

## 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. 27<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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