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## UNIT 1

### Global Issues in the Twenty-First Century: An Overview

Unit Overview

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1. **A Special Moment in History**, Bill McKibben, *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1998

The interconnected dangers of **overpopulation**, **climate change**, and **pollution** have been in the headlines for years, but doomsday has not yet arrived. Bill McKibben examines two important questions: What if we already have inflicted serious damage on the planet? What if there are only a few decades left to salvage a stable environment?

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2. **It's a Flat World, After All**, Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, April 3, 2005

Thomas Friedman is a well-known commentator who has contributed significantly to the debate about **globalization**. This article summarizes his latest book, *The World Is Flat*. He discusses a number of **technological trends** that are not only involving new participants in the global economy but also fundamentally changing the way people do business.

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3. **Can Extreme Poverty Be Eliminated?**, Jeffery D. Sachs, *Scientific American*, September 2005

One of the United Nations Millennium Project's goals was reducing by half the level of extreme **poverty** by 2015. The director of the project describes how business as usual has to be replaced with programs that address the underlying causes of poverty by improving **health**, **education**, **water**, **sanitation**, **food production**, and **roads**.

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4. **The Ideology of Development**, William Easterly, *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2007

The author critically evaluates both the **economic and political assumptions of development** theorists such as Jeffrey Sachs and Thomas Friedman. Easterly argues that the top down approach managed by international bureaucrats has done little to alleviate **poverty** while at the same time minimizing local solutions to economic challenges. This article is an excellent companion piece to other articles in this section, for it presents a distinctly different perspective.

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5. **Feminists and Fundamentalists**, Kavita Ramdas, *Current History*, March 2006

The **women's movement** had great success during the twentieth century. Today it faces a backlash. The new challenges facing women are discussed along with strategies to meet them.

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6. **Unipolar Stability**, William Wohlforth, *Harvard International Review*, Spring 2007

There is considerable speculation about the **future** of the United States' dominance of the international political system (defined as unipolarity). Some argue that the brief unipolar period between the Cold War (bipolarity) and the emergence of a multipolar **international system** is already drawing to a close. The author provides useful rules for evaluating these historic trends and examines built-in, self-reinforcing mechanisms that are resistant to change and therefore will perpetuate **unipolarity**.

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## UNIT 2

### Population and Food Production

#### Unit Overview

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7. **The Century Ahead**, Chris Wilson, *Daedalus*, Winter 2006

Rapid **population** growth was the dominant demographic trend in the twentieth century. The author argues that the twenty-first century is likely to be the century of aging. The implications of this demographic transition are examined in different regions of the world.

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8. **Africa's Restless Youth**, Michelle Gavin, *Current History*, May 2007

While much of the world's population is aging, Africa is in the midst of a **demographic youth bulge**. The **social and political consequences** of this are described.

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9. **Continuing the Green Revolution**, Norman E. Borlaug, *The Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 2007

Norman Borlaug is one of five people awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Congressional Gold Medal. In this essay, he summarizes the impact of **biotechnology** and discusses the **future** of technology and **food production**.

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10. **Bittersweet Harvest**, Honor Hsin, *Harvard International Review*, Spring 2002

In this essay, the growing debate over **genetically modified crops** is described with specific examples of both pro and con perspectives. Honor Hsin concludes that careful **scientific research** must be seriously considered in this debate rather than just **corporate interests** or public fears.

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## UNIT 3

### The Global Environment and Natural Resources

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11. **Deflating the World's Bubble Economy**, Lester R. Brown, *USA Today Magazine*, November 2003

Lester Brown is one of the leading commentators on global **environmental issues**. In this article, he argues that unless damaging trends are reversed, depleted aquifers and exhausted soils could lead to the abandonment of rich **agricultural areas**. Brown also provides case studies of a number of successful transitions to sustainable practices.

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12. **The Great Leap Backward?**, Elizabeth C. Economy, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007

China's rapid **economic growth** is resulting in deteriorating environmental conditions. These consequences are described along with the government's ambitious targets for **environmental protection** which are often ignored by local officials.

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13. **Water Is Running Out**, Moureen Lamonge, October 23, 2006

Many countries are in a state of water shortage or scarcity, and some experts forecast that **future wars** will be fought over **water**, not **oil**.

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14. **Plastic Bags Are Killing Us**, Katharine Mieszkowski, *Salon.com*, August 10, 2007

The problems with **plastic waste** and especially the ubiquitous plastic bag are described, including impacts on **marine life**. Plastic bags have been banned in some countries and efforts are underway in some U.S. cities to do the same. Plastic bags present special problems for recycling.

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15. **Cry of the Wild**, Sharon Begley, *Newsweek*, August 15, 2007

Hunting, including protected animals, is a **multimillion-dollar business**. The impact on **endangered species** is described along with efforts to protect the world's vanishing wildlife.

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# UNIT 4

## Political Economy

### Unit Overview

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#### Part A. Globalization Debate

16. **Globalization and Its Contents**, Peter Marber, *World Policy Journal*, Winter 2004/2005

The term **globalization** has different meanings for different people, often depending on their political perspective. The debate about the positive and negative impacts of this process is reviewed from a broad historical perspective. The author concludes that the evidence strongly suggests that **human prosperity** is improving as boundaries between people are lowered.

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17. **Why the World Isn't Flat**, Pankaj Ghemawat, *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2007

The concept of **globalization** has defined much of the debate about international **economic activity** for the past twenty years. The author critically examines the basic assumptions of those that argue that this trend is dominant and concludes that "the champions of globalization are describing a world that doesn't exist."

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#### Part B. General Case Studies

18. **The Lost Continent**, Moisés Naím, *Foreign Policy*, November/December 2006

The author observes that the role of **Latin America** in the world has been declining for decades. He examines the reasons for this diminished role with a special focus on **political culture**.

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19. **Political Graft: The Russian Way**, Marshall I. Goldman, *Current History*, October 2005

**Corruption** is typically an attempt by **government officials** to extort money from the **private sector**. In Russia, officials go further and take over a business for themselves.

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20. **Promises and Poverty**, Tom Knudson, *The Sacramento Bee*, September 23, 2007

Companies often market their products by boasting about what they do for the **environment**. Starbucks' eco-friendly approach is examined with a special focus on the complex story of **coffee** in East Africa.

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21. **Where the Money Went**, James S. Henry, *Across the Board*, March/April 2004

In the literature on **international economics**, little attention is devoted to **corruption** and other illegal activities. Scandals bring short-term attention to these issues, but systematic study of corruption is difficult and dangerous. The author focuses on broad structural processes that transfer wealth from **poor countries** to rich—magnifying **underdevelopment** and **debt**.

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#### Part C. Global Energy Case Studies

22. **Ensuring Energy Security**, Daniel Yergin, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006

Daniel Yergin is a leading expert on global **energy** politics. He provides a comprehensive overview of changing energy markets and U.S. national **security**. New consumers, such as India and China, have changed the supply and demand equation. Increasingly complex systems of shipping oil have further compounded the **political-economy** of global energy.

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23. **Nuclear Now!**, Peter Schwartz and Spencer Reiss, *Wired*, February 2005

The argument that nuclear power is an **environmentally friendly** alternative to **oil and coal** is presented along with a discussion of "interim storage" and the recycling of nuclear waste. Numerous references are made to the role of nuclear power in Europe and Japan, which provides an international context to the discussion.

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24. **Looking into the Sun**, David H. Freedman, *Inc.*, July 2005

**New technologies** in solar **energy** are examined in the context of energy costs and alternatives. This article serves as an excellent counterpoint to the article on nuclear power.

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## UNIT 5 Conflict

### Unit Overview

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25. **Terrorist Rivals**, Louise Richardson, *Harvard International Review*, Spring 2007

An examination of the traditional way of viewing international politics reveals an interesting conclusion: "That a country with secure borders, a formidable nuclear deterrent, and no military rivals . . . feels vulnerable, speaks to the inadequacies of the traditional formulation of the **balance of power**." In addressing the threat of **terrorism**, the author offers six principles for guiding U.S. policy in the **future**.

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26. **State of Denial**, Bob Woodward, Simon & Schuster, 2006

This excerpt from Woodward's book on the Iraq **war** provides interesting insights into the world view and **foreign policy** strategy of the Bush administration.

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27. **The Long March to Be a Superpower**, *The Economist*, August 4, 2007

The Chinese **military** is rapidly modernizing by purchasing Russian equipment and developing new missiles and other weapon systems. The capability of the People's Liberation Army to challenge the United States is assessed along with a discussion of the ability to wage asymmetrical **warfare**.

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28. **North Korea Takes on the World**, Charles K. Armstrong, *Current History*, September 2007

The **future** for Korean **denuclearization** and the normalization U.S.-North Korean relations is likely to be difficult and unpredictable.

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29. **Lifting the Veil**, Henry Munson, *Harvard International Review*, Winter 2004

This article explores the question, "Why do they hate us?" Using public opinion polls to examine attitudes in the Middle East, Professor Munson identifies two sources of **anti-American militancy**: U.S. support of Israel and a backlash to the strategy and tactics of the **war on terrorism**.

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30. **Changing Course on Nuclear Talks**, Philip E. Coyle, *The Sacramento Bee*, October 22, 2006

In the aftermath of North Korea's testing of a nuclear weapon, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense examines the potential for a **nuclear arms race** and critically examines the contradictions in U.S. foreign efforts to provide leadership in future **arms control talks**.

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31. **The Politics of Death in Darfur**, Gérard Prunier, *Current History*, May 2006

A complex mix of **tribal, ethnic, and religious cross-currents** forms the backdrop for the unfolding crisis in the **drought-prone** Darfur region of Sudan. The French author describes the national and international political maneuvering that impedes a meaningful response to this **humanitarian crisis**.

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32. **Asia's Forgotten Crisis**, Michael Green and Derek Mitchell, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007

In the past decade Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has gone from both an **anti-democratic** embarrassment and **human rights** disaster to a growing security threat to its neighbors. The lack of a coordinated response by the **international community** is described.

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33. **Men of Principle**, *The Economist*, July 21, 2007  
The **domestic politics** of Iran are described along with the internal and external pressures for change in this **geo-politically** important country. 144
34. **Banning the Bomb**, Ward Wilson, *Dissent Magazine*, Winter 2007  
The military utility of **nuclear weapons** is challenged along with doctrine that has supported their development. The author argues that nuclear weapons have no real military value and proposes that they be banned, thereby eliminating the danger of them falling into the hands of **terrorists** and unstable leaders. 148



## UNIT 6 Cooperation

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35. **Europe as a Global Player**, Hans-Gert Poettering, *Harvard International Review*, Spring 2007  
The evolution of the European Parliament is chronicled. This expansion of the **legislative power** and responsibility has resulted in significant changes in both the scope **European Union** policy and the increased integration of member countries. 154
36. **The Grameen Bank**, Muhammad Yunus, *Scientific American*, November 1999  
A small experiment, begun in Bangladesh to loan money to poor people as a way of helping them become more productive, has turned into a **major new concept in the eradication of poverty**. 157
37. **The Search for Solutions**, Mary Carmichael, *Newsweek*, October 1, 2007  
Working separately and together, inspired individuals can take on and conquer major problems, including the search for a **vaccine** to prevent **malaria**. 161
38. **Teamwork Urged on Bird Flu**, David Brown, *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2005  
The author indicates that, "Avian influenza is making the world a global village—or, more precisely, a global barnyard—in a way that demands **international cooperation** to a degree not seen previously on a **health issue**." Cooperative efforts from 100 countries are described, as efforts mount to prevent bird flu from becoming a human pandemic. 165



## UNIT 7 Values and Visions

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39. **Humanity's Common Values**, Wendell Bell, *The Futurist*, September–October 2004  
The author argues that, "there is an emerging global ethic, a set of shared values." These have evolved and now shape and constrain behavior. Specific principles are described along with behavior that supports the development of **legal and ethical norms** necessary for a positive global **future**. 168
40. **The Politics of God**, Mark Lilla, *The New York Times Magazine*, August 19, 2007  
**Institutions** created over hundreds of years establish the legitimacy of North American and Western European leaders without referring to divine command. Building these institutions defined much of Euro-centered history. The author argues that this cultural uniqueness creates difficult challenges for Europe and North America in their **foreign relations** with countries that believe in the unity of religion and politics. 174



- 41. What Lurks in its Soul?**, David A. Vise, *The Washington Post*,  
November 13, 2005  
Google's well-known user-friendly features, according to the author, hide an appetite for radical changes that will fundamentally redefine the boundaries between **people** and the way they obtain **information**. **182**
- 42. A Deeper Shade of Green**, Bill McKibben, *National Geographic*,  
August 2006  
The author observes that "Humans have never faced a civilization-scale challenge before." The concept of **environmentalism** is being redefined by the magnitude of the challenges we face. McKibben observes the "environmentalists desperately need to learn how to celebrate **community**." **185**
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