**C. THE COLD WAR ERA**

**The Cold War** lasted from 1945 through the early 1990s. Very few areas of the globe were unaffected. The two superpowers that emerged after World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union, not only vied for global domination, but also tried to pull the rest of the world into their standoff. Every time a government in any country across the globe changed hands, the Americans and Soviets evalu­ated it based on its leanings toward one side or the other, and in many cases actually tried to militarily influence the position it would take. All of this took place in the context of an arms race between the two superpowers in which nuclear arsenals became so massive that global holocaust became possible at the touch of a button.

In 1945, no one would have predicted how polarized the world would become during the Cold War, or even that a Cold War would develop in the first place. But in hindsight we can see that the Cold War was already under way the day that Germany fell to the Allies at the end of World War II.

**Power Grab: Soviets and Americans Want Everyone to Take Sides**

After Germany was defeated, the U.S.-Soviet struggle immediately influenced the chain of events. The biggest conflict was over future security. Both superpowers wanted arrangements in Europe that made it more likely for their worldview to dominate. The U.S. promoted capitalism and variations on democracy. The Soviet Union promoted communism, which, as practiced by the Soviets at the time, also meant totalitarianism. A good chunk of Western Europe was solidly in the American camp, but the bigger question was Germany and parts of Eastern Europe.

According to plans drawn up by the Allies during conferences at **Yalta** and **Potsdam**, Germany and other parts of Eastern Europe were divided into temporary "spheres of influence," each to be occupied and rebuilt by respective members of the Allied forces. Germany was divided into four regions, each under the influence of one of four Allies: France, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Determined to protect its borders and ideology, the Soviet Union demanded that its neighboring states, places like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, be under its influence as well. The United States wanted those nations to have free elections. The Soviet Union said no way, and they simply set up puppet states in those countries.

Meanwhile, in Germany in 1948, the French, British, and American regions merged into one, form­ing a democratic West Germany, while the Soviet Union's region became East Germany. The capital, Berlin, was on the eastern side, and within that city, an eastern and western zone were created. The Soviets wanted all of Berlin to be within its control, so they cut off land access to Berlin from the west, an action known as the Berlin Blockade. The West retaliated by flying in food and fuel to the "trapped" western half of the city, an action known as the **Berlin Airlift**. Eventually, the Soviets relented and Berlin was divided in half. In 1961, the Soviets built a wall between the two halves, preventing East Berliners access to the West.

**East versus West: Let's Point Our Weapons at Each Other**

By the late 1940s, Europe was clearly divided into East and West, each under the influence of their respective superpowers.

East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary became part of the Eastern bloc, also called the Soviet bloc or Soviet satellites. Yugoslavia was communist as well, but established its own path, having testy relations with Moscow. Western Europe, including Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, West Germany, and eventually Greece and Turkey on the Mediter­ranean, became part of the Western bloc.

Under the **Truman Doctrine** of 1947, the United States explicitly stated that it would aid countries threatened by communist takeovers. This policy is known as containment, or in other words, pre­venting expansion of your enemy. To this end, the Western bloc formed a military alliance of mutual defense called **NATO** (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). In response, the Eastern Bloc formed a military alliance known as the **Warsaw Pact**. For more than 40 years, the two alliances loaded their borders with weapons, first conventional, then nuclear, and dared the other to strike first. Churchill called the line between East and West the **Iron Curtain** because western influence couldn't penetrate it and easterners were not allowed to go west.

As for the rest of the world, the two superpowers quickly tried to influence developments to tip the balance of world power in their favor. Some countries allied with one side or the other (more on this later), but other countries, such as India, refused to take sides and sometimes accepted investment from both, a policy known as nonalignment.

The Cold War affected different countries in different ways. On the next several pages, you'll review how it impacted China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and Europe.

**China: Communists Make Huge Gains**

China changed a lot after the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1911. Under the leadership of **Sun Yat-sen**, who led the Chinese Revolution of 1911, China became more westernized in an effort to gain power and boot out the Europeans and japanese, who had established spheres of influence in the country. Sun Yat-sen promoted his Three Principles of the People-nationalism, socialism, and democracy. It was hoped that nationalism would unite the people against foreign interests and give them a Chi­nese identity; socialism would lead to greater economic equality, especially land redistribution; and democracy would lead to the ability of the Chinese people to chart their own future. Although he advocated for a democratic system, Sun Yat-sen established a political party, the **Guomindang (KMT or Nationalist)**, which was dedicated to his own goals.

Sun Yat-sen didn't live long enough to see his plans implemented. His successor, however, Chiang Kai-shek, established the Guomindang as the ruling party of China, but only for a while. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, two forces wreaked havoc on Chiang's plans. The Japanese Empire invaded Manchuria and made an effort to take over all of China in the late 1930s. Meanwhile, the communists, allied with the Soviet Union, were building strength in northern China. The communists joined the Guomindang in its fight against the Japanese, but at the same time were bitter rivals of the Guomin­dang in the struggle to control the future of China.

During World War II, the United States pumped money into the Guomindang's efforts against Japan, while the Soviets weren't as active in their support for the communist's efforts against japan, partly because they were focused on Germany. As you know, Japan was defeated. As in Europe, after the war, the powers of democracy and communism clashed, and the Guomindang and communists continued to fight the Chinese Civil War for the next four years.

By 1949, the communists under **Mao Zedong** had rallied millions of peasants in northern China and swept southward toward the Guomindang strongholds, driving the Guomindang farther and farther south until they finally fled to the island of Taiwan, where they established the Republic of China. The impact for mainland China was enormous. It became the People's Republic of China, the largest communist nation in the world under the leadership of Mao Zedong. The two Chinas have been separate ever since, and both claim to be the "real" China. Taiwan eventually developed into an economic powerhouse, but it lost its credibility as the true China when the United Nations and eventually the United States recognized the People's Republic of China as China in 1973. Taiwan has rejected China's efforts toward reunification, but nevertheless the two nations have grown close together, especially as the economies of both nations have grown stronger and stronger.

Mao Zedong: His Own Way

After the success of the Communist Revolution in China in 1949, it's leader, Mao Zedong, collectivized agriculture and industry, and instituted sweeping social reform using policies that were not unlike Stalin's five-year plans. Most of these plans were relatively successful, and China greatly increased its productivity, especially in the steel industry. By the late 1950s, Mao implemented **his Great Leap Forward**, in which huge communes were created as a way of catapulting the revolution toward its goal of a true Marxist state. In reality however, the local governments that ran the communes couldn't produce the ridiculous agricultural quotas demanded by the central government. So they did what any fearful local government would-they lied about their production, leading to the starvation deaths of nearly 30 million Chinese people. By all accounts, it was more like a Great Leap Backward. The successes of Mao's initiatives in the early 1950s were erased, and agriculture and industry failed to produce results. Part of the problem was that the Soviet Union, up until that time the only foreign supporter of China, pulled away and eventually withdrew its support. The Soviet Union not only wanted the world to become communist, but it wanted the world to be communist under its control.

China wasn't following orders, so Soviet support for China cooled. China was left on its own with its communal system in disarray.

Mao stepped back to focus on building the military-something that was essential if the country couldn't rely on Soviet support-while more moderate reformers tried to turn the country around. The progress was quick and substantial; elements of capitalism were introduced into the economy and, in 1964, China tested its first atomic bomb, adding to the global arms race that was quickly building around the world. Mao was unimpressed, however. A purist, Mao was upset that the country was straying from its communist path, and so, in 1966, he jumped back to the forefront of his government and promoted his most significant domestic policy, the **Cultural Revolution**. Mao's goal with the Cultural Revolution was to discourage anything approaching a privileged ruling class, as existed in the West as well among the Soviet communist elite. As such, Mao instituted reforms meant to erase all traces of a Western-influenced intelligentsia. Many universities were shut down for four years. The students and faculty, along with other "elites" including doctors, lawyers and classically trained musicians were sent to work on collective farms for "cultural retraining." In addition, many political dissidents were either imprisoned or killed. When the universities were reopened, the curriculum was reorganized to include only communist studies and vocational training. During this time, Mao's ***Little Red Book****,* a collection of his teachings on communism, became a popular symbol of the forced egalitarianism of the Cultural Revolution.

It all failed miserably in advancing China economically or socially. By the early 1970s, China real­ized it needed to open itself up to Western ideas. In 1976, when **Deng Xiaoping** took office after Mao's death, the new leadership quickly changed the education policy and began to focus on restructuring the economic policies.

China Looks West: Likes the Money, Not So Sure About the Freedom

More recently, China's economy has been transformed from a strict communist command economy to one that includes elements of free-market capitalism. Deng Xiaoping's government entered into joint ventures with foreign companies in which the profits and business decisions were shared. In addition, Deng allowed for limited business and property ownership to stimulate hard work and in­novation. The reforms have been wildly successful. China's economy is expanding faster than most of the economies of the world and reforms continue to be introduced slowly, which gives the economy time to adjust to the changes. However, despite the economic reforms, the government continues to remain strictly communist in the political sense, and has frequently resisted government and social reforms. In 1989, one million demonstrators converged on **Tiananmen Square**, calling for democratic reform. In an event known as the Tiananmen Square massacre, the government sent troops and opened fire. Hundreds were killed. While China continues to reform its economy and is becoming a major economic powerhouse, the possibility for democratic reforms is still unknown.

**Division of Korea: The Cold War Turns Hot and Now Possibly Nuclear**

Prior to World War II, Korea was invaded by Japan and annexed as part of the expanding Japanese Empire. After Japan was defeated in World War II, Korea was supposed to be re-established as an independent nation, but until stability could be achieved and elections held, it was occupied by the Soviet Union and the United States in two separate pieces-the Soviet Union north of the **38th parallel** and the United States south of it. This was very much like the way that Germany was split, and, just like in Germany, the two superpowers couldn't agree on the terms of a united Korea.

In 1948, two separate governments were established-a Soviet-backed communist regime in North Korea and a U.S.-backed democracy in South Korea. Both superpowers withdrew their troops in 1949, but in 1950, North Korea attacked South Korea in an attempt to unite the two nations under a single communist government. The United Nations condemned the action and soon a multinational force, largely consisting of U.S. and British troops, went to the aid of the South Koreans. The UN forces made tremendous headway under General MacArthur, nearly reaching the Chinese border, but when it looked as if the North Koreans would be defeated, China entered the war on behalf of the communist North. The two sides battled it out along the 38th parallel, eventually leading to an armistice in 1953.

Today, the two nations remain separate and true to the political philosophies under which they were formed 50 years ago. The United States maintains a large military presence in South Korea, which has become an economic powerhouse. North Korea, meanwhile, has suffered through isola­tionist and just plain nutty rulers and massive food shortages, but has built up a huge military and is thought to have acquired the technology to develop a nuclear bomb. It has already developed mis­siles capable of delivering those bombs to South Korea, Japan, China, or possibly even as far as the west coast of the United States. As of July 2005, North Korea has agreed to re-enter the "Six Nation Talks" (which include the United States, North Korea, South Korea, China, Russia, and Japan) in an attempt to negotiate a resolution to North Korea's continued demand that it be allowed to advance its nuclear programs (and the United States' demand that it stop). If past experience is any indication as to how these negotiations might go, it is likely North Korea will once again leave the negotiating table without a resolution or make an agreement, only to continue pursuing its nuclear programs in secret. The failure of the international community to reach a resolution on the Korean peninsula in the early 1950s has created a modern-day crisis of nuclear proportions.

**Vietnam: The Cold War Turns Ugly**

After World War II, the French tried to hold on to their colony of Indochina, but nationalists known as the Vietminh fought them back. By 1954, the Vietminh's guerilla warfare techniques succeeded in frustrating the French, and an accord was signed in Geneva dividing the nation-you guessed it-into two pieces. The communists, under the leadership of **Ho** Chi Minh, gained control of the land north of the 17th parallel while Ngo Dihn Diem became the president of the democratic south. Under its new constitution, North Vietnam supported reunification of Vietnam as a communist state. **Ho Chi Minh** supported communist guerrillas in the south, and soon war broke out. France and the United States came to the aid of South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh prevented them from taking over the north, but not before years of fighting led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. A peace agreement eventu­ally led to the reunification of Vietnam as a communist state under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. The long-range impact was significant for the region, the world, and the United States. The world witnessed the defeat of a superpower by a small but determined nation. Communism took a major step forward in the region. And for the United States, the defeat affected foreign policy for decades, as the American public remained fearful of involving itself in "another Vietnam."

**The Cuban Revolution: Communism on the American Doorstep**

After Cuba won its independence from Spain during the Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States remained involved in Cuban affairs under the terms of the Platt Amendment, which also provided for the presence of U.S. military bases. During the following decades, the Americans in­vested heavily in Cuban businesses and plantations, but those investments generally only made the wealthy very rich with little or no benefit for the masses of peasants. From 1939 to 1959, the United States supported the Batista Dictatorship in Cuba, which continued the policies that benefited the wealthy land-owners. In 1956, the peasants began a revolt under the leadership of **Fidel Castro**. Even the United States eventually withdrew its support of Batista. Using guerilla warfare techniques, the revolutionaries made tremendous advances, and by 1959, Batista fled. The Cuban Revolution was hailed as a great success against a dictator.

But then, Castro, the great promoter of democracy, took control of the government, suspended plans for an election, and established a communist dictatorship. By 1961, he had seized the industries and nationalized them, while executing his rivals. The United States, concerned about the communist dictatorship on its borders, freaked, especially when Castro established strong ties with the Soviet Union after the United States imposed an economic embargo on Cuba. In an attempt to overthrow Castro, the United States trained and supported a group of Cuban exiles living in the United States who hated Castro. The U.S. was convinced that an invasion by these exiles would lead to a popular revolt against Castro. But it didn't work out that way. In 1961, President Kennedy authorized the **Bay of Pigs Invasion**, not with the full force of the mighty U.S. military, but with the small force of Cuban exiles, who were quickly captured after they landed.

After the Bay of Pigs debacle, Cuba and the Soviet Union realized the United States might try something bigger next time around, so they mobilized. In 1962, U.S. spy planes detected the installa­tion of Soviet missiles in Cuba, and Kennedy immediately established a naval blockade around the island, refusing to allow any more shipments from the Soviet Union. Kennedy made it clear to the world that if missiles were launched from Cuba, the United States would retaliate against the Soviet Union itself. The standoff became known as the **Cuban Missile Crisis**. For three months the world waited to see who would back down, and on October 28, the Soviets said that they would remove the missiles in exchange for a promise from the Americans that they would not invade Cuba. The Americans agreed to the settlement.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, the Cubans lost their main financial backer, a huge loss because it amounted to billions of dollars of aid. Still, Castro has managed to hang on to his power, but economic conditions in Cuba deteriorated sharply after the fall of communism in Europe.

During the Cold War, the standard of living in Western Europe improved dramatically, despite eco­nomic swings. In Eastern Europe, behind the iron curtain, the massive state-run industries couldn't keep up with the innovations in the West. A growing divide between the "rich" west and the "poor" east was becoming obvious, and as it became obvious to the people who lived within the Eastern Bloc, they began to revolt.

The revolt was as much about democracy and self-determination as it was about the economy. The Soviet Union was a huge patchwork of many different nationalities, many of which wanted to control their own destinies. What's more, an increasing number of people in the Eastern Bloc countries that were controlled by the Soviet Union, such as Poland, were also itching for democratic and economic reform. By the 1980s, groups of reform-minded individuals began scratching their itch.

Poland: Solidarity Grows in Popularity

The decline of communism brought sweeping reform to Poland and its government, which had been trying for years to prevent the spread of anticommunist sentiment. In 1980, more than a decade before the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, a group of workers began the **Solidarity Movement** under the leadership of Lech Walesa. Thousands of workers joined a strike for reform of the communist economic system. The government reacted by imposing martial law and arresting Lech Walesa, as well as other Solidarity leaders. Throughout the early- and mid-1980s, the government tried to suppress Solidarity. But in 1988, the reform-minded Rakowski became the Premier of Poland. Solidarity was legalized and in 1989, a member of Solidarity, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, became Prime Minister in the first open elections since the end of World War II. In 1990, the communist party fell apart in Poland, just as it was falling apart throughout eastern Europe, and Lech Walesa was elected president. Dur­ing the 1990s, the economy improved swiftly as Poland introduced market-based reforms and a new democratic constitution. Poland formally completed its integration into the West by joining NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. Quite a change.

German Reunification: All This, Just to Be Back Where It Started

The decline of communism in the Soviet Bloc directly led to the reunification of Germany as a free market democracy. East Germany cut ties with the Soviet Union and began negotiations with West Germany. Many Western nations feared that a united Germany would lead once again to a nation­alistic regime, but the prospect for peace, economic and political reform, and an improved standard of living for the people of East Germany outweighed the concerns. When the Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989, signaling the fall of East Germany, a mass exodus of East Germans fled to the West. Businesses in East Germany continued to struggle because their outdated corporate structures, equip­ment, and machinery could not compete with the more efficient businesses in the western half of the nation. Unemployment was high in both halves of the newly united nation. Yet, the government did not abandon its ambitious reconstruction program aimed at the modernization of the former East Germany and the establishment of nationwide communication and transportation lines. Germany has therefore continued to press forward and has since emerged as a leading economy in Europe.

Just in case you haven't been keeping track, by the way, in the last 90 years, Germany went from being crushed in WWI to being built up under fascist Nazis, to being crushed in WWII, to being oc­cupied by four former enemies, to being divided in two, to being at the epicenter of the Cold War, to being reunified as a modern, capitalist-leaning, democratic nation. If you know a German grandma, go get her some aspirin.

The Soviet Union Collapses: *Glasnost, Perestroika,* Kaput

When **Mikhail Gorbachev** came to power in the Soviet Union in 1985, he instituted policies of ***glasnost***(openness) and urged a ***perestroika***(restructuring) of the Soviet economy. He may not have realized it at the time, but he set in motion a tidal wave of change that he wouldn't be able to reverse. Legislation was passed to add elements of private enterprise to the economy. Nuclear arms treaties were signed with the United States. Gorbachev even publicly and officially denounced the Great Purge by Stalin in the 1930s, a huge deal because it showed that the Soviet Union was re-evaluating itself. The list of reforms and changes goes on and on, but the bottom line is that within six years, Poland and other former Soviet satellites declared their separation from the USSR. The Soviet Union itself disintegrated in 1991. Russia became its own country again, while the other parts of the old Soviet Empire, such as the Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia, just to name a few, became independent nations.

Some observers were shocked by the degree to which so many different nationalities within the former Soviet Union wanted to form their own countries, and further shocked that most of the shifts in power happened relatively peacefully. But there were exceptions. In the same region that sparked World War I 80 years prior-the Balkans-nationalistic movements within the former Yugoslavia led to "ethnic cleansing" in which Muslims were slaughtered by Serbians. The entire mess eventually led to the involvement of UN troops during much of the 1990s. Even in Russia itself, nationalists in different regions, especially in Muslim-dominated **Chechnya**, want to break away, and have used guerilla warfare and terrorist methods to advance their cause.

During the 1990s, however, most of the new countries in the former Soviet bloc, especially those in Eastern Europe, created constitutional democracies with economic systems based on variations of capitalism. While the reform movements have been faster in some countries than in others, and while communist remnants make themselves heard and the transition from state-owned industries to privately owned industries has caused high unemployment and corruption in many countries, democracy seems to be taking a foothold in the region. Though much is uncertain about the future of the former Soviet bloc, a few things can be said for sure: by the end of 1991, the Cold War was over, the Warsaw Pact had disbanded, and the United States found itself as the world's only superpower.

**D. INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIA AND AFRICA**

After World War II, a wave of independence movements marked the beginning of the end of European imperialism. In an era when the United States and Western Europe were fighting a Cold War in part to defend people's right to choose their own futures (**self-determination**) under democratic systems, it became difficult for western colonial powers to reconcile their post-World War II principles with their imperialist policies. More importantly, it was increasingly difficult for the subjugated peoples to tolerate their treatment, and so they rose up and demanded independence.

**The Indian Subcontinent**

After the mostly Hindu Indian National Congress was established in 1885 to increase the rights for Indians under colonial rule, and then the Muslim League in 1906 to advance the causes of Islamic Indians, it took years for momentum to build into an organized resistance to colonial power. In 1919, the **Amritsar Massacre** catapulted the movement.

In Amritsar, 319 Indians, some Hindu and some Muslim, were slaughtered by British General Dyer during a peaceful protest in a city park. The protesters, who were protesting the arrest of two of their leaders who also were doing nothing other than protesting, were unarmed and entirely surprised by the attack. Because the park was walled, there was no way to escape from the attackers. By all ac­counts, the slaughter was unprovoked and entirely unwarranted. When news of the massacre spread, Indians joined the self-rule cause by the millions. It was now a full-fledged movement.

During the 1920s, **Mohandas Gandhi** became the movement's most important voice and orga­nized huge protests against colonial rule. Gandhi's philosophy of passive resistance, or **civil disobe­dience**, gained popular support in the struggle against British colonial rule. Instead of fighting with weapons, Gandhi's followers staged demonstrations and refused to assist the colonial governments. This included massive boycotts of British imperial goods as well as strikes, such as when hundreds of thousands of workers refused to labor for the British colonial government's salt factories. Gandhi's nonviolent teachings and his success became enormously influential. They also partly inspired the civil disobedience of the U.S. civil rights movements led by **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr**.

At the same time, however, there was an increase in violence between Hindus and Muslims. While both groups worked together peacefully against the British, radical members of each group found it hard to tolerate the other. This disturbed Gandhi, who was raised Hindu but yearned for mutual respect among people of both religions. In the late 1920s, Gandhi began to call for Indian unity above religious considerations. But the Muslim League, instead, actively pushed for the creation of a Muslim nation, and had even bounced around a name for their future country: Pakistan.

Independence Won: Nations Two

After World War II, Britain finally granted independence to the Indian subcontinent. The long and relatively nonviolent struggle for independence had finally paid off. The terrible irony was that once independence was granted, the real bloodshed began. Radical Hindus and Muslims started killing each other.

There were two schools of thought regarding the newly independent subcontinent. The first, promoted by Mohandas Gandhi and, at first, the British, called for the establishment of a united In­dia where both Hindus and Muslims could practice their religions. The second was a movement by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, whose aim was to partition the subcontinent and form a separate Muslim nation in the northern part, where Islam had become the dominant religion. The British eventually were convinced that a partition would save lives by separating people who seemed clearly intent on killing each other, so when it turned over the reigns to new leaders of the independent India in 1947, it separated the country into ... thirds: India in the south and Pakistan in two parts, one to the northwest of India (Pakistan) and the other to the east (East Pakistan, currently Bangladesh).

Both parts of **Pakistan** were Muslim, while **India** was predominately Hindu, although officially secular. The result was chaotic. Millions of people moved or were forced to flee due to religiously motivated violence. Essentially, India and Pakistan exchanged millions of citizens with practitioners of each religion moving to the nation where their religion was dominant. Gandhi's worst nightmares were realized. Nearly half a million people were killed as they migrated to their respective "sides." The move of so many people along religious lines only served to create an international conflict be­tween Pakistan and India. Within a year, Gandhi himself was assassinated by a Hindu who was upset with Gandhi's secular motivations. Today, the two nations are still fighting, especially in Kashmir along their borders, where religious self-determination still remains the big issue. What's more, both countries have since become nuclear powers ..

**Africa**

After World War II, African nations also asserted their independence. They were partly motivated by events in India and in the world more generally, but they were also motivated by the war itself. During the war, hundreds of thousands of Africans fought for their colonial powers. It just stands to reason that if you're valuable enough to die for your country, you're valuable enough to live free.

Other than South Africa, which had been independent before World War II, the nations north of the Sahara were the first colonies to win independence. These nations had strong Islamic ties, and the mostly Muslim Middle East had already won its freedom in the decades· prior (more on that later). Egypt, too, had won its independence early, in 1922, although it kept extremely close ties to Britain. In the 1950s, as the independence movement gathered steam in Africa, **Gamal Nasser**, a general in the Egyptian army, overthrew the king and established a republic. He nationalized industries, including the Suez Canal, and then became embroiled in Middle East conflicts. Nasser's actions emboldened other Islamic nationalists to seek independence, and soon the African nations along the Mediterranean were free**.**

South of the Sahara, independence was a trickier issue. The problem was that while nearly every­one wanted independence, most of the colonies had been raped of their resources. There had been little investment in human beings. The vast majority of Africans were uneducated, or only educated through grammar school. Unlike in India, where a substantial number of upper-caste Indians were highly educated and even attended universities in Britain, many African nations had few natives who were skilled professionals: doctors, scientists, lawyers, diplomats, businesspeople. This meant that once the colonial powers left, there would be few people left who could immediately take charge and build a productive, self-sufficient society.

What's more, as mentioned in the previous chapter, national unity among the natives was hard to foster, because the boundaries of so many African colonies had been drawn according to European needs, not African needs. Africans within the same colony spoke different native languages and had differing, sometimes opposing, customs, histories, and loyalties. For all of these reasons, while African independence was hard fought or granted to all of the former colonies in the decades following World War II, many African nations struggled to build strong, stable, independent countries.

Rwanda: Ethnic Genocide

The difficulties of establishing stable nations in Africa are exemplified by the situation in **Rwanda**. Eth­nic strife, genocide, and human rights violations in Rwanda stem from conflicts between two groups: the Tutsi (15 percent of the population in Rwanda) who governed the Hutu (85 percent of Rwanda) during German and Belgian colonial occupation. In 1962, after Rwanda became independent, the Hutu revolted against the Tutsi leadership, leaving thousands dead. The two ethnic groups continued to fight until 1972, when a military coup by Juvenal Habyarimana unseated the government and eventually established a one-party republic in 1981. The military government was fairly successful in keeping the peace, but in 1994, when the general was killed in a plane crash, a civil war broke out once again between the two warring factions. One hundred days of genocide left as many as 800,000 Tutsi dead, and by the following year more than 2 million mostly Hutu refugees were sent or fled to neighboring Zaire, where many died from disease. Because the entire country has only 7 million people, the genocide and displacement ranks among the most tragic in recent history.

Developments in South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was formed by the combination of two British colonies and two Boer republics, and although the British and Dutch colonists were given considerable rights to self-government, blacks were entirely excluded from the political process. In 1923, residential segregation was established and enforced. In 1926, blacks were banned from work in certain skilled occupations that whites wanted for themselves. When South Africa won independence from Britain in 1931, the racial policies didn't improve. In fact, a system of **apartheid** ("separation of the races") was established in South Africa in 1948 as an all-encompassing way of dividing black (80 percent of the population) and white. By the late 1950s, apartheid was extended to the creation of homelands, areas of the country that were "set aside" for blacks. The homelands were in the worst part of the country, and comprised less than 15 percent of the nation's land. The whites were given the cities, the resource-rich mines, and the best farmland. While many blacks were compelled to move to the homelands, others stayed in the cities, where they were segregated into black slums.

In response, the black community organized. In the 1950s**, Nelson Mandela** became leader of the African National Congress, an organization determined to abolish apartheid. At first, he ad­vocated peaceful protest, following the example of Gandhi. But in 1960, after the Sharpeville mas­sacre in which 67 protesters were killed, the African National Congress supported guerrilla warfare.

At **Sharpeville**, blacks were protesting a policy that forced them to carry passes to be in the cities in order to go to their jobs. The passes were issued at places of employment. This meant that if you worked and your wife didn't, you couldn't go into the city with her because she wouldn't have a pass. The massacre rallied the anti-apartheid movement. Mandela was arrested in 1964 for his role in anti-apartheid violence and sentenced to life imprisonment.

After decades of increasing pressure from the black majority and the international community, South Africa finally released Mandela in 1990 and agreed to negotiate on the policy of apartheid. The government more than negotiated, it crumbled. In 1994, after apartheid was abolished, Mandela was elected president in the first free and open election in the nation's history.

**The Middle East**

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the modern nation of Turkey at the close of World War I, the Middle East, which was largely comprised of old Ottoman lands, was temporarily put under the control of the League of Nations. As if the two European powerhouses didn't already control enough of the world, France was put in charge of Syria and Lebanon, while Britain got Pales­tine, Jordan, and Iraq. Persia (Iran) was already carved up into spheres of influence between Britain and Russia during the nineteenth century. As for Arabia, it united as a Saudi kingdom immediately following the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

The Middle East during the twentieth century is complicated stuff, but a good chunk of the es­sential information involves the creation of the modern nation of Israel, so that's where we'll start.

Israel: Balfour Declares a Mess

If you remember, the Hebrews (Jews) occupied lands in Palestine at the time of the ancient Roman Empire. As is the case everywhere else on the globe, between that chapter and this chapter a series of conquests shifted power over the region a mind-numbing number of times. While a few Jews managed to stay in the region, most bolted for Europe or other regions as Palestine became increasingly entrenched in Islam. All the while, however, many Jews had wanted to return to what they believed was the "promised land." But in the meantime, generation after generation of Muslim Palestinians had made that land home.

During World War I, **Zionists** (Jewish nationalists) living in Britain convinced **Arthur Balfour**, Britain's foreign secretary, that a Jewish homeland in Palestine was both desirable and just. In 1917, he issued what became known as the **Balfour Declaration**, which explicitly stated the right for a home in Palestine for the Jewish people, but he also stated that it in no way should displace the Palestinians who currently lived there. As history would have it, Britain gained control of Palestine in 1920, not as a colony but as a mandate from the League of Nations-which meant that it was to govern on behalf of the League of Nations-and was therefore in a position to make good on its declaration.

But the declaration was messy because it essentially provided that the Palestinians and Jews were to divide land that they both claimed. Jews began streaming into Palestine and, as their numbers grew, the Palestinians started to get uneasy: In the 1930s, huge numbers of Jews flooded the region to escape Germany as Hitler came to power. By the beginning of World War 11, nearly 500,000 Jews . had emigrated to Palestine. While Palestinians still outnumbered Jews, the Jewish population was now large enough to pull some serious weight, especially because money was pouring into the region from Jewish communities worldwide.

The Jewish Wait for a State Ends in 1948

In 1948, the United Nations (which had replaced the ineffectual League of Nations) officially created two Palestines, one for Jews and the other for Muslims (Palestinians). Sound familiar? It should. The same arrangement was made with India and Pakistan. The Indians and Pakistanis have been fighting ever since. This should give you a clue for what's coming in the next paragraph.

As soon as David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of **Israel**, announced the official creation of the Jewish homeland, Muslims from six Arab countries attacked Israel. But the Israelis shocked and awed them with their quick organization and military capability. Within months, the Israelis controlled most of Palestine, including the Palestinian parts, while Jordan held the remaining portions (the West Bank). Suddenly, Palestinians were without a home. They had no land to call their own.

As Jews flocked to Israel from all over the world, Israel and Arab countries continued to have skirmishes. In 1967, an amazingly short Six Day War resulted in total victory for the Israelis who took control of the West Bank from Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. In 1977**, Prime Minister Begin** and **Egyptian President Sadat** signed the **Camp David Accords**, an agreement which led to Israel pulling out of the Sinai and Egypt recogniz­ing Israel's right to exist. This was a huge blow to the Palestinians and other Arab nations. Sadat was assassinated.

In the years since, the Israelis and the Palestinians have been fighting over the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Gaza Strip. The **Palestine Liberation Organization** (PLO), a group dedicated to reclaiming the land and establishing a Palestinian state, has so far been unsuc­cessful in negotiating a homeland. The efforts are complicated by the *intifada* (uprising), an on-again off-again movement that sometimes uses terrorism against Israeli citizens in an attempt to either destroy Israel or force it into withdrawal from the occupied territories. But at the same time, militant Israelis continue to build settlements in the occupied territories.

A new *intifada* began in 2000 reigniting violence between the Palestinians and the occupying Israeli forces. As suicide bombings became more frequent, newly elected Israeli prime minister **Ariel Sharon** approved the construction of a wall to be built between the Palestinian West Bank and Israel in order to protect Israelis against suicide attacks. Often compared to the Berlin Wall, Israel has been criticized by the international community for employing such a draconian measure to fight terrorist attacks.

Not limiting itself to criticism however, the international community, led by the United States, the European Union, the UN and Russia, in 2003 proposed a "Roadmap to Peace," which outlined a set of goals to achieve peace in the region. Progress on the Roadmap remained stalled until the death of Palestinian president (and former PLO leader) **Yassir Arafat** in November 2004. Arafat had been consistently blamed by Israel and the U.S. for blocking such progress. Following his January 2005 election, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas quickly signed a cease-fire with Israel that effectively ended the *intifada* that began in 2000.

Even with this latest progress, controversy continues as Sharon continues with his plan to with­draw all Israeli settlers and troops from the Gaza Strip. Sharon has managed to upset both Palestin­ians and his own people with the plan. Palestinians are suspicious of the Gaza pullout and see it as an attempt by Israel to gain more control over the West Bank (which is bigger and has more Jewish settlements). On the other hand, Jewish settlers in Gaza are furious because they are being forced to leave their homes. Lasting peace however will remain elusive until the Israelis and Palestinians can reach negotiated agreements on the permanent removal of Israeli troops and settlements from the occupied territories and the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

The Iranian Revolution: The Shah Gets Shooed

**Reza Shah Pahlavi** rose to power in 1925 by ousting the then ruling shah, who had allowed Persia to fall under European spheres of influence. Taking a stance similar to the Japanese during the Meiji Res­toration, Reza Shah decided that the best way to beat the westernizers was to join them. Iran (formerly Persia) modernized slowly at first, but once the Europeans left after World War II, the westernization efforts gained momentum, and in the 1960s, the Shah instituted land reform and education reform plus increased the rights of women, including the right to vote. Women also pursued higher education and the professions, and began to dress in Western fashions. All of this infuriated many Islamic fundamentalists who wanted to make the teachings of the Qu'ran the law of the land. Believing that the influence of the West was too strong, they sought to reverse the economic and social changes. Others believed that the Shah was not reforming *enough,* especially with regard to the political system, which lacked significant democratic reform.

The Shah reacted violently against dissent from both sides, pressing forward with his own mix of social and economic reform even in the face of strong public opposition. When President Carter of the United States visited Iran to congratulate it on its programs of modernization and westernization, the Islamic fundamentalists had had enough. In 1979, the Shah was ousted from power during the Ira­nian Revolution, which sent Iran back to a theocracy led by **Ayatollah ("Mirror of God") Khomeini**. Immediately, modernization and westernization programs were reversed, women were required to wear traditional Islamic clothing and to return to their traditional roles, and the Qu'ran became the basis of the legal system.

Soon after the revolution, Iran was invaded by Iraq in 1980 following a series of border disputes between the two countries. Iran's position was further complicated by Iraqi leader **Saddam** **Hussein's** quiet support from the United States, which was still quite furious over Iran's taking of U.S. hostages during the revolution. Even with some US. support, the Iran-Iraq war turned into an eight-year war of attrition with neither side gaining much ground until a cease-fire was signed in 1988.

Since the Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, Iran has been characterized by a power struggle between powerful Islamic fundamentalist clerics and an increasingly vocal reform-minded and some­what pro-western minority. Most recently however, Iran has caused international concern (particu­larly in the United States) by pushing ahead with efforts to develop what they deemed "peaceful" nuclear technologies, claiming they have a right as an independent nation to develop such technology as they see fit. Along with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the European Union, the United States is currently calling on Iran to sign an international agreement limiting or even eliminat­ing its nuclear programs.

Oil: Enormous Amounts of Black Goo

The Industrial Revolution was a huge bonanza for the Middle East. That's because they'd been sit­ting on over two-thirds of the world's known oil reserves since the beginning of civilization. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, it was goo. After the Industrial Revolution, it was fuel. As multinational corporations rushed to the Middle East throughout the twentieth century to obtain drilling and pro­duction rights, Middle Eastern governments like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, and Iraq started to earn billions of dollars annually. But the goo also meant that the rest of the world had become very, very interested in the Middle East, because oil allowed the West to do one of its favorite things: drive. This world interest sometimes led to intervention and war.

Once the oil-producing nations of the Middle East realized how much power they wielded, they organized. In 1960, the region united with a few other oil-exporting nations, like Venezuela, to form a petroleum cartel known as **OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries).** With three-quarters of the world's petroleum reserves, OPEC members collectively cut supply dramatically in the 1970s, sending the price of oil through the roof. Billions of extra dollars flowed into OPEC member nations' coffers. Nations like Saudi Arabia used the extra money to modernize their infrastructures, and spent billions on attempts to improve their agricultural sectors. Since the 1970s, OPEC hasn't been able to keep its members in line, and therefore it's a much less powerful organization, but the individual members who make up the organization continue to wield huge power over the world economy.

War in the Gulf: Oil and Sad dam Hussein

Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 under the leadership of Saddam Hussein because Iraq wanted to gain control of a greater percentage of the world's oil reserves. Iraqi control of Kuwait would have nearly doubled Iraq's oil reserves to 20 percent of the world's total, and would have put it in good position to make advances on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, actions that would have given Iraq control of more than half of the world's oil reserves. The world, especially the industrialized West, reacted immediately. The United Nations, and particularly the United States, sent forces to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait. The immediate impact of their success was the liberation of Kuwait and the humiliation of Iraq, which was subjected to UN monitoring, severe limitations on its military activi­ties, and economic sanctions. Neverthe1ess, Hussein remained in power, and the UN forces left the region without moving forward to oust him. Hussein held on to his brutal dictatorship for another ten years while also, many argue, ignoring key elements of the peace treaty that allowed him to keep his power after his invasion of Kuwait.

In April 2003, a coalition of countries consisting primarily of the United States and Great Britain, invaded Iraq to oust him from power. Saddam's government quickly fell to coalition forces but Hus­sein himself was not captured until December of that year. Sovereignty was returned to a transitional government in June of 2004, and a new democratically elected government was formed in May 2005. However, since the initial invasion, Iraq has been increasingly defined by suicide bombings against coalition forces and more and more against Iraqi forces and civilians. As of this writing, even amidst the violence, the Iraqi government is currently working on a new constitution due to be finished in August 2005. However, it remains to be seen if the new government can encourage a violent insur­gency to peacefully engage in the political process in new e1ections scheduled in Iraq for December. Nobody knows at present how long coalition forces will remain in Iraq to try to maintain security and stability.

Taliban, Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden

During the early 1980s, the Soviet Union sent thousands of troops to Afghanistan at the request of Marxist military leader Nur Muhammad Taraki, who had engineered a military coup against the previous government. Many Afghans opposed communism and Soviet intervention, however, and soon a massive civil war raged. Some of the resistors called themselves "holy warriors" and, with the aid of weapons from the Western powers who supplied the Cold War on every front, launched guerilla attacks against the superior military might of the Soviet Union. As internal problems escalated in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev agreed to withdraw Soviet troops from the region and a peace accord was signed. While communism fell apart in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the problems in Afghanistan continued. The decline of communism removed the Soviet threat, but warring factions vied to fill the power void, the power that finally triumphed after 14 years of fighting and more than 2 million deaths was called the **Taliban**, an Islamic fundamentalist regime that captured the capital of Kabul in 1996. The new government imposed strict Islamic law and severe restrictions on women. It also provided safe haven for **Osama bin Laden**, the Saudi-born leader of an international terrorist network, known as **Al Qaeda**, which has a serious distaste for Saudi Arabia and the United States. It's believed that Al Qaeda’s main issue with Saudi Arabia is that the ruling family is too cozy with the United States and that they have allowed U.S. troops to remain in the country since the Persian Gulf War, which amounts to the presence of infidels in a kingdom that is home to Islam's most holy sites. Al Qaeda despises the United States for what many believe are at least three reasons. First, the United States supports Israel, which the organization would like to see removed from the planet. Second, it has troops stationed in Saudi Arabia, and third, the United States is the primary agent of globalization, which Al Qaeda believes is infecting Islamic culture.

On **September 11, 2001**, Al Qaeda operatives managed to take control of four American passenger jets and fly two of them into the World Trade Center in New York City, one into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and one (presumably unintentionally) into a field in Pennsylvania. The towers of the World Trade Center fell to the ground, killing close to 3,000 civilians. The United States immedi­ately launched a war on terrorism, targeting Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Within months, the Taliban was removed from power and U.S. and UN forces occupied the country of Afghanistan. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, still survives.

**IV. PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER**

You've read about a lot of stuff in this chapter. Two world wars. A cold war and all its consequences. The end of European imperialism. The rise of the United States as a superpower. Islamic fundamen­talism in the Middle East. These are all huge events. And it's hard to discern immediately how you can connect them all together, other than to say that there were a lot of wars and a lot of hatred. Yet, beyond the morbidity and feelings of helplessness that a careful study of history can engender, there are also a lot of ways to think about history that can help you evaluate how people and the world function.

In the last chapter we talked a lot about nationalism, and it certainly didn't stop in the twentieth century. Nationalism not only led to fascism in Nazi Germany, but also to independence movements after World War II in India and Africa, and in Europe and Asia after the fall of the Soviet Union. Some­times it was based on broad cultural characteristics-Gandhi, for example, unsuccessfully wanting everyone to look at themselves as Indians, not as Hindus or Muslims-and other times it was very narrowly defined-Serbs, for example, or Nazis.

Regardless of its forms, nationalism affected all of the major global events in the twentieth century.

In both World War I and II, the aggressors were highly nationalistic. The independence movements following World War II were nationalistic. And the Cold War, because it pitted two opposing world­views that were so strongly identified with the nations of the Soviet Union and the United States, was arguably a nationalist struggle as well. National pride was on the line. And in the end, superpower status was on the line too.

By the late twentieth century, whether because of nationalism or not, there were a huge number of independent nation-states. Each former colony in Africa was independent. Lots of new countries formed from the old Soviet Union. What's more, most of the countries were developing along demo­cratic lines, though some along militaristic or Islamic theocratic lines, and capitalism seemed to be making huge gains after the fall of the Soviet Union, which leads us to the next question.

**IS THERE CURRENTLY A CONVERGENCE OF CULTURES?**

This is a tough question to answer. It could go either way, and if you study history enough, you can argue for both sides.

On the one hand, globalization is clearly occurring, and it's been occurring for a long time. It's just that now it's getting a lot faster and it's penetrating more and more hidden parts of the globe. Centuries ago, trade, conquest, and exploration were forms of globalization because they brought people together, essentially "making the world smaller." Big movements like the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution can certainly be categorized as movements toward globalization because they weren't culturally specific, but rather could be applied nearly anywhere around the globe. They brought people closer together because they led to certain ways of thinking that were attractive and accepted by different kinds of people. If people start to agree on how the universe is organized or how governments should be organized, that is most certainly a convergence of cultures.

In the twentieth century, globalization really got going. Aided by transportation, communication, and imperialism, anything produced in one country could be received in another. Popular examples of globalization are the appearance of the same multinational companies everywhere (seeing a Mc­Donalds in Istanbul) and certainly the use of the Internet, but globalization is much broader than even these examples. Globalization led to and continues to lead to an interconnectedness of entire economies. The Great Depression in the 1930s proved that the economies of most industrialized na­tions were heavily intertwined. Today, the economies are so intertwined that a fall in stock prices in Tokyo will have an instantaneous impact on the stock market in the United States.

As more and more countries start to look the same (independent, democratic, constitutional), their economies function in similar ways (stock market, low barriers to trade, strong banking system), and their cultures look the same (educated people who know English, Hollywood movies playing on the corner, cell phone in their hands), it can be strongly argued that there is a convergence of cultures.

On the other hand, globalization doesn't mean convergence. Globalization just means that ev­erything is spread all around the globe all the time. It doesn't mean that people accept, like, or want what's being hurled at them. It just means that it's available. Some argue that globalization will lead to an increase in the number of people who lash out against it, sometimes aggressively or violently. Globalization isn't well received in Islamic fundamentalist countries, or in countries that are trying hard to maintain a historical cultural identity, like France.

But more significantly, it can't be denied that the biggest movements of the twentieth century were rooted in self-determination and nationalism. The whole point of self-determination is for nations to chart their own course. If self-determination and nationalism mean that a country is going to use its independence to do what every other country does, then why be independent in the first place? Clearly, people want to chart their own course. They fought wars for the right to do so. They must have been doing so for a reason. So it makes sense that globalization will have its limits. And isn't the world a whole lot less consolidated today than it was under European imperialism, when that small continent ruled the world? Doesn't that suggest the opposite of global convergence?

In the end, there's no right answer to this question. The challenge is not that you accurately predict the future, but that you have an understanding of history to make a reasonable, defendable argument about the direction that history seems to be taking. If you can discuss globalization, nationalism, and self-determination in the same essay or conversation without totally losing your mind, you have command enough of the issues and complexities to be confident in yourself. Keep reading, keep studying, and keep thinking.