CHAPTER 35
Globalization at the Turn of the Millennium
Global Political Economies
The great appeal of democracy is that it allows for the peaceful resolution of differences between a country's social, cultural, and regional groups.

Democratic institutions gained ground in eastern Europe and in Russia during the last decade.

Since 1991, democracy has become the norm in Latin America.
In Asia, Indonesia and China have moved towards more open political processes.

With the notable exception of South Africa, elections in sub-Saharan Africa have often been used by would-be dictators as the first step in establishing their political and military dominance.
Democracy is the exception, not the rule, in the Middle East
Global Politics

- Since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations has sought to reestablish its role as the world's peacekeeper and defender of human rights.

- While United Nations peacekeeping missions have had some success, it is often difficult for the member nations to agree on a given course of action.
It has been particularly difficult for the international community to agree on how and when to intervene in civil conflicts and when to stop human rights abuses.

This fact was illustrated in the slow response of the United States and the European nations to civil war and ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda.
Arms Control and Terrorism

- Recent events have raised concerns about terrorism and the proliferation and dissemination of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
- Many countries, including the United States, have begun new nuclear weapons programs.
- Fears about WMDs and terrorism came together in the concern that terrorist organizations, like that led by Osama bin Laden, would gain access to WMDs.
President Bush's declaration of a "War on Terrorism" and preemptive strikes by the United States on Afghanistan and Iraq raised fears in much of the world that the United States no longer felt itself bound by international institutions and international law.
Disorder in Iraq following the United States invasion has intensified the worldwide debate about the best way to respond to the twin threats of terrorism and WMDs.
The Global Economy

- Following a decade of rapid growth, a worldwide recession began in 2000.
- World trade and manufacturing became increasingly integrated and interdependent.
- Rapid growth occurred in parts of the developing world, as countries made the transition from communism to capitalism.
China's steps to open its economy to freer trade and investment helped make it a global economic power.

Technology that made it possible to rapidly invest funds in international markets also made it possible to withdraw those funds just as rapidly.
Trends and Visions
Christian Millenarianism

- Many Christians saw deeper meaning in the dawning of the twenty-first century, believing that the return of Jesus Christ and the end of the world were imminent.

- Such Christian millenarians see in current events evidence of the coming apocalypse.
Militant Islam

- Like people of all faiths, Muslims have responded in a variety of ways to globalization.
- A minority have chosen a militant response to what they see as a direct threat to Islam.
- Economic and political failures have contributed to the rise of militant Islam.
- Conflict with Israel and unhappiness about American support of Israel have also fueled anger in the Middle East.
- Militant Muslims believe that violence against perceived enemies is justified because they see themselves as locked in global battle between good and evil.
Universal Rights and Values

- The United Nations sought to protect the rights of individuals through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed by the General Assembly in December 1948.

- The declaration’s emphasis on individual rights was derived mostly from European and American history; many of the countries that later signed this declaration had reservations about the universal nature of concepts that had been formulated exclusively on the basis of the western cultural tradition.
Rather than addressing fundamental philosophical issues regarding the concept of human rights, human rights activists worked through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and focused their efforts on agreed-upon violations of human rights: torture, imprisonment without trial, summary execution by death squads, famine relief, and refugee assistance.
Demands by the United States that its citizens be exempted from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and its withdrawal from the Kyoto agreement has prompted charges of hypocrisy from critics of the United States government.
Women’s Rights

- Positions on the question of women’s rights clearly demonstrate the dichotomy of views between the western industrialized nations and the nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

- The feminist movement in the West was concerned with voting rights, equal access to education and jobs, and an end to gender discrimination and sexual exploitation. Feminists in the West also decried the oppression of women in other parts of the world.
Some non-western women complained about the deterioration of morality and family life in the West and questioned the priorities of the western feminist movement. Efforts to coordinate the struggle for women’s rights internationally gained momentum in the 1970s but these efforts were not able to overcome deep-seated cultural disagreement on the definition of women’s rights.
Global Culture
After World War II, the United States became the world’s main exporter of movies, challenged only by India, Egypt, and Hong Kong.
In the 1960s television began to spread to most of the non-western world, where government monopolies ensured that the new medium would be used to disseminate a unified national viewpoint rather than function as a medium for the transmission of western culture and opinions.

American organizations like MTV (Music Television) and CNN (Cable News Network) used satellite transmission technology to enter the international market; MTV created special editions adapted to the tastes of local markets, but CNN proffered a fundamentally American view of the news.
The development of digital technology offered the possibility of combining the separate technologies of movies, television, and computers, while the development of the Internet transformed business and education.

These technological innovations could be seen as portents of western—especially American—cultural domination, but as technology became more widespread, people around the world had more opportunities to adapt that technology to their own purposes.
The Spread of Pop Culture

- The new technologies helped change perceptions of culture by allowing popular culture to become more and more visible.
- At the beginning of the early twentieth century, European composers, choreographers, writers, and artists drew on popular cultures to inspire and enliven their work.
The invention of the phonograph was the key that opened popular culture to global audiences. Phonographs spread American popular music—jazz, blues, and rock ‘n’ roll—around the world.
Mass production and advertising opened another door to the worldwide spread of popular culture.

The consumer products of American, European, and Japanese transnational companies found their way into international markets.
Emerging Global Culture

- Cultural links across national and ethnic boundaries at the elite level generated much less controversy than did the globalization of popular culture.

- Russian-American collaboration on space missions and in the business world, the flow of graduate students and researchers from around the world to American scientific laboratories, and the use of English as a global language were all aspects of globalization at the elite level.
The importance of English as a global language is evident in the emergence of an international literature in English.

Western universities have become the model for higher education around the world.
Enduring Cultural Diversity

- Diverse cultural traditions persisted at the end of the twentieth century despite the globalization of industrial society and the integration of economic markets.

- Japan, for example, has been a success in the modern industrial world in spite of—or perhaps because of—its group-oriented, hierarchical approach to social relations.
The economic success of Japan and other Asian countries call into question the long-standing western assumption that all of world history culminated in the exceptional convergence of political freedom, secularism, and industrialization that emerged in the West.

Also coming into question was whether industrialization offered the only viable route to prosperity.