

Ch 26 The U.S. in Today's World

Sec 1 – The 1990s and the New Millennium

Clinton Wins the Presidency

1. Election of 1992 – George H.W. Bush (Rep) vs. Bill Clinton (Dem) vs. Ross Perot (Ind)
 - a. George Bush – popularity soared after the Persian Gulf War, **popularity rating was 89%**, however, his approval rating took a nose-dive in early 1992 **dropping to 40%** due to a worsening recession and high unemployment
 - b. Bill Clinton – Gov. of Arkansas, vowed to strengthen the nation's weak economy while leading the Democratic party in a more moderate direction
 - i. **Emphasized moving people off welfare and called for growth in private business**
 - ii. **Clinton's biggest problems came from concerns about his character (dodging the Vietnam War & the Whitewater Scandal)**
 - c. Ross Perot – Texas billionaire, drew strength from the irritable mood of many voters by targeting growing federal budget deficits
 - i. 27th Amendment – prevents congressional pay raises from taking effect until after an election has occurred

d. Clinton won 370 electoral votes to 168 for Bush, however his 43% share of the popular vote was the smallest winning percentage since Woodrow Wilson in 1912 – Bush 38%, Perot 19%

The Clinton Record

1. Health Care Reform – Clinton had promised sweeping reform to offer all Americans guaranteed, affordable health care

a. Hillary Rodham Clinton – appointed by her husband to a head a task force on the health care issue

i. Mrs. Clinton put together a plan that would have extended coverage to every American, mandated that employers pay 80% of their workers' insurance costs, and provided for a national health board to monitor spiraling health-care costs

ii. The plan was presented to Congress in Sept. 1993 and Congress debated for a year allowing for small business and large insurance company lobbyists, as well as Republicans, to seal the plan's fate

iii. The program never came to the floor of Congress for a vote

2. Economy – unemployment fell and the stock market rose to new heights

- a. Clinton and a Republican controlled Congress agreed in 1997 on legislation to balance the federal budget by 2002
 - b. In 1998, for the first time in 30 years, the federal budget had a surplus
 - c. National Debt – had grown to \$5.5 trillion but due to increased gov't revenues Clinton was able to start paying down some of the debt
3. Welfare Reform – passed in 1996, put an end to a 61 year federal guarantee of welfare
- a. Placed limits on how long people could receive benefits and gave states “block grants” (set amounts of federal money they could spend on welfare or for other social concerns)

Crime and Terrorism

1. Columbine Shooting – April 1999, two students killed 12 students and a teacher while wounding 23 others before shooting themselves
2. World Trade Center Bombing – 1993 terrorists exploded bombs in the lower levels of the WTC
3. Oklahoma City Federal Building Bombing – 1995, Timothy McVeigh killed 168 people by parking a truck full of explosives in front of the federal building
4. USS *Cole* – a navy guided-missile destroyer stationed in the Arabian Sea

- a. Oct 2000 – while refueling in the Yemeni port of Aden, it was hit by a suicide attack, blowing a huge hole in the ship’s hull killing 17
- b. U.S. immediately blamed Saudi exile and Muslim extremist Osama bin Laden

New Foreign Policy Challenges - Clinton’s biggest challenge was to ease the instability that had followed the end of the Cold War

1. Russia – cooperated with the U.S. on economic and arms control issues, but criticized us for involvement in Yugoslavia

2. China – Clinton pushed for China to grant its citizens more democratic rights; however he supported a bill in 2000 granting China permanent trading rights

4. Former Yugoslavia - 1991 Yugoslavia broke into five nations

- a. Bosnia – Serbs began “ethnic cleansing”, killing or expelling from their homes people of certain ethnic groups

- i. U.S., NATO, and the UN worked to restore peace

- ii. Dayton Peace Accords – signed in Dec 1995 by the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia ending the conflict

- iii. Three years later Serbs attacked ethnic Albanians in the Serb province of Kosovo

- iv. In 1999, U.S. & NATO launched airstrikes against Serb targets with U.S. troops later being sent in as part of a peace-keeping force
 - v. In 2000, Slobodan Milosevic, the brutal Serbian president, was pushed from office
4. North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) – central piece of legislation for both the Bush and Clinton administrations
- a. Passed by the House in Nov 1993, lowered tariffs and brought Mexico into the free-trade zone that the U.S. and Canada had already established
 - b. Critics argued that NAFTA would weaken environmental regulations and result in the loss of American jobs to Mexico
 - c. Supporters argued that free trade and lower tariffs would strengthen all the participants' economies (especially Mexico's) and that would create more U.S. jobs
 - d. Many manufacturing jobs moved to Mexico and U.S. companies were forced to keep wages low although trade with Mexico did increase

The Republican Congress – **in mid-1994, amid the failure of his health-care plan and recurring questions about Whitewater, Clinton's approval rating dropped to 42%**

1. Newt Gingrich – Republican congressman from Georgia, began to turn voters’ dissatisfaction with Clinton into support for Republican candidates allowing them to recapture Congress during the mid-term elections
 - a. Contract with America – 10 items Republicans proposed to enact if they won control of Congress
 - i. Congressional term limits, a balanced budget amendment, tougher crime laws, and welfare reform
2. Voters gave Republican control of both houses of Congress for the 1st time since 1954 – only 38% of eligible voters voted
3. Government Shutdown – many Democrats and some Republicans refused to go along with these conservative reforms
 - a. After going his first two years w/o issuing a veto, Clinton issued 15 in his next two years
 - b. Clinton opposed Republican budgets that slowed the growth of entitlement programs and refused to compromise
 - c. Clash resulted in a shut down of the nonessential parts of the federal gov’t for a week in November and several weeks in December 1995 and January 1996

- i. Many government services were delayed which inconvenienced citizens and federal employees alike
- ii. 1/3 of Americans blamed Clinton for the shutdown, but even more, 44%, blamed Congress – Gingrich’s approval rating plunged to 22% (Speaker of the House)
- iii. Both sides agreed to compromise: Clinton promised to balance the federal budget in 7 years and Republicans promised to protect several of Clinton’s favorite programs

Election of 1996 – Clinton vs. Bob Dole (Rep) vs. Ross Perot (Reform Party)

1. Clinton – popularity began to soar after he and Congress started to work together in addition to the strong economy, held huge leads over Dole and Perot
2. Dole – offered a 15% cut in the income tax and focused on scandals within the Clinton administration
3. Perot – launched a television blitz attacking both major parties but without much success
4. Clinton won 49% of popular vote, Dole 41%, and Perot 8% however the Republicans were able to maintain control of Congress
5. Only 49% of eligible voters voted

Clinton's Second Term – in his 1998 State of the Union address, Bill Clinton outlined an impressive program of federal spending for schools, tax credits for child care, a hike in the minimum wage, and protection for Social Security – wouldn't happen due to scandal and international crisis

1. Clinton's Impeachment

- a. Clinton was accused of lying under oath about having an improper relationship with Monica Lewinsky, a White House intern, and also encouraging her to lie about their relationship
- b. Clinton denied having a sexual relationship with Lewinsky on national TV and in a deposition before a federal grand jury
- c. Dec 20, 1998 – House narrowly approves two articles of impeachment against Clinton
 - i. Perjury before a grand jury concerning his relationship with Lewinsky
 - ii. Obstruction of justice – accused of encouraging others to lie on his behalf
 - iii. On the evening of the House vote, 58% of Americans opposed impeachment while only 38% supported it
- d. Senate held a five week trial and hours of televised debate

- i. Clinton's approval rating remained exceptionally high, perhaps because most Americans doubted the political motives of his attackers and almost certainly because a strong economy kept most citizens content with his performance
 - ii. Democrats voted solidly against conviction and enough Republicans broke with their party to acquit Clinton on both charges
- e. Clinton survived the scandal but it limited his ability to be an effective president and it deepened public cynicism about politics and politicians