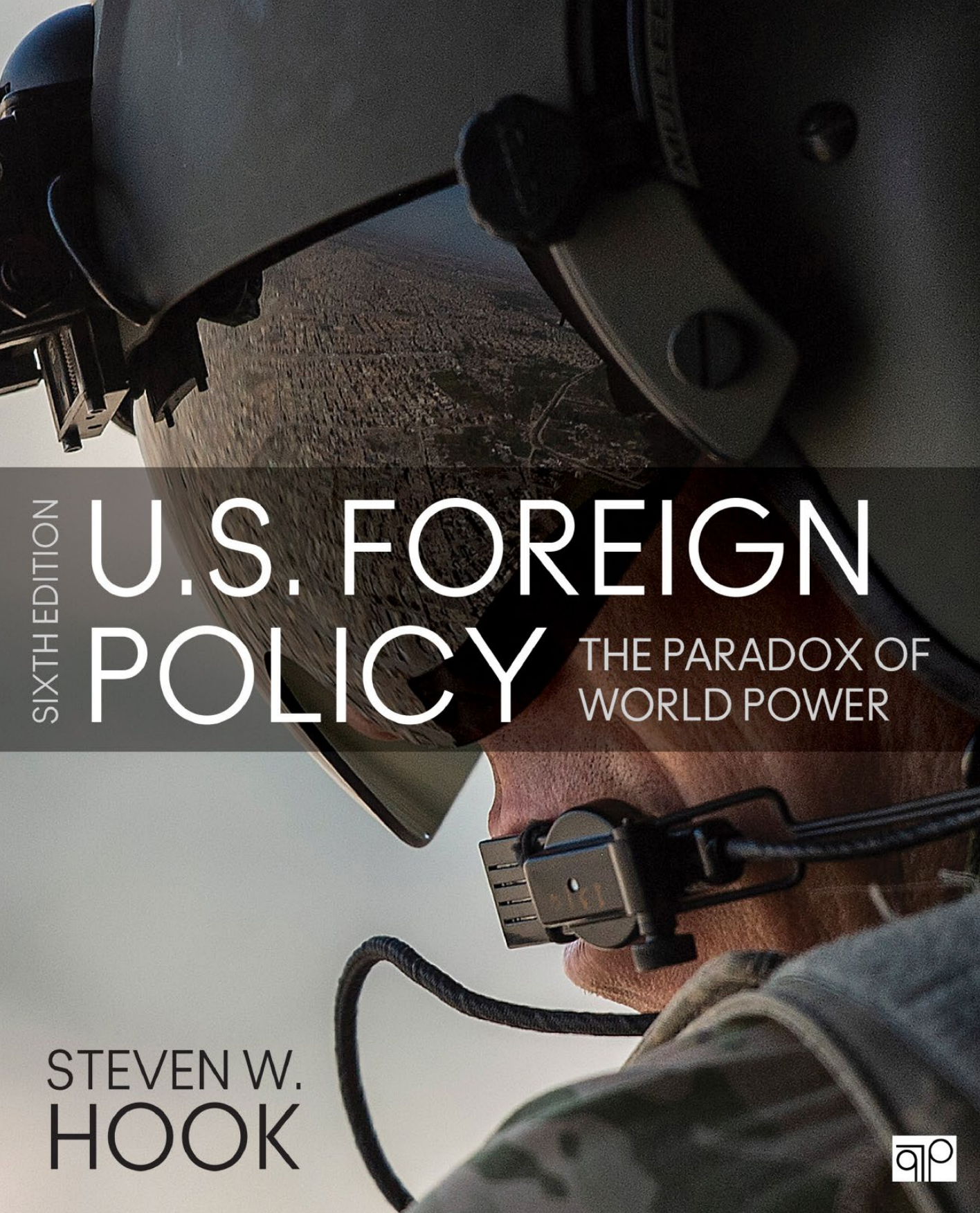
SIXTH EDITION
U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
THE PARADOX OF WORLD POWER
STEVEN W. HOOK

U.S. Foreign Policy

Sixth Edition

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U.S. Foreign Policy

The Paradox of World Power

Sixth Edition

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PREFACE

The United States today remains the world's preeminent world power. It is also an embattled and increasingly exhausted power, confronting both the limits of its domestic resources and its capacity to manage rapidly changing conditions overseas. How U.S. foreign policy makers respond to the many challenges facing them will dictate the course of the twenty-first century—not just for the United States but for all states and societies.

The first decade of the twenty-first century proved withering for American leaders, who endured the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; launched protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; suffered natural and man-made catastrophes in the Gulf of Mexico; and ended the decade reeling from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. By the time President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, the United States faced four crises at once: (1) a financial crisis, with banks and mortgage houses in disarray; (2) a fiscal crisis, with spiraling budget deficits and foreign debts; (3) a political crisis, with partisan gridlock at levels unseen in decades; and (4) a strategic crisis, with U.S. military capacity drained by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and by repeated setbacks in fighting asymmetric wars.

The Bush-Obama years also produced a credibility crisis, with many nations overseas upset over U.S. actions such as the torture of suspected terrorists; the "targeted killings" of enemies using aerial drones; and the covert surveillance of U.S. citizens and foreign leaders, including NATO allies. With the more recent emphasis on an "America first" strategy and our retreat from decades-long post–World War II alliances since Donald Trump's election to the presidency in 2016, America's credibility has been strained even further. Under all these conditions, sustaining the nation's global primacy, the centerpiece of post–Cold War grand strategy, can no longer be assumed. In sum, the United States lost its way at the very historic moment when its self-proclaimed mission to re-create the global order in its image seemed within its reach.

These developments reveal a paradox in the U.S. experience as a world power: the very sources of strength for the United States during its steady growth—a deeply ingrained sense of national exceptionalism, the diffusion and limitations of political powers, the free rein granted to civil society, and the promotion of free markets domestically and globally—have increasingly become sources of vulnerability as well. The decentralized federal government, largely unchanged for more than two centuries, seems unable to manage the rapid changes taking place overseas. Meanwhile, non-state actors such as multinational corporations, powerful ethnic

and religious groups, Internet outlets such as WikiLeaks, and transnational agents of global governance, all of which are viewed as vital to American-style democracy, limit the options and actions of U.S. foreign policy makers. Thus, the United States may be considered a victim as well as a beneficiary of its own success.

This lesson is clearly evident in events over the past decade. The near collapse of the U.S. financial system could be seen as a logical extension of the nation's laissez-faire economic system that discouraged regulation while encouraging (and rewarding) reckless speculation and lending practices. The deep recession that greeted President Obama upon his election forced him to focus on domestic recovery—an effort that overshadowed his stature as a global leader and stymied his ability to clear a new path for U.S. foreign policy. More recently, the so-called Islamic State terrorist group gained attention and recruits through a creative use of social media, a technology pioneered in the United States. To Richard N. Haass (2014), president of the Council on Foreign Relations, "the question is not whether the world will continue to unravel but how fast and how far."

The paradox also applies to fateful decisions on war and peace. American leaders have maintained a "separate peace" with other industrialized democracies while engaging in recurring conflicts against authoritarian regimes and failed states. As international relations theorist Michael Doyle (1983) observed more than a quarter of a century ago, "the very constitutional restraint, shared commercial interests, and international respect for individual rights that promote peace among liberal societies can exacerbate conflicts in relations between liberal and nonliberal societies" (324–325). This problem is compounded by the double standards commonly adopted by U.S. leaders, who preach the gospel of democratic freedoms while tolerating repression in strategically vital countries such as Saudi Arabia and China.

As noted earlier, the paradox outlined in this book is ultimately based on the attributes that enabled the United States to expand steadily and serve so often as a catalyst for constructive change beyond its shores. These same strengths, however, contain the seeds of possible peril and threats to U.S. primacy. As the nation muddles its way through its fractious domestic politics and growing foreign policy concerns, a central question confronts students and practitioners of foreign policy: Can America endure as the foremost world power, despite itself?

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

My primary objective in writing this book is to explore this paradox, identify its key sources and manifestations, and consider its future implications. Because of the sheer magnitude of U.S. military might, economic wealth, and political and cultural influence, the choices of U.S. foreign policy makers resonate in all corners of the world. Those choices, however, are made within a domestic institutional setting that

is purposefully conflicted. The coherence of U.S. policy choices is impaired further by components of transnational civil society—including corporations, nonprofit interest groups, the news media, and global public opinion—that are integral to the U.S. foreign policy process.

Because the contradictions and dilemmas inherent to U.S. foreign policy are woven into the nation's culture and institutional structure, they are unlikely to be overcome anytime soon. The stakes in the policy process for all American citizens, however, will remain enormous. If this book helps readers make sense of these cascading developments, and if the link between the process and the conduct of U.S. foreign policy can be more fully grasped, then the book will have achieved its main purpose.

My secondary goal for this book is to present a clear and concise, yet comprehensive, overview of the U.S. foreign policy process to students at all levels. Instructors deserve a text that meets their pedagogical needs. Their students, meanwhile, deserve a text that is tightly organized, limited in its use of jargon, visually appealing, and even pleasurable to read. No account of U.S. foreign policy will have its intended effect if its readers are lost in translation.

To this end, the twelve chapters that follow are organized into four parts—each with three chapters—that cover distinct aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Part I introduces the book's theme, reviews key historical developments and milestones, and identifies theories of foreign policy analysis that shed light on the decision-making process. This latter material, found in Chapter 3, forms the analytic core of the book. Part II examines the roles of government actors and their institutional structures. Clashes between the executive and legislative branches, which occur alongside bureaucratic rivalries, are of particular interest. In Part III, external pressures from civil society—including public opinion, the news media, and interest groups—take center stage. Finally, Part IV highlights the three primary domains of U.S. foreign policy: national security, foreign economic relations, and transnational concerns such as climate change. All the chapters have been updated in terms of both the scholarly literature and coverage of recent developments in U.S. foreign policy. The narrative, including references and key terms, has been tightened to encourage more focused reading.

This analytic framework was designed to facilitate instruction in several ways. The symmetrical structure of the volume lends itself to break points and examinations at regular intervals. The "In Their Own Words" boxed feature provides insightful perspectives on the policy process. The references direct readers to the vast supporting literature on U.S. foreign policy that informs research papers and subsequent studies. Finally, a detailed glossary defines the key concepts introduced in bold type throughout the text. It is preceded by two appendixes that list U.S. administrations since World War II and present the text of the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

Each chapter features learning objectives that offer students measurable takeaways for the chapter and engage students in close, focused reading. The revisions highlight both global and domestic shifts in the balance of power that affect U.S. foreign policy. They include essential coverage of foreign policy initiatives under the Trump administration and how they compare to the actions of his recent predecessors. Throughout, the sixth edition continues to ask the most pressing question of whether U.S. foreign policy makers can manage these dynamics in a manner that preserves U.S. values at home and primacy abroad.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This sixth edition, like the first five, drew on the talents and hard work of a large supporting cast. I am grateful to the entire editorial team at CQ Press and SAGE for making this revision not only manageable but also highly enjoyable. As always, Charisse Kiino, vice president of the College Editorial division of CQ Press and SAGE, fully supported the project. Acquisitions editor Scott Greenan provided early guidance, and senior content development editor Scott Harris and editorial assistant Lauren Younker kept the project and its many moving parts on schedule. Bennie Clark Allen skillfully guided the manuscript through production, and Meg Granger, my copy editor, made sense of my often tortured prose, called out contradictions and ambiguities, and offered valuable suggestions for updates in response to developments in the "real world." In Kent, Ohio, my research assistant Eli Kaul gathered data and generally helped me "tame The Beast"—our affectionate term for this ambitious and challenging project.

Many reviewers provided much-needed criticism at various stages of the project. They include Choong-Nam Kang, Murray State University; Ivan Dinev Ivanov, University of Cincinnati; and Niall Michelsen, Western Carolina University. Their suggestions were consistently on target and very useful in guiding this revision. I am also grateful to my students, near and far, who have freely offered their comments about the text either in the classroom or via shook@kent.edu. Any deficiencies in the volume stem from my own inability to heed their collective guidance.

Syrians rally as they wave flags of the opposition, and of Turkey, during a demonstration against the Syrian government in the rebel-held town of Hazzanu on September 21, 2018. The conflict in Syria remains a point of interest in U.S. foreign policy.

Aaref WATAD/AFP/Getty Images

Chapter Objectives

1.1 Discuss the basic indicators of world power and where the United States stands.

1.2 Summarize four categories of challenges facing U.S. world power.

1.3 Explain how culture, institutions, and civil society create the paradox of U.S. world power.

1

THE UNITED STATES IN A TURBULENT WORLD

In the nation system of the seventeenth century, each nation depended on itself. From World War II until the Cold War, the United States maintained this "predominance of power" (Leffler 1992). Since then, our citizens and governments around the world have revealed the temperament of American foreign policy. We live within dangerous and unstable periods.

Several fateful actions have taken place in recent years. First, Donald Trump took presidential office on January 20, 2017. Taking an "America first" approach, the new president rejected globalization and rejected the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Trump also rejected the Paris Climate Agreement and devoted energy to building a thirty-foot wall that would prevent anyone outside the United States from entering illegally from Mexico. Additionally, Russia launched cyberattacks against the United States, an action that impacted the 2016 American presidential election.

German chancellor Angela Merkel said in 2017 that she would no longer depend on Trump as an ally. As she said, "We have to know that we must fight for our future, for our destiny as Europeans" (Smale and Erlanger 2017). It was no surprise that America's popularity fell to low levels among other countries in the world.

Questions

This book seeks to strengthen our understanding by exploring the process by which leaders face pressures at home and overseas. Achievements of both the United States and its people face uneasy relationships. Some key questions we will consider include,

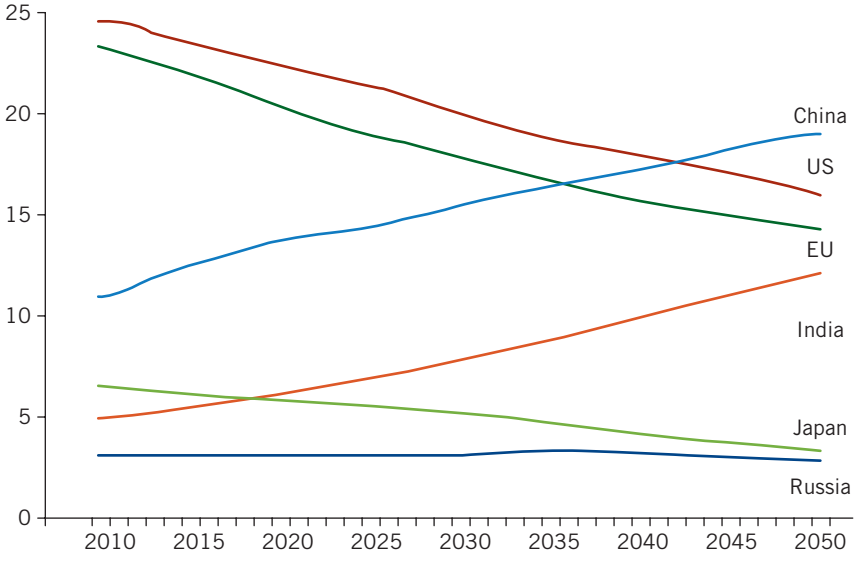
1. Can the United States maintain its strength in the midst of threats?
2. Can Americans keep up their economic growth amid growing competition?
3. Will America uphold its political institutions, social values, and cultural appeals?
4. Will America regain the respect it has lost in the world?

THE PARADOX OF AMERICA'S WORLD POWER

These challenges to the United States raise profound questions about the nation's capacity to sustain its dominant position in a **unipolar** world. A central paradox of America's world power is that, in seeking to sustain its global primacy, the United States is increasingly constrained by the very forces that propelled its rise to global predominance. These strengths also create vulnerabilities. Derived

FIGURE 1.1

The World in 2030: The Global Power Index Forecast



SOURCE: National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*. December 2012.

from an eighteenth-century model, the nation's governing structures remain remarkably unchanged in the twenty-first century. Yet the world order that the United States played a lead role in creating has changed in profound ways, along with the country's role in that order (see Figure 1.1).

This book explores this paradox by examining its presence in the process of making U.S. foreign policy. Of particular interest are the institutions of power inside and outside the U.S. government that define the roles of public and private actors; create and reinforce common values, norms, and codes of conduct; and define what is possible among contending foreign policy choices. These institutions of power are becoming more complex as the scope of U.S. foreign policy broadens, as the lines between domestic and foreign policy concerns are increasingly blurred, as the number and magnitude of problems crossing national borders increase, and as more individuals and groups become stakeholders and participants in the foreign policy process. This paradox is visible in several recent examples:

- Divisions over foreign policy in the 1990s prevented the United States from adopting a coherent world role despite its victory in the Cold War and global power. When participants in a national survey were asked in 1999 to

identify the biggest foreign policy problem facing the United States, they most often replied, "Don't know" (Rielly 1999, 98).

- President George W. Bush's intelligence brief on August 6, 2001, featured the headline "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S." The White House was warned to prepare for "hijackings or other types of attacks." No one acted on warnings, however, as intelligence agencies "lacked the incentives to cooperate, collaborate, and share information" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States 2004, 12).
- Entrepreneurs in the United States led the way in the development of social media and Internet-based communications. Such technology, however, enabled adversaries of the United States to advance their political and military agendas. The technology allowed Russian hackers to gain access to governments, schools, and industrial powers.
- Trump showed his government's military strengths to other leaders around the world. Vigilantes spread in Turkey, the Philippines, Colombia, and elsewhere. The president approved such actions.
- On October 10, 2018, Jamal Khashoggi disappeared in Saudi Arabia. He was later found to have been murdered. The act was never officially condemned by the U.S. government (Freedman 2018).

THE NUMBERS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

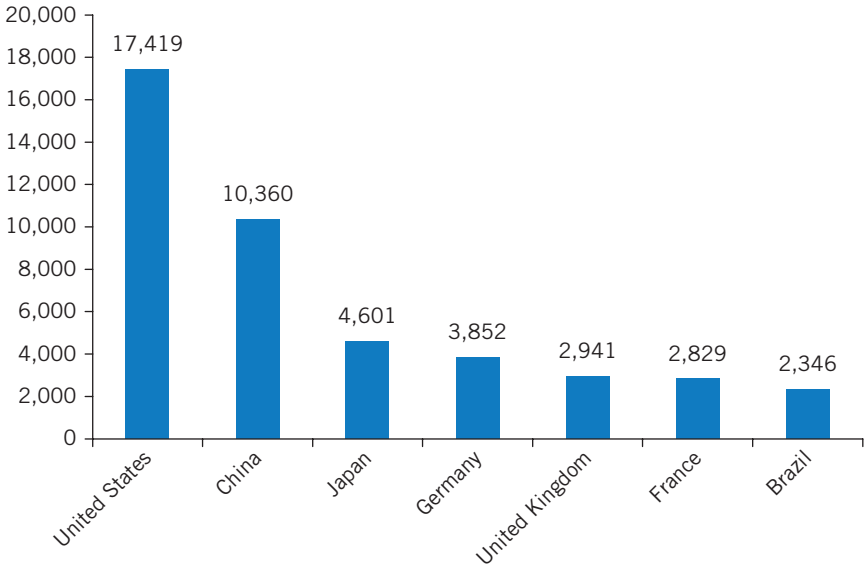
Since the end of the Cold War, most foreign policy debates have accepted the reality of U.S. **primacy** as a starting point and focused instead on the extent, consequences, and likely future of the unipolar world power. The concentration of America's world power is notable given that the United States is home to less than 5 percent of the world's population. Much of the nation's advantage derives from the scale of its economy, which produces much of the world's total output (see Figure 1.2). The degree of U.S. predominance is even greater in the military realm. The United States, the only country that has divided the world into regional military commands, also maintains "command of the commons—command of the sea, space, and air" (Posen 2003, 7). In 2018, the U.S. government spent about $610 billion on its military, or about one third of the global total.

If formal military allies of the United States are taken into account as elements of U.S. world power, the nation's military potency is even greater. The United States also provides the largest volume of weaponry to other countries. In 2014, the United States provided a hundred foreign governments with military training and education, further solidifying its projection of world power (U.S. Department of State 2015b). All these military programs fortify U.S. strength.

American primacy also derives from its **soft power**, the expression of its political values and cultural dynamism in ways that other societies and governments may find

FIGURE 1.2

World Economic Output, Seven Largest Producers by GDP, 2018



SOURCE: World Bank, World Development Indicators, July 1, 2018, http://data.worldbank.org/.

NOTE: Figures are current U.S. dollars in billions.

appealing (see Nye 2004). The United States is often regarded as an "idea" rather than an ordinary nation-state, traditionally defined by physical boundaries, common ethnic or religious identities, and material interests. The soft power of the United States enhances U.S. security by highlighting shared rather than opposing interests and values. A recent study found that eight of the world's top ten universities—ideal centers for the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and culture—are located in the United States (see Table 1.1). American fashions, popular music, movies, and television programs are so pervasive overseas that they provoke charges of "cultural imperialism."

SHIFTS IN THE BALANCE OF POWER

Political analysts see U.S.-dominated world order as advantageous not only for the United States but also for the international system as a whole. A benign **hegemon** maintains stability in the international system, discouraging conflicts among regional powers and covering most of the costs of military security and global economic development. Less powerful states have incentives to align with the dominant

TABLE 1.1

Top Ten Universities in the World, 2018

Rank	University	Country
1	Harvard University	United States
2	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	United States
3	Stanford University	United States
4	University of California–Berkeley	United States
5	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
6	California Institute of Technology	United States
7	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
8	Columbia University	United States
9	Princeton University	United States
10	University of Washington	United States

SOURCE: Best Global Universities Rankings, *U.S. News & World Report,* 2018. www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/rankings.

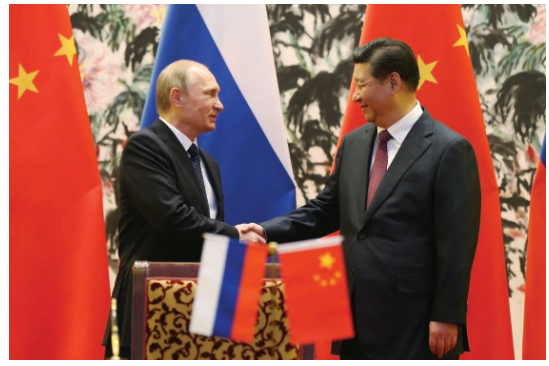
power rather than challenge it by forming rival blocs. Others fear the concentration of power in one country and believe that "unbalanced power, whoever wields it, is a potential danger to others" (Waltz 1997, 915).

A related argument identifies historical cycles in the global balance of power. Historian Paul Kennedy traced *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987) to a pattern of **imperial overstretch** by which the Roman, Dutch, Ottoman, Spanish, British, and Russian empires bit off more than they could chew and then succumbed to uprisings in their far-flung provinces and to political infighting at home. World history has revealed the "increasing costs of dominance" that accompany global primacy (Gilpin 1981). According to **long cycle theory** (Modelski 1987), the dominant power's strength in relation to others inevitably peaks and then erodes as smaller powers benefit from the leader's technological advances, economic aid, and military protection. This cycle of hegemonic boom and bust prompts major wars and restructurings of the global power balance.

Three episodes in early U.S. foreign policy revealed that for all its rhetoric about freedom and justice, the U.S. government often observed a Darwinian logic of survival of the fittest: the wars against Native American tribes, the practice of slavery before the Civil War, and interventions in Latin America. Slavery has long been condemned as an ultimate denial of human rights, and the U.S. treatment of Native Americans fits the commonly accepted definition of *genocide*.[1] American forces

seized northern Mexico in the late 1840s and then intervened more than sixty times in the Latin American–Caribbean region prior to World War II (Grimmett 2004).[2] This pattern continued during the Cold War, when U.S. leaders turned to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow elected regimes in Guatemala (1954) and Chile (1973).

Elsewhere, the United States supported dictators such as Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire. American leaders aligned with Saddam Hussein's Iraq during its war against Iran in the 1980s even after Saddam used chemical weapons to massacre Iranian forces and ethnic minorities in his own country. These actions, including the catastrophic Vietnam War, cast doubts on the virtues of U.S. foreign policy even as the nation fought successfully against fascism and communism in the twentieth century. During George W. Bush's **war on terror**, the morality gap appeared in the prisoner abuses by U.S. guards at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and in the February 2012 burning of Korans, the religious text of Islam.



How Hwee Young/Getty Images

In recent years, several world leaders have sought to challenge the United States and its unprecedented world power. Most prominent among these challengers were Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, and Chinese president Xi Jinping. These two leaders shared a desire for more influence in world politics. In their frequent meetings, they looked for ways to gain an upper hand in their relations with the United States.

Such actions damaged U.S. credibility while provoking friends around the world. The theocratic regimes were seen as an affront to U.S. policies, or **blowbacks** (C. Johnson 2000). Iran and Saudi Arabia considered them regional hegemons. Others within the Red Sea region sought for territory within Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen, and Sudan. As President Trump said in 2018, "If the United States has any real strategy to achieve a successful outcome within Syria, it was one of the best-kept secrets in its history" (Cordesman 2018).

In recent years, world leaders have sought to challenge the United States and its growing world power. The most prominent were Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, and Chinese president Xi Jinping, whose country's financial growth is larger than that of the United States. The European Union lost its strength without the previous American Marshall Plan that kept the EU together. Great Britain moved away from the EU, leaving the United States its only strength. At the same time, France, Hungary, Germany, Poland, and other governments left on their own. At home, Congress could only stand up to the president until "the water's edge."

RESISTANCE TO GLOBALIZATION

Yet another challenge to the United States stems from the process of **globalization**, which is the linking of national and regional markets into a single world economy (see Stiglitz 2002). Advances in transportation and communications technology,

intellectual developments, and public policy shifts in the eighteenth century first spurred this historic trend. The Internet revolution late in the twentieth century accelerated the pace of globalization. In today's world economy, goods, services, and financial investments cross national borders at a record pace.

Commerce is taken in multinational corporations with headquarters around the world. Although Great Britain was at the forefront of the economic globalization through the nineteenth century, the primary catalyst since then has been the United States. Globalization conforms to a national consensus that private enterprise, unfettered by government interference, provides the surest path to prosperity as well as to individual liberty.

According to this consensus, a prosperous world economy resembles that of the United States, with few internal barriers to the movement of goods, services, labor, and capital. Trade, not political or military competition, is the primary arena of foreign policy. Furthermore, "trading states" have strong interests in a stable international system and are reluctant to wage wars against each other. Globalization, according to this view, is a harbinger of world peace.

The quickening pace of economic globalization brought improved living standards to many nations, but others fell behind, unable to attract foreign investment or find new markets for their goods. The growing gap between the world's rich and poor placed new strains on the international system. Critics believed that globalization produced a variety of other problems as well: the triumph of consumerism over cultural diversity, heightened pollution and deforestation, and the exploitation of sweatshop workers. The U.S. model of political economy has come under greater scrutiny as China and other rising powers have boosted economic growth while suppressing the political rights of their citizens.

CULTURAL ROOTS OF THE PARADOX

The roots of this paradox are found in the U.S. **national style**—that is, the cultural influences that historically have shaped the country's approach to international relations (Dallek 1989). Although national style is an ambiguous concept and cultural influences are difficult to identify with precision, the conduct of every country's foreign policy reflects its distinctive sense of place within the international system. This sense of place is shaped by tangible factors such as geographic location, the availability of natural resources, and the size and characteristics of the population. Other factors, such as a country's historical experience, also influence its national style.

When it became the first independent country in the Western Hemisphere, the United States removed from the great powers. This distance, combined with the ample territory and natural resources available within the thirteen original colonies, enabled the new nation to develop its political and economic systems with little

outside assistance. The United States was distinctive in that its civil society, compared with those of most other countries, did not feature sharp divisions between a small but powerful aristocracy and a large but powerless feudal peasantry.

This consensus encouraged a sense of national exceptionalism, by which citizens felt the United States was destined not simply to survive as a nation-state but also to achieve the status of a superior world power. Long before the nation's independence, the first European settlers to North America proclaimed the founding of a "city upon a hill" that would inspire societies far from its shores. Colonial leaders later believed that independence from Great Britain would create "a more perfect union" based on limited, representative government.

Americans tend to focus on domestic concerns. Only when foreign problems reach crisis proportions do they spark the public's interest. As a result, the public hastily demands action by the government impulsively, with little deep background or understanding of the underlying problems that provoked the crisis. George Kennan (1951, 59), the architect of U.S. Cold War strategy, found this aspect of democratic foreign policy making particularly troublesome:

> *I sometimes wonder whether in this respect a democracy is uncomfortably similar to one of those prehistoric monsters with a body as long as this room and a brain the size of a pin. He lies there in his comfortable primeval mud and pays little attention to his environment; he is slow to wrath—in fact, you practically have to whack his tail off to make him aware that his interests are being disturbed. But, once he grasps this, he lays about with such blind determination that he not only destroys his adversary but largely wrecks his native habitat.*

In Their Own Words

Alexis de Tocqueville *Alexis de Tocqueville, an aristocratic Frenchman, traveled through the United States in 1831–1832 to chronicle the social, political, public, religious, and intellectual life of the emerging democratic nation. His account of these travels,* Democracy in America, *long considered one of the most astute observations of American life ever written, is still widely read and studied by historians and political scientists alike.*

I have no hesitation in saying that in the control of society's foreign affairs democratic governments do appear decidedly inferior to

(Continued)

(Continued)

others. . . . Foreign policy does not require the use of any of the good qualities peculiar to democracy but does demand the cultivation of almost all those which it lacks. . . .

Democracy favors the growth of the state's internal resources; it extends comfort and develops public spirit, strengthens respect for law in the various classes of society, all of which things have no more than an indirect influence on the standing of one nation in respect to another. But a democracy finds it difficult to coordinate the details of a great undertaking and to fix on some plan and carry it through with determination in spite of obstacles. It has little capacity for combining measures in secret and waiting patiently for the result.

SOURCE: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by J. P. Mayer (New York: Perennial Library, 1988), 228–230. First published in 1835.

CONCLUSION

A central question examined in this book is how well the United States can provide the international leadership it espouses in the face of the domestic and global constraints that are essential features of its political and social system. Of particular concern is whether a political culture that is largely indifferent to foreign affairs is compatible with a dominant world role. The institutions of power raise further concerns about the U.S. government's ability to overcome domestic divisions as well as pressures from transnational civil society, particularly economic pressures. How the government manages the paradox of its world power will determine how long U.S. primacy endures in the turbulent twenty-first century.

The mutual love-hate relationship between the United States and the world beyond its borders may be inevitable given the nation's unprecedented primacy. There is little doubt, however, that the country's successes and failures also stem from the peculiarities of U.S. government and social structures and the growing pressures imposed by transnational civil society. Historical patterns suggest that the U.S. political system is self-correcting. Previous bursts of "creedal passion" have been followed by restraint and moderation (Huntington 1981). In this context, it remains to be seen how effectively the U.S. government will adapt to vital changes in the strategic environment and global balance of power.

Key Terms

blowbacks, p. 7

globalization, p. 7

hegemon, p. 5

imperial overstretch, p. 6

long cycle theory, p. 6

national style, p. 8

primacy, p. 4

soft power, p. 4

unipolar, p. 2

war on terror, p. 7

Chapter Objectives

2.1 Discuss U.S. policies of economic and territorial expansion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2.2 Explain how major shifts in the global balance of power led to two world wars and the subsequent rise of U.S. primacy on the world stage.

2.3 Describe the institutional foundations and ideals representing U.S. foreign policy in the postwar period.

2.4 Identify the foreign policy challenges the United States faced immediately after the Cold War.

U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt tests a steam shovel during construction of the Panama Canal in November 1906. Roosevelt had supported earlier efforts by Panamanian rebels to seize control of the future canal zone, declare independence from Colombia, and seek diplomatic recognition by the United States. Congress promptly approved a treaty with the new government that granted the United States "power and authority" over the canal "in perpetuity." Under President Jimmy Carter, the U.S. government agreed in 1977 to turn control of the canal over to Panama in 2000.

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THE EXPANSION OF U.S. POWER

The central goal of this book is to help readers understand U.S. foreign policy today. This understanding is impossible, however, without reference to the nation's past experience, first as a regional power and then as the predominant world power. This chapter reviews these developments, evaluating their relevance to the current policy process. A single chapter cannot provide an exhaustive survey of U.S. diplomatic history, but it can highlight the pivotal events that shaped the nation's relations with the world beyond its shores.[1]

Such a historical perspective reveals the origins and development of the paradox of America's world power. As the United States grew from a regional power to the holder of global primacy, it continued to maintain the political arrangements, along with the social and cultural traditions, that prevailed in a time of diplomatic detachment. Early American leaders advanced claims of moral, political, and social **exceptionalism**, or a widely held sense of superiority. Living up to these values proved difficult, however, as these leaders contradicted their righteous claims. American leaders and citizens built a nation-state that gained power, reaching a level of global prominence that had no competitors in modern history.

This historical review covers two distinct time periods. The first involves the gradual expansion of U.S. territory, wealth, and influence from the nation's founding to the First World War. As we will find, early American leaders charted a course of unilateral action, avoiding diplomatic ties to the great powers of Europe while building an industrial economy that would make the United States a major force in global trade markets. As for territorial expansion, the western frontier offered a limitless opportunity to create, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, an "**empire** of liberty" from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans.

In Their Own Words

Barack Obama *On September 28, 2014, President Obama appeared on the CBS news program 60 Minutes. Interviewer Steve Kroft questioned the high costs of U.S. activism on the world stage. Obama's response reflected his view of American primacy while also capturing the nation's historic sense of mission.*

America leads. We are the indispensable nation. We have capacity no one else has. Our military is the best in the history of the world. And when trouble comes up anywhere in the world, they don't call Beijing. They don't call Moscow. They call us. That's the deal.

When there's a typhoon in the Philippines, take a look at who's helping the Philippines deal with that situation. When there's an earthquake in Haiti, take a look at who's leading the charge making sure Haiti can rebuild. That's how we roll. And that's what makes this America.

SOURCE: CBS, *60 Minutes*, "President Obama: What Makes Us America," September 28, 2014, www.cbsnews.com/news/president-obama-60-minutes/.

The second period covers the conduct of U.S. foreign policy once the country became a great power in the twentieth century. The United States began the century in the midst of a struggle to colonize the Philippines and then asserted hegemonic control over Central America. Other leaders became engulfed in a struggle against the Soviet Union and other communist states. The Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 left the United States in a position of unprecedented global primacy. A decade later, terrorists attacked in the heart of New York City. As journalist Michael Hirsh (2003, 25) observed, "We are in this world with both feet now. We have achieved our Founding Fathers' fondest dream, and, at the same time, their worst nightmare. We are a shining success, the supreme power on earth. And we are entangled everywhere." Such is the paradox of world power.

ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

America's earliest leaders were concerned first and foremost with building political institutions that could preserve the nation's independence. The Articles of Confederation, which in 1781 established the framework of the first American political system, featured a very weak central government. Under the articles, the original thirteen states conducted their own trade policies while the cash-starved Congress largely dismantled the nation's military forces, thereby making the United States vulnerable to intimidation by more unified powers overseas. The country cried out for a stronger national government. Under the U.S. Constitution, drafted in 1787 and ratified in 1788, states maintained primary control over their internal affairs while ceding sovereignty to the federal government. The president and Congress shared responsibilities for American foreign policy (see Chapters 4 and 5).

The new framework was not meant to encourage U.S. activism in diplomacy, which many Americans saw as an artifact of the Old World, long dominated by monarchs, church leaders, and feudal despots. Thomas Jefferson, the first secretary of state and third president, observed in a note to his personal secretary, William Short, that diplomacy was "the pest of the peace of the world, as the workshop in which nearly all the wars of Europe are manufactured." By 1820, the United States had become the fourth-richest country in the world as measured by per capita income (Prestowitz 2003, 84). Alexander Hamilton, the first Treasury secretary, believed the country should "erect one great American system superior to the control of all trans-Atlantic force or influence and able to dictate the terms of the connection between the old and the new world" (quoted in Earle 1937, 69). Jefferson, too, envisioned U.S. dominance extending beyond the nation's borders.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the United States was hardly an isolationist country in its formative years (see Table 2.1). The expansion of American power featured a consistent pattern of **unilateralism**. Rather than collaborating and

TABLE 2.1

U.S. Foreign Policy Chronology, 1783–1945

1783	United States gains independence from Great Britain.
1788	Constitution establishes stronger American government.
1793	United States proclaims neutrality in European wars.
1803	France sells Louisiana Territory to United States.
1812	Territorial and trade disputes provoke U.S. war with Great Britain.
1823	Monroe Doctrine proclaims U.S. sphere of influence throughout Western Hemisphere.
1845	United States annexes Texas.
1846	The Mexican-American War begins.
1853	United States forcefully opens Japan to American trade.
1867	Russia sells Alaska to the United States.
1898	United States annexes Hawaii.
1898	Spanish-American War begins.
1899	United States calls for "Open Door policy" toward China.
1902	U.S. troops, after three years of guerrilla war, colonize the Philippines.
1903	United States signs treaty to build Panama Canal.
1904	Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine grants United States "international police power."
1914	World War I begins in Europe.
1917	United States declares war against Germany.
1918	German surrender ends World War I.
1919	U.S. Senate rejects Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations.
1928	Kellogg-Briand Pact renounces war as an "instrument of national policy."
1935	Congress passes Neutrality Acts barring U.S. intervention in Europe.
1939	German territorial conquests lead to World War II.
1941	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor provokes U.S. entry into World War II.
1944	Bretton Woods system, including World Bank and International Monetary Fund, is created.
1945	Defeat of Axis powers ends World War II. United Nations is established.

pooling resources with like-minded states, leaders adopted a unilateral foreign policy. President George Washington held the benefits of going it alone, and three years later, he summarized his view in his Farewell Address (1796):

> The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. . . . Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. . . . Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. . . . It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.

MANIFEST DESTINY ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

The United States, driven by a "cult of nationalism" that provided a moral basis for expansion, came to dominate the Western Hemisphere by default (Van Alstyne 1965). The nation's emergence as a regional power coincided with the demise of the British, French, Russian, and Spanish outposts in North America. Globally, a **multipolar** balance of power existed that was anchored by the European powers, which maintained relatively peaceful relations with each other in the century separating the Napoleonic and world wars. The United States, which along with Japan emerged as formidable "offshore powers" in the nineteenth century (see Figure 2.1), filled this geopolitical vacuum in a variety of ways: by buying vast territories at bargain prices, negotiating settlements, and forcefully seizing territories when other measures failed.

The first major territorial gain occurred in 1803, when Jefferson acquired the vast Louisiana Territory, which stretched westward from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and northward from the Gulf of Mexico to the Oregon Territory. French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte, who had regained the territory from Spain two years earlier, was unable to govern, let alone defend, such a massive amount of land in North America while pursuing his ambitions in Europe. He made the most of the situation by offering Louisiana to the United States for $15 million (or about three cents an acre). Jefferson, though suspecting that his role in the Louisiana Purchase was "an act beyond the Constitution," eagerly accepted the offer (see Kukla 2003).

The acquisition of the Louisiana Territory, followed by the displacement of Spain from Florida, left the United States free to focus on state building, economic development, and further continental expansion (see Map 2.1, Nineteenth-Century European Empires and U.S. Continental Expansion). After the War of 1812, in

FIGURE 2.1

Multipolar Balance of World Power (mid-nineteenth century)

which they struggled over unresolved trade and territorial differences, the United States and Great Britain established close economic ties. The demise of the Spanish empire in Latin America, which led to the liberation of its colonies, paved the way for U.S. regional hegemony. In 1823, President James Monroe, seeking to discourage renewed European intrusions into Latin America as well as Russian ambitions along the Pacific coast, claimed the **Monroe Doctrine**, which further separated the United States from the European powers:

> In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. . . . With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected. . . . The political system of the [European] powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. . . . We should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.

Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821 paved the way for the next significant act of U.S. expansion. The U.S. government's annexation of Texas in 1845 was viewed as evidence that the United States had God's blessing to continue its westward expansion. In the *Democratic Review*, editor John O'Sullivan claimed the **manifest destiny** of the United States "to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions" (quoted in Pratt 1927, 797–798). The United States quickly defeated the Mexican army.

MAP 2.1

Nineteenth-Century European Empires and U.S. Continental Expansion

SOURCE: Thomas M. Magstadt, *An Empire If You Can Keep It: Power and Principle in American Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2004), xviii, xix. Reprinted by permission of CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications Inc.

OPENING THE DOOR TO ASIA

The conquest of northern Mexico, along with the acquisition of the Oregon Territory from Great Britain in 1846, effectively closed the western frontier, which had been a symbol of virtually endless opportunity for American expansion. Advocates of continued expansion turned to the Pacific Ocean as the new frontier. "He would be a rash prophet who should assert that the expansive character of America has now entirely ceased," wrote historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1920 (37). The United States had much to gain economically by tapping into the enormous markets of East Asia. Japan offered commercial relations as well as docking and fuel rights. When these efforts failed, President Millard Fillmore deployed naval vessels to Tokyo. Faced with this early example of **gunboat diplomacy**, Japan's emperor accepted a "treaty of friendship" in 1854 that provided for U.S. access to the Japanese market.

American interests in the Pacific Ocean extended well beyond Japan. In addition to the several islands it occupied to serve as coaling stations for U.S. ships and to prevent other countries from taking the islands, the United States was especially interested in the Hawaiian Islands, located midway between North America and Asia. Unable to achieve a treaty on its own terms, the U.S. government, in 1893, recruited a rebel army that staged a successful coup against the monarchy. Within days, the new government of Hawaii signed a treaty of annexation with the United States. The United States also gained control of Alaska during this period, purchasing the remote territory from Russia's czar for $7 million.[2]

Critics accused the United States of behaving like the European empires it had long condemned. But such protests proved futile, as illustrated by the Spanish-American War in which the United States clashed with Spain over its colony in Cuba. As American forces were ousting Spain from Cuba, a U.S. fleet on the other side of the world was defeating Spanish forces in the Philippines, another Spanish colony. The United States gained control of the Philippines only after waging a lengthy war that left thousands of casualties, largely Filipino, in its wake. Advocates of American occupation seized on the prospect of bringing Christianity and "civilization" to the Philippines. These factors contributed to McKinley's decision in 1902 to rule the Philippines as a U.S. colony, marking an exception to the U.S. government's general rule of opposing colonization.

The nation's territory extended across North America and the Pacific Ocean; its population doubled between 1865 and 1890 to 71 million, in large part from European immigration. Meanwhile, U.S. economic output matched, and then exceeded, that of the major European powers. More Americans lived in cities than in rural areas, and industrial production contributed more than agriculture to national output. Securing overseas markets, therefore, became a national priority. In 1899, the United States claimed an **Open Door policy** designed to prevent China from being carved up among European trading interests.

A BIG STICK IN LATIN AMERICA

President Theodore Roosevelt, a former naval officer and a veteran of the Spanish-American War, and also a strong advocate of U.S. expansion, proved to be the central American figure in foreign policy as the new century began (see E. Morris 2001). He eagerly sought to become a world leader. In 1905, Roosevelt received the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the end of the Russo-Japanese War. Two years later, Roosevelt deployed a U.S. naval armada around the world, a symbol of the nation's arrival as a global power. The president believed in a version of social Darwinism that viewed wars as both inevitable and noble, with the victors assigned a "mandate from civilization" to look after less powerful nations. Citing a favorite aphorism from his safaris in Africa, Roosevelt pledged that the United States would "speak softly, but carry a big stick."

Roosevelt was concerned with Latin America, a U.S. sphere of influence since the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine. The president engineered a domestic uprising in northern Colombia in 1903, after which the United States recognized the new Republic of Panama and signed a treaty to build and lease the Panama Canal. Concerned then not only with European meddling in the region but also with internal power struggles that threatened friendly governments, the president issued the **Roosevelt Corollary** to the Monroe Doctrine. Following this logic, Roosevelt ordered U.S. military interventions in the Dominican Republic (1904), Honduras (1905), Cuba (1906), and Panama (1908).

FIGHTING TWO WORLD WARS

The Roosevelt Corollary may have affirmed U.S. dominance of the Western Hemisphere, but developments elsewhere created new challenges for the United States. In Europe, a century of calm was quickly coming to an end. The creation of a unified German state in 1871 started this downward spiral. Germany's rise coincided with the decline of the Ottoman, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires, all of which had contributed to a crude but stable peace in Europe. Major shifts in the global balance of power, which included the rise in stature of the United States and Japan, would lead to two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

For Americans, Europe's plunge into war in 1914 affirmed the prudence of their country's historic aversion to foreign entanglements (see Tuchman 1962). As order unraveled in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson sought to keep the United States "neutral in fact as well as name." But the country could not maintain its detached posture once the conflict in Europe extended into the Atlantic Ocean. Any hopes

for hiding ended in May 1915, when a German submarine destroyed the British ocean liner *Lusitania*, whose passengers had included 128 American citizens. Russia's withdrawal from the conflict in November 1917 secured Germany's position in the east and allowed its forces to concentrate along the western front. The prospect of German control over all of Europe and its implications for U.S. security prompted Congress to declare war against Germany in 1917.

The United States contributed to the war effort in two ways. First, Wilson drew on the nation's immense industrial capacity by shipping massive volumes of weapons, munitions, and medical supplies to its allies, who were mired in a defensive stalemate against Germany. Troops on both sides were dug into long lines of mud-filled trenches, unable to advance against the new generation of armored tanks, long-range artillery, and automatic weapons. Second, Wilson deployed U.S. troops to the western front to reinforce exhausted French and British forces and begin a slow counteroffensive. The strength of the U.S. forces ultimately tipped the balance, leading to Germany's surrender in November 1918.

To Wilson, the United States should not fight simply for its survival or that of its allies. The nation should defend a more general principle: the right of citizens of any country to determine their own destinies. World War I, then, became a war to "make the world safe for democracy." When the war ended, Wilson felt duty bound to seek a world order that would put these principles into practice and ensure that the recent conflict had been "the war to end all wars." He proposed a new system based on the concept of **collective security**. In such a system, leaders would defend each other in the event of outside aggression. Wilson outlined his plan to Congress in early 1918, when he identified "fourteen points" that all countries should respect, including worldwide disarmament, freedom of the seas, open markets, and the prohibition of secret diplomacy. Most famously, the president proposed the formation of a **League of Nations** that would provide the institutional foundation for collective security.

An array of major powers called for global treaty to "outlaw" war. Two assumptions underlaid the Pact of Paris, also known as the **Kellogg-Briand Pact** (named for the U.S. and French foreign ministers). First, military force was an unacceptable tool of statecraft. Second, the destructive power of modern military weapons, clearly demonstrated in the First World War, made the future use of such weapons suicidal to all parties. In 1928, representatives from fifteen countries signed a pact that condemned "recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and . . . as an instrument of national policy." Eventually, sixty-two governments, including those of Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union, signed the agreement. These reforms did not prevent the major powers from playing the same old game of power politics. After Japan seized control of Manchuria in 1931, Prime Minister Tojo Hideki ordered his forces to gain control of the entire Chinese coastline. Two years later, Adolf Hitler became

chancellor of Germany and repudiated the Treaty of Versailles. Taking his cue from Hitler, Italy's fascist Benito Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

American leaders favored intervention, but the public remained unconvinced. President Franklin Roosevelt bowed to the popular view. During the 1940 presidential campaign, he declared, "I have said this before and I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars" (quoted in Schulzinger 1994, 172). Nevertheless, Roosevelt brought the nation's considerable resources to bear in support of its allies. As German forces advanced toward the English Channel, the president, through the **lend-lease program**, provided Great Britain with U.S. military hardware and ships in exchange for American access to British bases in the Caribbean.

The first direct assault on the United States occurred half a world away. Japanese leaders knew that only the United States stood in the way of their plan to create a Japanese-led "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." On December 7, 1941, Japanese warplanes attacked the large American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The raid killed some 2,500 Americans and devastated the U.S. fleet. Roosevelt declared December 7 a "date which will live in infamy." Three days later, Germany, which had formed an "axis" with Japan and Italy, declared war against the United States.

Roosevelt chose to avoid the moralistic rationales that Wilson had employed in World War I. Instead, he identified clear threats to **national security** and focused on military measures to overcome them. The United States would be engaged militarily on two fronts, thousands of miles apart. In the Pacific, the United States restored its naval forces and reversed Japan's advances, which by 1943 included the Philippines (a U.S. colony). In 1944, Allied forces landed on the coast of France and began their eastward push against German troops. These forces joined Soviet troops, who had been equally successful on the eastern front. Germany's surrender, along with Hitler's suicide, came in May 1945.

A month before Germany's surrender, Roosevelt had suffered a fatal stroke, and Vice President Harry Truman had succeeded to the presidency. Truman suddenly learned about the U.S. military scientists experimenting with nuclear energy that could yield an explosive force of unprecedented magnitude. The scientists involved in the secret Manhattan Project, based in Los Alamos, New Mexico, detonated the first nuclear bomb there on July 16, 1945. Only then did government officials notify Truman of this awesome new weapon, which could be used to drop nuclear bombs against Japan. With this in mind, he approved the August 6 nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and the August 9 bombing of Nagasaki, which together killed nearly 150,000 Japanese citizens. Faced with the prospect

of additional U.S. nuclear attacks, Japan surrendered to the United States and brought World War II to a merciful close.

GLOBAL PRIMACY AND THE COLD WAR

Immediately after World War II, the United States entered the third global conflict of the twentieth century. This conflict was labeled the **Cold War** because it never led to direct military combat between its principal antagonists, the United States and the Soviet Union. The basis of this conflict was ideological, pitting the capitalist countries, led by the United States, against the communist countries, led by the Soviet Union. Whereas capitalism respected private property and glorified free enterprise, communism sought to improve living standards by erecting a powerful state that owned and operated the means of economic production. A military showdown between the two superpowers would have produced death and destruction of unknowable proportions. The Cold War, while it avoided such an outcome, produced an endless series of "hot" wars in other parts of the world, mainly among developing countries caught in the crossfire (see Table 2.2).

The United States emerged from World War II as the predominant world power, maintaining a nuclear monopoly for a time and producing as much economic output as the rest of the world combined. However, the Soviet Union, exploiting its considerable resources, both real and potential, soon shifted the global balance of power to a **bipolar** one, with the United States and the Soviet Union representing the contesting "poles" (see Figure 2.2). With a sphere of influence that spanned from East Germany to the Alaskan border, the Soviet Union possessed the world's largest conventional forces and gradually caught up with the United States in the nuclear arms race. In addition to the arms race, the worldwide competition for allies became a defining element of the Cold War.

Strains between the United States and the Soviet Union, allies against the Axis powers in World War II, became insurmountable shortly after the war. Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader, imposed firm control over the countries of Eastern Europe that his armies had liberated from Nazi Germany. In February 1946, he predicted an inevitable clash between the communist and capitalist countries and the eventual triumph of communism. A month later, Winston Churchill, the former British prime minister who left office just before the war ended, articulated the division of Europe that would last throughout the Cold War: "An **Iron Curtain** has descended across the Continent" (see Map 2.2, Cold War Division of Europe).

The task of formulating a Cold War strategy was assigned to George Kennan, a Soviet specialist in the State Department. Kennan first laid out his plan in a February 1946 "long telegram" that circulated within the government. It was reprinted a year later in the journal *Foreign Affairs* (see In Their Own Words box). Kennan's call for

TABLE 2.2

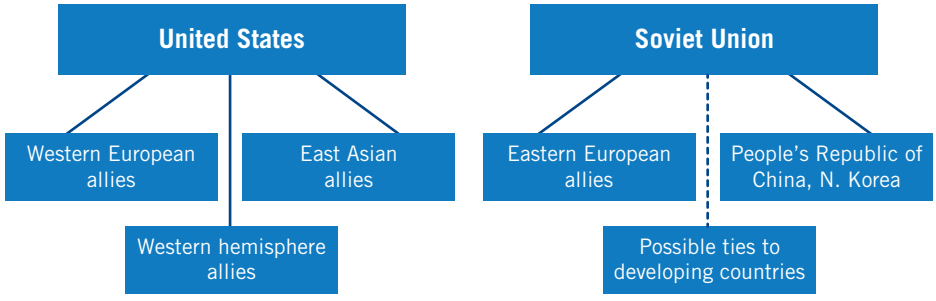
U.S. Foreign Policy Chronology: The Cold War

1945	Yalta Conference of victorious powers seeks to organize the postwar world.
1946	George Kennan devises containment strategy as the Cold War sets in.
1947	Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine call for U.S. aid to allies.
1948	The State of Israel is created and immediately recognized by the United States.
1949	NATO is formed by United States and eleven other nations.
1950	North Korea attacks South Korea, prompting UN military intervention.
1953	Korean War ends; CIA aids overthrow of Iran's government.
1954	CIA aids overthrow of Guatemala's government.
1959	The Cuban Revolution produces a communist state close to the U.S. border.
1962	Cuban missile crisis prompts nuclear showdown between the Soviet Union and United States.
1964	Congress authorizes U.S. military intervention in Vietnam.
1968	Tet offensive in Vietnam prompts birth of antiwar movement in United States.
1970	Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia; four student protestors are killed at Kent State University.
1972	Nixon launches détente strategy, visits Soviet Union and China.
1973	The last combat troops leave Vietnam.
1979	Iranian militants seize U.S. embassy in Tehran; Soviet Union invades Afghanistan.
1981	Reagan begins major military buildup as the Cold War heats up.
1986	U.S. covert support for Nicaraguan rebels leads to Iran-*contra* scandal.
1989	Hungary opens borders with Austria, signaling the Cold War's demise.
1990	Russia and Ukraine declare independence from Soviet Union; Germany is reunified.
1991	Soviet Union dissolves, ending the Cold War.

the **containment** of communism struck a middle ground between two alternatives: U.S. detachment from the emerging conflict and an all-out invasion and "liberation" of the Soviet Union. Under the containment strategy, the United States would accept the existing sphere of Soviet influence, but it would prevent further Soviet expansion by any means, including military force. In doing so, the United States

FIGURE 2.2

Bipolar Balance of Power in Early Cold War



would wait out the Soviet Union, looking forward to the day when its internal flaws—the denial of individual rights, the lack of a market economy, the high costs of foreign occupation—would cause the communist system to collapse from within.

Beyond waging the Cold War, the United States sought to create a "stable world order" that reflected its own political and economic principles. The behavior of the fascists had provided a strong case for democratic rule. The U.S. economy would thrive in a market-friendly global trading system that provided outlets for American goods and services. In addition, U.S. banks, multinational corporations, and private investors would benefit enormously if they had free access to foreign markets. In this respect, the American grand strategy during the Cold War pursued objectives overseas and within the United States.

NEW STRUCTURES OF FOREIGN POLICY

The challenges and opportunities facing the United States after World War II, combined with the lessons of the interwar years, deterred U.S. foreign policy makers from retreating again into their hemispheric shell. The country had to engage in world politics. Less clear, however, was *how* the United States would engage in politics at that level. Would the U.S. government pursue its own interests or those of the international community? Would it choose military or nonmilitary instruments to achieve its goals? Would it act alone or in collaboration with other governments? The answers came in the late 1940s, when President Truman concluded that the nation's interests intimately tied to global stability, political reform, and economic growth. Led by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, the "wise men" of the Truman administration believed that a world of governments and economies resembling those of the United States would be more peaceful, democratic, and prosperous than the present one (see Isaacson and Thomas 1986; McMahon 2008).

MAP 2.2

Cold War Division of Europe

SOURCES: Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics: People's Power, Preferences, and Perceptions*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003), 197; Steven W. Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, 18th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010), 30. Reprinted by permission of CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications Inc.

Global pressures compelled the United States to centralize national security structures and increase the president's direct control over military policy—steps viewed as vital in the nuclear age. The National Security Act of 1947, the most sweeping reorganization of U.S. foreign policy in the nation's history, paved the way for the creation of the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Officials from fifty governments came to San Francisco in early 1945 to create the United Nations (UN). Along with the other powers of the immediate postwar period—China, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union—the United States protected its interests by means of a permanent seat and veto power on the UN Security Council. Countries in the UN General Assembly have one vote, but their votes are nullified by permanent members of the Security Council. The assembly provides a chance for exchanges, debates, and resolutions.

The creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 resulted from several troubling developments in Europe. In 1947, Great Britain had withdrawn its military support for Greece and Turkey, whose governments faced internal revolts by communists and other groups. Under the **Truman Doctrine**, the United States provided military aid to both states and, more broadly, pledged support for "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." In February 1948, the Soviet Union gained control of Czechoslovakia by supporting a coup against its elected leader and imposing a communist regime in its place.

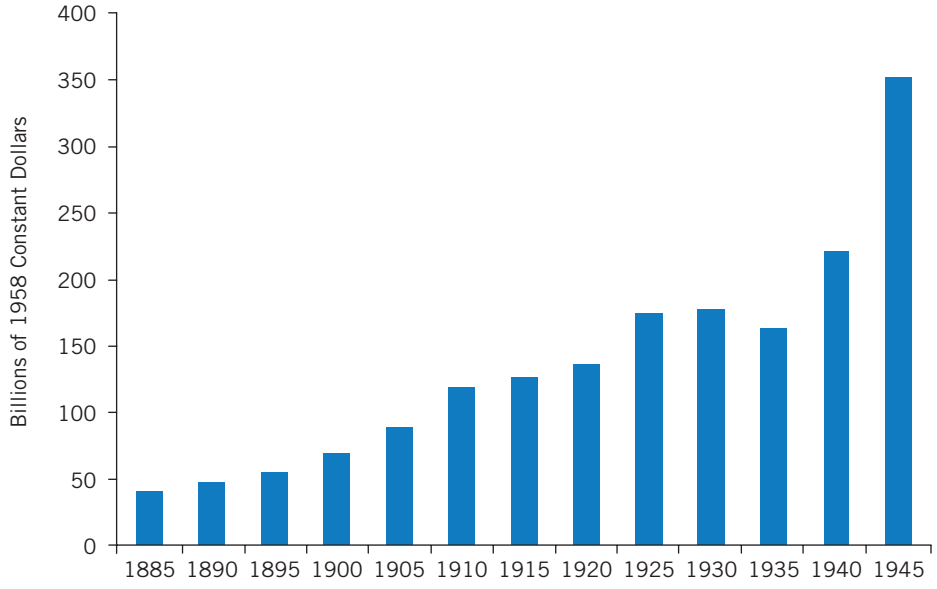
On the economic front, the U.S. government also engaged in a flurry of institution building. The nation's economy had grown rapidly in the years before and during the war (see Figure 2.3), and by 1945, U.S. output matched that of the rest of the world combined. In the summer of 1944, officials from forty-four governments met in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to discuss postwar financial arrangements.

The **Bretton Woods agreements** created a system of fixed currency exchange rates based on the U.S. dollar, which because of American economic clout would be considered "good as gold." The Bretton Woods system included two international financial institutions designed to stabilize the world economy further (see Chapter 6). The first World Bank would lend money to member states to rebuild their industries, and the second International Monetary Fund would manage currency exchanges and provide relief to member states facing short-term currency crises.

The **Marshall Plan**, named after Secretary of State George Marshall, paved the way for Western Europe's economic recovery and its eventual political alignment within the European Union. Truman agreed with Marshall that Europe urgently needed U.S. help to revive its slumping economies. Congress then authorized the transfer of $13 billion (about $100 billion in current dollars) in low-interest loans to

FIGURE 2.3

U.S. Economic Growth, 1885–1945



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Statistical History of the United States: From Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

these countries, which were required to coordinate their plans for recovery. They did so in 1948 by creating the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). The success of the OEEC in 1957 led to the creation of the European Economic Community, which later became the European Community and now is the European Union.

REGIONAL CONFLICTS AND THE VIETNAM SYNDROME

The new architecture also countered two threats: the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC), the largest countries by area and population, respectively. Of most concern was the USSR's detonation of a nuclear device in September 1949, an act that neutralized the U.S. advantage in this area of military power. The PRC came into being in October 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong. Among its first actions, the PRC signed a treaty of cooperation in 1950 with the Soviet Union, which deepened fears in Washington that the balance of global power was shifting against the United States and toward communism.

The PRC was particularly troubling because, unlike the Soviet Union, China represented a potential role model for other developing countries. Colonial rule was

yielding to the creation of new Asian and African countries, which quickly gained a voting majority in the UN General Assembly. The crushing poverty in these new states, and the lack of political institutions in place to satisfy their citizens' rising expectations, raised additional U.S. fears that these countries would turn to communism. The *third world*, a term used to distinguish the region from the *first world* (the capitalist bloc) and the *second world* (the communist bloc), figured prominently in U.S. foreign policy and attracted military intervention by both superpowers in three areas: Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam.

KOREA. After World War II, the Soviet Union and United States were concerned about future control of the Korean peninsula in Northeast Asia, which had been a Japanese colony. The two governments agreed to divide the peninsula along the thirty-eighth parallel—with Moscow controlling the northern and the United States the southern region—until the creation of a unified national government. Any hopes for reunification vanished in June 1950 when communist forces from North Korea attacked their counterparts in South Korea. A multinational force led by the UN and United States pushed North Korean troops back across the thirty-eighth parallel.[3] With no clear victor, North Korea and South Korea remained divided for the rest of the Cold War and are still separate nations. Nuclear weapons played an important role in Eisenhower's foreign policy, which he labeled the **New Look**. The president believed nuclear weapons provided "more bang for the buck" than did conventional forces. The New Look also featured new military alliances that created a "containment belt" around the Soviet Union and China (see Map 2.3, Cold War Alliances With the United States).[4]

CUBA. The gravest challenge to U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was posed by the nearby island of Cuba, less than a hundred miles from Florida. In 1959, the U.S.-backed military regime of Fulgencio Batista was overthrown and replaced by a Marxist regime led by Fidel Castro, who openly declared the United States to be an enemy of the Cuban people. But a U.S. covert operation failed miserably in 1961 when Cuban exiles were repelled at the Bay of Pigs. The standoff between the United States and Cuba took a perilous turn in November 1962. Americans discovered that the Cuban government began installing medium-range nuclear missiles on the island. Kennedy, well aware of the source of the nuclear missiles, insisted that Castro remove the missiles or face swift military action. After nearly two weeks of tense negotiations between the U.S. and Soviet governments, which came to be called the **Cuban missile crisis**, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev ordered the missiles removed. A direct, and possibly apocalyptic, clash between the superpowers was narrowly averted. Castro's Cuba, however, remained a stubborn obstacle to U.S. regional and global interests (Schoultz 2009).

MAP 2.3

Cold War Alliances With the United States

SOURCES: Organization of American States, www.oas.org; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, www.nato.int; Steven W. Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II,* 19th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2013), 69.

VIETNAM. As the events in Cuba unfolded, the United States also was becoming more deeply immersed in a more distant conflict. Its outcome would reveal the limits of U.S. military power, raise doubts about the country's moral posture in the Cold War, and shatter the domestic consensus favoring the containment strategy (Hess 2009). The war began when France could no longer subdue a colony based in Vietnam. The U.S. government, which feared the rise to power of a communist regime, stepped into the quagmire. Eisenhower viewed Vietnam through the lens of the "domino theory," which held that a communist victory in one country would lead to a succession of additional victories in neighboring states.

The U.S. military presence in Vietnam grew slowly in the early 1960s and then soared to half a million soldiers and advisers by 1968. Like Korea, Vietnam was split into northern and southern regions, with the north allied with communism and the south receiving support from the United States and its allies. Despite the superior firepower of the United States, Kennedy and his successor in office, Lyndon Johnson, could not defeat the north's Viet Cong forces, led by Ho Chi Minh. Television networks broadcast graphic images of the carnage on a

AP Photo

A North Vietnamese tank rolls through the gate of the Presidential Palace in Saigon, April 30, 1975, signifying the fall of South Vietnam. Thousands of Vietnamese citizens celebrated in Saigon, later renamed Ho Chi Minh City in honor of the leader of the revolutionary movement.

daily basis. Despite President Richard Nixon's promises to end the war, the conflict continued into the mid-1970s, when Vietnam gained independence under a communist government. Nearly 59,000 U.S. troops had died in the conflict, and another 153,000 had been wounded. More than 1 million Vietnamese had been killed or wounded.

The Vietnam War proved disastrous for the United States in several ways. For one thing, U.S. leaders had wrongly viewed it as an ideological struggle rather than a war of independence and self-determination. As a result, their goal of winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people had been doomed from the start. Militarily, U.S. forces had failed to adapt to the demands of guerrilla warfare while assaults by American bombers had merely strengthened the will of the Vietnamese.[5] As the national soul-searching associated with the **Vietnam syndrome** took hold across the country after the war, the moral superiority of the United States could no longer be taken for granted—nor could the virtues and open-ended military commitments of the containment doctrine.

THE END OF THE COLD WAR

By the early 1970s, the Soviet Union had caught up with the United States in the most potent category of military power, nuclear weapons. At the same time, the U.S. economy was showing serious signs of distress. The costs of the Vietnam War and other burdens had prevented the country from maintaining its role as the "lender of last resort." Domestic unrest and new regional crises, particularly in the Middle East, forced Nixon to change the course of U.S. foreign policy.

Nixon assigned his **national security adviser**, Henry Kissinger, the task of designing a strategy that recognized these new realities. Kissinger, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany and a passionate advocate of U.S. primacy (Keys 2011), soon settled on **détente**, a term borrowed from the French meaning an easing of tensions. Under the détente policy, U.S. and Soviet leaders established a closer working relationship so that regional crises could be resolved without threatening a direct confrontation. In addition, in return for Soviet restraint, the United States offered that country material benefits, including badly needed American agricultural exports. The two governments also negotiated a series of arms control treaties that first limited, and later reduced, the stockpiles of nuclear weapons on both sides.

Nixon also sought improved relations with the People's Republic of China, whose communist government the United States had not yet recognized. The PRC, still ruled by Mao Zedong, was struggling, so it stood to benefit greatly from the economic opportunities U.S. recognition would bring. The breakthrough between the countries came in a May 1972 visit by Nixon to China, during which the United States officially recognized the PRC as the legitimate government of China.