From 1908 until it gained independence in 1960, it was known as the Belgian Congo. Later it went by the name Zaire. Today the Democratic Republic of the Congo is often called the DRC or simply the Congo, as it will be here.

The main explanation for the Congo’s young population is its total

fertility rate (TFR). This measure represents the average number of children that a woman will give birth to in her lifetime. The TFR for the world at large is 2.5. The average for the least developed countries of the world is 4.3. The Congo's TFR is still higher: 5.8.

The Congo's population of young people might be even larger except for one demographic factor, its infant mortality rate. In the Congo the death rate of children under age 1 is 2.5 times the world average. Nevertheless, the Congo's high fertility rate keeps the population booming. The Congo's 2015 population of 76 million is projected to rise to 95 million by 2025 and 149 million by 2050. Much of that population will continue to be young.

Children need to be cared for. They are largely dependent upon their parents for basics such as food, clothing, and shelter. Demographers frame this issue in terms of youth dependency—that is, the ratio of economically dependent children to working-age adults in the population. In the Congo, with a fertility rate way above average, youth dependency is high. The more young children in a family, the harder it is for parents to earn enough money to provide the necessities of life. The large families common in the Congo thus put a big financial burden on parents. In the Congo 80 percent of residents live on less than $2 per day, and this extreme poverty makes the problem worse.

A large youth population also places burdens on the educational system. The constitution of the Congo promises a free education up to the age of 14. But public education is expensive. Schools must be built and maintained, supplies purchased, and teachers hired. Funding for public education comes mainly from working-age people who pay taxes. In such a poor country, revenue from taxes is not enough to provide schooling for all. In addition, children are often expected to work to help support the family. As a result, most Congolese children do not receive even an elementary education.

Children generally require more health care than adults do. They need immunizations against childhood diseases such as measles. Congolese children also need access to medical care to deal with a common killer, diarrhea, and to protect them from tropical diseases such as malaria. Unhealthy children can grow up to be unhealthy, unproductive adults. The size of the young population in the Congo, however, makes the provision of adequate health care a monumental task and, at present, an unreachable goal.

Congo will continue to have a growing population of young people as long as its total fertility rate remains high. Lowering the TFR calls for

conscious family planning. This can include decisions by parents about how many children to have, how much time should elapse between births, and the use of birth control. However, several factors serve to limit family planning and thus contribute to Congo's high fertility rate.

One is the traditional kinship system. Families are part of a broad network of kin, or relatives. To survive and prosper, a kinship system must continue to grow. For this reason, it puts pressure on couples to produce as many children as possible. In a poor country like the Congo, children are seen as a sign of wealth. Older children can work and contribute to a family's income.

Another factor is a lack of education. Women who are educated tend to delay having a family, often in favor of pursuing a career or other interests. They are also more inclined to consider family planning. In the past half century, levels of education have risen, but not far by Western standards. Only half of Congolese children ages 6 to 11 attend elementary school, and only a quarter of those complete it. Teen illiteracy remains high, especially among girls. The number of Congolese who graduate from high school and go on to higher education, although growing, is still tiny.

So, what has the Democratic Republic of the Congo's government been doing about its expanding population of young people? The short answer is very little. From 1994 to as late as 2008, civil wars kept the country in chaos and left more than 5 million dead. Today, the Congo is considered a "failed state." That is, the government is ineffective—incapable of maintaining law and order or providing public services. Its inability to meet demographic challenges is another aspect of its failure as a state.

Nonetheless, the Congo can improve its prospects for the future. The country is rich in natural resources, including fertile land, forests, rivers, and minerals. Congo's high youth dependency could actually help turn that potential into prosperity. If the Congo can severely cut its total fertility rate, it may be able to take advantage of the "demographic dividend." Its abundance of children would, over time, turn into an abundance of working-age adults. That would put the Congo in a position to develop a thriving economy that could pull many of its people out of poverty.