

# The U.S. Role in a Changing World



THE  
**CHOICES  
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BROWN UNIVERSITY

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## Introduction: Global Issues and U.S. Policy

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Since the turn of the century, the world has become increasingly complex. Much of the planet is increasingly connected by a web of trade, technology, and common political values. In this globalized world, traditional dividing lines based on borders and cultures have blurred. On the other hand, the problems that have haunted humanity throughout history have not disappeared. Violence continues to erupt over questions of land, power, and identity. Billions of people live in poverty. Tyrannical governments use fear and intimidation to maintain their authority. The United States is one of many actors that shapes and navigates this complex world.

From the first days of the republic, U.S. citizens have debated how to balance their priorities at home with their involvement in international affairs. In his farewell address of 1796, President George Washington warned his fellow citizens to “steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.” Yet Washington also recognized that the United States would need to be connected to the larger world in order to prosper.

Since the creation of the United States, the country has evolved into a far more powerful one than George Washington could have possibly imagined. Time and again, the people of the United States have been compelled to rethink the U.S. role in the world. Changes in the United States—rapid economic growth, increasing global power, waves of immigration, and social and political changes—

have caused generations of U.S. citizens to wrestle with conflicting foreign policy ideas. Citizens have argued about what interests and values, if any, should shape U.S. relations with other countries, and how the United States should act internationally.

Today, the United States is considering its domestic needs and reassessing its international relationships. An array of economic, political, and social transformations are taking place both at home and abroad. Consensus about how to address these issues is hard to achieve. Nevertheless, a healthy democracy requires debate and discussion about the values and policies that shape the United States' place in the world.

The readings in this text discuss the forces that shape the U.S. role in the world. Part I examines several pressing issues facing the United States and the world today: the economy, human health and the environment, international relations, and human rights. Part II explores security concerns of the United States and how they connect to the issues presented in Part I.

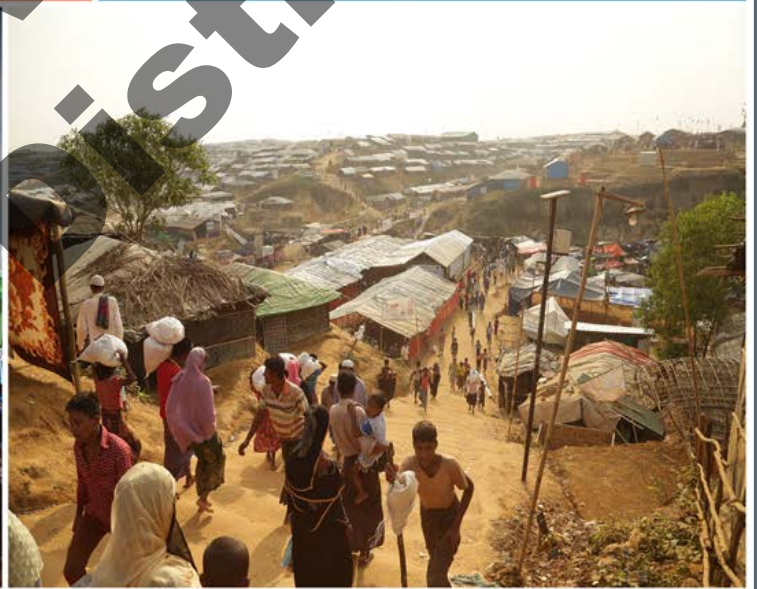
After the readings, you will consider four distinct alternatives for U.S. foreign policy. Finally, you will be asked to offer your own policy recommendations that reflect your personal beliefs and opinions.

# The U.S. Role in a Changing World

## Teacher Resource Book

TEACHER RESOURCE BOOK

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## Interpreting Political Cartoons

### Objectives:

**Students will:** Interpret political cartoons about current international issues.

Identify the message and point of view of the cartoons.

### Required Reading:

Before the lesson, students should have read Part II and completed “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 15-16) or the “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-17).

### Handouts:

“Political Cartoons” (TRB 20-24)

“Political Cartoon Techniques” (Optional) (TRB-25)

A slideshow of the cartoons is available at <[www.choices.edu/usrole](http://www.choices.edu/usrole)>.

### In the Classroom:

**1. Getting Started**—Divide the class into groups of three or four. Distribute “Political Cartoons” to each student. Have the students discuss each cartoon in their groups and answer the questions provided. (Space has been provided for questions 1-2. Questions 3-4 will need to be answered on a separate sheet of paper.) As an alternative, you may wish to break up the cartoons among the groups and have students report back to the class on their assigned cartoons.

**Optional:** You may wish to challenge your students to complete a more in-depth analysis of the cartoons. Before distributing the cartoons to students, distribute “Political Cartoon Techniques” and review the techniques as a class. Distribute the cartoons. In addition to answering the four questions that accompany the cartoons, ask students to identify at least two techniques that each cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.

**Note:** It may be helpful to analyze one cartoon together as a class before sending students off in their groups.

**2. Drawing Connections**—Select several cartoons from the collection. Discuss how the points of view of the cartoonists are reflected in the cartoons. Were the students surprised by the variety of perspectives?

### Extra Challenge:

Have the students draw cartoons presenting their own views on a specific issue or about the U.S. role in the world more broadly.

### Homework:

Students should read the “Options in Brief” in the student text.



## Political Cartoons

*Introduction:* The strong feelings raised by international issues inspire political cartoonists in the United States and around the world. Cartoons not only reflect the events of the times, but also offer interpretations and express strong opinions about these events. These cartoons come from cartoonists both in the United States and abroad.

Answer questions 1-2 in the space beside each cartoon. Questions 3-4 should be answered on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Who or what is depicted in the cartoon?
2. Does the cartoon have a message or point of view? What is it?
3. Choose two cartoons in the collection that present opposing views. How do the messages differ?
4. What strikes you most about this collection of cartoons?



1.

2.

The Meeting by Peter Fismesitovic, Kleine Zeitung, Austria.

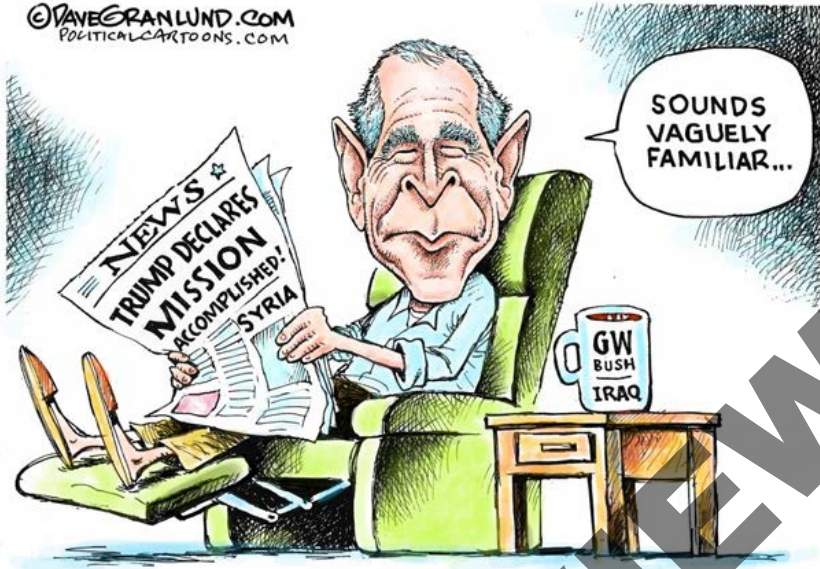


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