



Main events in recent history

In August 1990 Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, invaded and attempted to annex Kuwait. The war against Iraq began in January 1991, with US troops forming the majority of the coalition in the 'Operation Desert Storm'. In late February, Iraq withdrew from Kuwait.

In 1992, Democratic Bill Clinton was elected President of the United States. He was re-elected in 1996. With him the USA enjoyed a long economic expansion. In 1998, he was involved in a scandal after his sexual relationship with a White House intern, Monica Lewinski.

In 1997, in the UK the Labour Party won the elections and Tony Blair became Prime Minister. In 2003, he lost support after his unpopular decision to join the USA in the invasion of Iraq. In 2007, he resigned and Gordon Brown became Prime Minister.

In ex-Yugoslavia the struggles for power and control combined with the fighting between the various ethnic groups, leading to many atrocities and ethnic cleansing. In 1999, NATO intervened with a bombing campaign against Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia in the Kosovo War.

After many years of white rule and Apartheid in South Africa black political leaders were released from jail and the political parties were made legal, the most important led by Nelson Mandela.

Advances in medical research led to the first cloning of an animal, namely a sheep called Dolly.

The 1990s also saw the development of genetic engineering and the growth of GM (Genetically Modified) Foods.

In 1991, the World Wide Web first became available to the public, and by the year 2000 there were an estimated 295 million users on the Internet. Improvements in communication included mobile phone technology: at the end of the 1990s, mobile phones had become part of everyday life.

In 2000 Republican George W. Bush was elected President of the United States, and was re-elected in 2004.

On September 11, 2001, four airliners were hijacked; two of them destroyed the World Trade Center towers in New York City; another airliner crashed over the Pentagon, while the fourth crashed in Southern Pennsylvania. The victims were almost 3,000: it was the worst terrorist attack in American history. Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist group declared themselves responsible for the attacks and President Bush announced a "war on terror". One month later American troops, joined by a coalition of other countries, invaded Afghanistan.





Bush accused Saddam Hussein's Iraq of supporting terrorism and possessing mass destruction weapons. Despite the fact that the United Nations did not approve, the USA, with the support of the UK, Australia, Poland, Spain, and Italy, invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003. This caused a lot of hostility in the Muslim world. A serious global financial crisis started in the USA in 2007 and definitely broke out in October 2008, soon spreading all over the world. It has been the worst crisis since the Wall Street Crash in 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression.

On November 4, 2008, Democratic Barack Obama became the first non-white and African-American President of the USA.

On October 9, 2009, President Barack Obama was awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee said he won it for "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and co-operation between peoples". The Committee attached special importance to Obama's vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons.

On April 20, 2010, a British Petroleum deep water oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico: it was the largest oil spill in American history, killing eleven people and devastating the environment.

On March 11, 2011, a tsunami caused by an earthquake severely damaged the Fukushima nuclear power plants in Japan: it was the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl, contaminating water, soil and crops.

On May 2, 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed during an American raid on his hideout location in Pakistan.

In November 2012 American President Barrack

Obama was elected for his second term.

On March 13, 2013, Pope Francis (Argentinian) became the first non-European Pope in over 500 years.

On April 15, 2013, two bombs exploded at the Boston Marathon in a terrorist attack associated with radical Islam.

In June 2014 the rise of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) caused western nations to confront Islamic fundamentalism.

On November 13, 2015, a series of brutal attacks occurred in Paris, France, killing more than 100 people. ISIS claimed responsibility. On March 22, 2016, three coordinated nail bombings occurred in Brussels, Belgium, for which again ISIS claimed responsibility.



ACTIVITIES

1 Who are the following people mentioned in the text?

- 1 Saddam Hussein
- 2 Bill Clinton
- 3 Monica Lewinsky
- 4 Tony Blair
- 5 Gordon Brown
- 6 Slobodan Milosevic
- 7 Nelson Mandela
- 8 George W. Bush
- 9 Osama bin Laden
- 10 Barack Obama
- 11 Pope Francis

2 Read the events that characterised the 2010s and look for the following information.

1 Events concerning the environment:

- as for oil
- as for nuclear pollution

2 Events concerning terrorism:

- in the USA
- in France
- in Belgium