not ignore the movement. They started talking about concern for the environment and for working conditions. Would this lead to real change? It was too soon to tell, but at least the voices of protest had been heard.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE "WAR ON TERRORISM"

"I DON'T THINK THEY CARE ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE us," the woman said. She was a cashier at a filling station. Her husband was a construction worker. She added, "Maybe if they lived in a two-bedroom trailer, it would be different."

Who was she talking about? "They" were the two candidates for president in 2000. The Republican candidate was George W. Bush, son of the man who had been president before Bill Clinton. The Democratic candidate was Al Gore, who had been vice president for eight years.

That cashier wasn't the only person who thought that neither of the two candidates really cared about her and people like her. Many others felt the same way. An African American woman who managed a McDonald's, earning barely more

than the minimum wage, said, "I don't even pay attention to those two, and all my friends say the same. My life won't change."

Almost half the voters in the country would not even go to the polls on Election Day 2000. Many saw no real difference in the candidates. They had no way to know that the candidate who became president would soon have to deal with a national crisis—a terrorist attack on the United States that would start a new cycle of war.

A Close Election

BUSH, THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE, WAS known for his close ties to the oil industry. Both candidates, though, had support from big business. Bush and Gore had other things in common, too.

Both candidates favored a large military and the continued use of land mines (even though other nations in the world had banned these deadly devices, which can kill or injure civilians many years after combat ends). Both supported the

death penalty and the growth of prisons. Neither of them had a plan for free national health care, or for a big increase in low-cost housing, or for a dramatic change in environmental controls.

There was a third candidate. His name was Ralph Nader, and he was nationally known as a critic of the way large corporations control the American economy. Nader's plan for the nation focused on health care, education, and the environment. But Nader was shut out of the debates between presidential candidates that were broadcast on national television. Without the support of big business, he had to raise money from the small contributions of people who believed in his program.

When Election Day came, it turned out to be the strangest election in American history. Gore received hundreds of thousands more votes than Bush. Under the Constitution, though, presidents aren't elected by the direct vote of the people, sometimes called the popular vote. Instead, each state has a certain number of electors. The electors' votes determine who becomes president.

Twice in American history, in 1876 and 1888, a president had been elected who *wasn't* chosen by the majority of voters. That's because the electors'

votes don't always match the popular vote. For example, if 45 percent of the voters in a state voted for candidate A, and 55 percent voted for candidate B, the electoral votes might not be divided between the two candidates. Candidate B might get all the electoral votes.

That's how things work in the state of Florida—and that's what caused a raging argument about the presidential election of 2000. Across the nation, the electoral vote between Gore and Bush was extremely close. It was so close that Florida's electoral votes would decide the election.

But it was not clear whether Gore or Bush had received more votes in Florida. It seemed that many votes had not been counted, especially in districts where a lot of black voters lived. Also, ballots were disqualified on technical grounds, and marks made on ballots by voting machines were not clear.

In short, Florida's popular vote was in doubt. Florida's electoral vote hung in the balance, and so did the presidency. But Bush, the Republican candidate, had an advantage. His brother was governor of Florida, and Florida's secretary of state, Katherine Harris, was also a Republican. Her job

gave her the power to certify, or officially declare, who had more votes. She rushed through a recount of some of the ballots and announced that Bush had won the Florida vote. This made Bush the new president.

Democrats appealed to the Florida Supreme Court. The court, which was dominated by Democrats, ordered Harris not to certify a winner until the recount of the popular vote was complete. Harris set a deadline for recounting, and although thousands of votes were still disputed, she declared Bush the winner by 537 votes.

Gore prepared to challenge her decision. He wanted the recount to continue, as the Florida Supreme Court had ordered. To keep this from happening, the Republican Party took the case to the nation's highest court, the U.S. Supreme Court.

Four Supreme Court justices felt that the Florida recount should continue. They argued that the Court did not have the right to interfere with the way the Florida Supreme Court had interpreted its state's electoral law. But the five conservative judges on the court overruled the Florida Supreme Court and halted the recount. In the end, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling let

Harris's certification stand. Bush got Florida's electoral votes.

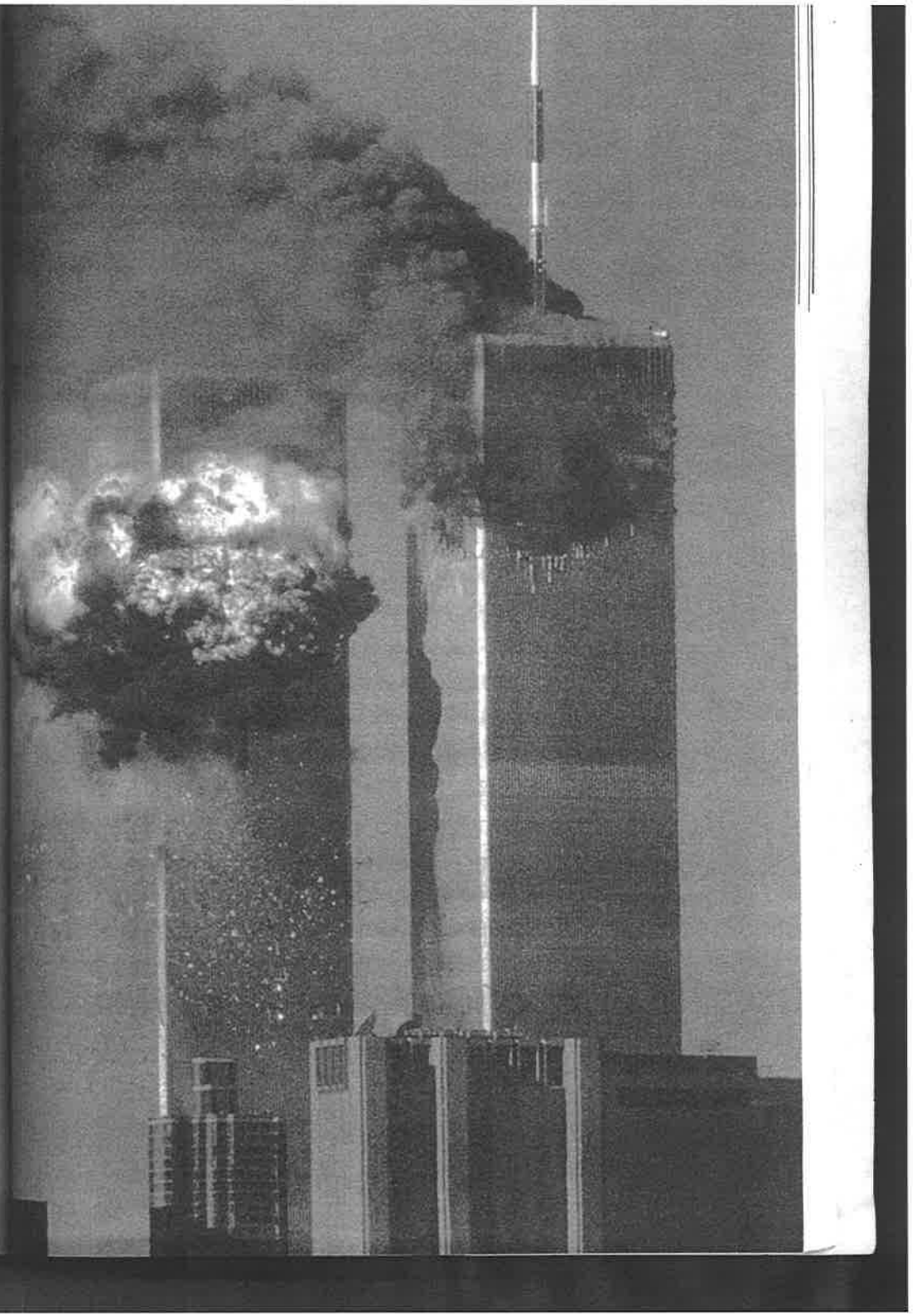
John Paul Stevens was one of the liberal justices who had voted not to interfere with the Florida Supreme Court. With some bitterness, he summed up the results of the Court's decision:

> Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's presidential decision, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law.

The Terrorist Attack and the Response

NINE MONTHS AFTER BUSH TOOK OFFICE, on September 11, 2001, a terrible event pushed all other issues into the background. Hijackers on three planes flew the huge jets, loaded with fuel, into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Americans all over the country watched, horrified, as the towers collapsed in an inferno of



(right) The World Trade Center south tower bursts into flames, New York City, September 11, 2001.

concrete and metal. Thousands of people who worked in the towers were buried in the wreckage. So were hundreds of firefighters and police officers who had gone to their rescue.

Nineteen men from the Middle East, most from Saudi Arabia, had made this attack against huge symbols of American wealth and power. They were willing to die to strike a deadly blow against the superpower that they saw as their enemy.

President Bush immediately declared a "war on terrorism." Congress rushed to give the president the power to take military action without the formal declaration of war that the U.S. Constitution requires. Only one member of Congress disagreed—Barbara Lee, an African American representative from California.

The administration believed that the attack was ordered by Osama bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian who supported a militant form of Islam, the Muslim religion. He was thought to be hiding somewhere in the Asian nation of Afghanistan, so Bush ordered the bombing of Afghanistan.

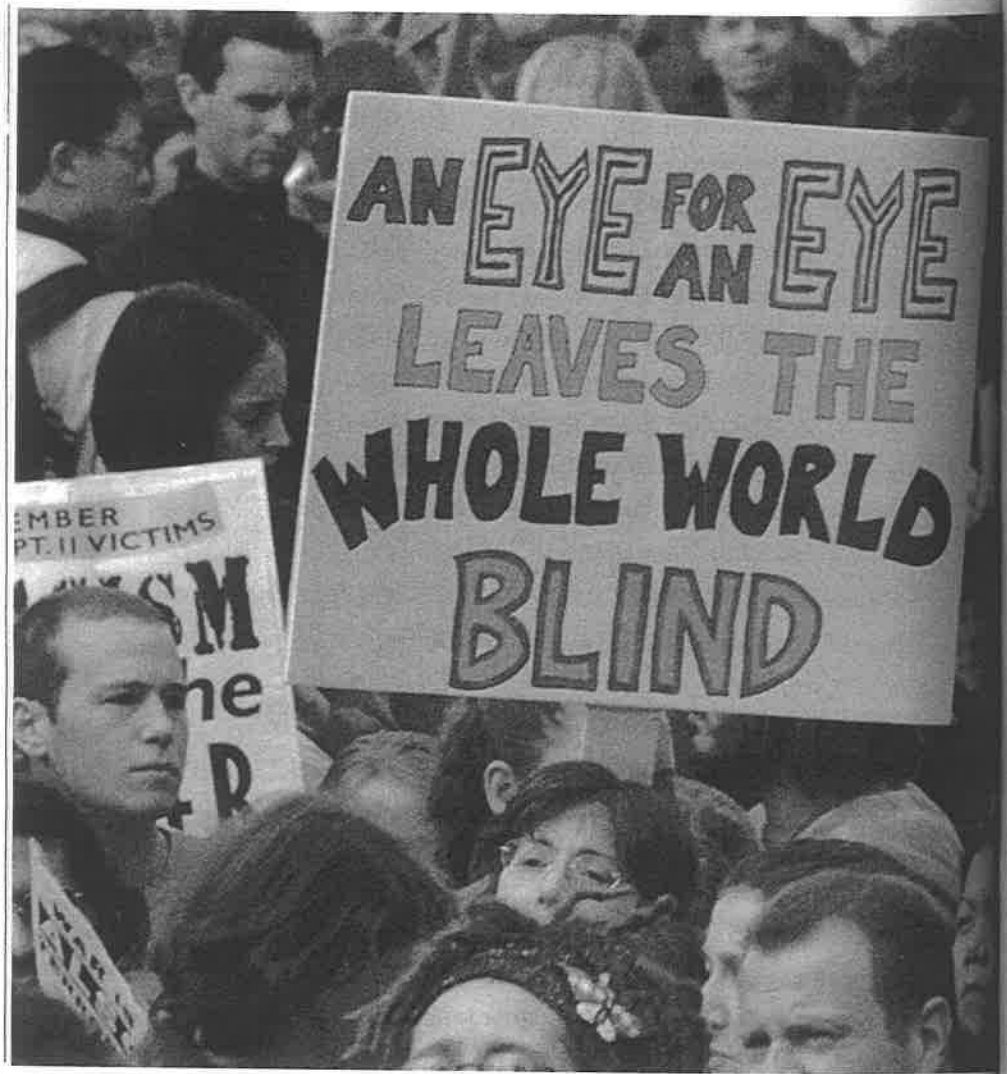
The president set out to capture or kill Osama bin Laden and to destroy his militant Islamic organization, called Al-Qaeda. But after five

months of bombing, Osama bin Laden remained free. Bush had to admit to Congress that "tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large" in "dozens of countries."

Bush and his advisers should have known that terrorism could not be defeated by force. Evidence from many countries and time periods shows that when countries respond to terrorist acts with military force, the result is more terrorism.

The bombing of Afghanistan was devastating to the country, which had already suffered a 1979 invasion by the Soviet Union, followed by a civil war. Although the Pentagon claimed that the United States was bombing only military targets, human rights groups and the press reported at least a thousand civilians killed. But the mainstream press and major television networks did not show Americans the full extent of the human suffering in Afghanistan. Instead, the media encouraged a mood of revenge.

Congress passed a law called the Patriot Act. It gave the Department of Justice the power to hold noncitizens on nothing more than suspicion, without charging them with a crime, and without the protections guaranteed in the Constitution.



And although President Bush cautioned Americans not to take out their anger on Arab Americans, the government rounded up people for questioning. Most were Muslims. A thousand or more were held without charges.

In the wartime atmosphere, it became hard for citizens to criticize the government's actions. A retired telephone worker was at his health club when he made a remark critical of President Bush. Later he was questioned by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A young woman found two FBI agents at her door. They said they had gotten reports of posters on her wall, criticizing the president.

Still, some people spoke out against the war. At peace rallies all over the country, they carried signs with slogans such as "Our Grief Is Not a Cry for Revenge" and "Justice, Not War."

Family members of people who had died in the September 11 attacks wrote to the president. They urged him not to match violence with violence, not to bomb the people of Afghanistan. Amber Amundsen's husband, an Army Specialist, had been killed in the attack on the Pentagon. She wrote:

(left) Demonstrators holding signs gather at an anti-war rally in Washington, 2001.

> I have heard angry rhetoric [speech] by some Americans, including many of our nation's leaders, who advise a heavy dose of revenge and punishment. To those leaders, I would like to make clear that my family and I take no comfort in your words of rage. If you choose to respond to this incomprehensible brutality by perpetuating [continuing] violence against other innocent human beings, you may not do so in the name of my husband.

Some families of September 11 victims traveled to Afghanistan to meet Afghan families who had lost loved ones in the American bombing. One of the Americans was Rita Lasar, whose brother had died in the attack. Lasar said that she would devote the rest of her life to working for peace.

Critics of the bombing felt that terrorism was rooted in deep complaints against the United States. The way to stop terrorism was to respond to these complaints.

Some of the Islamic world's complaints were easy to identify. The United States had stationed troops in Saudi Arabia, where Islam's holiest shrines are located. For ten years the United States had kept Iraq from trading with other countries—a move that was supposed to be political, but one that had caused the deaths of hundreds of

thousands of children by keeping food and medicine out of the country, according to the United Nations. The United States also supported the nation of Israel in its occupation of land claimed by Palestinian Muslims.

To change its position on these matters, the United States would have to withdraw military forces around the world. It would have to give up political and economic power over other countries. In short, America would have to stop being a superpower. This was something that the military-industrial interests of both political parties could not accept.

Three years before September 11, 2001, a former U.S. Air Force officer named Robert Bowman had written about terrorist attacks on American embassies in Africa. He described the roots of terrorism:

> We are not hated because we practice democracy, value freedom, or uphold human rights. We are hated because our government denies these things to people in Third World countries whose resources are coveted [desired] by our multinational corporations. That hatred we have sown has come back to haunt us in the form of terrorism. . . . Instead of sending our sons and daughters around the

> world to kill Arabs so we can have the oil under their sand, we should send them to rebuild their infrastructure, supply clean water, and feed starving children. . . .
> In short, we should do good instead of evil. Who would try to stop us? Who would hate us? Who would want to bomb us? That is the truth the American people need to hear.

Voices such as Bowman's were mostly shut out of the American media after the September 11 attacks. But there was a chance that their powerful message might spread among the American people, once they saw that meeting violence with violence did not solve the problem of terrorism.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

WAR IN IRAQ, CONFLICT AT HOME

THE UNITED STATES MADE "WAR ON TERROR" its mission after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. Soon that mission would lead American troops into war in the Middle Eastern nation of Iraq. As voices at home spoke out against the war, the administration of President George W. Bush faced other troubles. A deadly hurricane made people around the world question the U.S. government's commitment to social justice, and debates about immigration made people ask what it means to be an American. In an election in 2006, voters in the United States showed that they were ready for change.

Afghanistan after the U.S. Invasion

WHEN UNITED STATES FORCES BOMBED AND invaded Afghanistan, they failed to capture Osama bin Laden or to destroy the Al-Qaeda organization. Yet the military operation killed thousands of Afghan civilians and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes.

U.S. leaders justified this terrible toll on the grounds that the invasion had removed the Taliban from power.

The Taliban was a fundamentalist Islamic group that had been ruling Afghanistan with an iron hand. Among other things, the Taliban insisted on strict interpretations of Islam that denied rights to women. The defeat of the Taliban brought a group called the Northern Alliance into power. Its record was far from spotless. In the mid-1990s, the Northern Alliance had committed many acts of violence against the people of Kabul and other Afghan cities.

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush claimed that getting rid of the Taliban meant that "women are free" in Afghanistan. This was a false claim, according to an organization of Afghan women. And two years after the U.S. invasion, the

New York Times gave a discouraging account of things in Afghanistan. Women were not free, bandits roamed the land, warlords controlled huge areas, and the Taliban was making a comeback.

Sixteen months into the war, a Scotsman who took medical aid to Afghan villages was distressed at what he saw. He wrote, "The country is on its knees. . . . It is one of the most heavily land-mined countries in the world . . . 25 percent of all children are dead by the age of five." Sadly he concluded, "Surely, at the start of our 21st century, we should have evolved beyond the point where we reduce a country and a people to dust, for the flimsiest of excuses." But as of August 2006, air strikes were still killing Afghan civilians, and the *New York Times* reported widespread "corruption, violence and poverty."

The attack on Afghanistan had not brought democracy or security, and it had not weakened terrorism. If anything, the violence unleashed by the United States had angered people in the Middle East and created more terrorists.

Weapons of Mass Destruction?

WITH AFGHANISTAN STILL IN TURMOIL, the Bush administration began to set the stage for a war against Iraq. Richard Clarke, adviser to the president on terrorism, later said that immediately after the September 11 attacks the White House looked for reasons to attack Iraq—even though no evidence linked Iraq to the attacks.

Bush and the government officials close to him wanted the American public to think that Iraq and its dictator, Saddam Hussein, threatened the United States and the world. They accused Iraq of concealing "weapons of mass destruction," including plans to build a nuclear bomb.

A United Nations team made hundreds of inspections all over Iraq. It found no weapons of mass destruction, or any evidence that Iraq was working on a nuclear weapon. U.S. vice president Richard Cheney, though, insisted the weapons were real. Condoleezza Rice, the secretary of state, spoke menacingly of "a mushroom cloud," like the cloud caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. The government also pointed to Hussein's cruel and illegal acts, such as the use of chemical poisons to massacre five thousand

Iraqis from the Kurdish ethnic minority. But Hussein had killed those Kurds in 1988, and at the time the United States had not objected loudly. Back then, Iraq and the United States had been on the same side against Iran, another nation in the Middle East.

What was the real reason for building up the idea of war against Iraq in 2002? Maybe the reason lay underground. Iraq had the world's second largest oil reserves, after Saudi Arabia. Ever since the end of World War II in 1945, the United States had been determined to control the oil of the Middle East. Oil shaped U.S. decisions about the Middle East during both Democratic and Republican presidencies. The administration of President Jimmy Carter, a liberal Democrat, had produced the "Carter Doctrine." Under this doctrine, the United States claimed the right to defend its interest in Middle Eastern oil "by any means necessary, including military force."

In September 2002, the Bush administration said that it would take military action on Iraq on its own, without the support of other countries. This violated the charter of the United Nations, which allows military action only in self-defense,

and only when approved by the U.N. Security Council. Nevertheless, the United States prepared to make war on Iraq. Protests took place all over the world. On February 15, 2003, ten to fifteen million people across the globe demonstrated against the coming war at the same time.

The Iraq War Begins

DESPITE THE PROTESTS, THE UNITED STATES government launched a massive attack on Iraq on March 20, 2003. "Operation Iraqi Freedom," as it was called, dropped thousands of bombs on Iraq and sent more than a hundred thousand soldiers into the country. Hundreds of U.S. soldiers were killed. Thousands of Iraqis died, many of them civilians.

After three weeks, U.S. forces occupied Iraq's capital, Baghdad. After six weeks, major military operations were declared over. President Bush stood triumphantly on a U.S. aircraft carrier, in front of a huge banner that said, "Mission Accomplished."

But the mission to control Iraq wasn't accomplished. Violence grew as Iraqi insurgents attacked the U.S. army. The capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003 did nothing to stop the attacks.

Iraqis grew more and more resentful of the U.S. occupation of their country. American troops rounded up Iraqis suspected of being insurgents. Thousands of Iraqis were held prisoner. When photos appeared showing U.S. troops torturing Iraqi prisoners, there was evidence that this behavior had the approval of the U.S. secretary of defense. All of these things fed the fire of Iraqi hostility toward the United States. Polls showed that a vast majority of the Iraqis wanted U.S. troops out of Iraq.

The Bush administration refused to consider withdrawing from Iraq. Meanwhile, U.S. casualties were mounting. By the middle of 2006, more than 2,500 Americans had died. Thousands more were wounded, often quite severely. The administration went to great lengths to keep the American public from seeing the coffins, and to keep the armless and legless veterans out of sight.

As bad as American casualties were, Iraqi casualties were much greater. By mid-2006, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis had died. The country was a shambles. People lacked clean water and electricity and lived amid violence and chaos.

At the beginning of the war, a large majority of the American people had accepted the Bush administration's argument that Saddam Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction," and that the invasion of Iraq was part of the "war on terror." The major media did not question this, and the Democratic Party largely supported the war.

But as the war went on, the situation became clearer. Operation Iraqi Freedom had brought neither democracy, nor freedom, nor security to Iraq. The U.S. government had deceived the American people about "weapons of mass destruction" that did not exist. It had claimed that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were linked to Iraq, when there was no evidence to show this. It had supported torture and imprisonment without trial for thousands of people in Iraq and in the United States.

The administration was also using the war as an excuse for violating Americans' constitutional

rights. Under the Patriot Act, the United States could pick up people in Afghanistan and other places and accuse them of terrorism. Instead of treating them as prisoners of war, who have rights under international law, the government created a new label for them: "unlawful enemy combatants." They were locked up in Guantánamo Bay, a U.S. military installation in Cuba. Rumors of torture came out of this prison, and some prisoners committed suicide.

In the fall of 2006, the U.S. Congress passed a bill that allowed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to continue the harsh interrogation of suspected terrorists in secret prisons around the world. The bill also did away with the right of habeas corpus for an "unlawful enemy combatant," even a U.S. citizen. The loss of this right, which is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights, meant that prisoners would not be brought before a court to challenge their arrest.

The Anti-War Movement

PROTESTS AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ TOOK place all over the United States. They were smaller than the huge anti-war demonstrations of the Vietnam era, but they showed that the Bush administration's policies were losing support.

Cindy Sheehan, whose son Casey died in Iraq, spoke out powerfully against the war. When she camped near Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, she drew support from all over the country. In a speech to a Veterans for Peace gathering in Dallas, Sheehan addressed President Bush: "You tell me the truth. You tell me that my son died for oil."

As the war in Iraq continued, young people who had joined the military began to reconsider. Diedra Cobb of Illinois declared herself a conscientious objector, someone whose moral beliefs prevent her from fighting. Cobb wrote, "I joined the Army thinking that I was, quite possibly, upholding some of the mightiest of ideals for the greatest, most powerful country on this earth. . . . There had to be some good that would come out of the carnage, in the end. But this is where I made my mistake, because in war there is no end."

(left)
Anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan speaks to the news media at the White House, 2005.

Between the beginning of the war and the end of 2004, according to CBS news, 5,500 soldiers deserted. Many went to Canada. One of them was a former staff sergeant in the Marine Corps. He told a hearing in Toronto that he and his fellow marines shot and killed more than thirty unarmed men, women, and children, including a young Iraqi who got out of his car with his arms in the air.

An English newspaper, *The Independent,* reported on U.S. deserters. It said, "Sergeant Kevin Benderman cannot shake the images from his head. There are bombed villages and desperate people. There are dogs eating corpses thrown into a mass grave. And most unremitting of all, there is the image of a young Iraqi girl, no more than eight or nine, one arm severely burnt and blistered, and the sound of her screams."

It was getting harder to get young Americans to join the armed forces, so the military stepped up its recruiting efforts. Recruiters targeted teenagers. They visited high schools, approaching students at football games and in school cafeterias. Anti-war groups took up the challenge. They visited schools to tell young people the other side of the story.

By 2006, polls showed that a majority of Americans were against the war and lacked confidence in President Bush. Some journalists began to speak out boldly, even in media that earlier had supported the administration or remained quiet. On Memorial Day, May 30, Andy Rooney told viewers of the television show *60 Minutes* that he was a veteran of World War II. Then he said, "We use the phrase 'gave their lives,' but they didn't give their lives. Their lives were taken from them. . . . I wish we could dedicate Memorial Day, not to the memory of those who have died at war, but to the idea of saving the lives of the young people who are going to die in the future if we don't find some new way—some new religion maybe—that takes war out of our lives."

Salt Lake City, Utah, is generally considered a conservative place, one that would support the administration's war in Iraq. But thousands of people cheered Mayor "Rocky" Anderson when he called President Bush a "dishonest, war-mongering, human-rights violating president." Bush's time in office, declared Anderson, would "rank as the worst presidency our nation has ever had to endure."

Two Storms

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION TRIED HARD TO keep the country in a fiercely nationalistic mood—a mood of "us versus them" that would whip up support for the Iraq war and other administration policies. One result of this strong nationalist feeling was a wave of resentment against millions of immigrants, especially Mexicans, who had come to the United States without legal status. These immigrants were seen as taking jobs from people in the United States, even though various studies showed that they did not hurt the economy, but helped it.

Congress approved plans to build a 750–mile fence along the southern borders of California and Arizona. It was supposed to keep out Mexicans who were trying to escape the poverty in their home country. The U.S. government did not seem to see the irony in the idea of a fence to keep poor Mexicans from coming *into* territory that the United States had seized from Mexico in the 1840s.

In the spring of 2005, Congress discussed laws to punish people who were in the United States illegally. Huge demonstrations took place around the country, especially in California and the

(left) Protesters holding a massive American flag during the immigration rally in downtown Dallas, 2006.

Southwest, as hundreds of thousands of people demanded equal rights for immigrants. The protestors included both immigrants and Americans who supported them. One of their slogans was "No Human Being Is Illegal."

The Bush administration faced growing disapproval of the war in Iraq and criticism of its immigration policy at home. Then a natural disaster struck. In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast states of Mississippi and Louisiana. The levees that protected the city of New Orleans from the Mississippi River gave way. Together, the storm and flood destroyed much of the city, killed or injured thousands of people, and left hundreds of thousands homeless.

Americans and the world were shocked when the federal government was slow and inefficient in helping survivors in the stricken city. "People around the world cannot believe what they're seeing," said an article in the *Washington Post*. "From Argentina to Zimbabwe, front-page photos of the dead and desperate in New Orleans, almost all of them poor and black, have sickened them, and shaken assumptions about American might. How can this be happening, they ask, in a nation whose

wealth and power seem almost supernatural in so many struggling corners of the world. . . International reaction has shifted in many cases from shock, sympathy and generosity to a growing criticism of the Bush administration's response to the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina."

The Katrina experience also reminded people that while millions in Africa, in Asia, and even in the Untied States were dying of malnutrition and sickness, and while natural disasters were taking huge tolls of life all over the world, the United States government was pouring its enormous wealth into war and the building of empire.

In November of 2006, Americans went to the polls to elect members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The voters had many issues on their minds. One of the most important must have been the disastrous war in Iraq, and the way it was draining the nation's wealth.

When the votes were counted, the Democratic Party had taken control from the Republicans in both the House of Representatives and the Senate by a narrow margin. This didn't mean that Americans were filled with enthusiasm for the Democrats, but it did mean that they were saying "no" to the admin-

istration of George W. Bush, the Republican president. The voters had taken the power of government away from the president's party, and they had given politicians a chance to lead the country in a new direction. It was a rare democratic moment in the recent history of the nation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

"RISE LIKE LIONS"

I AM OFTEN ASKED HOW I CAME TO WRITE this book. One reason is that after twenty years of teaching history and political science, I wanted to write a different kind of history book—one that was different from the ones I had had in school, and the ones given to students across the country.

By that time, I knew that there is no such thing as a pure fact. Behind every fact that a teacher or writer presents to the world is a judgment. The judgment says, "This fact is important, and other facts, which I am leaving out, are not important." I thought that some of the things that had been left out of most history books were important.

The beginning of the Declaration of Independence says that "We the people" wrote the document. But the authors of the Declaration