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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TOPICS** | **WHO/What** | **WHEN/WHERE** | **OTHER FACTS** |
| **GLOBALIZATION**   * WTO * GATT * MULTINATIONAL CO. * FOUR TIGERS OF ASIA * EUROPEAN UNION * Pop Culture * World Cup * Olympics * NAFTA |  |  |  |
| **HUMAN RIGHTS**   * CIVIL RIGHTS (60s) * SUFFERAGE * Women’s Status * APARTHEID * ANC * GANDHI |  |  |  |
| **GEN. BALKANS** |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GEN. RWANDA**   * HUTU * TUTSI |  |  |  |
| **GEN. DARFUR** |  |  |  |
| **TECHNOLOGY**   * Green Revolution * Medicine * Internet * Space Explor. |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ISLAMIC LAW**   * 9/11: * IRANIAN REV.: * FUNDAMENTALISM (TALIBAN) |  |  |  |
| **SPACE:**   * Sputnik I * Hubble Space Telescope * Apollo & Soyuz * Voyager 2 * Pathfinder * Private Companies |  |  |  |
| **OIL INDUSTRY**   * OPEC * Gulf War |  |  |  |
| **ENVIROMENT**   * Sustainable Development * Ozone * Recycle * Climate Change (Global Warming) * Over Population * Pollution |  |  |  |

**GLOBALIZATION**

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by [information technology](http://www.globalization101.org/category/issues-in-depth/technology/). This process has effects on the [environment](http://www.globalization101.org/category/issues-in-depth/environment/), on [culture](http://www.globalization101.org/category/issues-in-depth/culture/), on political systems, on [economic development](http://www.globalization101.org/category/issues-in-depth/development/) and prosperity, and on [human physical well-being](http://www.globalization101.org/category/issues-in-depth/health/) in societies around the world.

Globalization is not new, though. For thousands of years, people—and, later, corporations—have been buying from and selling to each other in lands at great distances, such as through the famed Silk Road across Central Asia that connected China and Europe during the Middle Ages. Likewise, for centuries, people and corporations have invested in enterprises in other countries. In fact, many of the features of the current wave of globalization are similar to those prevailing before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

But policy and technological developments of the past few decades have spurred increases in cross-border trade, investment, and migration so large that many observers believe the world has entered a qualitatively new phase in its economic development. Since 1950, for example, the volume of world trade has increased by 20 times, and from just 1997 to 1999 flows of foreign investment nearly doubled, from $468 billion to $827 billion. Distinguishing this current wave of globalization from earlier ones, author Thomas Friedman has said that today globalization is “farther, faster, cheaper, and deeper.”

This current wave of globalization has been driven by policies that have opened economies domestically and internationally. In the years since the Second World War, and especially during the past two decades, many governments have adopted free-market economic systems, vastly increasing their own productive potential and creating myriad new opportunities for international trade and investment. Governments also have negotiated dramatic reductions in barriers to commerce and have established international agreements to promote trade in goods, services, and investment. Taking advantage of new opportunities in foreign markets, corporations have built foreign factories and established production and marketing arrangements with foreign partners. A defining feature of globalization, therefore, is an international industrial and financial business structure.

Technology has been the other principal driver of globalization. Advances in information technology, in particular, have dramatically transformed economic life. Information technologies have given all sorts of individual economic actors—consumers, investors, businesses—valuable new tools for identifying and pursuing economic opportunities, including faster and more informed analyses of economic trends around the world, easy transfers of assets, and collaboration with far-flung partners.

Globalization is deeply controversial, however. Proponents of globalization argue that it allows poor countries and their citizens to develop economically and raise their standards of living, while opponents of globalization claim that the creation of an unfettered international free market has benefited multinational corporations in the Western world at the expense of local enterprises, local cultures, and common people. Resistance to globalization has therefore taken shape both at a popular and at a governmental level as people and governments try to manage the flow of capital, labor, goods, and ideas that constitute the current wave of globalization.

To find the right balance between benefits and costs associated with globalization, citizens of all nations need to understand how globalization works and the policy choices facing them and their societies.

**Global Economic Development:**

* Multinational Corporations
* Free Trade
* Global Economy (NAFTA, WTO, GATT)
* European Union

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

The principle of universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international human rights law. This principle, as first emphasized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, has been reiterated in numerous international human rights conventions, declarations, and resolutions. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, for example, noted that it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems.

All States have ratified at least one, and 80% of States have ratified four or more, of the core human rights treaties, reflecting consent of States which creates legal obligations for them and giving concrete expression to universality. Some fundamental human rights norms enjoy universal protection by customary international law across all boundaries and civilizations. Human rights are inalienable. They should not be taken away, except in specific situations and according to due process. For example, the right to liberty may be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime by a court of law.

All human rights are indivisible, whether they are civil and political rights, such as the right to life, equality before the law and freedom of expression; economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to work, social security and education, or collective rights, such as the rights to development and self-determination, are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. The improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others. Likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others. Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting principle in international human rights law. The principle is present in all the major human rights treaties and provides the central theme of some of international human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The principle applies to everyone in relation to all human rights and freedoms and it prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories such as sex, race, and color and so on. The principle of non-discrimination is complemented by the principle of equality, as stated in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that States must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights. At the individual level, while we are entitled our human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others.

**International Human Rights Law**

* Food
* Freedom of Opinion and Expression
* Peaceful Assembly
* Slavery   
  Terrorism
* Torture
* Water and Sanitation
* Civil and political Rights
* Climate Change
* Death Penalty
* Cultural Rights
* Detention
* Disability
* Discrimination
* Education
* International Bill of Human Rights
* International Human Rights treaties

**Human Rights Issues**

* Adequate Housing
* Administration of Justice
* Children
* Women
* Youth

**GENOCIDE BALKANS**

In April 1992, the government of the Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Over the next several years, Bosnian Serb forces, with the backing of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army, targeted both Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) and Croatian civilians for atrocious crimes resulting in the deaths of some 100,000 people (80 percent Bosniak) by 1995. It was the worst act of genocide since the Nazi regime’s destruction of some 6 million European Jews during World War II. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Balkan states of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia became part of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. After the death of longtime Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980, growing nationalism among the different Yugoslav republics threatened to split their union apart. This process intensified after the mid-1980s with the rise of the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, who helped foment discontent between Serbians in Bosnia and Croatia and their Croatian, Bosniak and Albanian neighbors. In 1991, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia declared their independence; during the war in Croatia that followed, the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army supported Serbian separatists there in their brutal clashes with Croatian forces. In Bosnia, Muslims represented the largest single population group by 1971. More Serbs and Croats emigrated over the next two decades, and in a 1991 census Bosnia’s population of some 4 million was 44 percent Bosniak, 31 percent Serb, and 17 percent Croatian. Elections held in late 1990 resulted in a coalition government split between parties representing the three ethnicities (in rough proportion to their populations) and led by the Bosniak Alija Izetbegovic. As tensions built inside and outside the country, the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his Serbian Democratic Party withdrew from government and set up their own “Serbian National Assembly.” On March 3, 1992, after a referendum vote (which Karadzic’s party blocked in many Serb-populated areas), President Izetbegovic proclaimed Bosnia’s independence.

## **ATTACK ON SREBRENICA: JULY 1995**

By the summer of 1995, three towns in eastern Bosnia–Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde–remained under control of the Bosnian government. The U.N. had declared these enclaves “safe havens” in 1993, to be disarmed and protected by international peacekeeping forces. On July 11, however, Bosnian Serb forces advanced on Srebrenica, overwhelming a battalion of Dutch peacekeeping forces stationed there. Serbian forces subsequently separated the Bosniak civilians at Srebrenica, putting the women and girls on buses and sending them to Bosnian-held territory. Some of the women were raped or sexually assaulted, while the men and boys who remained behind were killed immediately or bussed to mass killing sites. Estimates of Bosniaks killed by Serb forces at Srebrenica range from around 7,000 to more than 8,000. After Bosnian Serb forces captured Zepa that same month and exploded a bomb in a crowded Sarajevo market, the international community began to respond more forcefully to the ongoing conflict and its ever-growing civilian death toll. In August 1995, after the Serbs refused to comply with a U.N. ultimatum, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joined efforts with Bosnian and Croatian forces for three weeks of bombing Bosnian Serb positions and a ground offensive. With Serbia’s economy crippled by U.N. trade sanctions and its military forces under assault in Bosnia after three years of warfare, Milosevic agreed to enter negotiations that October. The U.S.-sponsored peace talks in Dayton, [Ohio](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/ohio) in November 1995 (which included Izetbegovic, Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman) resulted in the creation of a federalized Bosnia divided between a Croat-Bosniak federation and a Serb republic.

**INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

Though the international community did little to prevent the systematic atrocities committed against Bosniaks and Croats in Bosnia while they were occurring, it did actively seek justice against those who committed them. In May 1993, the U.N. Security Council created the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague, Netherlands. It was the first international tribunal since the [Nuremberg Trials](http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nuremberg-trials) in 1945-46 and the first to prosecute genocide, among other war crimes. Radovan Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb military commander, General Ratko Mladic, were among those indicted by the ICTY for genocide and other crimes against humanity.

Over the better part of the next two decades, the ICTY charged more than 160 individuals of crimes committed during conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Brought before the tribunal in 2002 on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, Slobodan Milosevic served as his own defense lawyer; his poor health led to long delays in the trial until he was found dead in his prison cell in 2006. In 2007, the International Court of Justice issued its ruling in a historic civil lawsuit brought by Bosnia against Serbia. Though the court called the massacre at Srebrenica genocide and said that Serbia “could and should” have prevented it and punished those who committed it, it stopped short of declaring Serbia guilty of the genocide itself.

## **GENOCIDE RWANDA**

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Habyarimana and Burundi’s president Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down over Kigali, leaving no survivors. (It has never been conclusively determined who the culprits were. Some have blamed Hutu extremists, while others blamed leaders of the RPF.) Within an hour of the plane crash, the Presidential Guard together with members of the Rwandan armed forces (FAR) and Hutu militia groups known as the Interahamwe (“Those Who Attack Together”) and Impuzamugambi (“Those Who Have the Same Goal”) set up roadblocks and barricades and began slaughtering Tutsis and moderate Hutus with impunity. Among the first victims of the genocide were the moderate Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and her 10 Belgian bodyguards, killed on April 7. This violence created a political vacuum, into which an interim government of extremist Hutu Power leaders from the military high command stepped on April 9.

The mass killings in Rwanda quickly spread from Kigali to the rest of the country, with some 800,000 people slaughtered over the next three months. During this period, local officials and government-sponsored radio stations called on ordinary Rwandan civilians to murder their neighbors. Meanwhile, the RPF resumed fighting, and civil war raged alongside the genocide. By early July, RPF forces had gained control over most of country, including Kigali. In response, more than 2 million people, nearly all Hutus, fled Rwanda, crowding into refugee camps in the Congo (then called Zaire) and other neighboring countries.

After its victory, the RPF established a coalition government similar to that agreed upon at Arusha, with Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, as president and Paul Kagame, a Tutsi, as vice president and defense minister. Habyarimana’s NRMD party, which had played a key role in organizing the genocide, was outlawed, and a new constitution adopted in 2003 eliminated reference to ethnicity. The new constitution was followed by Kagame’s election to a 10-year term as Rwanda’s president and the country’s first-ever legislative elections.

## **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

As in the case of atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia around the same time, the international community largely remained on the sidelines during the Rwandan genocide. A U.N. Security Council vote in April 1994 led to the withdrawal of most of a U.N. peacekeeping operation (UNAMIR) created the previous fall to aid with governmental transition under the Arusha accord. As reports of the genocide spread, the Security Council voted in mid-May to supply a more robust force, including more than 5,000 troops. By the time that force arrived in full, however, the genocide had been over for months. In a separate French intervention approved by the U.N., French troops entered Rwanda from Zaire in late June. In the face of the RPF’s rapid advance, they limited their intervention to a “humanitarian zone” set up in southwestern Rwanda, saving tens of thousands of Tutsi lives but also helping some of the genocide’s plotters–allies of the French during the Habyarimana administration–to escape.

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, many prominent figures in the international community lamented the outside world’s general obliviousness to the situation and its failure to act in order to prevent the atrocities from taking place. As former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the PBS news program “Frontline”: “The failure of Rwanda is 10 times greater than the failure of Yugoslavia. Because in Yugoslavia the international community was interested, was involved. In Rwanda nobody was interested.” Attempts were later made to rectify this passivity. After the RFP victory, the UNAMIR operation was brought back up to strength; it remained in Rwanda until March 1996, as one of the largest humanitarian relief efforts in history.

In October 1994, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), located in Tanzania, was established as an extension of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague, the first international tribunal since the Nuremburg Trials of 1945-46 and the first with the mandate to prosecute the crime of genocide. In 1995, the ICTR began indicting and trying a number of higher-ranking people for their role in the Rwandan genocide; the process was made more difficult because the whereabouts of many suspects were unknown. The trials continued over the next decade and a half, including the 2008 conviction of three former senior Rwandan defense and military officials for organizing the genocide.

**GENOCIDE DARFUR**

GENOCIDE DARFUR

Darfur is a region in Sudan the size of France. It is home to about 6 million people from nearly 100 tribes. Some nomads. Some farmers. All Muslims. In 1989, General Omar Bashir took control of Sudan by military coup, which then allowed The National Islamic Front government to inflame regional tensions. In a struggle for political control of the area, weapons poured into Darfur. Conflicts increased between African farmers and many nomadic Arab tribes.

In 2003, two Darfuri rebel movements- the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)- took up arms against the Sudanese government, complaining about the marginalization of the area and the failure to protect sedentary people from attacks by nomads. The government of Sudan responded by unleashing Arab militias known as Janjaweed, or “devils on horseback”. Sudanese forces and Janjaweed militia attacked hundreds of villages throughout Darfur. Over 400 villages were completely destroyed and millions of civilians were forced to flee their homes.

In the ongoing genocide, African farmers and others in Darfur are being systematically displaced and murdered at the hands of the Janjaweed. The genocide in Darfur has claimed 400,000 lives and displaced over 2,500,000 people. More than one hundred people continue to die each day; five thousand die every month. The Sudanese government disputes these estimates and denies any connection with the Janjaweed.

The Sudanese government appears unwilling to address the human rights crisis in the region and has not taken the necessary steps to restrict the activities of the Janjaweed. In June 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) took the first step in ending impunity in Darfur by launching investigations into human rights violations in Darfur. However, the government of Sudan refused to cooperate with the investigations.

On March 4, 2009 Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, became the first sitting president to be indicted by ICC for directing a campaign of mass killing, rape, and pillage against civilians in Darfur. The arrest warrant for Bashir follows arrest warrants issued by the ICC for former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Harun and Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb. The government of Sudan has not surrendered either suspect to the ICC.

Darfuris today continue to suffer and the innumerable problems facing Sudan cannot be resolved until peace is secured in Darfur. According to UN estimates, 2.7 million Darfuris remain in internally displaced persons camps and over 4.7 million Darfuris rely on humanitarian aid. Resolving the Darfur conflict is critical not just for the people of Darfur, but also for the future of Sudan and the stability of the entire region

since the current conflict began in 2003:

* Over 400,000 darfurian civilians have died – an estimated 150,000 from violent
* 2.8 million people have been displaced within sudan
* 250,000 have fled abroad, mainly to chad where they are facing further violence
* 90 per cent of the villages of darfur’s targeted ethnic groups have been destroyed janjaweed militia and government forces have been responsible for
* 97 per cent of the killing
* 3.6 million people are dependent on international humanitarian assistance a third of people in need are beyond the reach of humanitarian workers

**MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES:**

The printing press was the big innovation in communications until the telegraph was developed. Printing remained the key format for mass messages for years afterward, but the telegraph allowed instant communication over vast distances for the first time in human history. Telegraph usage faded as radio became easy to use and popularized; as radio was being developed, the telephone quickly became the fastest way to communicate person-to-person; after television was perfected and content for it was well developed, it became the dominant form of mass-communication technology; the internet came next, and newspapers, radio, telephones, and television are being rolled into this far-reaching information medium.

The public internet came along after four decades of television dominance and decades of private internet use and development. It came along after hundreds of years of inventive thinking and groundbreaking theorizing, and it built on every bit of human intelligence that had come before. The key innovators were dozens of scientists whose work covers decades; the entrepreneurs were thousands of political leaders, policy wonks, technology administrators, government and commercial contractors, and even grassroots organizers

In the early 1960s, J.C.R. Licklider (pictured above), Leonard Kleinrock, Donald Davies, Paul Baran, Lawrence Roberts and other research scientists came up with the ideas that allowed them to individually dream of and eventually come together to create a globally interconnected set of computers through which everyone could quickly and easily access data and programs from any site.

The first group of networked computers communicated with each other in 1969, and ARPANET, or the Advanced Projects Research Agency Network became the start of the internet. Four U.S. universities were connected and became a research system by which computer scientists began solving problems and building the potential for worldwide, online connectivity. ARPANET had its first public demonstration in 1972, and in this same year the first e-mail program was written by Ray Tomlinson. By 1973, a majority of the internet use was for e-mail discussion.

In 1991, the World Wide Web was developed by Tim Berners-Lee (pictured at left) as a way for people to share information. The hyper-text format available through his Web made the internet much easier to use because all documents could be seen easily on-screen without downloading. The first "browser" software - Mosaic - was introduced by Marc Andreessen in 1993, and it enabled more fluid use of images and graphics online and opened up a new world for internet users.

In 1996, there were approximately 45 million people using the Internet. By 1999, the number of worldwide Internet users reached 150 million, and more than half of them were from the United States. In 2000, there were 407 million users worldwide. By 2004, there were between 600 and 800 million users (counting has become more and more inexact as the network has grown, and estimates vary).

The internet is a work in progress. While IP version 6 is now ready for implementation, some scientists - led by internet pioneer David Clark and others - are working toward a complete reinvention of the worldwide internet, starting from scratch. The project is expected to develop over the next decade.

**World Changes Due to the Internet**

After Berners-Lee brought his "World-Wide Web" to life in 1990, and Andreessen launched Mosaic, the revolutionary browser, in 1993, the Internet had an estimated 16 million users by 1995, and venture capitalists were busy full-time, funding hundreds of new Internet-related business concerns. Individuals all over the world are sharing their interests, hopes and dreams online, and the number of internet users is nearing a billion.

Thanks to the work of thousands of collaborators over the final four decades of the 20th century, today's Internet is a continually expanding worldwide network of computer networks for the transport of myriad types of data.

**Other Forms of Technology:**

* MRI Scans
* CAT Scans
* Genetic Engineering
* Cloning
* Fertilizers
* Pesticides
* Pop-culture

**Islamic Influences on law and government in the Muslim World:**

### **Islamic law represents one of the world's great legal systems. Like Judaic law, which influenced western legal systems, Islamic law originated as an important part of the religion.** Sharia, an Arabic word meaning "the right path," refers to traditional Islamic law. The Sharia comes from the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, which Muslims consider the actual word of God. The Sharia also stems from the Prophet Muhammad's teachings and interpretations of those teachings by certain Muslim legal scholars. Muslims believe that Allah (God) revealed his true will to Muhammad, who then passed on Allah's commands to humans in the Koran. Since the Sharia originated with Allah, Muslims consider it sacred. Between the seventh century when Muhammad died and the 10th century, many Islamic legal scholars attempted to interpret the Sharia and to adapt it to the expanding Muslim Empire. The classic Sharia of the 10th century represented an important part of Islam's golden age. From that time, the Sharia has continued to be reinterpreted and adapted to changing circumstances and new issues. In the modern era, the influences of Western colonialism generated efforts to codify it. In the 19th century, many Muslim countries came under the control or influence of Western colonial powers. As a result, Western-style laws, courts, and punishments began to appear within the Sharia. Some countries like Turkey totally abandoned the Sharia and adopted new law codes based on European systems. Most Muslim countries put the government in charge of prosecuting and punishing criminal acts. In the area of family law, many countries prohibited polygamy and divorce by the husband's repudiation of his wife. Modern legislation along with Muslim legal scholars who are attempting to relate the will of Allah to the 20th century have reopened the door to interpreting the Sharia. This has happened even in highly traditional Saudi Arabia, where Islam began. Since 1980, some countries with fundamentalist Islamic regimes like Iran have attempted to reverse the trend of westernization and return to the classic Sharia. But most Muslim legal scholars today believe that the Sharia can be adapted to modern conditions without abandoning the spirit of Islamic law or its religious foundations. Even in countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Sharia is creatively adapted to new circumstances.

**Iranian Revolution:** Despite growing prosperity, opposition to the shah was widespread, fanned mainly by conservative Shiite Muslims, who wanted the nation governed by Islamic law. They were directed, from France, by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Ruhollah ibn Mustafa Musawi Khomeini Hindi), a Muslim clergyman who had been exiled in 1963.

As the Shah's regime, supported by the U.S., became increasingly repressive, riots in 1978 developed into a state of virtual civil war.  In early 1979 popular opposition forced the shah to leave the country. Hundreds of the shah's supporters were tried and executed, others fled the country, and the westernization of Iran was reversed.  Khomeini, who had returned to Iran in triumph in February 1979, presided over the establishment of an Islamic republic.

On 4 November 1979, after the shah had been allowed entry into the United States for medical care, militant Iranians stormed the US embassy in Teheran, taking 66 Americans hostage. The militants demanded that the shah be turned over to face trial and that billions of dollars he had allegedly took abroad be returned. Thirteen of the hostages were soon released, but another 53 were held until an agreement was negotiated that freed the hostages on 20 January 1981.  Unable to persuade Iran to release them, President Carter ordered a military rescue mission, which failed, resulting in the deaths of eight American servicemen when their aircraft collided in the Iranian desert.

In September 1980 Iraq took advantage of Iran's internal political disputes to seize territory in the Shatt al Arab and oil-rich Khuzestan province. The full-scale war that resulted severely reduced Iran's oil production and disrupted its economy. The government was also beset by unrest among ethnic minorities. The war ended with a cease-fire in 1988 and cost the two nations an estimated 1 million dead and 1.7 million wounded.

In 1989, Khomeini died and Hojatolislam Said Ali Khamenei became Iran's supreme leader. Iran's relations with the West improved, due in part to President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's role in obtaining the release of Western hostages held in Lebanon. In 1993 Rafsanjani was reelected president.

**9/11**: On September 11, 2001, 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda hijacked four airliners and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third plane hit the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C., and the fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Often referred to as 9/11, the attacks resulted in extensive death and destruction, triggering major U.S. initiatives to combat terrorism and defining the presidency of George W. Bush. Over 3,000 people were killed during the attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., including more than 400 police officers and firefighters.

At 7 p.m., President [George W. Bush](http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/george-w-bush), who had spent the day being shuttled around the country because of security concerns, returned to the White House. At 9 p.m., he delivered a televised address from the Oval Office, declaring, “Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.” In a reference to the eventual U.S. military response he declared, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”

Operation Enduring Freedom, the American-led international effort to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and destroy Osama bin Laden’s terrorist network based there, began on October 7. Within two months, U.S. forces had effectively removed the Taliban from operational power, but the war continued, as U.S. and coalition forces attempted to defeat a Taliban insurgency campaign based in neighboring Pakistan. [Osama bin Laden](http://www.history.com/topics/osama-bin-laden), the mastermind behind the September 11th attacks, remained at large until May 2, 2011, when he was finally tracked down and killed by U.S. forces at a hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan. In June 2011, President [Barack Obama](http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/barack-obama) announced the beginning of large-scale troop withdrawals from Afghanistan, with a final withdrawal of U.S. forces tentatively scheduled for 2014.

**Improvements in Space Exploration**

It’s an expensive arena to play in, between the fuel costs and the technological challenge of operating in a hostile environment. For humans, a small mistake can quickly become fatal — something that we have seen several times in space history. And for NASA’s budget, there are projects that come in late and over budget, upsetting Congress and the public. Perhaps the most direct benefit comes from technologies used on Earth that were first pioneered in space exploration.

**Job creation**

One benefit of space exploration is “job creation”, or the fact that a space agency and its network of contractors, universities and other entities help people stay employed. From time to time, NASA puts out figures concerning how many associated jobs a particular project generates, or the economic impact.

Here’s an example: in 2012, NASA administrator Charles Bolden published “It’s also important to remember that the $2.5 billion investment made in this project was not spent on Mars, but right here on Earth, supporting more than 7,000 jobs in at least 31 states,” he wrote.

But the benefit can cut in a negative way, too. NASA’s budget is allocated by Congress, which means that the amount of money it has available for employment fluctuates. There are also some programs that are highly dependent on grants, which can make stable jobs challenging in those fields. Finally, as the priorities of Congress/NASA change, jobs can evaporate with it. One example was the space shuttle’s retirement, which prompted a job loss so massive that [NASA had a “transition strategy”](http://www.nasa.gov/pdf/616259main_Workforce%20Transition%20Strategy%20IV%20Report_508.pdf) for its employees and contractors.

**Education**

Teaching has a high priority for NASA, so much so that it has flown astronaut educators in space. (The first one, Christa McAuliffe, died aboard the space shuttle Challenger during launch in 1986. Her backup, Barbara Morgan, was selected as an educator/mission specialist in 1998 and [flew aboard STS-118 in 2007](http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/morgan.html).) And to this day, astronauts regularly do in-flight conferences with students from space, ostensibly to inspire them to pursue careers in the field.

[NASA’s education office has three goals](http://www.nasa.gov/offices/education/about/#.VMZSpy6GOAA): making the workforce stronger, encouraging students to pursue **STEM** careers (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), and “engaging Americans in NASA’s mission.” Other space agencies also have education components to assist with requirements in their own countries.

**Benefits translated into everyday life:**

* LED Lights
* Infrared Ear Thermometers (So you can take your temperature in your ear)
* Artificial Limbs
* Ventricular Assist Devices (Helps your heart beat)
* Anti-Icing Systems on planes
* Highway safety (grooves on highways)
* Improved Tires
* Chemical Detection
* Video Analyst system
* Land mine removal
* Fire – resistant reinforcement in buildings
* Firefighter gear
* Enriched baby food
* Portable cordless vacuums
* Freeze drying technology
* Solar energy
* Water purification systems
* High Resolution 3d Imaging
* Wall Ovens
* Food Safety

**Growth of the Oil Industry**

The 19th century was a period of great change and rapid industrialization. The iron and steel industry spawned new construction materials, the railroads connected the country and the discovery of oil provided a new source of fuel. The discovery of the Spindletop geyser in 1901 drove huge growth in the oil industry. Within a year, more than 1,500 oil companies had been chartered, and oil became the dominant fuel of the 20th century and an integral part of the American economy.

Many of the early explorers of America encountered petroleum deposits in some form. They noted oil slicks off the coast of [California](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/california) in the sixteenth century. Louis Evans located deposits along the eastern seaboard on a 1775 map of the English Middle Colonies.

The first oil corporation, which was created to develop oil found floating on water near Titusville, [Pennsylvania](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/pennsylvania), was the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company of [Connecticut](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/connecticut) (later the Seneca Oil Company). On August 27, 1859, they struck oil at a depth of sixty-nine feet. So far as is known, this was the first time that oil was tapped at its source, using a drill.

Titusville and other towns in the area boomed. One of those who heard about the discovery was [John D. Rockefeller](http://www.history.com/topics/john-d-rockefeller). Because of his entrepreneurial instincts and his genius for organizing companies, Rockefeller became a leading figure in the U.S. oil industry. By 1870 Standard Oil (owned by Rockefeller) had become the dominant oil refining firm in Pennsylvania.

Pipelines early became a major consideration in Standard’s drive to gain business and profits. Soon the company owned a majority of the lines, which provided cheap, efficient transportation for oil. Cleveland became a center of the refining industry principally because of its transportation systems.

In 1901 one of the largest and most significant oil strikes in history occurred near Beaumont, [Texas](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/texas), on a mound called [Spindletop](http://www.history.com/topics/spindletop). Drillers brought in the greatest gusher ever seen within the United States. This strike ended any possible monopoly by Standard Oil. One year after the Spindletop discovery more than fifteen hundred oil companies had been chartered. Of these, fewer than a dozen survived, principally the Gulf Oil Corporation, the Magnolia Petroleum Company, and the Texas Company. The Sun Oil Company, an Ohio-[Indiana](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/indiana) concern, also moved to the Beaumont area as did other firms. Other oil strikes followed in [Oklahoma](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/oklahoma), [Louisiana](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/louisiana), [Arkansas](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/arkansas), [Colorado](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/colorado), and Kansas. Oil production in the United States by 1909 more than equaled that of the rest of the world combined.

Many smaller companies developed outside the Northeast and the Midwest where Rockefeller and his associates operated.

As Standard Oil grew in wealth and power, it encountered great hostility not only from its competitors but from a vast segment of the public. Standard fought competition by securing preferential railroad rates and rebates on its shipments. It also influenced legislatures and Congress through tactics that, though common in that era, were unethical. Nor was the company’s handling of labor any better.

Both Secretary of Commerce [Herbert Hoover](http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/herbert-hoover) and Secretary of State [Charles Evans Hughes](http://www.history.com/topics/charles-evans-hughes) began to pressure American companies to seek oil abroad. These firms invested in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and South America and searched for oil everywhere while they continued to export quantities of oil from the United States. In 1933, Standard Oil secured the first contract to drill for oil in Saudi Arabia.

World War II made the oil industry a key American resource. Oil company research and executive leadership played major roles in the conflict. When the war ended, the United States faced the problem of stabilizing the peace. In the Vietnam struggle experts contend the United States supplied about 5 billion barrels of oil, although great quantities of that came from Middle Eastern properties owned by American companies. Certainly the total for both wars represents a quantity larger than either that of the great East Texas oil field or possibly that discovered on Alaska’s North Slope in 1967.

Over the next forty-five years numerous major crises occurred, in many of which oil played a key role.

* Europe underwent a coal shortage, the first energy crisis, immediately after the war.
* The [Marshall Plan](http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/marshall-plan), created to solve that and other problems, was hampered by the first Iranian crisis of 1950-1954.
* From the 1956 Suez crisis to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, oil proved to be the most important consideration in America’s Middle Eastern policy.
* The United States sought to balance support for the new state of Israel against the pressures of the oil producers, mostly Arab, united in 1960 as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (*OPEC*).

The United States continues to consume about two-thirds of the world’s oil production. Oil should be considered the keystone of the standard of living in the United States and to a large degree its rank as a world power.

After the 1960s, as domestic production declined and demand soared, the oil industry had to import vast quantities from the Middle East and Venezuela. The nation’s key energy source increasingly hinged on balancing diplomatic relations with Arab oil-producing nations while continuing its aid to Israel.

While the United States was blessed with plentiful supplies of oil its growth to the rank of a great power accelerated. In today’s world as an oil-dependent power it must find alternate sources of energy or accommodate drastic changes in its way of life and position in the world.

**GLOBAL ENVIROMENTAL ISSUES**

Our environment is constantly changing. There is no denying that. However, as our environment changes, so does the need to become increasingly aware of the problems that surround it. With a massive influx of natural disasters, warming and cooling periods, different types of weather patterns and much more, people need to be aware of what types of environmental problems our planet is facing.

Global warming has become an undisputed fact about our current livelihoods; our planet is warming up and we are definitely part of the problem. However, this isn’t the only environmental problem that we should be concerned about. All across the world, people are facing a wealth of new and challenging environmental problems every day. Some of them are small and only affect a few ecosystems, but others are drastically changing the landscape of what we already know.

**15 Major Current Environmental Problems**

**1. Pollution:** Pollution of air, water and soil require millions of years to recoup. Industry and motor vehicle exhaust are the number one pollutants. Heavy metals, nitrates and plastic are toxins responsible for pollution. While water pollution is caused by oil spill, acid rain, urban runoff; air pollution is caused by various gases and toxins released by industries and factories and combustion of fossil fuels; soil pollution is majorly caused by industrial waste that deprives soil from essential nutrients.

**2. Global Warming:** Climate changes like global warming is the result of human practices like emission of Greenhouse gases. Global warming leads to rising temperatures of the oceans and the earth’ surface causing melting of polar ice caps, rise in sea levels and also unnatural patterns of precipitation such as flash floods, excessive snow or desertification.

**3. Overpopulation:** The population of the planet is reaching unsustainable levels as it faces shortage of resources like water, fuel and food. Population explosion in less developed and developing countries is straining the already scarce resources. Intensive agriculture practiced to produce food damages the environment through use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides and insecticides. Overpopulation is one of the crucial current environmental problem**.**

**4. Natural Resource Depletion:** Natural resource depletion is another crucial current environmental problems. Fossil fuel consumption results in emission of Greenhouse gases, which is responsible for global warming and climate change. Globally, people are taking efforts to shift to renewable sources of energy like solar, wind, biogas and geothermal energy. The cost of installing the infrastructure and maintaining these sources has plummeted in the recent years.

**5. Waste Disposal:** The over consumption of resources and creation of plastics are creating a global crisis of waste disposal. Developed countries are notorious for producing an excessive amount of waste or garbage and dumping their waste in the oceans and, less developed countries. Nuclear waste disposal has tremendous health hazards associated with it. Plastic, fast food, packaging and cheap electronic wastes threaten the well-being of humans. Waste disposal is one of urgent current environmental problem**.**

**6. Climate Change:** Climate change is yet another environmental problem that has surfaced in last couple of decades. It occurs due to rise in global warming which occurs due to increase in temperature of atmosphere by burning of fossil fuels and release of harmful gases by industries. Climate change has various harmful effects but not limited to melting of polar ice, change in seasons, occurrence of new diseases, frequent occurrence of floods and change in overall weather scenario.

**7. Loss of Biodiversity:** Human activity is leading to the extinction of species and habitats and and loss of bio-diversity. Eco systems, which took millions of years to perfect, are in danger when any species population is decimating. Balance of natural processes like pollination is crucial to the survival of the eco-system and human activity threatens the same. Another example is the destruction of coral reefs in the various oceans, which support the rich marine life.

**8. Deforestation:** Our forests are natural sinks of carbon dioxide and produce fresh oxygen as well as helps in regulating temperature and rainfall. At present forests cover 30% of the land but every year tree cover is lost amounting to the country of Panama due to growing population demand for more food, shelter and cloth. Deforestation simply means clearing of green cover and make that land available for residential, industrial or commercial purpose.

**9. Ocean Acidification:** It is a direct impact of excessive production of CO2. 25% of CO2 produced by humans. The ocean acidity has increased by the last 250 years but by 2100, it may shoot up by 150%. The main impact is on shellfish and plankton in the same way as human osteoporosis.

**10. Ozone Layer Depletion**: The ozone layer is an invisible layer of protection around the planet that protects us from the sun’s harmful rays. Depletion of the crucial Ozone layer of the atmosphere is attributed to pollution caused by Chlorine and Bromide found in Chloro-floro carbons (CFC’s). Once these toxic gases reach the upper atmosphere, they cause a hole in the ozone layer, the biggest of which is above the Antarctic. The CFC’s are banned in many industries and consumer products. Ozone layer is valuable because it prevents harmful UV radiation from reaching the earth. This is one of the most important current environmental problem.

**11. Acid Rain:** Acid rain occurs due to the presence of certain pollutants in the atmosphere. Acid rain can be caused due to combustion of fossil fuels or erupting volcanoes or rotting vegetation which release sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere. Acid rain is a known environmental problem that can have serious effect on human health, wildlife and aquatic species.

**12. Water Pollution:** Clean drinking water is becoming a rare commodity. Water is becoming an economic and political issue as the human population fights for this resource. One of the options suggested is using the process of desalinization. Industrial development is filling our rivers seas and oceans with toxic pollutants which are a major threat to human health.

**13. Urban Sprawl:** Urban sprawl refers to migration of population from high density urban areas to low density rural areas which results in spreading of city over more and more rural land. Urban sprawl results in land degradation, increased traffic, environmental issues and health issues. The ever growing demand of land displaces natural environment consisting of flora and fauna instead of being replaced.

**14: Public Health Issues:** The current environmental problems pose a lot of risk to health of humans, and animals. Dirty water is the biggest health risk of the world and poses threat to the quality of life and public health. Run-off to rivers carries along toxins, chemicals and disease carrying organisms. Pollutants cause respiratory disease like Asthma and cardiac-vascular problems. High temperatures encourage the spread of infectious diseases like Dengue.

**15. Genetic Engineering:** Genetic modification of food using biotechnology is called genetic engineering. Genetic modification of food results in increased toxins and diseases as genes from an allergic plant can transfer to target plant. Genetically modified crops can cause serious environmental problems as an engineered gene may prove toxic to wildlife. Another drawback is that increased use of toxins to make insect resistant plant can cause resultant organisms to become resistant to antibiotics.