

Issues in the Contemporary World

Document-Based Investigation

CASE STUDY 1

Civic Participation

The United Kingdom and South Africa

CASE STUDY 2

Developing Societies

Brazil and Mexico

CASE STUDY 3

Building Economic Powerhouses

China and India

CASE STUDY 4

Women in Society

Ireland and Turkey

CASE STUDY 5

The Role of the United Nations

Themes

ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Globalization is transforming the world's economic landscape.

GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

Democracies are struggling to increase citizen participation. Meanwhile, nations are trying to define the role of the United Nations.

SOCIETY

Changes in political structures, economic systems, and belief systems are fundamentally reshaping societies.

Issues of world peace and security are debated in the United Nations Security Council.

CASE STUDIES: Issues in the Contemporary World

THE BIG PICTURE

The world today is a rapidly changing place. New technologies are reshaping the way economies operate and people interact. But how people and nations react to change is often rooted in the past. That's why studying the past can give you the tools you need to understand the present. The following case studies look at some key issues facing the world today. Use what you have learned to form opinions about these key issues.



California Standards

History-Social Sciences

10.10 Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China.

10.11 Students analyze the integration of countries into the world economy and the information, technological, and communications revolutions (e.g., television, satellites, computers).

Voters in Cape Town line up in the early morning hours to vote in a South Africa election ►



History's Impact video program

Watch the video to learn more about the role of the United Nations.



Case Study 1 Civic Participation

What challenges do old and new democracies face in promoting civic participation?

Case Study 2 Developing Societies

How are developing nations such as Brazil and Mexico trying to meet the needs of their peoples?

Case Study 3 Building Economic Powerhouses

How are the giant emerging economies of India and China affecting the world?

Case Study 4 Women in Society

How do political and social trends affect the roles of women?

Case Study 5 The Role of the United Nations

What should the role of the United Nations be in international affairs?

Document-Based Investigation

Civic Participation

The United Kingdom and South Africa

FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE



What challenges do old and new democracies face in promoting civic participation?

KEY TERMS

devolution



California Standards

HSS 10.10.3 Discuss the important trends in the regions today and whether they appear to serve the cause of individual freedom and democracy.

In a 2005 survey, “Voice of the People,” about two-thirds of the respondents in 68 countries said they were generally satisfied with democracy. Yet only one-third said that their own countries were ruled by the will of the people. Citizens may respect the idea of rule by the people, but many do not see it as a reality in their countries.

When people feel they have little voice in their government or that their votes do not count, they may become discouraged about participating in their democratic institutions. In recent years, voter turnout has declined in many countries. Some observers fear that this decline suggests a more general disinterest in civic participation.

Civic participation involves more than voting, of course. There is a range of political activities aimed at influencing government policies, structures, laws, and the use of public resources.

Contacting elected representatives, staging protests, and building coalitions to have a louder voice on issues—these are just some of the ways people participate. In addition, factors such as fair elections, honest government, a lively opposition, and free speech help keep citizens engaged.

Participation in a democracy extends beyond politics as well. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have a strong role in many countries, tackling issues from hunger to election monitoring. Local charities and other volunteer organizations also provide crucial support for communities.

The United Kingdom has over a century of democratic tradition. South Africa began its great experiment in rule by the people in 1994, with its first-ever multiethnic elections. Yet both countries are undergoing political changes that will affect the future of their democracies.



South African president Thabo Mbeki greets enthusiastic residents of Manelodi during his successful reelection campaign in 2004.

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Old and new democracies each have their own advantages and problems. The United Kingdom has a stable society, respect for long-established laws and democratic institutions, and a healthy culture of civic volunteerism. In recent years, however, it has been troubled by a declining level of voter turnout in elections. South Africa's young democracy has seen its initially high level of voter turnout drop rapidly. It is struggling to create trustworthy institutions amid social and political unrest. Increasingly, South Africans are participating in civic life through informal organizations.

Democracy in the UK The United Kingdom's parliamentary traditions stretch back at least 700 years. Over the centuries, political change has come slowly. It was not until the twentieth century that the country became fully democratic, extending voting rights to all adult citizens.

Since it was elected in 1997, Britain's Labor government has sought to reform the country's democratic institutions. In part, these efforts are a response to declining voter participation, especially among poor and young voters. "The turnout freefall has triggered a national debate about the public's loss of interest in politics and what to do about it," one university study noted.

One of the Labor government's key reforms has been **devolution**. Devolution is the redistribution of power from the central government to local governments. Devolution of authority to the UK countries of Wales and Scotland took place in the late 1990s. At the time, devolution was hailed as a victory for democratic reform. However, it has not fulfilled the hopes of some of its proponents. They are disappointed because major areas of power remain in the hands of the central government.

Democracy in South Africa In the 2005 "Voice of the People" survey, South Africa topped the charts for optimism. Nearly two-thirds of South Africans said their country was governed by the will of the people—the highest ranking of any country.

In the first few years of independence, South Africans demonstrated their support for democracy by going to the polls in impressive



UK Conservative Party leader David Cameron faces a group of reporters at his party's conference in April 2006.

numbers. High voter turnout in 1994 brought President Nelson Mandela to power. Since then, however, election turnout among the voting-age population has begun to drop sharply.

The main beneficiary of voter participation in South Africa has been the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The ANC has seen its majorities rise in each of the three national elections since the end of apartheid. Voters continue to reward the party for its role in the anti-apartheid struggle. But without an opposition party to challenge and monitor it, the ANC has been troubled by corruption and inefficiency.

Despite a lack of reliable institutions of governance, South Africans' commitment to civic participation remains strong. Membership in informal institutions, such as anti-crime organizations, women's organizations, and trade unions, has soared. Social scientists believe that societies that have a dense network of informal institutions are healthier ones.

Informal institutions strengthen a society. They offer flexible, creative options for solving a society's problems. Albert Oupamoloto is a resident of Soweto, one of South Africa's poorest cities yet one known for its vibrant political life. He describes the optimism that drives much civic participation in South Africa: "Many people think their lives are better because they are free citizens," Oupamoloto says, "and I agree with them."

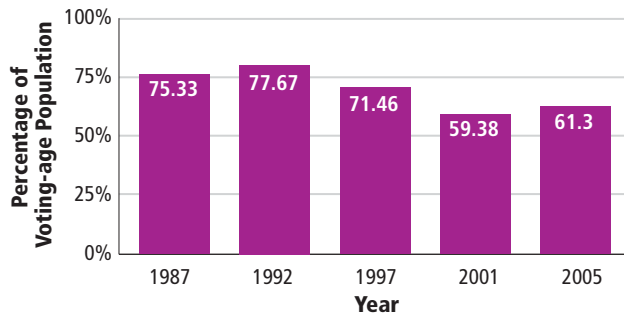
INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE

Democracy in the United Kingdom and in South Africa presents strong comparisons and contrasts. The documents that follow explore these issues by presenting different points of view and arguments. Examine the documents, keeping in mind what you have read about these democracies, and answer the questions that follow.

DOCUMENT 1

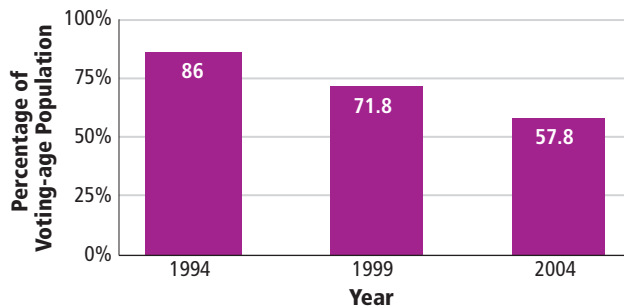
The United Kingdom and South Africa—an old democracy and a new one—both have experienced declines in voter turnout in recent years. Both are trying to identify possible causes for the decline and to inspire citizens to participate in the democratic process. This graph shows the election trends in the two countries.

ELECTION TURNOUT, UNITED KINGDOM



Source: <http://www.election.demon.co.uk>

ELECTION TURNOUT, SOUTH AFRICA



Source: <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/may/piomboMay04.asp>

Analyzing the Document

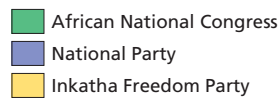
Describe the changes in voter turnout in the two countries during the time period shown here. Compare and contrast the two countries' turnout results. Which country experienced the sharpest decline?

DOCUMENT 2

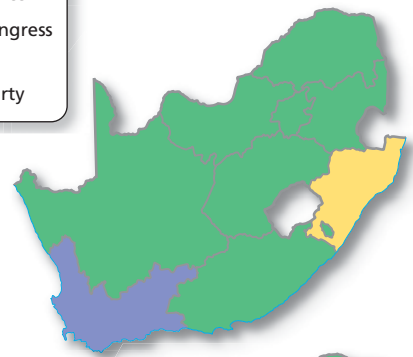
This series of maps shows the results of South African national elections from 1994, when apartheid ended and the country held its first multiethnic vote.

SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS, 1994–2004

Election results by province



1994



1997



2004



Analyzing the Document

What political change does this series of maps show? What are some possible consequences of this change?

In 2006 the British government released a study of declining voter turnout. A British magazine examined the report.

"The real problem . . . lies not with the political system at all, but with changes in society itself. As [the report] observes, two contrasting groups have emerged to whom conventional politics has little appeal.

On one hand there are the relatively well-educated, relatively well-informed, relatively young who expect to make their own decisions, find self-expression in buying what they want when they want it, and see themselves as individuals free of geographic, institutional or social bonds.

On the other are the casualties of de-industrialisation who suffer from persistent poverty and social exclusion. The former are cynical about political leaders and irritated that voting is not more like shopping, while the latter feel bullied and let down by the institutions they rely on for their survival.

Constitutional reform . . . is well worth doing for its own sake. But whether it will make much difference to people who are already profoundly detached from the habits and modes of representative democracy is another matter."

—*The Economist*, March 4, 2006

Analyzing the Document

What two groups does the report describe?

Analyzing the factors underlying the decline in voter turnout has been a source of heated debate in South Africa. This writer remains hopeful that the trend signals a "normalizing" of politics in South Africa.

"[T]he fact that the major worries of political leaders and analysts was about potential apathy, rather than electoral violence, signifies the politics are becoming increasingly routine, a sign of the institutionalization of democracy in South Africa. . . .

The election process and results demonstrated that politics are normalizing in South Africa, while at the same time pointing to areas that need to be monitored. For now, democracy is stable, institutionalizing itself and performing well. If the country can avoid the pitfalls of permanent party dominance and the slow erosion of democratic freedoms (as occurred in neighboring Zimbabwe after 1980), the second ten years of democracy will be worth celebrating."

—Jessica Piombo, "Politics in a Stabilizing Democracy: South Africa's 2004 Elections," *Strategic Insights*, May 2004

Analyzing the Document

Why does this writer think dropping voter turnout signals a "normalizing" of South African politics? What does she believe needs to be monitored if democracy in South Africa is to grow stronger?

ANALYZING THE ISSUE

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Research Online

SD7 Case Study

1. Review the documents presented on this issue. What similarities and what differences do they reveal about the challenges to democratic participation in the United Kingdom and in South Africa? What effect, if any, does the age of these democracies have on citizen participation?
2. Review the graph showing South African voter turnout and the map showing election results. What possible connection is there between declining voter turnout and the increased election success of the ANC?
3. Do library or online research to learn more about another democratic reform proposed in the United Kingdom—the elimination of hereditary lordships in Parliament's House of Lords. What effect might the change have on democracy and representation in the United Kingdom?
4. What sort of informal organizations are there in your community? in the United States? Do research to learn about one such organization. Write a one-page paper describing the organization, including its purpose, goals, and membership.

Document-Based Investigation

Developing Societies

Brazil and Mexico

FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE



How are developing nations such as Brazil and Mexico trying to meet the needs of their peoples?

KEY TERMS

megacity, maquiladora



California Standards

HSS 10.10.1 Understand the challenges in the regions, including their geopolitical, cultural, military, and economic significance and the international relationships in which they are involved.

HSS 10.11 Students analyze the integration of countries into the world economy and the information, technological, and communications revolutions (e.g., television, satellites, computers).

In order to become more prosperous, developing countries strive to create political, economic, and social stability. The three elements are interconnected. Political stability is one factor that helps businesses take root and thrive. It attracts much-needed foreign investment that strengthens the economy. A strong economy creates jobs, wealth, and consumer markets, helping to build a middle class—the backbone of a stable society. Finally, a contented, stable society promotes political order and helps democracy take root.

Like many developing regions, Latin America has had its share of instability in all three categories. For more than a century, political revolutions have stemmed in part from severe economic gaps between rich and poor. Economically, a reliance on exporting cash crops has kept the region trapped in boom-and-bust cycles; a drop in world prices for commodities can send developing economies into a tailspin. Socially, large migrations have unsettled societies in recent decades, as poor and landless peoples move to urban areas seeking work. Further upheaval has come from the efforts of indigenous peoples in Mexico and elsewhere to gain recognition and equality.

In recent years, however, the region's two most populous countries, Brazil and Mexico, have undergone remarkable political transformations. Brazil emerged from a string of repressive military dictatorships in the 1960s and 1970s to form a modern democracy. In 2000 Mexico set aside more than seven decades of one-party rule and held its first true two-party election.

Economic security, however, has proved more difficult to achieve. Globalization is pitting the two countries against new economic competitors such as India and China. Still, leaders in both countries are seeking dynamic solutions to produce long-term stability and make use of one of their greatest assets: the enormous human resources they possess in their large populations.



Maquiladora factories, like the one shown above, have fueled much of Mexico's growth but are vulnerable to swings in the world economy.

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

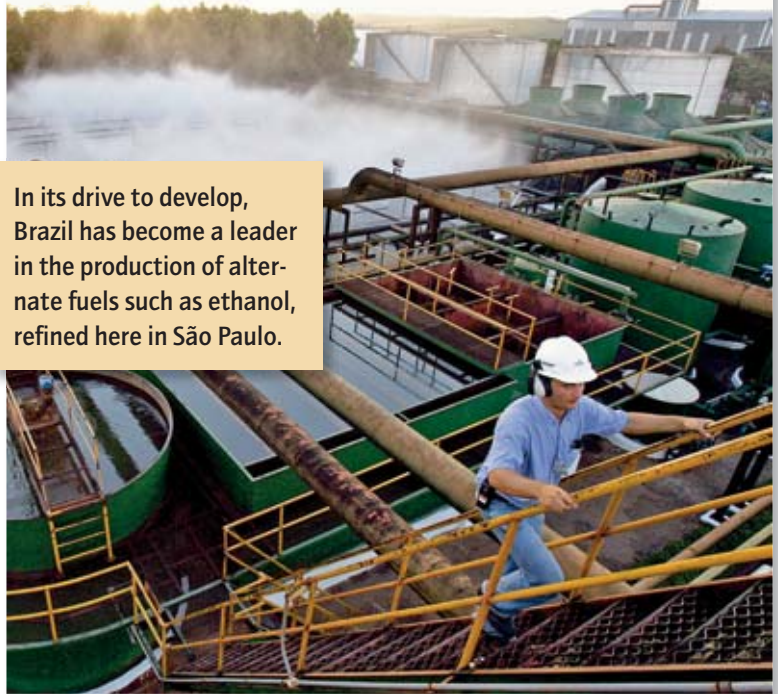
Economically and socially, Brazil and Mexico face many of the same challenges. Both are attempting to broaden their economic bases by expanding their sources of trade and foreign investment. Both are also seeking new solutions to the chronic problem of poverty and inequity in society.

Progress and Problems in Brazil Latin America's largest country, Brazil also has the region's largest economy. The nation made considerable economic progress starting in the mid-1990s despite some severe downturns. It expanded its presence in global markets for agricultural, mining, and manufactured goods. Exports surged, the economy grew, infant mortality dropped, and school enrollment increased. Laws requiring better management of government finances have been praised.

Yet Brazil also has some of the world's most desperate poverty, especially in the **megacities** of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Megacities are those with populations of 10 million or more. Most of Brazil's urban poor live on the fringes of its two megacities. In Rio the *favelas*, or shantytowns, that climb the hillsides are so dangerous the police won't go there. São Paulo is one of the world's most murderous cities, wracked by gang violence. The streets are so dangerous that many wealthy people travel by helicopter, hopping among the city's 240 heliports.

To ease the population pressure on the cities, since the 1970s Brazil has turned to one of its most valuable resources: space. Brazil opened up its vast interior for resettlement and large-scale development. The resulting destruction of rain forests, however, has produced an international outcry and spurred calls for Brazil to limit rural overdevelopment.

Mexico Seeks Solutions Mexico has the second-largest economy in Latin America, now exceeding a trillion dollars. It has large petroleum reserves and a thriving tourism industry. Its location next to the United States has made it possible to expand trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexico benefits from its **maquiladoras**, the large industrial assembly plants throughout its border towns that produce finished goods for export to the United States.



In its drive to develop, Brazil has become a leader in the production of alternate fuels such as ethanol, refined here in São Paulo.

Mexicans enjoy the highest per-capita income in Latin America. But such averages mask the huge gaps between rich and poor. In 2005 the richest 10 percent of Mexicans earned 25 times what the poorest 10 percent earned—just as they had two decades before. The government estimated extreme poverty at 17.3 percent in 2004.

Efforts to address rural poverty are limited by the fact that only 15 percent of Mexico's large, dry land mass is arable. The lack of land continues to draw peasants from the countryside to the nation's megacity, Mexico City, where nearly one-fifth of the nation's population lives. Not surprisingly, Mexican government policies now focus on urban poverty, because of the massive spinoff problems it creates: violence, political instability, and environmental destruction.

Despite protests from some U.S. leaders, the Mexican government encourages migration to the United States. Migrants, legal and illegal, send much-needed dollars back home to support their families.

Meanwhile, Mexico is focusing on creating a more highly educated work force, a priority in the era of globalization. The government pays parents to keep their children in school instead of pulling them out to work in the fields and family businesses.

INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE

Over the years Brazil and Mexico have adopted a number of strategies to boost economic development—and to lessen its potential negative effects. The documents that follow explore the issue of development in Brazil and Mexico. Examine the documents, keeping in mind what you have just read about economic development efforts in the two countries.

DOCUMENT 1

Brazil has taken a lead in forming regional trade agreements in Latin America and trade ties outside the region, as a way of broadening and stabilizing its economy. President Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva explained the philosophy behind this course of action.

"I think Latin America is going through an important moment in its history. . . . [O]ur way forward is to consolidate the process of integration, . . . physical integration, with infrastructure, with roads, with railways, with communications, with energy. Based on this Brazil has decided to make some investments in other countries. Brazil today has some \$3bn of investments in other South American countries, so that we can give South America more infrastructure.

We believe that it is necessary to do much more, because only infrastructure is going to make more circulation possible. Not just goods but people as well. And we have had some results in the period in which we have been in government. Today, Latin America is Brazil's biggest market. We export almost \$28bn to the rest of Latin America. . . . With the European Union we have \$27bn and with the US \$23bn. This is an extremely important thing. We are showing that it is possible through partnership and with seriousness, that we can help each other, we can help ourselves to grow. . . .

—Brazilian President Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva, interview, *Financial Times*, July 2006

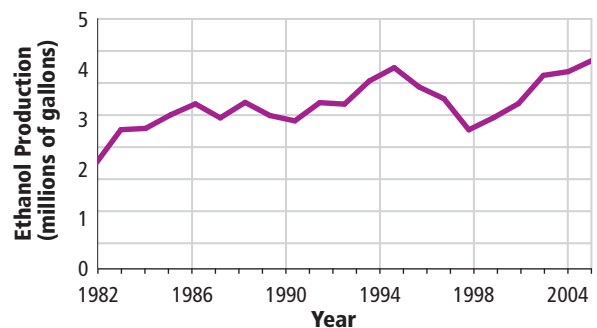
Analyzing the Document

Why, according to Lula da Silva, does it make sense for Brazil to invest money in other countries in the region?

DOCUMENT 2

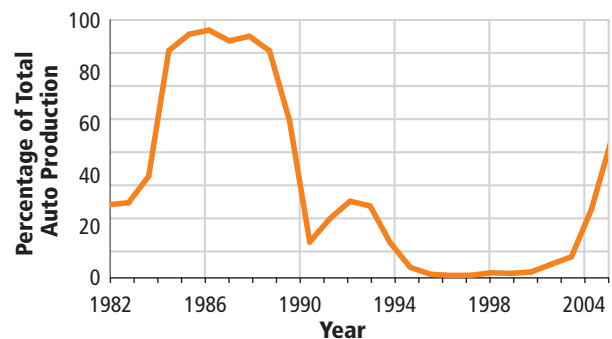
In 1979 Brazil launched a national program to develop alternate fuels. Ethanol, a type of alcohol produced from refined sugar cane, is the leading alternate fuel. Today, 34,000 gas stations in Brazil have at least one pump dedicated to alternate fuel. The program has drastically reduced Brazil's need for oil and has cut down on auto pollution. But the vast acreage devoted to sugar cane production is causing worry among environmentalists, who fear a loss of biodiversity.

BRAZILIAN ETHANOL PRODUCTION



Source: Earth Policy Institute; Unica

BRAZILIAN ALTERNATE FUEL VEHICLES



Source: Unica

Analyzing the Document

What is the trend in ethanol production? How does the trend correspond to trends in auto manufacturing?

DOCUMENT 3

About a third of the people in the Mexican state of Chiapas are descended from the Maya, or “people of the corn,” as they call themselves. Since 1994 the indigenous people of Chiapas have waged a battle to end political and cultural repression by the government and bring decent living conditions to the extremely impoverished region. The woman in this photograph participated in a protest by the Zapatista rebels of Chiapas that was held in Mexico City. Such demonstrations drew worldwide support to their cause.

Analyzing the Document

What does this photograph suggest about the cultural identity of the people of Chiapas?



DOCUMENT 4

There were 14 megacities worldwide in 1995. By 2015 there will be 21. Mexico and Brazil have some of the world’s largest megacities. These statistics provide a snapshot of population growth in some of the world’s megacities.

Analyzing the Document

Compare and contrast the statistics for the Mexican and Brazilian cities listed in the table. Which city has a higher percentage of its country’s population? Which city is projected to grow the fastest?

MEGACITIES

City/Metropolitan Areas (rank)	Population* (2000)	Percentage of Population (2000)	Projected Population Growth (2000–2015)
Tokyo, Japan (1)	34,450	27.1%	5.1%
Mexico City, Mexico (2)	18,066	18.3%	14.3%
New York City, USA (3)	17,846	6.3%	10.5%
São Paulo, Brazil (4)	17,099	10.0%	16.7%
Mumbai, India (5)	16,086	1.6%	40.8%
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (14)	10,803	6.3%	14.4%

*All population figures in thousands.

Source: World Almanac Book of Facts, 2005

ANALYZING THE ISSUE

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Research Online
SD7 Case Study

- Review the documents presented on this issue. What evidence do they present to suggest that development in Brazil and Mexico is a complex challenge?
- What goals do Brazil and Mexico share in terms of economic development? What are some problems unique to each country?
- Do online research to learn more about life in the Chiapas region of Mexico. How has life there changed, or not changed, since the Zapatista rebellion in 1994? Why did the rebellion evoke sympathy throughout Mexico and the world? Do you think economic development in Mexico would benefit Chiapas? Why or why not?
- Research Brazil’s policy of alternative fuel development. Compare the positive and negative effects. Do you think the government is justified in pursuing this policy? Explain your reasoning.

Document-Based Investigation

Building Economic Powerhouses

China and India

FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE



How are the giant emerging economies of India and China affecting the world?

KEY TERMS

offshoring, privatization, joint ventures



California Standards

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To many observers the question is not whether India and China will bump the United States from its position as the world's largest economy. The question is when, and which country will get there first.

The world's two most populous nations have embarked on ambitious programs to move from failed planned or semi-planned economies to vibrant market economies. Their pathways to success have differed, and each faces challenges that could derail them. China is still a one-party Communist dictatorship, and India's thriving democracy struggles to contain explosive religious conflict. Yet few experts dispute that the changes underway in these two countries are shaking up the world's economies.

The economic successes of India and China are no accident. China began limited economic reforms in the late 1970s and then threw open its doors to private enterprise 20 years later, determined to become

the manufacturing capital of the world. India opened its economy later, in the 1990s, but quickly seized the opportunities of the telecommunications revolution. High-speed Internet connections opened up sudden opportunities for these countries to connect their large labor pools with potential employers and customers around the globe.

The vigorous moves of India and China onto the world stage are affecting economic planning, markets, and wages in other countries. No one is quite sure how this scenario will play out either for India and China—

potential competitors who also happen to share a disputed border—or for the Western and Asian industrial giants of the twentieth century. One thing is for certain: the twenty-first century is truly a new era of global economic interdependence.



China's heavy industry manufacturers, like this tractor factory in the city of Luoyang, have grown increasingly competitive in world markets.

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

The rise of Asian economies began in the 1960s, when Japan, South Korea, and the other so-called “Asian tigers” began to industrialize at a breathtaking rate. These countries developed efficient, streamlined manufacturing processes that flooded the global market with inexpensive export goods.

Today’s “Asian tigers,” India and China, may not yet match Japan’s GDP, but their rapid economic growth makes for a promising future. Up until now, China has emphasized traditional manufacturing industries. India has focused on new service industries provided via the Internet, from tax preparation to computer technical support.

China’s Communist Economy Under Maoist Communism, China’s government tightly controlled all aspects of the nation’s economy. Communist leaders tried to move the ancient agricultural society into the modern age. But massive industrialization efforts eventually stalled. The government allowed virtually no private enterprise. The lack of free-market incentives produced low productivity and inefficiency. While Japan and other “Asian tigers” were roaring, China’s living standards remained relatively low.

Chinese Capitalism Takes Hold With the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, China cautiously started down a new economic path. Since then, agricultural, industrial, and market reforms have come slowly but steadily.

In the agricultural sector, the government began to allow farmers to sell some of their crops on the free market. Centralized economic planning was relaxed. That allowed regional officials to make free-market decisions on some issues, including trade.

The government also began to encourage foreign investment, although not on the scale that India later embraced. Initially, economic liberalization was confined to the creation of a few “special economic zones,” such as the



Factories, like this textile plant in Hubei province, have sprouted up in China’s interior.

city of Shenzhen. These areas served as testing grounds for China’s limited capitalism.

The results were impressive. Farm output doubled during the 1980s. Industrial growth and investment in the special economic zones blossomed. Another round of market reforms was launched in the 1990s, creating what the government called “a socialist market economy.” At the same time, China placed strict curbs on its population growth, holding it to a rate of about 13 per 1,000 people. This helped to ease poverty, but it created controversy at home and abroad.

Economic growth surged. By 2005 China had become the second-largest economy in the world, although still far behind the United States in terms of production. Since 1980 China has doubled its share of world trade every five years. It now supplies one-fifth of the world’s clothing and one-third of all mobile phones.

In 2001 China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO). In joining the WTO, China agreed to follow its laws and standards of competitive business and trade practices. The move made China an even more attractive place for foreign investment and for **offshoring**. Unlike outsourcing, which involves moving a part of a business operation, like computer tech support, to another country, the offshoring involves moving an entire factory or other business enterprise abroad.



High-tech business parks (left) are sprouting up around Bangalore and other Indian cities. The Internet allows Indian software engineers (right) to serve world customers.

China has struggled to decide how far and how fast to implement reforms. Corruption and slow government decision-making hamper progress. The easing of restrictions on business has produced a rise in economic crimes, widespread inequality, and worrisome levels of pollution. Nevertheless, China is clearly on a path from which it does not intend to turn back.

India's Closed Economy Since it achieved independence from Great Britain in 1948, India has struggled to overcome desperate, grinding poverty. Inspired by the philosophy of independence leader Mohandas K. Gandhi, India adopted a socialist economy. It strove for economic self-sufficiency, with limits on imports and foreign investment. For more than four decades, India's economy was largely closed.

The government embarked on large-scale industrialization in order to meet its own needs and to limit dependence on foreign investment and imports. However, heavy government regulation resulted in decades of inefficiency, over-regulation, poor output, and quality goods.

India Opens Its Doors In the 1990s a democratic India embraced capitalism and began to move to a market economy. The government allowed increasing **privatization**, the private ownership of industries as opposed to government control. It opened the door to limited private investment in some industries. Over time, more and more foreign companies were allowed to operate in India. At first they formed **joint ventures**—business partnerships and co-ownership—with Indian companies.

In the early 2000s, direct foreign investment in India, particularly in telecommunications, took hold. In 2006 the American computer giant IBM announced that it would triple its investment in India over the following three years, to \$6 billion.

Government efforts to revamp India's ways of doing business have helped the economy grow at an impressive rate of 7 percent a year since 1991. In addition to a more open business climate, two factors have contributed to making India a world leader in providing high-tech services to businesses worldwide. An emphasis on higher education over the last fifteen years has given India a large pool of highly skilled workers. There are also a large number of English speakers—the legacy of British colonial rule. Looking to the future, many observers believe India's democratic government will give it the flexibility it needs to meet the challenges ahead.

Barriers to Success India still faces formidable obstacles to economic success. High import tariffs and restrictions on direct foreign investment have remained, sparking a national debate on how far to liberalize, or open up, the economy. India's huge population, most of whom still work on farms and in small, traditional businesses, can be an economic asset. Already home to one-sixth of the world's people, the country is expected to become the most populous nation within the 50 years. But the rapid creation of vast wealth has further highlighted the "two Indias": one largely rural and poor; the other urban and prosperous.

INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE

Today, university graduates in cities like Bangalore, India, are preparing the tax returns of millions of Americans—overnight, half a world away, via the Internet—for far lower wages than tax preparers get in the United States. China is promoting a balance of high-technology “knowledge jobs” as well, while also boosting manufacturing to become a giant exporter. The opening of these economies poses both challenges and opportunities for the rest of the world.

DOCUMENT 1

In his influential book *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman argued that India and China are leveling, or flattening, the economic playing field. Western industrialized countries are losing their advantages, and other developing countries risk falling farther behind.

“Kenichi Ohmae, the Japanese business consultant, estimates in his book *The United States of China* that in the Zhu Jiang Delta area alone, north of Hong Kong, there are fifty thousand Chinese electronics component suppliers.

‘China is a threat, China is a customer, and China is an opportunity,’ Ohmae remarked to me one day in Tokyo. ‘You have to internalize China to succeed. You cannot ignore it.’ Instead of competing with China as an enemy, argues Ohmae, you break down your business and think about which part of the business you would like to do in China, which part you would like to sell to China, and which part you want to buy from China.

Here we get to the real flattening aspect of China’s opening to the world market. The more attractive China makes itself as a base for offshoring, the more attractive other developed and developing countries competing with it, like Malaysia, Thailand, Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, and Vietnam, have to make themselves. They all look at what is going on in China and the jobs moving there and say to themselves, “Holy catfish, we had better start offering these same incentives.” This has created a process of competitive flattening, in which countries scramble to see who can give companies the best tax breaks, education incentives, and subsidies, on top of their cheap labor, to encourage offshoring to their shores.”

—Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat*, 2005

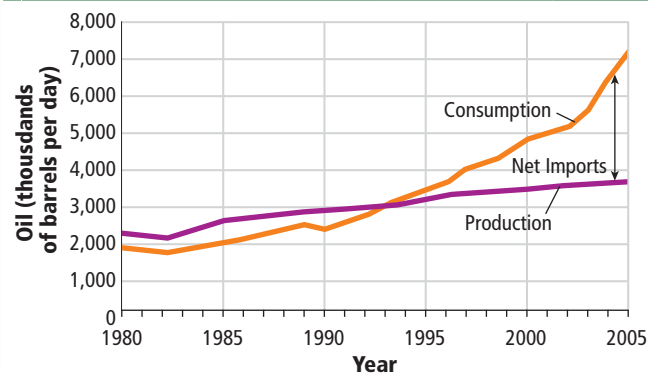
Analyzing the Document

Why, according to Friedman, does China pose a problem for developing countries like Mexico and Brazil?

DOCUMENT 2

As China industrializes and modernizes, its demand for energy is soaring, as shown in this graph. The increasing need causes concern about the possible effect on global energy prices and supplies.

CHINA’S OIL CONSUMPTION, 1980–2005



Source: Congressional Budget Office, April 2006

Analyzing the Document

By roughly how much did China’s energy consumption increase between 1980 and 2005? Explain the gap between the two lines since about 1995. What effect could that have on the rest of the world?

DOCUMENT 3

For decades, the United States has promoted free trade and capitalism around the world. It continues to do so today. In the early years of the twenty-first century, however, the United States ran up large budget and trade deficits.

MORIN/The Miami Herald



Analyzing the Document

Who are the characters in this cartoon? What are they concerned about? How does the cartoonist depict China, and why?

DOCUMENT 4

Economic change is transforming India and China. In this article, the writer describes some of the changes that have affected Bangalore, India, as a result of the city's growing technology industry.

"One visible byproduct of the flood of technology jobs into Bangalore has been the rapid Westernization in the city.

Young, comparatively well-paid technology workers dress in the latest American and European clothing, speak in Western-accented English, drive foreign cars and shop in the ritzy malls dotting the city. They live in high-rises or gated enclaves, removed from the realities of everyday Bangalore.

Home prices are shooting up, and local newspapers advertise apartments and villas costing over \$1 million. But the salaries of many of Bangalore's citizens working in jobs outside of the high-growth sectors have not been keeping up. Many government workers still take home about 4,500 rupees, or \$100, a month. For the majority, such homes remain distant and extravagant dreams . . .

The pace of urban change in Bangalore has indeed been torrid, said Tejaswini Niranjana, the director of the Center for the Study of Culture and Society, a research institute based in the city. 'Everybody's life has been transformed but not all are keeping pace with the swift changes,' said Niranjana, adding that there was simmering resentment among those who were not sharing in the wealth created by the new jobs."

—Saritha Rai, "A City Whose Global Name Turns East,"
International Herald Tribune, November 1, 2006

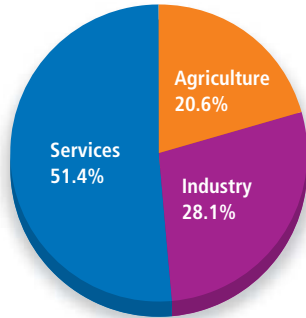
Analyzing the Document

What kinds of changes does the writer identify? How are these changes having uneven effects on Bangalore's people?

DOCUMENT 5

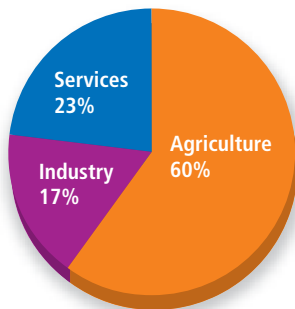
Today, a relatively small segment of India's labor force generates the largest share of its income, as measured in gross domestic product (GDP). These pie graphs illustrate that fact.

INDIA'S GDP BY SECTOR, 2005



Source: CIA World Factbook 2006

INDIA'S LABOR FORCE BY SECTOR, 1999



Source: CIA World Factbook 2006

Analyzing the Document

What proportion of India's labor force produces the largest share of its wealth, as measured in GDP? What do you think accounts for this fact?

DOCUMENT 6

The writer is a former governor of Hong Kong and former European Commissioner for External Relations. He notes the high stakes in the India-China competition.

"India now trains a million engineering graduates a year (against 100,000 each in America and Europe) and stands third in technical and scientific capacity—behind America and Japan but ahead of China. Now when we play the geopolitical game of who will dominate the century to come, we add India to the stand-off between America and China.

... I recognise the growing interest in whether we should—businessmen and politicians—place our bets on China's authoritarian model of development or India's democratic approach. The question is given more edge if you accept (which I don't) the old Chinese adage, "No mountain can accommodate two tigers."

—Chris Patten, "Mystery Candidate," *Financial Times*, August 4, 2006

Analyzing the Document

According to Patten, in what way is the competition more than an economic one? Rewrite the last sentence in your own words. What is Patten's view of the issue?

ANALYZING THE ISSUE

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SD7 Case Study

1. Review the documents presented on this issue. What are some ways the economic rise of India and China are affecting the world?
2. What do the documents suggest about the advantages and disadvantages India and China each possess in their effort to become the world's biggest economic power?
3. Read excerpts and reviews of Thomas Friedman's book, *The World is Flat*. What does the title of his book mean? What effect does he think India and China are having on the world economy?
4. What steps do you think the United States could take to meet the challenge of global competition? Consider possibilities relating to education and business growth.

Document-Based Investigation

Women in Society Ireland and Turkey

FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE



How do historical and cultural trends affect the status of women?

KEY TERMS

secular



California Standards

HSS 10.10.3 Discuss the important trends in the regions today and whether they appear to serve the cause of individual freedom and democracy.

Global studies of women in recent years have painted a bleak picture of the status of women around the world. For example, a 1999 survey revealed that women did about 66 percent of the work, earned 10 percent of the income, and owned 1 percent of the land. Moreover, women held only about 16 percent of the seats in the world's parliaments. A United Nations report noted in 2005, "Gender is one of the world's strongest markers for disadvantage."

The world's governments have pledged themselves to improve conditions for women. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals set a timetable of 2015 for increasing standards for women. It calls for improvements in the areas of educational opportunities, literacy, employment in non-farm jobs, and participation in national parliaments.

Globalization has helped produce a gradual shift in attitudes in some societies. Globalization emphasizes that countries need to value women as a human resource in order to become economically competitive. Studies show that countries that hold women back from participating in society consistently lag behind in development. In addition, as globalization helps women throughout the world gain greater access to new role models, information, and opportunities, their expectations grow.

Yet as governments try to improve the lives of women, they often must struggle to balance competing demands. Empowerment for women can clash with traditional cultural and religious beliefs. Even some women wonder if too much is lost in the rush for change. Ireland and Turkey are two nations that have faced and continue to face these challenges. The paths they have followed have taken some surprising twists.



Tansu Ciller (left) of Turkey and Mary McAleese (right) of Ireland have risen to the top ranks of government in their respective countries in recent years.

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Ireland is a predominantly Roman Catholic country, and Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country. In each, religious tradition and, in some cases, religious doctrine, have played a role in shaping the roles of women in society.

Ireland in Transition As recently as the 1970s, an Irish woman who got married could be forced to quit her job. In a largely Roman Catholic country opposed to abortion and birth control, the majority of women stayed home and raised families.

Starting in the 1970s, however, and gathering force in the 1990s, a number of changes began to reshape Irish society. In 1973, Ireland joined the European Economic Community, forerunner to the European Union (EU). As a member of the EU, Ireland has gradually conformed to EU standards on the treatment of women. Also, EU membership has opened Ireland to the world, helping to change attitudes on a number of social issues.

While EU influence has grown, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church has begun to diminish. In 1972 a clause recognizing the “special position” of the Catholic Church in Irish society was removed from the constitution. Since then, the Church has continued to play a large role in politics, but not always successfully. So far, it has convinced Irish voters to uphold restrictions on abortion, but it failed in its efforts to keep divorce illegal.

Social, political, economic, and cultural changes have combined to open up opportunities for women. After a long struggle, the right of married women to work outside the home was guaranteed. The employment of women has risen steadily, from roughly 36 percent of the workforce in 1994 to about 47 percent in 2004. Much of that increase came during the 1990s, when an Irish economic boom produced a need for more workers.

Yet women in Ireland still face inequities. Men earn more than women do, and they have greater access both to living-wage jobs and to high-paying management jobs. Despite success at the top of the political ranks, overall participation of women in public office is low. Ireland ranks 77th out of 188 nations in terms of the proportion of women members of Parliament.



Modern Turkish women express themselves in different ways. Some adopt Western dress and others wear traditional headscarves.

Diverging Trends in Turkey When the modern nation of Turkey was founded in 1923, its leaders built a **secular**, or nonreligious, state in which government and religion are strictly separated by law. Women’s rights were written into laws regarding property ownership, inheritance, and suffrage.

Turkey is trying to join the European Union. To further that effort, it has taken numerous steps to bring its laws closer in line with EU requirements and to promote women’s rights generally. Yet the reality of equal opportunity has been more difficult to achieve. Women have trouble rising to managerial levels in the workplace. Although Turkish law mandates equal pay, estimates of inequities between women and men range from 10 percent to 40 percent. (In the United States, pay inequities range from 8 to 25 percent.)

In 2002 Turkey took what many saw as a turn away from secular politics. That year, they elected a party with Islamic ties. Commentators were quick to point out, however, that the shift was partly a reaction to corruption in the secular governments of the 1990s.

Recently, a generational divide has opened up among some Turkish women. To older generations, being a “modern” woman meant being secular—seeing yourself as a Turkish citizen first and as a Muslim second. Among the new generation, however, some women seek to redefine women’s rights and feminism in accordance with their religious beliefs.

INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE

The changing role of women in societies around the world raises many questions. The documents that follow present data and opinions about how two countries—Ireland and Turkey—are addressing some of these questions. Examine the documents, keeping in mind what you have read about how women’s roles are changing in each country. Then answer the questions that follow.

DOCUMENT 1

This chart compares key facts about the populations of Ireland and Turkey. Note that while both countries have had female heads of state, neither is a leader when it comes to electing women to the national legislature.

IRELAND AND TURKEY COMPARISON, 2005

	IRELAND	TURKEY
Population	4.1 million	70.5 million
Religion	88.4% Roman Catholic	99.8% Muslim
Adult Literacy Rate	Men 99%, Women 99%	Men 94.3%, Women 78.7%
Women in Parliament, world ranking*	Ranked 77 out of 188	Ranked 126 out of 188

*USA Ranking = 66 out of 188

Source: CIA; International Parliamentary Union

Analyzing the Document

In what way are Ireland and Turkey fairly similar, according to this data? How are they different?

DOCUMENT 2

The election of Ireland’s first woman president, Mary Robertson, focused more attention on women’s issues. In this speech, Robertson called for new thinking about roles for women in Irish society.

“If the imbalances of the past came, and I believe they did, not simply from legislative and economic inequality but from profound resistances and failures of perception, then it follows that to right that balance we must do more than review our legislation and re-state our economic structures. We must also fundamentally re-appraise our view of who and what is valuable in our society. We must look with fresh and unprejudiced eyes at the work of women, the views of women, their way of organising and their interpretation of social priorities. To achieve this, we must, I believe, begin at the beginning and alter our way of thinking.”

—Speech by Mary Robinson,
president of Ireland, 1992

Analyzing the Document

According to Robinson, what combination of factors produced inequalities in Irish society?

DOCUMENT 3

Like many countries, Turkey is struggling to live up to its promises of gender equality. This table shows the education gender gap.

EDUCATION RATES IN TURKEY, 2004			
	GIRLS	BOYS	GENDER GAP
Primary school	93	100	7.8
Secondary school	57.2	74.3	17.1
College	18.7	24.3	8.3
Adult literacy	78.5	94.4	15.9
Adult literacy, rural	69.2	91	21.8
Adult literacy, urban	83.4	96.1	12.7

Analyzing the Document

Where is the gender gap greatest? Where is it lowest? What do you think accounts for the differences in urban and rural literacy rates?

DOCUMENT 4

The controversy over the Muslim head scarf symbolizes the current tensions in Turkey over the role of women. This writer, a Turkish professor of sociology, has studied the attitudes of young Turkish women who are rebelling against secularism and wearing the head scarf.

“What really distinguishes the contemporary Islamic movement [in Turkey] is this presence of women in these movements, so they are the motor of change. . . .

But what happens is that each time these Muslim girls—or women, now—go to public life, pursue their professional career, for instance, they go from home to outside, from private to public life. Each time there is a tension within the [Islamic] movement and, therefore, there is a kind of debate among Islamic women who want to go even more public and Islamic men who remind them that, first of all, they have to be wives and mothers—their sacred roles. . . .

. . . [A]lthough we are in a country where the majority of the population is Muslim, nevertheless we define the republic as a secular republic. And secularism meant this neutral space where you are not allowed to bring your religious, ethnic, particularistic [individual] identities. So there is this debate now ongoing to what extent we are going to enlarge democratic rights to include this kind of new demands of difference.”

—Nilufer Gole, online interview, *Frontline*, PBS, June 2001

Analyzing the Document

How are attitudes toward women’s participation in Turkish society changing?

ANALYZING THE ISSUE

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 SD7 Case Study

1. How has religious tradition played a role in shaping women’s roles in Ireland and in Turkey? What similarities and differences exist between the two countries on this issue?
2. In what ways is there a gap between the laws and the realities of life for women in both countries? Provide specific examples.
3. Research the role of the president in Ireland. Do you think the function of that position made it easier for women to reach that post? Why or why not?
4. Do research to create a time line of major events in the history of women’s rights in Ireland, Turkey, and the United States from the 1900s to the present.

Document-Based Investigation

The Role of the United Nations

FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE

What should the role of the United Nations be in international affairs?

KEY TERMS

charter, General Assembly, Security Council, Secretariat, peacekeeping



California Standards

HSS 10.9.8 Discuss the establishment and work of the United Nations.

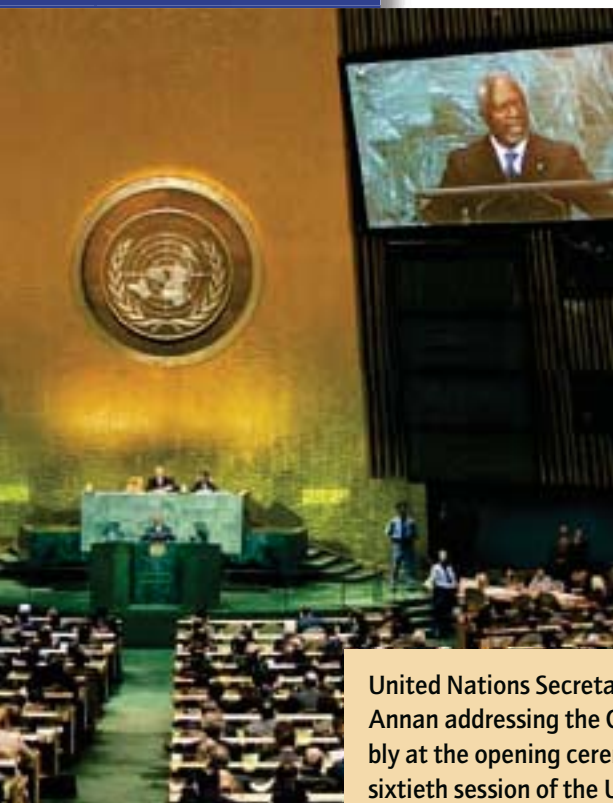
It was an ambitious idea: Create an organization to settle disputes among nations and solve tough global problems. Since its founding in 1945—the outcome of efforts by the United States and its World War II allies—the United Nations has struggled to live up to those high ideals.

The United Nations **charter**, the document that created the organization, lays out four major goals. It aims “to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.” Security, human rights, economic development, healthcare, disaster relief, and refugee aid are among its top concerns today.

From the start, the UN’s mission was a delicate balancing act. The charter establishes the principle of equality among nations; yet it assigns an unequal role to the world’s powerful nations in maintaining global security—often to the frustration of smaller countries. The United Nations consists of a diversity of shifting alliances, values, voices, interests, and goals. Even within the host country itself, the United States, debate over the very existence of the UN has raged for years.

Since 1945 UN membership has grown from 51 to 191 nations. As the organization has grown, so has its mission. Indeed, the modern-day rise of globalization, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation has challenged the UN in ways its founders never could have imagined. With expansion have come problems: waste, corruption, scandals. Failures to prevent or resolve wars and genocides in various parts of the world during the 1990s and beyond further damaged the UN’s image and credibility.

Starting around 2005, the UN launched reforms aimed at dealing with these acknowledged problems. Leaders vowed to retool the organization to effectively meet twenty-first century needs. Critics remained skeptical about whether the UN could succeed in reforming itself.



United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressing the General Assembly at the opening ceremonies of the sixtieth session of the UN in 2005.

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

The UN consists of six main entities: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice. The court is held at The Hague, in the Netherlands, while the rest of the operations are based at the UN's global headquarters in New York City.

The **General Assembly** includes all the member nations, and each nation gets one vote on matters before the assembly. The votes are not binding, but they carry weight as a statement of world opinion.

The role of the **Security Council** is to be the guardian of peace. It sends armies to trouble spots to keep the peace, arranges cease-fires, and brokers peace agreements. If countries violate agreements, the Council may impose sanctions. It can even order military action against the offenders. Of the 15 Security Council members, five are permanent—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The others serve two-year terms. Each of the permanent members has veto power over Security Council decisions. This arrangement guarantees that the interests of the powerful nations are protected. Recently, there have been discussions about expanding the Security Council to include other powerful nations, such as Japan and Germany.

The **Secretariat** carries out the administrative tasks of the UN, from conducting studies to providing services around the globe. The head of the UN, the secretary-general, is elected for up to two five-year terms.

An Expanding Role Since the end of the Cold War, the UN's mission has expanded. UN workers are now dispersed throughout the world. More than half of the UN's 30,000 non-military employees serve in the field. Civilian field operations include humanitarian relief operations, human rights monitoring, election monitoring, and efforts to combat the drug trade and other global criminal activity.

The major field operation of the UN is **peacekeeping**, or sending multinational forces into countries to enforce ceasefires or truces among warring countries or warring groups within a single country. In 2006, approximately 80,000 troops from member nations served in



UN peacekeeping troops on patrol in Sudan in 2006. In 1998, the UN received the Nobel Peace Prize for its peacekeeping operations.

UN peacekeeping forces around the globe. In 2006 roughly 70 percent of the UN's budget was dedicated to field operations, up from 50 percent 10 years earlier.

Criticism and Scandal Critics of the UN fault it for reacting slowly to the ethnic genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s. They say the UN is ineffective in combating terrorism and in preventing the spread of nuclear technology to countries such as Iran and North Korea. Some fault the UN for not taking stronger action against the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in Iraq prior to the U.S. invasion of the country in 2003.

The worst blow to the UN's image in recent times was the Oil-for-Food scandal that broke in 2004. The UN Oil for Food program allowed Iraq to sell its oil to buy humanitarian supplies for its people. Instead of using the oil money to buy food and medicine for suffering Iraqis, Saddam Hussein skimmed billions from the program. UN officials were implicated in profiting from the theft as well.

INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE

Controversy continues to rage around the United Nations. The documents that follow explore these issues by presenting different points of view and arguments. Examine the documents, keeping in mind what you have read about the organization's history, mission, and challenges.

DOCUMENT 1

Reflecting the scope of the UN's mission, in 2005 all 191 UN member countries pledged to achieve the following list of ambitious goals, called the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Analyzing the Document

How would you characterize the type of goals listed here? Do you think the goals are realistic in the time frame established? Why or why not?

DOCUMENT 3

The UN's expenses have grown as its mission has expanded. The budget for peacekeeping alone in 2004-2005 was greater than the UN's entire budget in 1996-1997.

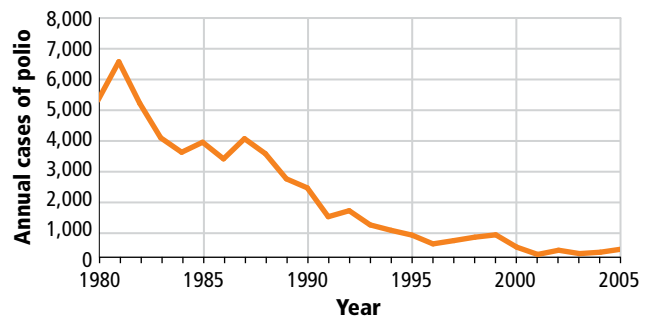
Analyzing the Document

During the decade shown here, what portion of UN expenses grew the most? What do you think accounts for that dramatic increase?

DOCUMENT 2

The World Health Organization, a branch of the UN, has spearheaded efforts to combat disease worldwide. With funding from member states and private groups, the WHO coordinates disease-prevention efforts, such as the drive to eliminate smallpox, which achieved success in 1977. Currently, the WHO is conducting a drive to wipe out polio. The graph below shows the progress of the effort.

WORLD CASES OF POLIO, 1980-2005

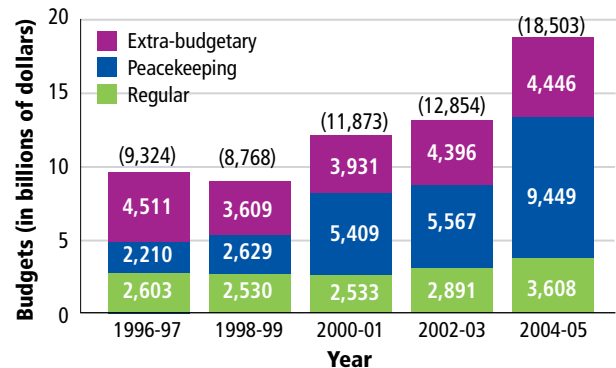


Source: World Health Organization

Analyzing the Document

What is the trend in world cases of polio? What happened between 2000 and 2005?

UN BUDGETS, 1996-2005



Source: UN Fact Sheet, March 2006

DOCUMENT 4

American conservatives have been particularly critical of the United Nations over the years. At times they have called for the United States to withdraw from the UN, and they have successfully worked to withhold US funding from the UN.

In this piece from *Commentary* magazine, one of the leading conservative journals in the United States, the writer finds fault with the very structure of the UN. As UN responsibilities grow, the writer argues, so do opportunities for inefficiencies and corruption.

Analyzing the Document

From what you read, do you believe that Rosett believes the United Nations can ever be reformed?

"Since its founding, the institution has added untold numbers of agencies, funds, commissions, programs, "ad-hoc bodies," and "other entities," to the point where most of the UN's own personnel do not know who reports to whom, or how. . . .

There is almost no way to hold the UN accountable for most of what goes on in this growing empire. . . . In fact, there is no procedure at the UN for impeaching or firing the Secretary-General. . . .

The founding purpose of the UN was to bring peace and prosperity to the globe. As to the former, the UN in the age of terror has been in most ways useless and in some ways positively dangerous. The lesson that Saddam Hussein quickly grasped was that the UN lends itself to money-laundering [illegally hiding the transfer of funds]. . . .

Like the Soviet Union of old, the UN is unwieldy, gross, inefficient, and incompetent. . . ."

—"How Corrupt Is the United Nations?"
Claudia Rosett, *Commentary* magazine, April 2006

DOCUMENT 5

As of late 2006, the United Nations had sponsored 59 peacekeeping operations since its founding. Sixteen were ongoing. UN peacekeeping has had some notable successes, such as El Salvador and Mozambique in the early 1990s and East Timor in the early 2000s.

In the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, success has been more elusive. Indeed, over the years there have been seven separate UN peacekeeping missions triggered by the Arab-Israeli conflict. UN peacekeepers have successfully monitored truces or agreements between Israel and its neighbors Syria and Egypt. But a lasting regional peace has remained out of reach. A UN monitoring force in Lebanon since 1978 has been powerless to stop repeated attacks against Israel or two full-scale invasions of Lebanon by Israel. The cartoonist, a supporter of Israel, reflects the frustration that many felt during the Israel-Lebanon War of 2006.

Analyzing the Document

How does the cartoonist characterize the UN's response to Middle East conflict?



Ann Florini is an analyst for the Brookings Institution, a nonpartisan think tank that often takes positions perceived as liberal. Like Claudia Rosett, she believes that the UN as currently organized is fundamentally flawed. Still, she believes the UN can be reformed.

"But all this [UN] activity depends on a fundamentally unsound institutional base. The UN's fifteen-country Security Council, the only UN body with teeth, gives lopsided power to the victors of World War II. The General Assembly, where all 191 nations theoretically have equal voice, has degenerated [fallen] into a . . . mess of largely pointless debates on a mind-numbing agenda covering every conceivable issue. The fifty-three-member Economic and Social Council is essentially worthless. The Secretariat suffers from a deadwood-ridden staff, extreme micro-management by member states, and an inadequate oversight system that allows plenty of waste, fraud, and abuse . . .

Step one [in reform] is to assign responsibility where it belongs: overwhelmingly with the member countries. . . .

The member countries have never invested the financial and human resources needed to make the UN work well. . . . A few hard-core opponents of reform—insiders point to Syria, Pakistan, Venezuela, Cuba, Egypt, and Iran—actively subvert [undermine] attempts to make

the UN function efficiently and effectively. The U.S., where Congress goes into periodic fits of rage over revelations of misdeeds such as the oil-for-food scandal, has only fitfully invested in the long-term, patient diplomacy needed to build consensus [agreement] for meaningful change, and has sometimes shot itself in the foot with bullying tactics like withholding of dues. . . .

The small reforms agreed upon to date may still prove the spark for a real UN renaissance—if a whole lot of people act quickly. . . .

[The United States] must engage effectively but, given the realities of anti-Americanism, quietly with pro-reform forces in New York. . . . And the member states need to regain control of their own delegations in New York, who too often serve personal interests at the expense of national ones.

If all this is done, the UN may be reborn.

—Ann Florini, "The UN at 60: Senescence or Renaissance?"
The Brookings Institution, 2005

Analyzing the Document

Does the writer support the existence of the United Nations? What does she see as the key challenges to its success? Use passages from the excerpt to support your answers.

ANALYZING THE ISSUE

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SD7 Case Study

1. Review the documents presented on this issue. What do they tell you about the difficulties of carrying out the UN's mission?
2. Review the descriptions of the authors of the passages excerpted here. How might their backgrounds affect their point of view about the UN?
3. Research viewpoints about the UN Human Rights Commission. What controversies have surrounded its membership? Why has the United States objected to some of its activities?
4. Considering all the challenges involved in getting UN members to agree on actions and respond quickly to crises, do you think the UN has outlived its usefulness? Do you think it should be strengthened? Do you have another viewpoint? Write a letter to the editor explaining your position and offering reasons to support it.