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OUTLINE OF THE U.S. ECONOMY



美国经济概况

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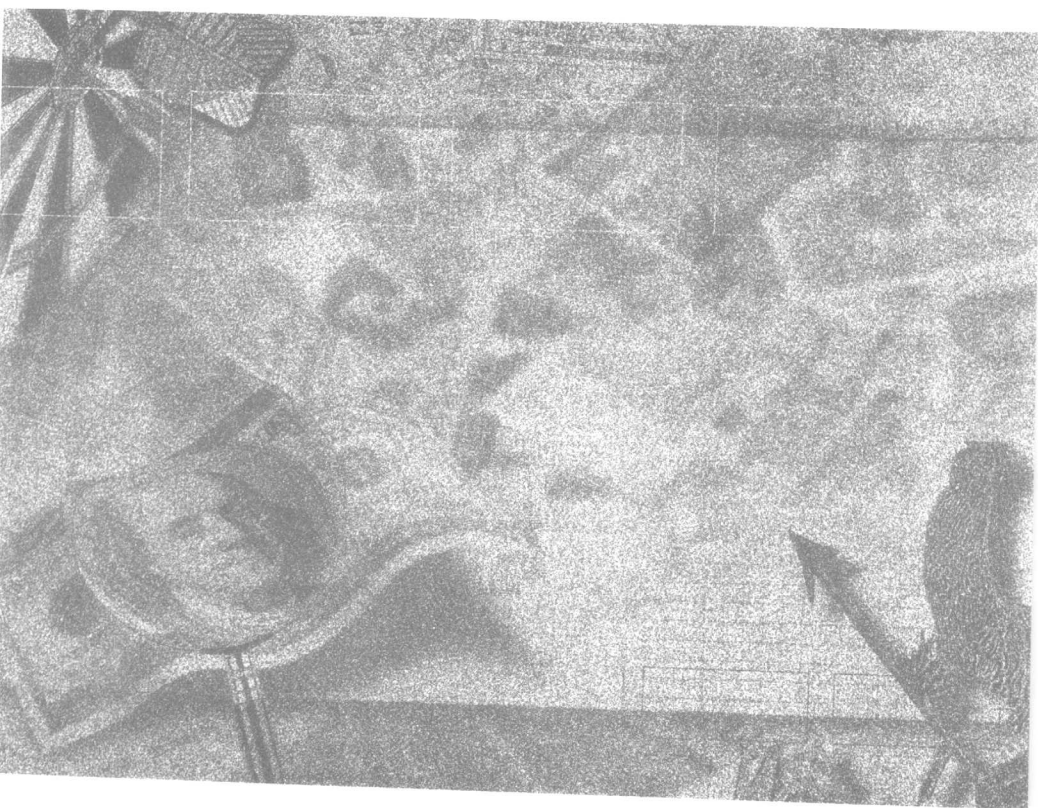
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CHAPTER 1

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The United States entered the 21st century with an economy that was bigger, and by many measures more successful, than ever. Not only had it endured two world wars and a global depression in the first half of the 20th century, but it had surmounted challenges ranging from a 40-year Cold War with the Soviet Union to extended bouts of sharp inflation, high unemployment, and enormous government budget deficits in the second half of the century. The nation finally enjoyed a period of economic calm in the 1990s: prices were stable, unemployment dropped to its lowest level in almost 30 years, the government posted a budget surplus, and the stock market experienced an unprecedented boom.

第一章

连续性与变革

进入 21 世纪，美国经济比以往任何时期都更为强盛，在许多方面也更加成功。它不仅经受住了 20 世纪上半叶两次世界大战和全球性经济萧条的考验，还战胜了下半叶的种种挑战，包括与前苏联长达 40 年的冷战、一次次严重的通货膨胀、居高不下的失业率，以及巨额政府预算赤字。直至 20 世纪 90 年代，美国经济才平稳：物价稳定、失业率降到近 30 年来的最低水平、政府预算盈余、股票市场空前繁荣。

In 1998, America's gross domestic product—the total output of goods and services—exceeded \$8.5 trillion. Though the United States held less than 5 percent of the world's population, it accounted for more than 25 percent of the world's economic output. Japan, the world's second largest economy, produced about half as much. And while Japan and many of the world's other economies grappled with slow growth and other problems in the 1990s, the American economy recorded the longest uninterrupted period of expansion in its history.

As in earlier periods, however, the United States was undergoing profound economic change at the beginning of the 21st century. A wave of technological innovations in computing, telecommunications, and the biological sciences were profoundly affecting how Americans work and play. At the same time, the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the growing economic strength of Western Europe, the emergence of powerful economies in Asia, expanding economic opportunities in Latin America and Africa, and the increased global integration of business and finance posed new opportunities as well as risks. All of these changes were leading Americans to re-examine everything from how they organize their workplaces to the role of government. Perhaps as a result, many workers, while content with their current status, looked to the future with uncertainty.

The economy also faced some continuing long-term challenges. Although many Americans had achieved economic security and some had accumulated great wealth, significant numbers—especially unmarried mothers and their children—continued to live in poverty. Disparities in wealth, while not as great as in some other countries, were larger than in many. Environmental quality remained a major concern. Substantial numbers of Americans lacked health insurance. The aging of the large post-World War II baby-boom generation promised to tax the nation's pension and health-care systems early in the 21st century. And global economic integration had brought some dislocation along with many advantages. In particular, traditional manufacturing industries had suffered setbacks, and the nation had a large and seemingly irreversible deficit in its trade with other countries.

Throughout the continuing upheaval, the nation has adhered to some bedrock principles in its approach to economic affairs. First, and most important, the United States remains a "market economy."

1998年,美国的国民生产总值——商品和服务的总量——超过8.5万亿美元。虽然美国的人口还不到世界人口总数的5%,却创造了超过世界经济25%的产值。第二经济大国日本创造的产值仅是美国的一半。日本和其他许多国家在20世纪90年代受到低增长率或其他经济问题的困扰,而这段时期是美国历史上最长的经济无干扰的发展时期。

然而,同以往一样,美国在21世纪初经历着一场深刻的经济变革。计算机、电信和生命科学等方面的科技革新浪潮正深刻地影响着美国人的工作和娱乐方式。同时,共产主义在前苏联以及东欧的崩溃,西欧经济力量的增长,亚洲强大经济体的出现,拉美和非洲经济机遇的增多,全球商业金融日趋一体化等,这些都带来了新的机遇与风险,所有这些变化都使美国人不得不从工作场所的安排到政府作用的发挥等方面,重新审视身边的一切。因此,可能会有许多人对自己目前状况很满意,但对未来没有把握。

美国经济也持续面临一些长期的挑战。虽然许多美国人在经济上已有保障,而且有些人已经积累了大量财富,但还有许多人,尤其是未婚母亲和她们的孩子仍然生活在贫困之中。美国的贫富差距虽然不像某些国家那样明显,但要比许多国家更大。环境质量仍然是人们最关心的问题。许多美国人没有健康保险。二战后出生高峰期出生的那一大批人现今已接近老龄,他们会在21世纪初加重国家养老金和健康保险制度的负担。全球经济一体化带来了许多益处,同时也引起了许多混乱。尤其是,传统制造业已遭受挫折,国家在对外贸易中出现了巨大的、似乎难以扭转的逆差。

在整个持续动荡不安的过程中,国家在解决经济事务中一直坚持一些基本原则。首先,也是最重要的一点,美国坚持“市场经济”。美国人仍然认为生产什么商品、商品价格的高低应通过千百万人的独立买卖活动来决定,而不是由政府或强大的私人利益来决定,这样的经济运行机制才能在总体上达到最佳状态。美国

when decisions about what to produce and what prices to charge for goods are made through the give-and-take of millions of independent buyers and sellers, not by government or by powerful private interests. In a free market system, Americans believe, prices are most likely to reflect the true value of things, and thus can best guide the economy to produce what is most needed.

Besides believing that free markets promote economic efficiency, Americans see them as a way of promoting their political values as well—especially, their commitment to individual freedom and political pluralism and their opposition to undue concentrations of power. Indeed, government leaders showed a renewed commitment to market forces in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s by dismantling regulations that had sheltered airlines, railroads, trucking companies, banks, telephone monopolies, and even electric utilities from market competition. And they pressed vigorously for other countries to reform their economies to operate more on market principles too.

The American belief in “free enterprise” has not precluded a major role for government, however. Americans at times have looked to government to break up or regulate companies that appeared to be developing so much power that they could defy market forces. They have relied on government to address matters the private economy overlooks, from education to protecting the environment. And despite their advocacy of market principles, they have used government at times to nurture new industries, and at times even to protect American companies from competition.

As the sometimes inconsistent approach to regulation demonstrates, Americans often disagree about the appropriate role of government in the economy. In general, government grew larger and intervened more aggressively in the economy from the 1930s until the 1970s. But economic hardships in the 1960s and 1970s left Americans skeptical about the ability of government to address many social and economic issues. Major social programs—including Social Security and Medicare, which, respectively, provide retirement income and health insurance for the elderly—survived this period of reconsideration. But the growth of the federal government slowed in the 1980s.

The pragmatism and flexibility of Americans has resulted in an unusually dynamic economy. Change—whether produced by growing affluence, technological innovation, or growing trade with other nations

人认为价格最能反映价值，因此，价格机制才能更好地引导经济生产出最需要的商品。

美国人不但相信自由市场能提高经济效率，还认为它是提高政治价值的方法——他们尤其信仰个人自由与政治多元化，反对权力过于集中。事实上，政府领导人在20世纪70年代、80年代和90年代重申了对市场经济的承诺，并取消对航空、铁路、卡车公司、银行、电话公司等垄断行业的保护，甚至取消了使供电事业免于市场竞争的规章制度。他们还极力敦促其他国家进行经济改革，按市场原则操作。

美国人虽然信奉“企业自由”，但并没有排除政府的重要角色。他们有时会依靠政府对那些发展过于强大，可能蔑视市场力量的公司进行拆分或管理，解决私有制经济所忽略的问题，如教育、环保等。尽管他们提倡按市场原则办事，但有时也利用政府来培植一些新的产业，有时甚至保护本国公司，使之免于竞争。

政府进行的管理有时不太协调，这表明美国人对于政府在经济活动中扮演什么样的角色才算适宜这一问题看法不一。从整体上说，自20世纪30年代到70年代，政府扩大了其职能，加大了对经济的干预力度。但60年代和70年代的经济困难使美国人对政府解决许多经济和社会问题的能力产生了怀疑。一些大的社会福利项目——包括分别为老年人提供退休金和健康保险的社会保障及医疗照顾——经过这一阶段的再三考虑之后保留了下来。但联邦政府职能扩大的速度在20世纪80年代慢了下来。

美国人的实用主义和灵活的态度使他们创造了异常强大的经济。变革——无论是由财富的增加、科技的进步，还是对外贸易的发展引起的——在美国经济发展史上是永恒的。正因为如此，

—has been a constant in American economic history. As a result, the once agrarian country is far more urban—and suburban—today than it was 100, or even 50 years ago. Services have become increasingly important relative to traditional manufacturing. In some industries, mass production has given way to more specialized production that emphasizes product diversity and customization. Large corporations have merged, split up, and reorganized in numerous ways. New industries and companies that did not exist at the midpoint of the 20th century now play a major role in the nation's economic life. Employers are becoming less paternalistic, and employees are expected to be more self-reliant. And increasingly, government and business leaders emphasize the importance of developing a highly skilled and flexible work force in order to ensure the country's future economic success.

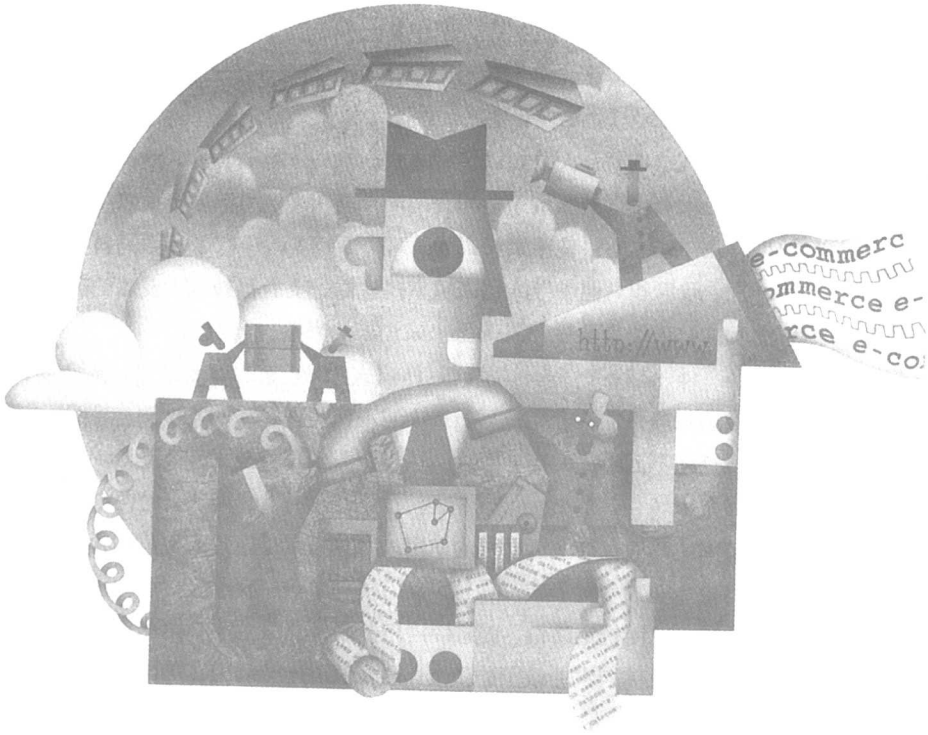
This book examines how the American economy works, and explores how it evolved. It begins by providing a broad overview in chapter 2 and a description of the historical development of the modern American economy in chapter 3. Next, chapter 4 discusses different forms of business enterprise, from small businesses to the modern corporation. Chapter 5 explains the role of the stock market and other financial markets in the economy. The two subsequent sections describe the role of government in the economy—chapter 6 by explaining the many ways government shapes and regulates free enterprise, and chapter 7 by looking at how the government seeks to manage the overall pace of economic activity in order to achieve price stability, growth, and low unemployment. Chapter 8 examines the agricultural sector and the evolution of American farm policy. Chapter 9 looks at the changing role of labor in the American economy. Finally, chapter 10 describes the development of current American policies concerning trade and international economic affairs.

As these chapters should make clear, the American commitment to free markets endured at the dawn of the 21st century, even as its economy remained a work in progress.

这个曾经是农业化的国家，现在要比 100 年前，甚至 50 年前，更加城市化和郊区化。与传统制造业相比，服务业变得越来越重要。在某些产业中，规模化生产被产品多样化和特定制作的专业化生产模式所取代。大公司以多种方式合并、分裂、重组。20 世纪中叶还没有出现的新型工业和公司现今已在经济生活中发挥着重要作用。雇主不再使用家长式的管理方式，工人也有了更强的自立性。政府和商业领导人越来越重视建立一支有高技能、灵活的劳动力队伍的重要性，以确保未来经济的兴盛。

本书将探讨美国经济的运作模式，探索它的演变过程。第二章进行概括性的介绍；第三章描述现代美国经济的发展史；第四章论述不同形式的商业企业，从小企业到现代公司；第五章讲述股票市场和其他金融市场在经济生活中的作用；接下来的两个章节阐述政府在经济活动中的作用——第六章讲述政府规范和管理自由企业的多种形式；第七章介绍政府如何控制经济活动的整体速度，以便稳定物价，促进经济增长及降低失业率；第八章探讨农业以及美国农业政策的演变；第九章讲述劳动力在美国经济中角色的变化；最后在第十章中介绍美国有关贸易和国际经济事务中的现行政策。

该书的目的是让读者清楚，在 21 世纪初，美国对自由市场经济的信条没有改变，虽然美国经济仍然是一项前进中的事业。



CHAPTER 2

HOW THE U. S. ECONOMY WORKS

第二章

美国经济 的运作方式