

Introduction

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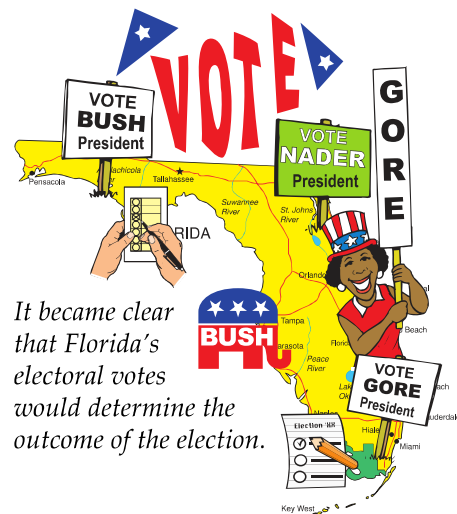


Courtesy of U.S. State Department

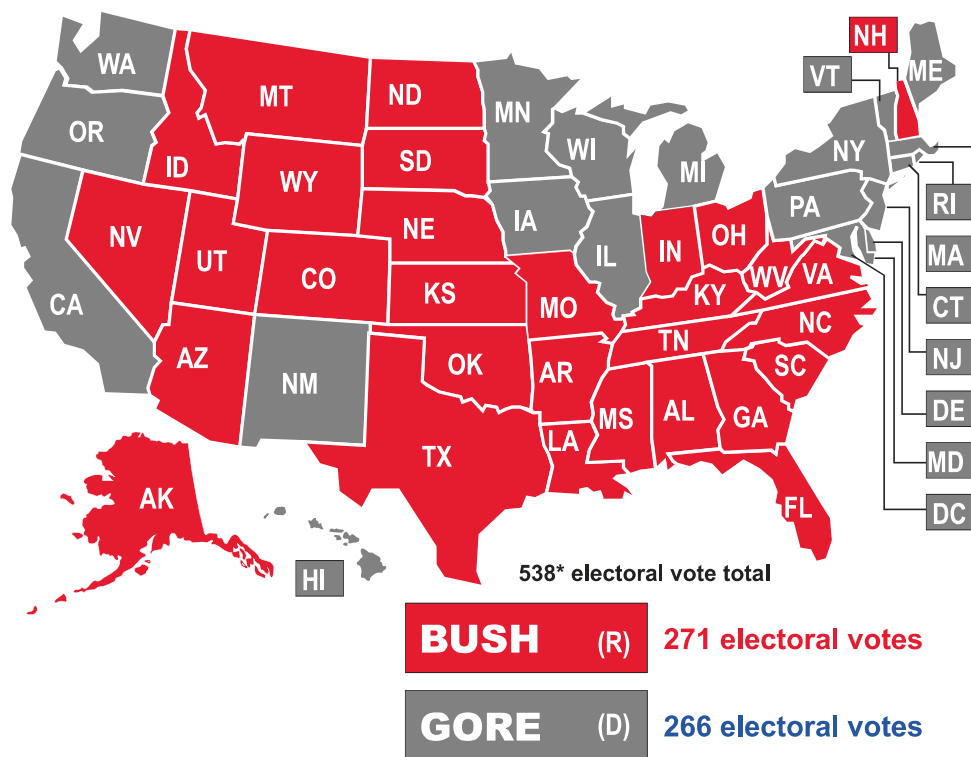
The 2000 presidential election was one of the closest in United States history. On election night, the television news networks projected that Al Gore would win in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Florida. All of these states together, along with those that Gore already won would give Gore enough **electoral votes** to win the presidency. However, later that evening, in a dramatic turn of

events, the television news networks reversed their original projection of a Gore victory. The election was “too close to call.”

It became clear that Florida’s *electoral votes* would determine the outcome of the election. When the final votes were counted, George W. Bush held an extremely small lead over Al Gore. Although Al Gore won the popular vote by more than 500,000 votes out of 105 million cast throughout the United States, Bush was proclaimed the winner when he was awarded Florida’s 25 electoral votes. A candidate needs 270 electoral votes to be elected president of the United States.



Because the election results in Florida were so close, an automatic recount was ordered. Disputes over the accuracy of the election results in Florida led to a month-long court battle. Ultimately, the United States Supreme Court, most of whose members were appointed by former Republican presidents, voted five to four to halt the recounts and awarded Florida's electoral votes to George W. Bush. George W. Bush had 271 electoral votes to Al Gore's 266. Needing 270 electoral votes to win, George W. Bush was elected.

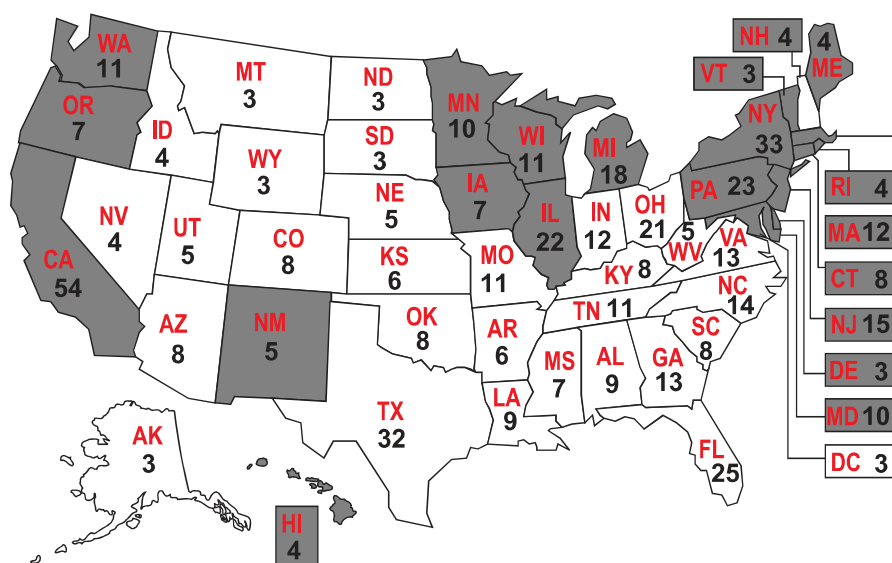


2000 Election Map

A presidential candidate can win the **popular vote** (those votes cast by individual voters) but lose the presidential election because he or she does *not* win the electoral votes (those votes cast by each state's electors) needed to be elected president. This happened in the 2000 election and in only three other presidential elections in our nation's history: in 1824, when Andrew Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams; 1876, when Rutherford Hayes defeated Samuel Tilden; and 1888, when Benjamin Harrison defeated Grover Cleveland.

The Electoral College

Each state has a designated number of electors equal to its total number of senators and representatives. In almost all states, electoral votes are given in a “**winner-takes-all**” fashion. This means that a presidential candidate may win a state by only the smallest of margins and still win all the electoral votes for that state. The presidential election is decided based on the number of electoral votes of the states won, not the candidate who wins the most *popular* votes earned in each state’s election.



2000 Electoral Votes

The First Bush Administration: The Domestic Agenda

Early in his first term, President Bush focused on two key issues: congressional approval of a major tax cut and education reform. Bush believed that a tax cut would jumpstart America’s slowing economy. Under this plan, many taxpayers would receive a one-time rebate of \$300-\$600 from the federal government. It was believed that a tax refund, along with tax cuts, would encourage consumers to spend money on goods and services and thus revive the economy. An improving economy would also lead to job growth. Critics of the president’s tax cuts pointed out that these cuts would benefit only the wealthiest citizens and not the middle or lower classes.

In 2001, two corporate scandals hurt consumer confidence in the economy. Many investors lost faith and trust in corporations when it was revealed that Enron, a powerful energy trading corporation, had engaged in illegal accounting practices. The company was deeply in debt. Its corporate stock fell to less than \$1.00 a share. Investors lost millions and many employees lost their jobs and life savings as Enron declared bankruptcy.

Again in July of 2002, WorldCom, another major corporation, also declared bankruptcy. In order to restore consumer confidence in corporate investments, Congress enacted legislation to create a regulatory board to oversee the accounting industry and corporations.

The president also put in place many reforms in education designed to increase accountability and standards for student performance in public schools in each state. The plan known as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* called for school choice for parents and students and mandatory standardized testing of students as a means to chart their yearly progress. Each state had to come up with guidelines and standards for improving competency in reading and mathematics. **Standardized tests** (tests that measure a student's knowledge and abilities) often determined whether or not a student would receive a high school diploma. However, many states balked at implementing No Child Left Behind in their state's public schools because of the lack of financial support needed to properly establish the program.

Foreign Affairs: September 11th and the War on Terrorism

On September 11, 2001, Americans reacted with shock and horror as they witnessed another terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in the financial district of New York City and the **Pentagon**, the five-sided building near Washington, D.C. that houses the United States Department of Defense. Using hijacked commercial airplanes as weapons, the terrorists crashed two airplanes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center and one into the *Pentagon*. A fourth plane crashed in a remote part of Pennsylvania.



The World Trade Center's twin towers before September 11, 2001.

Despite the speedy response to these disasters by emergency personnel, more than 2,800 people lost their lives. Many of those who died were passengers on the hijacked airplanes and those who worked at the World



As seen from New York Harbor, downtown Manhattan is obscured by smoke after the attacks.

Trade Center and the Pentagon. Many firemen and policemen also lost their lives when they attempted to rescue people trapped in the fiery wreckage of the World Trade Center's twin towers.

As a result of this terrorist attack, the United States military was put on full alert. The Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.) grounded air traffic nationwide and closed airports and key government centers. An investigation was immediately launched

to determine who was responsible for this act of terror against innocent American civilians. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) identified those that planned and carried out these acts of terrorism as members of a radical **fundamentalist** Muslim terror network known as **al Qaeda**. A *fundamentalist* believes in a strict interpretation of religious or political principles. This fundamentalist terrorist network believed that **jihad**, or *holy war*, against their enemies was a duty of their Muslim faith.

The prime suspect in these terrorist acts was *Osama bin Laden*. Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian **exile**, had long been an outspoken opponent of the United States and its allies. As the founder of the fundamentalist Islamic terrorist organization, *al Qaeda*, he had publicly called for attacks against the United States. He blamed the United States and the west for corrupting the Islamic world and oppressing Muslims. He was also wanted in connection with other terrorist acts committed against the United States, namely for his role in the bombing of United States embassies in Africa in 1998. The United States considered bin Laden to be an international terrorist and actively sought a cooperative role among the nations of the world to capture bin Laden and his followers.

A Reaction to Terrorism: A Nation United

Americans would not be intimidated by acts of terrorism. The Congress of the United States approved \$40 billion dollars to help the nation recover. National security and emergency aid was provided to the victims and their families. A wave of patriotism was evident in the solidarity shown by Americans as they lined up to donate blood and displayed their American flags. Charities collected funds for relief efforts as well. The Mayor of New York, *Rudy Giuliani* proclaimed, “We’re going to rebuild and rebuild stronger.” In a speech to the nation, President Bush told Americans, “We (the United States) will do whatever necessary to protect America and Americans.” On September 20, 2001, the President addressed the joint houses of Congress and the American people.

...Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime....

The President made it clear that the United States considered the terrorists’ attacks on the United States as “an act of war.” He firmly



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committed our nation’s resources for a war on terrorism itself. This included terrorist organizations and national governments that supported and protected terrorist’s organizations.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

The Invasion of Afghanistan

Osama bin Laden sought refuge in the Islamic nation of Afghanistan. He had long been a supporter and financial backer of the Islamic resistance movement that successfully overthrew Afghanistan’s Soviet-backed government in 1989. By 1996, a new Islamic fundamentalist group known as the **Taliban** gained control of Afghanistan. The *Taliban* regime in Afghanistan established a very conservative Islamic government. This government outlawed all western influences in their country. The Taliban also gave support and refuge to Osama bin Laden and his supporters.

Over the years, bin Laden used Afghanistan as a home for his terrorist organization. He built terrorist training camps in the Afghan countryside and recruited and trained many young Muslim men in the skills necessary to establish a global terrorist network. The United States demanded that the Afghan government shut down these terrorist training camps and turn over Osama bin Laden and his supporters to the United States. The Taliban refused these demands. In October 2001, coalition forces led by the United States bombed Afghanistan. This campaign was known as “Operation Enduring Freedom.”

With the help of American allies and northern Afghan rebel forces, the Taliban were defeated. United States authorities and the Afghan leaders eventually developed a new constitution. Soon thereafter, a democratically elected government was established. The al Qaeda network was broken in Afghanistan. However the defeat of the Taliban did not result in the capture of Osama bin Laden.

Many of the remaining Taliban and terrorists, along with Osama bin Laden, escaped into the mountainous border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. American forces continue to search for the al Qaeda leader.



Vice President Dick Cheney with newly-elected President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

The war on terrorism would become a global struggle. With terrorist networks established throughout the world, the war on terrorism would become a war described by President Bush as “a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have seen.”

National Domestic Security

In November 2002, the President signed in a law creating the Department of Homeland Security with former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge as its secretary. This new government agency moved quickly to safeguard our country from future terrorist attacks. At airports, increased security measures were put in place. Improved security at vital systems of transportation other than airports and power networks was quickly put in place as well.

Americans were also informed of the risk of terrorist attacks through a new color-coded terror alert system. Improved communication and information sharing between the FBI and other **intelligence-gathering agencies** were also established.

On October 26, 2001, law enforcement agencies were granted expanded powers to fight terrorism when Congress passed the legislation known as the *Patriot Act*. This act allowed the United States the power to indefinitely imprison without trial any noncitizens who are considered a threat to national security. Wiretapping of phones, monitoring of email, and expanded search warrant powers were considered necessary tools in the war against terrorism. People who opposed this law worried that the expanded powers of the government may violate **civil liberties**, or *human rights*. At issue was the protection of the *civil liberties* that are guaranteed in the United States Constitution, while at the same time protecting our citizens from acts of terrorism. Terrorists and al Qaeda suspects, mostly of Middle Eastern origin, that were captured were considered combatants and imprisoned at Guantanamo, a United States military base in Cuba.

The War on Terrorism Expands to Iraq

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, a date which has become known as 9/11, President Bush feared that nations that were hostile to the United States would also pose a security threat to our nation. Bush proclaimed in January 2002 in his State of the Union speech that “The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.” Iran, Iraq, and North Korea were referred to as “the axis of evil” because these nations were known to be developing **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**. *Weapons of mass destruction* include all banned chemical or biological weapons, as well as nuclear weapons, which are capable of killing enormous numbers of people.

In addition, Iraq became the focus of concern because the Bush administration feared that *Saddam Hussein*, the leader of Iraq, was supplying terrorists with weapons of mass destruction. Since the late 1990s, Iraq had refused to cooperate with weapons inspectors from the

United Nations (see Unit 11). In the fall of 2002, President Bush identified Iraq as “the next battlefield in the war on terrorism.” On October 11, 2002, the Congress of the United States passed a joint resolution that authorized the President to use armed force, if necessary, against Iraq.

Under the threat of an armed invasion, Saddam Hussein allowed weapons inspectors from the *United Nations* (UN) to return to his country (as they had after the first Gulf War). The UN weapons inspectors were unable to find any evidence that Iraq had resumed its weapons of mass destruction program. United States officials were skeptical and believed that Saddam had simply hidden the evidence of his weapons program. The Bush administration had come to believe that Saddam would continue to be a threat to world peace. His long record of human rights abuses and the legacy of the Persian Gulf War were fresh in their minds. Overthrowing



An Iraqi woman cries next to remains of bodies pulled from a mass grave that were believed killed during the Shiite revolt against Saddam Hussein’s regime.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

Despite objections from many of America’s allies, mainly France and Germany, the United States opted to prepare to launch a **preemptive war** against Iraq. A *preemptive war* is a military action that is intended to lessen an enemy’s ability to attack first. In a speech to the United Nations, Secretary of State *Colin Powell* presented the case for war; however, the UN favored the use of *diplomacy*. They wanted to continue

Saddam and ending his dictatorship would offer an opportunity to promote **democracy** in the region and perhaps resolve disputes between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The United States abandoned the use of **diplomacy**, or *peaceful settlement of disputes*. Instead, they issued an **ultimatum**, or a set of demands, to Saddam. Saddam was ordered to leave the country. When he refused to give up control, the United States with the support of Great Britain and other countries, made the decision to invade Iraq.



Secretary of State Colin Powell at a press conference on December 19, 2002, discussing Iraq’s weapon’s declaration.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department



Operation Iraqi Freedom began on March 19, 2003 with air strikes and a ground invasion.



using weapons inspections as a means to resolve the Iraqi crisis. Without the support of the United Nations, most of its allies and the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, the United States and Great Britain decided to invade Iraq.

*Operation Iraqi Freedom began on March 19, 2003 with **air strikes**, or an attack by aircraft, and a ground invasion.* American forces included mainly the enlisted men and women in the Army and Marine corps. However, reservists (members of the military not on active duty) and National Guard members were called to serve as well. Within

a month, Iraqi forces were defeated. On May 1st, President Bush told the American people that major combat operations were over. In his “Mission Accomplished” speech, he outlined his vision for a lasting peace and the reconstruction of a new Iraq.

Aftermath of the War in Iraq

Establishing a new democratically elected government and the occupation and



A coalition soldier gives medical care to an Iraqi boy.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

reconstruction of a war-torn Iraq would be costly. President Bush asked Congress to allot over \$80 billion for the rebuilding of Iraq. The costs of the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, homeland security, and the war in Iraq would cause the federal deficit to grow dramatically. The Bush administration asked other nations in the world to contribute in the reconstruction of Iraq’s infrastructure and its oil industry.



A coalition soldier gives water to an Iraqi woman for her child, March 22, 2003.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

The Iraqi people would have to come together and work to develop a new constitution. A governing council made up of Iraq's many ethnic and



Civilian vehicle traffic in the Iraqi capital was banned during the Iraqi national elections on January 30, 2005. Hundreds of residents in western Baghdad walked along the freeway to get to their polling sites.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

religious groups had the task of drawing up a new constitution. On January 30, 2005, the Kurds, an ethnic group in Northern Iraq, and the Shiites and Sunni (the two major Muslim sects) participated in the first democratic elections in their nation's history. However, over time, **insurgents**, or *resistance fighters*, began to launch a series of attacks against the American occupation forces in Iraq. Some of the insurgents were Saddam **loyalists**, or *supporters*, and others were criminals or

terrorists who had slipped across the Iraqi borders. These acts of anti-American violence produced a mounting toll of casualties among the civilian population and the troops stationed in Iraq. *Insurgents* used car and suicide bombings that targeted police stations, market places, and government buildings. Because of the mounting violence, the tours of duty of many of the American troops had to be extended. British, Spanish, and Italian forces serving in Iraq also suffered many casualties. By mid-2005, the total number of military personnel killed in Iraq had climbed to over 2,000.

No Weapons of Mass Destruction

The President had justified the war in Iraq based on his assertion that Saddam had been developing weapons of mass destruction and had direct links with the terrorist organization al Qaeda. The President had warned that Saddam was a direct threat to American security. After the fall of Saddam's government, United States inspectors searched for weapons of mass destruction, but none were ever found.

President Bush insisted that the decision to invade Iraq was the right one. He claimed that Saddam was a brutal dictator and a continuing threat to the United States and the world. "The world is better off with Saddam's overthrow." Critics of the Bush administration demanded to know how

the United States *intelligence gathering agencies* like the FBI or **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** (the government organizations that gather information about the secret plans of an enemy nation), were unable to provide accurate information concerning the weapons of mass destruction. These and other questions would become issues in the 2004 presidential election.

In December of 2003, many of Saddam's top government officials were already in American custody when he was captured. Many Americans believed that once the war was over, and Saddam was arrested, their loved ones would be able to come home; however, Iraq continues to remain a violent and dangerous land. President Bush has imposed no timetable on the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. He continues to insist that the war in Iraq has reduced the terrorist threat to the United States and the world. Opponents to Bush's Iraq policy claim that the war increased the threat of terrorism and has further alienated the Muslim world. **Terrorist cells** (small groups of people who are connected to al Qaeda's terrorist network) operate in many countries throughout the world. They have bombed subways, nightclubs, and apartment complexes in response to the war in Iraq.

The Election of 2004



President George W. Bush

Courtesy of U.S.
State Department

President George W. Bush ran for a second term against Democrat *John F. Kerry*, a United States Senator from Massachusetts. There were many issues debated during the 2004 presidential election. Some of these issues included the United States energy policy, the economy, the environment, morals and values, health care coverage, and education reform. Gay marriage and abortion were also hotly debated issues. However, one of the key issues of the 2004 election was the Bush administration's conduct of the war on terror. During the campaign for reelection, the president defended the actions of his administration, while Kerry asserted that the president's strategies for fighting the war on terrorism were ineffective.



John F. Kerry, a United States Senator from Massachusetts

Courtesy of U.S.
State Department

Kerry believed that the Iraq War was a distraction from the real “War on Terror,” and not a part of it. Was the country safer from another terrorist attack because of the steps the Bush administration had taken since



Secretary of State Colin Powell and President George W. Bush

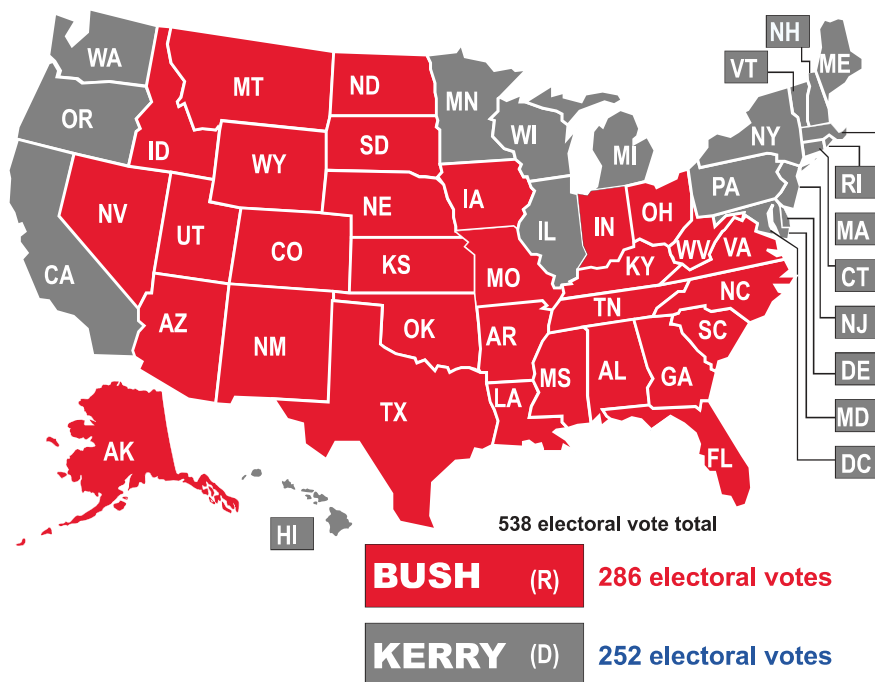
Courtesy of U.S. State Department

September 11th? As the two main candidates for president faced off in many presidential debates, this question remained the main focal point. In addition, the war in Iraq had divided voters because of the increasing United States casualties and failure of the Bush administration to prove that there was a link between Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist network. No weapons of mass destruction were ever found in Iraq and Osama bin Laden had not yet been captured.

Many wondered if the 2004 election would be as close as the 2000 election. Several states switched to electronic voting systems. Computer voting supporters claimed that electronically recorded votes could be counted with greater accuracy than paper ballots. As Election Day approached, it was uncertain who would be the next president. As in 2000, this election would also be close. The United States presidential election of 2004 was won by the incumbent or current President George W. Bush. He defeated his main rival Senator John F. Kerry. Ralph Nader also ran for president again in 2004; however this time around he was listed as the Reform Party candidate. Nader was on the ballot in 34 states, including Washington, D.C. The results of the popular vote were extremely close, and it was not until the following day that the final outcome was known.

The outcome of the election hinged on the battleground states of Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania. These three *swing states*, as they were called, could ultimately determine the presidential election. When Bush won Florida and Kerry won Pennsylvania, it was the state of Ohio that ultimately determined the outcome of the election. When Ohio’s votes were counted, Bush won the state’s electoral votes by a large enough margin to be reelected president.

Although President Bush received a majority of the popular vote, it was the closest margin ever for a sitting president, 50.73 percent (%) to Kerry's 48.27 percent. Bush had been reelected with 286 electoral votes to Kerry's 252. In exit polls, voters were asked what one issue mattered most to them in choosing a president—moral values ranked at the top with the war in Iraq, terrorism, jobs, and the economy also being major concerns. Even in a time of war and economic hardship, many Americans were motivated to vote for President Bush based on his stand against gay marriage and abortion. Election analysts believe that it was these issues that gave Bush the margin of victory to win the presidency in 2004.



2004 Election Map

Issues and Concerns Facing Americans in the 21st Century

Foreign Policy Challenges

The challenges of the 21st century will require that our nation's leaders be able to work together to develop policies that ensure a peaceful and prosperous America for future generations. The challenges that we face are many both at home and abroad. However, the three challenges above

all others include eliminating terror globally; stopping the spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; and the promotion of *democracy* around the world.

Terrorism. The United States and its global allies will have to work closely together to use all available resources to find and eliminate the terrorist networks. In addition, a strong military, improved diplomacy, and an effective intelligence gathering agency will provide for a more secure America. To prevent a new generation of terrorists from emerging, we must also work toward understanding the root cause of terrorism before we can effectively eliminate it. Expanding democracy in the Islamic world is seen as an effective part of the war on terrorism.

The spread of weapons of mass destruction. Iran and North Korea pose the greatest threat to world peace because these countries have been developing nuclear and chemical weapons. North Korea recently announced that they have manufactured nuclear weapons for self-defense.

Promoting democracy around the world. Although the number of countries turning toward some form of democracy has increased in the past 10 years, there are still many countries ruled by a range of military dictatorships; **repressive**, or *severely*



Iraqi Shiite women celebrate the capture of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein on December 15, 2003.

Courtesy of U.S. State
Department

restrictive monarchies; and dominant political parties. The greatest concentration of dictators is in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa—for example, Sudan, North Korea, Burma, China, Saudi Arabia, and Zimbabwe. These nations have a long history of human rights violations and are a threat to the peace and prosperity of the world. Promoting democracy would increase the chance that a nation will become economically successful and politically stable. In addition, free countries are more responsible members of the international community.

Domestic Policy Challenges

Health care. One of the biggest challenges for our future leaders will be to develop a plan to provide every American with affordable, high-quality health care and affordable drug coverage. Medicare is expected to run out of money by 2010 and go bankrupt by 2025. Because Americans are living longer, older people make up a larger percentage of the population than ever before. Four workers pay taxes for every one person who currently receives Medicare benefits.

Social Security. As the **baby-boom generation** (known as the *baby boomers*—those born between 1946-1964) reaches retirement age, a large number of retirees will overburden the Social Security System. As stated above, Americans are living longer. However, the number of people paying into the system is declining. Reforming the Social Security System has been a hotly debated issue for many years. The Bush administration supports the idea of allowing people to invest their Social Security money in the stock market. Other proposals to save the system from potential bankruptcy include cutting benefits, raising the Social Security taxes, and raising the retirement age.



Reforming the Social Security System has been a hotly debated issue for many years.

Courtesy of U.S.
State Department

Rising energy costs. Americans consume 2.5 million barrels of oil a day. The increased demand for oil has caused the cost to skyrocket. In addition, our dependence on Middle East oil is putting our national security at risk. New technologies and research and development of alternative fuels, as well as conservation measures, need to be pursued in order to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Immigration. Millions of people enter the United States illegally each year. With the threat that terrorists also may enter our borders, illegal immigration has become a security issue. Protecting our borders should be one of our highest priorities. Many illegal immigrants who enter the United States work at mostly low-paying jobs with no benefits. Many Americans are concerned that illegal immigrants don't pay taxes, but receive

government-funded services such as health care and public education. Others worry that even legal immigrants will take jobs away from Americans seeking employment. However, statistics suggest that immigration has helped our economy grow. Immigrants contribute as consumers, small business owners, and taxpayers.

Education reform. Improving the quality of public education will continue to be an issue in the 21st century. No Child Left Behind is the federal program the Bush administration believes will adequately reform and improve public education standards. The key issue facing public education is the establishment of a reliable source of funding. In most states, funding comes from property taxes. Therefore schools in poorer areas receive less funding than those in wealthier communities. Reformers have also supported the idea of **charter schools**. These schools receive a contract from local school districts. They offer programs that promise to improve student achievement. Other school reformers support the idea of school **vouchers**. *Vouchers* are tax dollars set aside for public schools and given to parents who want to enroll their children in a private school instead of a public school. Supporters of this system believe that public schools will be forced to compete with private schools for tax dollars and thus the overall quality of education will increase. Critics of the voucher system claim that it robs the public schools of the funds necessary to provide a quality public education.

Summary

George W. Bush defeated Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election and John Kerry in the 2004 election. After 9/11 (September 11, 2001), the United States embarked on a global war on terrorism. The United States invaded Afghanistan when the Taliban refused to shut down terrorist training camps and turn over Osama bin Laden. The Iraqi war resulted in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of a democratically



President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair after they conclude a joint news conference at Camp David.

Courtesy of U.S. State Department

elected government for the first time in the history of Iraq. In this new millennium, the United States faces important foreign policy challenges. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and the promotion of democracy are the most important issues of the 21st century. In addition, domestic challenges such as rising health care costs, Social Security reform, energy costs, and the debates over immigration and education reform remain issues yet to be resolved.