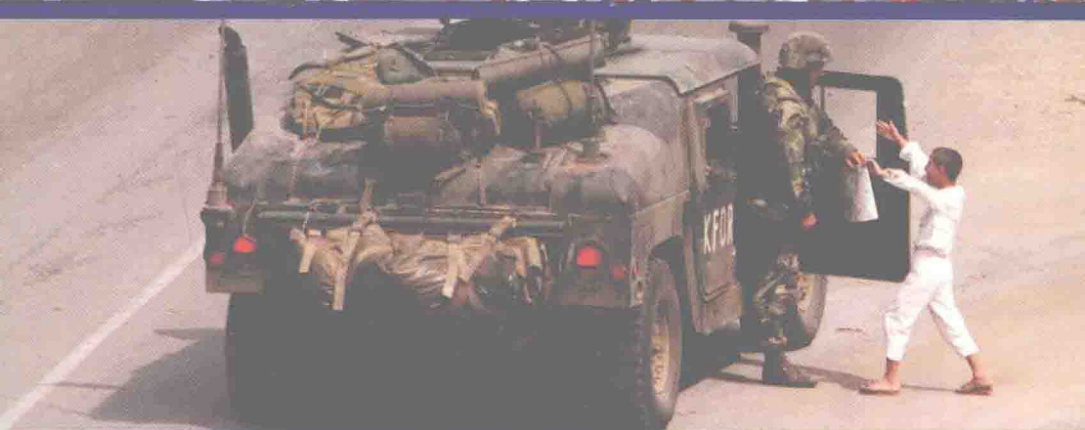
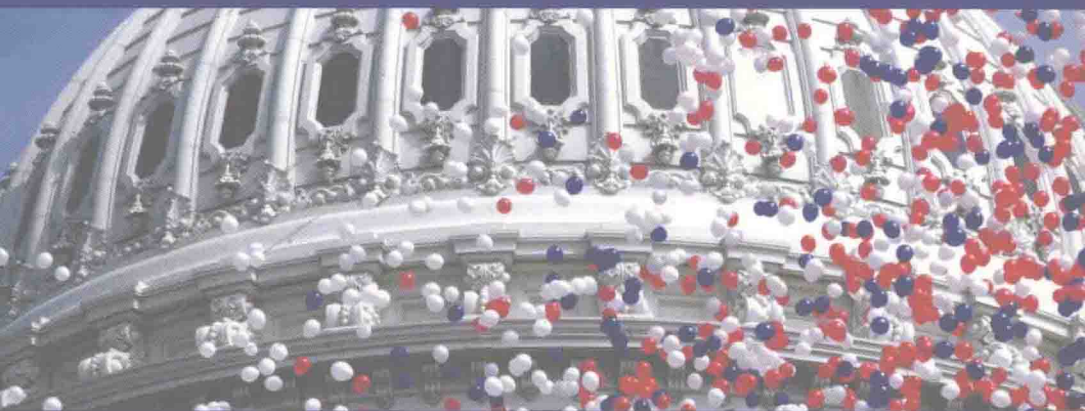


# Current Issues

2001 EDITION



Critical Policy Choices  
Facing the Nation and the World



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2001 Edition



Critical Policy Choices  
Facing the Nation and the World



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The Close Up Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic education organization, informs, inspires, and empowers people to exercise the rights and accept the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Close Up connects individuals of all ages to their communities and institutions through challenging educational programs and products. By building partnerships with the education community, the private and philanthropic sectors, and all branches and levels of government, Close Up makes civic participation a dynamic and meaningful experience.

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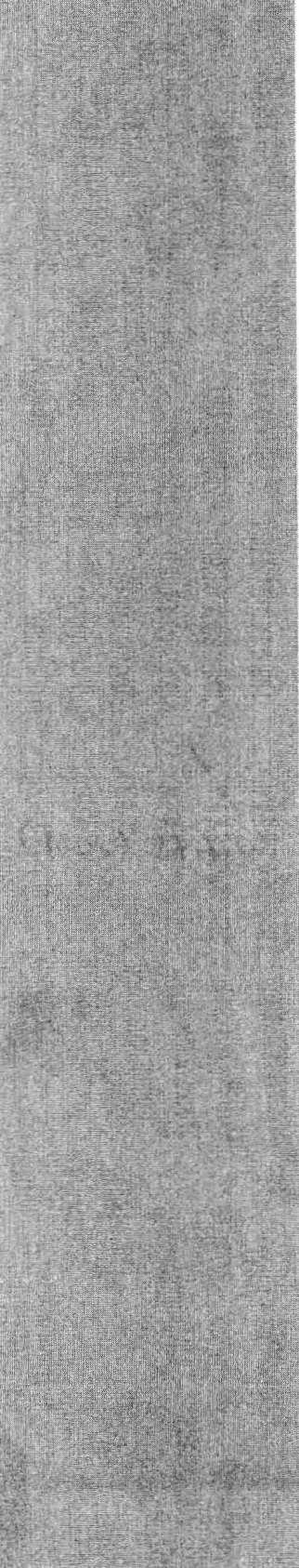
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## PREFACE

This book is about policy issues—matters being discussed and debated by Americans and their law-makers. Today, men and women living in the United States receive an unprecedented amount of information about national and international affairs. Much of this information is intended to shape public opinion. *Current Issues*, now in its twenty-fourth edition, takes a different approach. Domestic and foreign policy issues are covered in twenty updated chapters that present the facts in a balanced, objective manner, allowing readers to formulate their own opinions. Each chapter provides basic background information, identifies key questions, and details arguments from differing points of view.

The topics were chosen because they are part of today's public policy debate in the United States. Americans are discussing these issues in their communities, in their state capitals, and in Washington, D.C. That dialogue is at the heart of *Current Issues*.

Nothing is more important to the democratic form of government in the United States than the informed participation of its citizens in the political process. *Current Issues* is designed to support greater civic participation by ensuring that when it comes time for this book's readers to vote in an election, state an opinion, or take a stand on an issue, they can and will do so from an informed perspective.



# CONTENTS

## The Federal Government

Introduction .....	8
The Clinton Administration .....	10
Congress .....	20
The Supreme Court .....	28

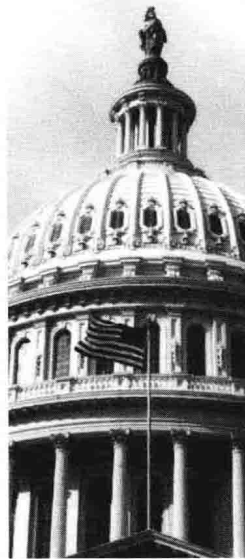
## Domestic Policy Issues

Introduction .....	34
The Federal Budget .....	36
Constitutional Rights .....	52
Crime and Drugs .....	66
The Economy .....	78
Education .....	92
Health Care and Aging .....	104
Immigration .....	120
The Media .....	134
Poverty .....	148
Women and Minorities .....	160

## Foreign Policy Issues

Introduction .....	176
Defense .....	178
Democracy and Human Rights .....	192
The Global Environment .....	208
International Trade .....	224
Weapons Proliferation .....	238
World Poverty and Foreign Aid .....	250
East Asia .....	262
Europe and Russia .....	278
Latin America .....	298
The Middle East .....	316

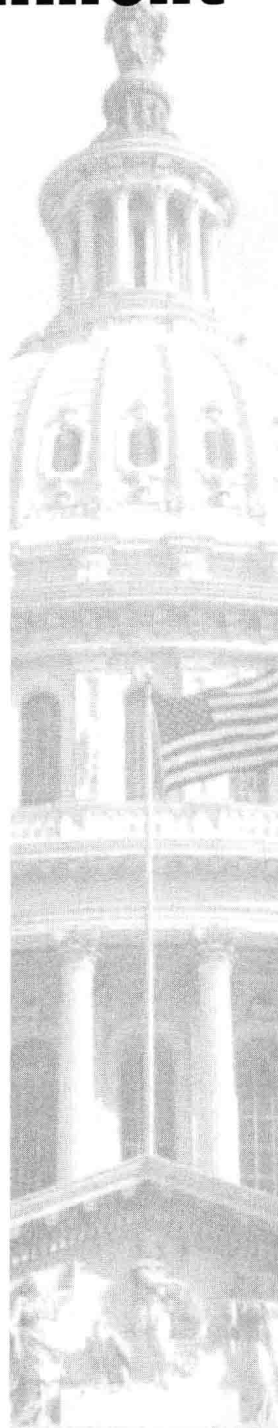
For Further Reading .....	334
Index .....	338





# The Federal Government

Introduction .....	8
The Clinton Administration .....	10
Congress .....	20
The Supreme Court .....	28





## INTRODUCTION

The United States is a republic, with democratically elected representatives who deal with the day-to-day workings of government. Every day government officials make decisions about important issues. As policymakers, they devise plans for addressing the nation's needs and for conducting relations with other countries. The process for dealing with such domestic and foreign issues is called public policy. Developing public policy is the government's way of meeting national goals, such as defending the country, protecting the environment, and improving access to health care. In the United States, the three branches of federal government—executive, legislative, and judicial—play different, but interrelated, roles in making and implementing public policy.

The executive branch, which includes the president, cabinet departments, and federal agencies, has the constitutional duty to carry out the laws of the United States. But the executive branch also initiates policies, represented, for example, by the budget the president sends to Congress. After Congress has approved and funded the president's proposals, the administration (another name for the executive branch) executes them.

The legislative branch—Congress—is primarily charged with making public policy. The Constitution gives senators and representatives—the nation's lawmakers—the power to formulate defense, trade, and other policies, as well as the power to raise and allocate funds to implement such decisions. Congressional committees monitor the executive branch to make sure that the president, cabinet departments, and federal agencies are carrying out policies as Congress intended.

The judicial branch, which is made up of the Supreme Court and lower federal courts, settles disputes involving citizens and federal, state, and local governments where a federal question is involved.

Federal courts interpret the U.S. Constitution as well as the nation's laws and treaties. The Supreme Court can, in effect, change public policy decisions by ruling that certain laws, regulations, or practices are unconstitutional. Decisions of the Supreme Court usually stand as the law of the land unless the Court later overturns its decision, or the Constitution is amended in a way that nullifies an earlier Court decision.

Over time the federal government's priorities change to reflect the needs of the country and the wishes of the electorate. Together, Congress and the president pass laws dealing with many domestic public policy issues. However, when the legislative and executive branches of government are controlled by opposing parties, finding consensus is almost always a challenge. At the same time, the search for agreement among the branches is an integral part of the Constitution's time-honored system of checks and balances.

# THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

Americans vote for president and vice president on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November of every leap year. Both are inaugurated (sworn into office) at 12:00 noon on the following January 20. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore were elected to two consecutive terms from January 1993 to January 2001. Americans will elect a new president and vice president in November 2000.

## President



The White House

William (Bill) Clinton, age 54, is the forty-second president. During his presidency, he worked with Congress to balance the budget and reform welfare laws, advocated increased spending on education and health care for children, increased police forces, and sent U.S. peacekeeping troops to Yugoslavia. In 1998 the administration was distracted by an independent counsel investigation, and in December of that year, Bill Clinton became the first president since Andrew Johnson in 1868 to be impeached by the House of Representatives. President Clinton was later acquitted by the Senate.

## Vice President



The White House

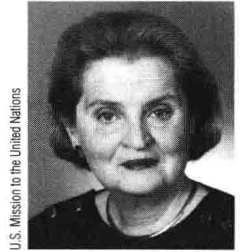
Albert Gore Jr., age 52, was a U.S. representative from Tennessee for eight years beginning in 1976 and served in the U.S. Senate from 1984 to 1993. One of President Clinton's most trusted and closest advisers, Vice President Gore often served as spokesperson for the president on national security matters and represented the administration overseas. Vice President Gore spent much of his time in 2000 successfully campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination.

## CABINET

There are currently fourteen Cabinet departments, each headed by a presidential appointee. President George Washington's first Cabinet was made up of the secretaries of state, treasury, and war (now defense), and the attorney general. Cabinet members are listed here in chronological order of the creation of their departments.

### Secretary of State

Madeleine Albright, age 62, was the first woman to be appointed secretary of state. She served as ambassador to the United Nations from 1993 to 1997 before taking charge of the State Department. As the nation's top diplomat, Secretary Albright traveled the world, helping keep the Middle East peace process alive and seeking solutions to the ongoing dispute with Iraq. In early 1999, Albright tried to persuade Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic to sign a peace accord ending the conflict in Kosovo. Milosevic's defiance led to NATO airstrikes against Serbia.



U.S. Mission to the United Nations

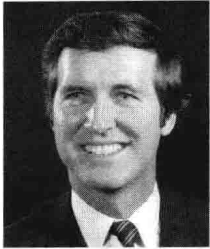
### Secretary of the Treasury

In July 1999, Lawrence Summers replaced Robert Rubin as secretary of the treasury. Summers, age 45, had been deputy secretary under Rubin since 1995. Before joining the Clinton administration, Summers served as chief economist at the World Bank and as a professor of economics at Harvard University. As secretary of the treasury, Summers worked hard on issues related to international financial policy as the United States looked for ways to improve the world economy.



U.S. Department of Treasury

## Secretary of Defense



U.S. Department of Defense

William Cohen, age 59, became secretary of defense in January 1997. Before taking over administration of the Pentagon, Cohen, a Republican, was a U.S. senator from Maine for eighteen years and served on the Senate Armed Services Committee. The defense secretary was an important presidential adviser on many national security issues, including defense restructuring and promoting development of a missile defense system. Secretary Cohen supervised U.S. military actions in the airwar against Serbia.

## Attorney General



U.S. Department of Justice

Before being named to head the Department of Justice, Janet Reno, age 61, was the state attorney for Dade County, Florida, where she served for fifteen years and won praise for reforming the juvenile justice system. As attorney general, she requested the appointment of independent counselors to investigate possible wrongdoings by members of the Clinton administration and later chose John Danforth to investigate the role of the FBI during the Branch Davidian standoff in 1993. Reno spent considerable time in 2000 seeking a way to reunite 6-year-old Cuban refugee Elian Gonzalez with his father.

## Secretary of the Interior

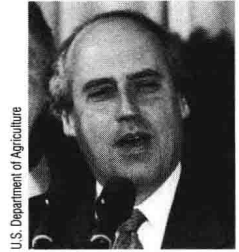


U.S. Department of the Interior

Bruce Babbitt, age 61, was governor of Arizona for nine years. As secretary of the interior, he oversaw 500 million acres of national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and recreation areas. Babbitt supported a “dominant public use” policy, which gives priority to recreation, wildlife, and watershed uses for the nation’s public lands. Babbitt was at the forefront of the Clinton administration’s efforts to explain to the American people the value of having strong conservation and environmental protection laws.

## Secretary of Agriculture

Dan Glickman, age 55, became secretary of agriculture in April 1995. Before being named to the Clinton Cabinet, Glickman served nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. While representing his Kansas district, he was an influential member of the House Agriculture and Intelligence Committees. Secretary Glickman was active in persuading Congress to grant an assistance package to farmers hurt by the depressed U.S. farm economy.



U.S. Department of Agriculture

## Secretary of Commerce

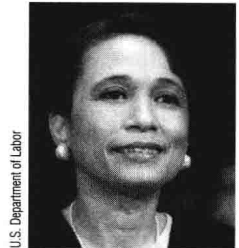
Before being named secretary of commerce in 1997, William Daley, age 52, was a top political adviser to his brother, Chicago mayor Richard Daley. In 1993, William Daley helped President Clinton win congressional approval for the North American Free Trade Agreement. Secretary Daley was lauded by many business leaders for revitalizing an agency that had been tarnished by alleged connections to campaign fundraising improprieties in 1996. In July 2000, Daley resigned to head Vice President Al Gore's presidential campaign.



Consolidated News/Archive Photos

## Secretary of Labor

Alexis Herman, age 53, was appointed secretary of labor at the beginning of President Clinton's second term. Secretary Herman believed that the United States must "train and retrain" workers so that the nation could compete in the new technology-dominated and information-based global economy. In March 2000, an independent counsel investigating Herman for her role in soliciting illegal campaign donations while she served in the Office of Public Liaison found no wrongdoing on her part.



U.S. Department of Labor

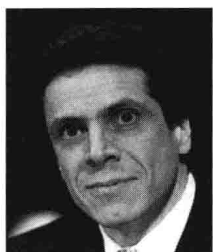
## Secretary of Health and Human Services



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Donna Shalala, age 58, was the longest-serving secretary of health and human services in U.S. history. She was chancellor of the University of Wisconsin at Madison from 1988 to 1993, the assistant secretary for housing and urban development from 1977 to 1980, and chair of the Children's Defense Fund in 1992. Secretary Shalala ran a huge department that oversaw highly visible and expensive programs, such as Social Security and Medicare.

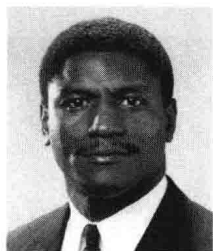
## Secretary of Housing and Urban Development



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Before being named to the Cabinet by President Clinton, Andrew Cuomo, age 42, served as assistant secretary for community planning and development at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from 1993 to 1996. In that post, he was in charge of a wide variety of economic development, affordable housing, and homeless programs. During his tenure at HUD, he was an outspoken advocate of anticrime and antipoverty programs.

## Secretary of Transportation



U.S. Department of Transportation

Rodney Slater, age 45, served as the administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) before being appointed secretary of transportation. The FHA, which is part of the Department of Transportation, is responsible for ensuring the safety of highways and bridges. A longtime political ally of President Clinton, Secretary Slater previously chaired the Arkansas State Highway Commission and served on the presidential transition team.

## Secretary of Energy

Prior to being chosen by President Clinton to be the secretary of energy in June 1998, Bill Richardson, age 52, served as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and represented New Mexico in the U.S. House of Representatives before that. In March 2000, Secretary Richardson led a delegation to a meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Vienna, where he urged the ministers to increase production and reduce the price of crude oil.



U.S. Mission to the United Nations

## Secretary of Education

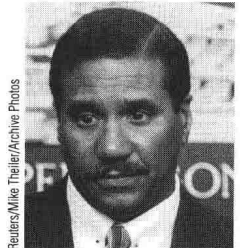
Richard Riley, age 67, was the governor of South Carolina from 1979 to 1987. In 1984, Riley worked to improve his state's schools by adding a one-cent sales tax. The secretary stated to Congress and the American people President Clinton's positions on such issues as college loans and school choice. Secretary Riley believed strongly in setting education standards and improving the performance of American teachers.



U.S. Department of Education

## Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Togo West Jr., age 58, became the secretary of veterans affairs in 1998, replacing Jesse Brown. Prior to becoming secretary of one of the largest Cabinet departments, West served four years as secretary of the army. Under West, the Department of Veterans Affairs earned praise for enforcing a new policy that requires veterans hospitals to report all medical errors and "adverse" events to the public.



Reuters/Mike Thelie/Archive Photos



## KEY PRESIDENTIAL ADVISERS

Along with Cabinet secretaries, other important officials serve as key advisers to the president. Although technically not members of the Cabinet, presidents commonly give Cabinet status to some advisers. Several of the following advisers head large agencies or represent the United States in important international settings.

### Ambassador to the United Nations



AP Photo/Dragan Filipovic

Richard Holbrooke was confirmed U.S. ambassador to the United Nations (UN) in August 1999. Previously, he had been a Peace Corps director, an investment banker, a professional diplomat, a magazine editor, an author, and the chairperson of two non-governmental organizations. While an assistant secretary of state, he was the chief negotiator for the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia. As ambassador to the United Nations, Holbrooke successfully urged Congress to pay late UN dues. His other priorities included seeking UN reform and addressing UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, the Balkans, and East Timor.

### White House Chief of Staff



The White House

John Podesta, age 50, replaced Erskine Bowles as White House chief of staff in November 1998. Podesta had been deputy chief. Before joining the Clinton administration, he was an attorney, law professor, and public relations professional in Washington, D.C. The chief of staff is responsible for coordinating legislative and communication strategies for the president as well as advising him on key appointments. Podesta's first challenge was to navigate the White House through the tumultuous impeachment proceedings in late 1998 and early 1999.