

The Conservative Era

Section 16.2 The New Conservative Coalition



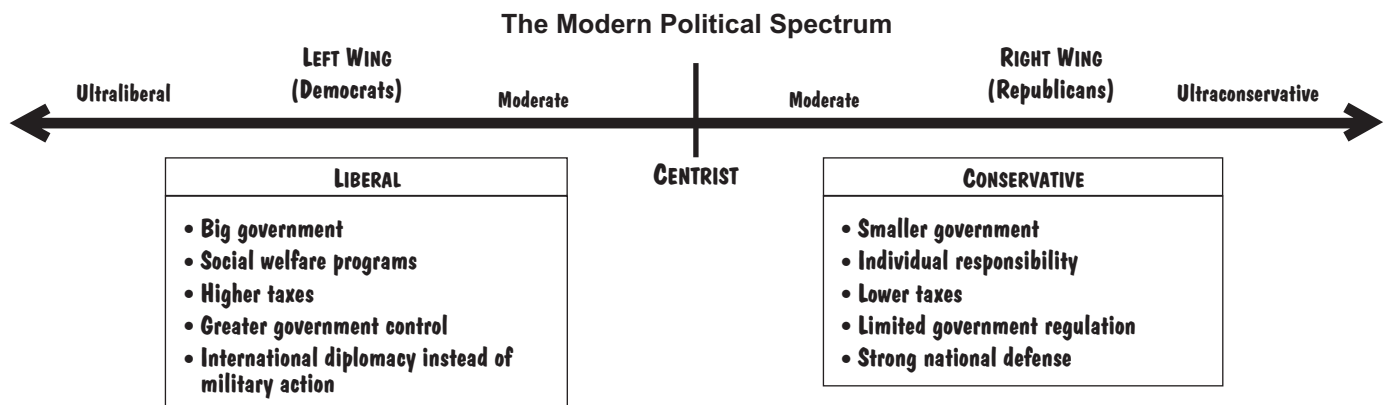
Pre-View 16.2

- **Liberalism** – the belief that the government should intervene in all social and economic issues
- **Conservatism** – the belief in limited government control and greater individual responsibility
- **Totalitarianism** – a form of government that controls every aspect of citizens' lives
- **Anarchy** – the absence of government control over anything
- **Barry Goldwater** – conservative who ran for President in 1964; credited with reinvigorating the conservative movement
- **New Right (or Christian Right)** – conservatives who promoted Christian values to go along with more traditional conservative beliefs
- **Jerry Falwell** – a televangelist who mixed the Gospel with political action; founded the Moral Majority as a political action group
- **Moral Majority** – a group founded to oppose liberals and liberal ideology; pursued political action influenced by Christian values

Liberals vs. Conservatives

Two opposing political beliefs have influenced politics from the beginning. **Liberalism** is the belief that government should play a key role in ensuring social equality. For example, a liberal will likely support government-run social programs. **Conservatism** is the belief that government should have limited control and that people should take individual responsibility. A conservative, for example, will likely believe in fewer government-run social programs.

Political party stances have evolved over time. Since the 1964 presidential election, Republicans have become more conservative and Democrats more liberal with regard to the role of the federal government in the economy and in the personal lives of individual citizens. However, even among conservatives and liberals, not everyone agrees on every issue, and some believe more strongly than others. The illustration below attempts to show how common ideological terms relate. The line is a continuum that shows the farther away from the center in either direction, the more strongly certain ideas are held. The illustration also shows the basic beliefs of both sides of the political argument.



If left-wing politics or ideology are taken to the extreme, the result is **totalitarianism**, or total government control of everything. If right-wing politics or ideology are taken to the extreme, the result is **anarchy**, or no government control at all. American politics does not go to extremes in either direction but falls somewhere to the right or left of center.

Section 16.2, continued

The New Conservative Coalition

A Coalition of Conservatives

Conservatives Unite

In the 1964 presidential election, the conservative Republican **Barry Goldwater** suffered a humiliating defeat to the liberal Democrat Lyndon Johnson who set out to greatly expand social welfare programs and civil rights for minorities. Rather than accept defeat, conservatives regrouped and began to rebuild the Republican Party as a grassroots political organization that could better present their goals and ideas to the people and win future elections. In the 1980 election, conservatives asserted themselves and made a significant impact in putting Ronald Reagan in the White House. These conservatives were opposed to huge social programs, higher taxes, and government control of free enterprise. See the summary of their positions on the issues.

Summary of Conservative Ideologies

- Opposed the wasteful spending of huge social programs
- Favored a strong anticommunist foreign policy
- Promoted capitalism and lower taxes

The New Right

During the 1970s, evangelical or fundamentalist Christianity enjoyed a revival with the growth of evangelical ministries on television (televangelists). Millions listened to televangelists as they denounced feminism, abortion, and homosexuality and promoted Christian and family values. (Feminism advocates equality between men and women.) A new movement called the **New Right**, or the **Christian Right**, emerged. The New Right agreed with conservative ideas on social programs, capitalism, and foreign policy but added their own emphasis on moral and religious values. They made several social issues, especially abortion, hot topics, and a politician's stance on such issues became an important factor in choosing which political candidates to support.

Several noteworthy names are associated with the Christian Right. Televangelist **Jerry Falwell** founded a political organization in 1979 called the **Moral Majority** to oppose social welfare and other liberal ideas. Falwell's Moral Majority was part of the Christian Right and represented the Christian Right, especially in the South, throughout the 1980s. Another televangelist Pat Robertson founded the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN). Robertson has been an outspoken opponent of feminism, abortion, and homosexuality, and he has been an influential voice in conservative politics. Catholics such as Phyllis Schlafly also joined the call for a return to family values. Schlafly was a major opponent of feminism and the Equal Rights Amendment, and as an author and commentator, she continues to be a leader in the conservative movement.

Ideologies of the New Right

- Opposed the feminist movement, abortion, and the Equal Rights Amendment
- Opposed the breakdown of the traditional family through divorce
- Opposed homosexuality
- Fought to keep pornography off the public airwaves and out of public view
- Promoted Christian values or traditional family values
- Advocated for prayer and Bible reading in public schools

The new coalition of conservatives and the New Right continue to influence politics into the twenty-first century. They remain a group that is highly courted by Republicans to help them win elections on social issues.

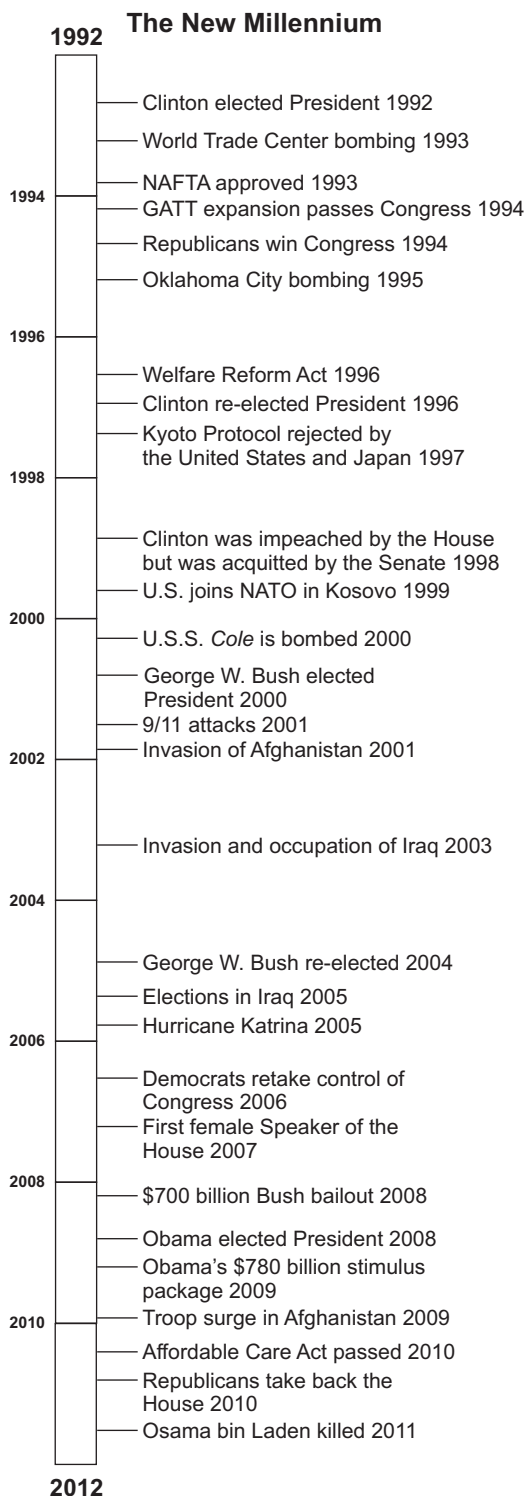
The New Millennium

Section 17.1 Introduction



Pre-View 17.1

- **Sorties** – military missions by aircraft flown against an enemy



The decade of the 1990s saw the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the New Millennium. In that time, the economy had gone global, offensive wars against terrorism had been waged at home and abroad, and new challenges both foreign and domestic continued to arise.

- Voters read George H.W. Bush's lips and said, "No" to another term and "yes" to William "Bill" Clinton, an Arkansas governor who would break his own tax pledge to middle-class Americans.
- The Clintons endured much unpleasantness, including accusations of shady real estate deals and sex scandals.
- Two wars in the Balkans to prevent ethnic cleansing and genocide, first Bosnia and then Kosovo, were fought mostly from above 15,000 feet by U.S. fighter planes and bombers.
- A disputed election in 2000 came down to counting ballots by hand until a Florida recount was halted by the Supreme Court. The narrow victory went to a former President's son with almost the same name. George W. Bush became the 43rd President. His father was Bush 41.
- Muslim terrorists hijacked American airliners and crashed them into the Twin Towers of New York City and the Pentagon. A fourth plane crashed into a Pennsylvania field because the passengers said, "No you don't!" Americans were outraged and unified.
- Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq focused on terrorists and the countries that sponsor terrorism. Neither Saddam Hussein nor Osama bin Laden enjoyed the outcome very much.
- In 2008 the first African American was elected to the office of President. He defeated a former prisoner of war in Vietnam.
- The healthcare reform that Democrats had sought for over 60 years finally passed but did not take effect until after the 2012 presidential election. The Affordable Care Act is not nearly as affordable as it was hoped and remains highly controversial.

From a tabloid presidency with sordid tales of sex to **sorties** (air attacks) flown in foreign wars, the period has been interesting to this point, and the story continues. The first African American President was swept into office on a wave of "hope and change." The change is obvious; the hope depends on whom you ask. Let's take a look.