

# America as Hyperpower

*Contemporary United States  
(1968–Present)*



**Policing and terrorism**

The 1990s and globalization

21<sup>st</sup>-century America

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will know the following about American foreign policy in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries:

- America's role as superpower
- The Persian Gulf War
- Terrorism in the United States
- The war on terrorism
- America's defense spending.



# Looking back timeline



Use this timeline to recap key historical events and contextualize contemporary American history.

Either press on a date, or drag the pointer along the timeline to read about what happened in each year.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





Following World War II, the U.S. emerged as a **superpower** for several reasons:

- Much of Europe's infrastructure had been destroyed. European nations turned to American industry for necessary goods.
- During the Cold War, the U.S. put money toward technological development and defense to keep up with the Soviet Union.
- The U.S. provided aid to countries to keep them ideologically aligned with Western democracy, rather than communist Russia.

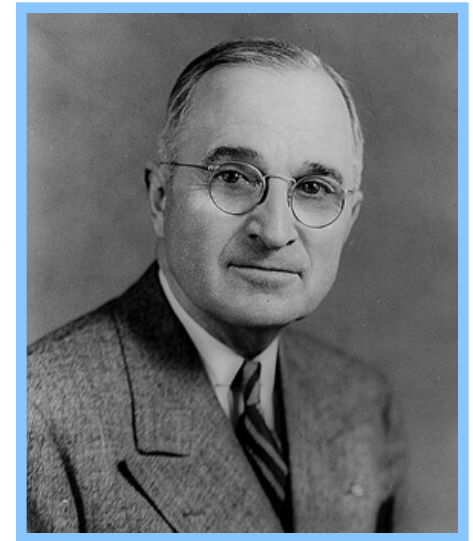


How might these factors affect the U.S.'s global status?



In 1947, President Truman asked Congress to supply aid to countries resisting repressive regimes. This policy became known as the **Truman Doctrine**.

“I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”



In the 1970s, President Nixon supplied aid to countries whose freedom was deemed necessary to American security.

In which countries has the U.S. intervened since World War II?



# Conflict in the Middle East



The Middle East has long been a site of conflict. The area's rich oil reserves have resulted in years of foreign intervention. In many countries, the departure of colonial governments allowed for the rise of dictators and religious **fundamentalists**. Press on the highlighted countries to learn more about the dynamics of Middle Eastern conflicts. Press **start** to begin.

start





# The Persian Gulf War

In 1990, Iraqi ruler **Saddam Hussein** invaded oil-rich Kuwait. His troops then pushed into Saudi Arabia.

By conquering Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Iraq would control half the world's oil. To prevent this, President George H. W. Bush called for military intervention in the region. The conflict became known as the **Persian Gulf War**.



On January 16, 1991, U.S.-led **coalition** troops launched **Operation Desert Storm** with an air attack on Baghdad, Iraq's capital. In February, coalition troops pushed into Kuwait from Saudi Arabia.







The Gulf War ended on February 28, 1991 with the liberation of Kuwait. Afraid that destabilizing Iraq would strengthen Iran, the U.S. chose not to pursue Hussein.

Many Americans celebrated the successful operation. However, while only 400 UN soldiers had been killed in the Gulf, more died after the war from the effects of chemicals used in combat.

Roughly 100,000 Iraqis were killed in the Gulf War. UN trade embargos against Iraq caused additional civilian casualties as many Iraqis lost access to Western food and medication.





Bush's approval ratings soared after the Gulf War. However, an economic recession beginning in 1990 forced him to break his campaign promise not to raise taxes.

As the recession went on, Americans began to look for new leadership. In the 1992 election, 43% of voters chose Democrat and Arkansas Governor **William "Bill" Clinton**.



Clinton promised a moderate approach to reform. He defeated Bush as well as **H. Ross Perot**, a Texan billionaire who ran as an Independent and won an impressive 19% of the vote.





Clinton believed that international trade would stimulate the economy and maintain peace. He worked to ensure positive relationships with Russia and China.

Clinton did support foreign intervention in certain situations. When Serbian nationalists began a genocide in Bosnia, Clinton sent troops to help **NATO** resolve the situation in 1995.

In 1998, Serbs began killing Albanians in Kosovo. The U.S. and NATO intervened again. Peacekeeping forces remained in the country for longer than anticipated, leading some to criticize Clinton's decision to get involved.

Do you know of any other cases in which the Clinton administration intervened in foreign affairs?



Although terrorism has existed throughout history, it developed new traits in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. New technologies allow terrorists to create smaller, deadlier weapons. Some terrorist groups hold extreme religious views. Such groups aim to wipe out other, supposedly "evil," ways of life. Press the dates to read more about major terrorist attacks on the United States since 1990.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The 9/11 terrorist attacks were the deadliest in U.S. history. In the aftermath, President **George W. Bush** increased antiterrorism measures in the United States.

Press **start** to learn more.

start



How should the U.S. resolve the situation?



# Military budgets



Since the arms race, the U.S. has continued to develop more sophisticated weapons and to intervene in conflicts around the world. This graph shows the countries with the six largest military budgets in 2010. Guess how much money each country spent by dragging each bar to the desired level. Then press the play button below each bar to reveal the actual figures.  
Press **start** to begin.

start



Are you surprised by this data? Why or why not?



After the Cold War, the U.S. emerged as the sole remaining superpower. Some argue that its dominance in every sphere – economic, military, technological, diplomatic and cultural – makes it a **hyperpower**. Read the following opinions and discuss how much you agree or disagree. When you have decided, drag the marker to the appropriate place on the slider scale.  
Press **start** to begin.

**start**

