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PREFACE

Every book comes with a story that helps to explain why the author committed the time and effort to produce it. In this case, the story starts on a summer's day over a decade ago fishing with a friend in Nantucket. My friend's nephew joined us on the boat, and I asked him where he went to school. "Stanford," he told me. He was a computer science major, soon to begin his senior year. I went on to ask him a number of specific questions about what else he was studying beyond coding. Anything in economics? History? Politics? His answers revealed he had taken the minimum number of courses outside his major and those he did take had little to do with the basics. What was clear was that this intelligent young man would soon graduate from one of the best universities with little or no understanding of his own country or the world. And he would do so at a moment when the fate of his country and the world were inextricably linked and more was in flux than at any time since World War II and the years just after.

This troubled me. A search of graduation requirements at most American institutions of higher learning revealed it is possible to graduate from nearly any two- or four-year college or university in the United States, be it a community college or an Ivy League institution, without gaining even a rudimentary understanding of the world. A recent survey of over eleven hundred American colleges and universities found that only 17 percent require students to take courses in U.S. government or history, while only 3 percent require them to take coursework in

economics. Don't get me wrong. Virtually every college or university offers multiple courses in international relations or American foreign policy, many of them well taught and comprehensive in what they cover. But unless a student chooses to major in these subjects, these courses are not required for graduation—and in many cases not even then for those who do choose to major in a related area. One survey of the top American colleges and universities showed less than a third required history majors to take a single course in U.S. history or government! Core courses that all students must take are an endangered species. What most institutions require is that each student take one or more courses in various designated areas, such as the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts. In larger institutions, there may be as many as one hundred courses to choose from in each area. Thus, it can be possible to fulfill an American history requirement without learning about the American Revolution or the Civil War, or to satisfy a world history requirement without understanding World War II or the Cold War or, more fundamentally, why the world matters and how it operates. Studying a foreign language is valuable, but it is not a substitute.

In high schools, the situation is even more pronounced, in that many schools do not even offer basic courses in international relations or global issues. My purpose is not to explain how all this came to be, although I would say high schools have increasingly given short shrift to civics and social studies because of resource limitations and pressures to satisfy mandates related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, also known as STEM. Another explanation is the difficulty in reaching agreement as to what should be taught.

The reluctance of institutions of higher learning to assert what they believe a graduate should know and have under his or her belt is an unfortunate development. It would be far

better if they would do so, and individuals could then choose to go to the school whose requirements best met their interests and objectives.

And then there is the fact that approximately one-third of Americans who graduate from high school do not attend any college and that only some 40 percent who do achieve a degree. All this, however, is a conversation for another day. What matters here and now is that an increasing number of young people in the United States and elsewhere are essentially uninformed about the world they are entering.

That said, this book is for men and women of all ages. Many of us who attended college did not focus on these issues, or even if we did study them, we forgot much of what we were taught. What's more, what people of my generation learned decades ago is increasingly inadequate or even obsolete. A great deal of history has transpired in recent years. The Cold War, which was accepted as a permanent given when I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s and defined the world for the four decades after World War II, is over, as is the Soviet Union. China is a world power. New technologies and issues, from the internet and artificial intelligence to climate change, have emerged. The time has come to stop thinking of an education as something we receive in our youth, finish by the time we are in our early to mid-twenties, and live off for the next fifty years. We need to regularly top off our intellectual tank as we drive down the proverbial highway of life.

My aim in this book is to provide the basics of what you need to know about the world, to make you more globally literate. "Global literacy" as used here is not about the number of people around the world able to read. (In case you are interested, though, it turns out that some 85 percent of adults worldwide are able to read, a number that sounds better than it is because it still means 750 million men and women cannot.)

Rather, global literacy for our purposes has everything to do with how much (or little) people know about and understand the world. Global literacy is essential, because we live in a time in which what goes on outside a country matters a great deal. Borders are not impermeable. The United States is bordered by two oceans, but oceans are not moats. For better and for worse, the so-called Vegas rule—what happens there stays there—does not apply in today's global world.

The World is designed to help you build a foundation to better navigate the headlines and filter the flood of news coming at us all. One objective is that readers will become less vulnerable to being misled by politicians with partisan agendas and by others claiming to be authorities when in fact they are not. All of us make decisions and voice opinions—be it as voters, students, teachers, parents, friends, consumers, or investors—that affect the country's (and hence our own) relationship with the world. With a better understanding of the world and the challenges that await, you will be a more informed citizen, one better able to hold your elected representatives to account and to arrive at sound independent judgments.

Just think about some of the questions that connect to the headlines. Is free trade something to support or oppose? Are tariffs a good idea? Should the United States attack North Korea and Iran, live with their nuclear programs, or negotiate? To what extent and at what cost should the United States or any country try to promote democracy and human rights and prevent genocide? How real is climate change, and what should be done about it? Should I volunteer for the armed forces or go to work for an international agency or nongovernmental organization (NGO)? Is it patriotic to buy goods produced in my own country and not elsewhere even if it is more expensive to do so or the quality is not as good? What precautions are worth

taking against pandemic disease or terrorism? What do we owe refugees and others who want to enter our country? Are China and the United States bound to become enemies and enter into a relationship reminiscent of what existed between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War?

There is no limit to the number of questions that could be raised dealing with the world where the answers could have profound consequences for our lives. We exist in a moment when history is being made. The fact that we describe the present in terms of the past—for instance, that we live in the post–Cold War world—tells us where we have been, not where we are heading. The tectonic plates of international relations are moving. History did not end with the Soviet Union's collapse. This is a critical time to understand what is taking place in the world, why it is taking place, and how it will affect our lives.

A second reason for knowing about the world is that every country, and the United States in particular given its large role and responsibilities, requires citizens who are familiar with the world and can operate successfully overseas. These men and women can literally be a country's foot soldiers, or they can be involved in the worlds of diplomacy, intelligence, law enforcement, foreign aid, and homeland security. Such opportunities need not be limited to government. We are also talking about journalists, academics, and businesspeople as well as those who opt to work for one of the many NGOs involved in promoting education, health, or development.

A third rationale for global literacy stems from economic self-interest. Take the case of the United States, which accounts for only one out of twenty people in the world. While the U.S. share of global economic output is a considerably higher percentage (on the order of 25 percent), this number is coming down. Every other country accounts for a smaller share of

global output, and every other country except China and India constitutes an even smaller percentage of the world's population. Understanding foreign markets is one requirement for remaining competitive, and knowing what is going on elsewhere is essential to all kinds of business and investment decisions.

Americans arguably have an additional reason to become globally literate, in that the United States has played a leading role in the world for the past three-quarters of a century. The United States has been the world's principal architect as well as its general contractor. What the country chooses to do (and not to do) in the future will have an enormous impact on others and on the world at large, which in turn will have a large impact on what goes on within the United States itself.

Notwithstanding the case for Americans becoming more knowledgeable about the world, I have endeavored to write these pages in a manner that makes them equally relevant to those from other countries. American foreign policy is uniquely American, but the world it seeks to shape is not.

The World focuses on the ideas, issues, and institutions essential for a basic understanding of the world. I also shed light on each region of the world, the major powers, the challenges associated with globalization, and the most relevant history. The book may not seem all that brief, but virtually every chapter, and in many cases parts of chapters, could sustain a book by itself. What survives includes little of the theory central to most textbooks written for introductory courses in this area for the simple reason that much of the theory that dominates the academic study of the field is too abstract and too far removed from what is happening to be of value to most of us.

If there is a parallel to what is provided here, it is the study of language. This book will not make you "fluent" in

international relations, but it will make you conversant, able to make sense of developments in the world and proposals to shape them. Although the day-to-day details of what is going on will inevitably change, much of what is discussed in the coming chapters will remain relevant. The book is thus envisioned as something evergreen that will remain useful even as history continues to unfold, as it inevitably will.

The book is divided into four sections. The first emphasizes history and is global in scope. Chapters are devoted to what is essential to know about the period of several hundred years leading up to World War I, the three decades from World War I to the end of World War II, the four-plus decades of the Cold War, and the current period. History, Mark Twain is alleged to have said, does not repeat itself, but it rhymes. We need to learn history's lessons to increase the odds that the future will improve upon the past.

The second section of the book begins with an introduction to the world writ large and includes chapters on the six principal regions of the world: Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Americas. Each chapter examines the importance of the region, provides its core history, and explains its dynamics.

The third and longest section of the book addresses global challenges, including climate change, terrorism, cybersecurity, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and trade. Depending on how well these challenges are managed, they can be a source of disorder or stability. This requires examining global governance in each of these realms. Just to be clear, global governance (which is really a fancy name for international cooperation) is not to be confused with global government, the notion of a single international entity or authority that has more power than individual governments. Such an authority does not exist and most likely never will.

A fourth and final section deals with world order, the most basic concept of international relations, as well as what brings it about and what threatens it. This part of the book delves into some of the principal sources of stability in the world, including the notion and reality of sovereignty, deterrence, the balance of power, alliances and less formal coalitions, and the role of international organizations, democracy, trade, and international law. It also assesses disorder in the world and ends with a discussion of what all this means for the current international era.

The notes that begin on this page are extensive. They include not just details as to sources used for this book, but also suggestions for further reading. In addition, there is a short discussion titled "Where to Go for More" that begins on this page and covers the many ways interested readers can follow up this book and keep up with what is going on in the world.

The World can be read from start to finish, or it can be read in bits. I imagine some readers might want to begin with the last section, on world order, and work backward. Whatever route you decide to take, my goal is that you finish the book with a better grasp of how the world we live in came to be, how it works, and why it matters.

Part I

THE ESSENTIAL HISTORY

History can help explain who we are as a people, a society, or a country, where we are, and how we got here. It can also help us understand others by providing context and perspective while increasing understanding.

History also has a practical side. It can provide lessons. While it is true that no two situations are exactly alike in every detail, there are patterns. George Santayana, a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writer, went so far as to suggest, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

As you would expect, there is an almost unlimited amount of history that could be mined to provide background for anyone seeking to gain a better understanding of the world. In an attempt to provide history that is useful but manageable in scale, I deal with what is widely understood to constitute the modern international era, that is, the history that starts in the seventeenth century.

This start date is not arbitrary. The Thirty Years' War, a conflict that involved much of Europe and that had both political and religious dimensions, ended in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia, a peace agreement that is widely viewed as heralding the rise of the modern international system, one with sovereign countries accepting one another's independence and respecting the boundaries separating them.

There is admittedly a European bias in all this. There is, however, a logic behind it. In this era, Europe had an outsized role in and influence over other parts of the world, and the norms embodied in the Treaty of Westphalia continue to provide the foundation of international relations throughout the world. In fact, some of the countries (China comes to mind)

that are the most "Westphalian" now and hold the most traditional views of sovereignty can be found outside Europe.

The history presented here is divided into four periods. The first covers the longest period, roughly three hundred years from the early seventeenth century to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In addition to the rise of the modern international state system, this period spans the colonial period, the demise of several empires, the opening of Japan and the creation of Germany, the American Civil War and the subsequent rise of the United States as a great power, and the emergence of technologies that revolutionized manufacturing, transportation, and warfare.

The second period focuses on roughly three decades, from 1914 through 1945, the deadliest years in all of history. It is bookended by the two prolonged and costly world wars that dominated the first half of the twentieth century. It also includes the establishment and subsequent failure of the League of Nations, the Great Depression, the rise of nationalism and fascism, and the many errors of foreign policy and diplomacy that contributed to the outbreak of world war for the second time in a single century.

The third section is devoted to the Cold War, the four-decade period following the end of World War II that was dominated by the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. It looks at why the Cold War broke out, why it stayed cold, and why it ended when and how it did.

The fourth and final history chapter assesses the post–Cold War period. It began in 1989, and three decades later is still where we find ourselves. At some point, this era will better define itself and earn a new name. Too much is unsettled and uncertain for us to know what will emerge and how it will appear in the eye of the historian. Again, though, it is essential

to know how this era has unfolded to this point if we are to grasp where we stand.

From the Thirty Years' War to the Outbreak of World War I (1618–1914)

The modern international system has its roots in seventeenth-century Europe. This continent was the center of the world because it had harnessed new technologies that proved critical to producing goods and crops and to transportation, publishing, and fighting wars. As is often the case, transition was marked by conflict.

The critical event was the Thirty Years' War, a war that began in 1618, contained both political and religious dimensions, and was fought both within and across borders by many of the major European powers of the era. Until then Europe was made up of a patchwork quilt of empires and small kingdoms. Religious and political authorities regularly confronted one another over territory and power. Borders were not respected; wars and lower-level forms of meddling were commonplace.

When the dust settled, countries emerged as an alternative to empires and principalities. Empires were often ruled from afar, which did not engender loyalty in citizens, and their large size made them inefficient to govern. Small principalities, in contrast, lacked the scale needed to compete for foreign markets or pool the resources necessary to wage war effectively. People proved more willing to devote themselves to governments they saw as their own. The emergence of a world composed of independent countries that respected one another's independence turned out to be a major innovation,

one that introduced a greater degree of stability and peace but also created a capacity to make war on a level never before seen.

The Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648, codified this new understanding. The treaty in many ways established the modern international system, one dominated by countries and the principle of sovereignty. The concept of sovereignty had three basic dimensions. First, countries should accept the borders of other countries and not use force in an attempt to change them. Second, countries should not interfere in events inside other countries. Third, governments should have a free hand to do as they please within their own borders. These three notions may not seem to amount to all that much, but they represented a major step

forward, one that if honored would have dramatically reduced the instability and violence that had become relatively commonplace in the world.

European nations, however, often violated the sovereignty of their neighbors, which explains, in part, why the history of this continent has been so violent and destructive. The Treaty of Westphalia did, however, introduce a period of relative peace. Europe did not descend into another major war or, to be more precise, a series of wars until the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, the brilliant, ambitious French general turned politician turned emperor. He came to power following a revolution in France that—like most revolutions—ended in excess and disorder. After a number of military victories that gave him control of much of Europe, Napoleon became overextended, electing to fight too many foes on too many fronts, and was finally defeated by a coalition that included Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom. The victors and the vanquished (minus Napoleon) came together in Vienna in 1814 and 1815 and created a settlement designed to prevent France from threatening its neighbors and to make it more difficult for revolutionary movements to overthrow the unelected governments of the day. The Congress of Vienna also made the wise choice of integrating a defeated France into the new order rather than penalizing and ostracizing it and potentially sowing the seeds of a France that would one day rise and try to overthrow the order.

The Congress of Vienna produced what became known as the Concert of Europe, a name that suggests the diplomatic equivalent of an orchestra of musicians playing together. This system was centered on Europe, but it nonetheless constituted much of the international order of its day given the dominant position of Europe and Europeans in the world at the start of the nineteenth century. In fact, by the middle of the nineteenth

century, Western Europe accounted for roughly one-third of global economic output, eclipsing China and India and maintaining a substantial lead over the United States. The Concert put into practice understandings that were at the core of the Treaty of Westphalia, above all ruling out invasion of another member country or any involvement in the internal affairs of another participant in the Concert without its permission. The Concert had a decidedly conservative bias, meaning that it favored the continued rule of existing dynasties and opposed revolutionary impulses. Beyond the obvious self-interest of rulers, what also allowed the arrangement to hold for as long as it did was the balance of military power in Europe that made it unattractive for any individual country to go against its principles.

The Concert technically lasted until the eve of World War I, but it ceased to play a meaningful role decades before then. It is a matter of judgment as to when it effectively ended, but I would argue for the middle of the nineteenth century, when most of the major powers had a falling-out with Russia over Crimea. This was an early conflict over who would come to control lands then part of the declining Ottoman Empire. It was followed by wars between Prussia (the principal forerunner of modern Germany) and both Austria and France. As will be discussed below, what remained of the Concert could not survive the rise of Germany, which was unified under the Prussian minister president Otto von Bismarck in 1871 and under his successors disrupted European stability.

BEYOND EUROPE

It would be an error to limit a review of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history to Europe, even though Europe was the part of the world where the most powerful and influential

entities of this era were to be found. A great deal of the world—parts of the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, the Americas, and East Asia—was colonized, mostly by European countries (principally Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain, and to a lesser extent Germany and Italy), but also by Japan and the United States. The principal motive was economic, although matters of national pride and the pursuit of glory were not far behind.

For China, the nineteenth century began well enough; its economy was relatively large, in part because of profitable trading relations with the British and others. But the century proved to be anything but glorious. It was a time that came to be marked by unimaginative imperial rule, internal challenges to central authority, and foreign aggression against China, including the Opium Wars, in which Britain forced China to participate in an opium trade that China wanted no part of given the effect of the drug on its citizens. These conflicts were followed by a series of incursions into China on the part of Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia, which in turn set off a scramble among these powers for economic concessions from China, which had fallen far behind the European powers economically, administratively, and militarily. This reality would not change until well into the second half of the twentieth century.

The period beginning with the Opium Wars and ending with Mao Zedong's proclamation of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 has become known to the Chinese as the "century of humiliation" and continues to shape how China's citizens view the world. China's current government argues that a China in internal disarray invites aggression from foreign powers and that only a strong central government can hold China together. The Communist Party employs this argument to justify its dominance.

Japan began the nineteenth century the same way it had begun and ended the two previous centuries, largely isolated from the outside world. In 1853, the United States (a Pacific country looking for new markets) led the charge to open Japan to trade with the outside world. When American warships showed up uninvited to demand access to Japanese markets, Japan gave in because there was no way it could hold its own militarily. Like China, it was forced to make humiliating economic and legal concessions to outsiders. These concessions proved to be widely unpopular in Japan and helped trigger a successful political challenge to the ruling shogun (the general who was first among equals among fellow feudal lords). By 1868, the imperial order had been restored under the emperor Meiji.

Meiji (which means "the enlightened ruler") ruled Japan for nearly fifty years, until 1912, a period widely described as the Meiji Restoration in which the modern Japanese state was established. Unlike China, Japan followed a course parallel to what was taking place in Europe and the United States. A modern bureaucratic government and administrative apparatus was established in Tokyo to oversee the entire country. Japan implemented an industrial policy and built a modern military. It also followed the European imperial example in the last two decades of the century. While the British, French, Germans, and others were occupying or controlling large swaths of the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia, Japan was establishing control over parts of Korea, Taiwan, and China. Japan handily defeated Russia in their 1904–1905 war, marking the first time during the modern era that an Asian power was victorious over a European one. Japan, like the major European powers of the day, was caught up in a wave of nationalist pride.

In the so-called New World, there were the British colonies in North America, which by the middle of the eighteenth

century had grown increasingly frustrated over being forced to pay taxes to the British crown and having little control over their own fate. What is termed the Revolutionary War (or the American War of Independence) was in fact a war of national liberation that began in 1775. It was fought by many who hailed from Britain and elsewhere in Europe against their British overseers. It proved (after more than a few setbacks) successful, and the new country, the United States of America, declared its independence in 1776.

Even a cursory history of the United States—one that tracked the political evolution of this new democracy through the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, and the Progressive Era—would go far beyond the limits of this book. But what is relevant for our purposes is that the country would evolve into a major agricultural, industrial, trading, financial, and military power, one whose decisions and actions (and inaction) would have a major impact on the rest of the world. Indeed, the twentieth century is often dubbed the American Century for good reason, although significant American involvement in the world only became permanent starting with World War II.

THE PATH TO WORLD WAR

Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, one of the dominant features of European history was the ascension of Britain to a position of global primacy as a result of its strong economy, trade links, access to raw materials and markets through its colonies, and globe-spanning navy. This primacy arguably lasted until the mid- to late nineteenth century, when the costs of empire and war began to mount and Germany emerged as a serious rival. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Europe was a venue of both the strong and the weak.

The strong were the Germans and British and to a lesser extent the French. Germany was by far the most powerful, with a thriving and increasingly industrial economy and a population far larger than that of Britain or France. France had never quite recovered from its loss to Prussia in their 1870 war and was held back by its own political and social structures. Britain was also increasing in economic strength and in population but could not keep pace with Germany and in any event was more a sea than a land military power. The weak were the fading empires: Russia, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), and Austria-Hungary. In some ways, the outbreak of World War I can be understood as the result of the interplay between these rising and declining entities and the competition among the former as to who would prevail in the coming era.

Exactly why World War I broke out and who or what was to blame are questions that have kept a good many talented historians occupied for decades. It was a war that did not need to happen. One influential history described Europe as "sleepwalking" its way to war in 1914; I have previously called it a war of choice, but a better description might be a war of carelessness.

There is no simple cause or explanation. Wars tend to break out both for underlying reasons and for immediate ones. World War I was no exception; in the words of Liddell Hart, arguably the preeminent military historian of the war, "Fifty years were spent in the process of making Europe explosive. Five days were enough to detonate it." It is thus not enough to say the war broke out because of the assassination in Sarajevo in June 1914 of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, by a terrorist backed by Serbia, which in turn had ties to Russia. There had been similar killings before that did not trigger a conflict. Near-nonstop skirmishing between Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans did, however, play a role in

creating momentum toward war. Military mobilizations also contributed to the momentum toward war because leaders felt pressure to match what other leaders were doing lest they find themselves at a disadvantage. Diplomacy never found a way to keep up.

Poor statecraft also contributed to the alliances (such as those between Germany and Austria-Hungary or France and Russia) that were forged without thinking through their implications. Arguments that countries would not dare to disrupt the mutually enriching trade that had grown up among them proved incorrect. The fact that a rough balance of power existed also proved insufficient. Such rational considerations could not compete successfully with the rising nationalism of the era that produced a cavalier attitude that war was inevitable but not to be feared because it would lead to quick and relatively painless victory. And last but far from least, the rise of Germany must be a principal explanation for the war. The modern country that the great Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck created in the second half of the nineteenth century out of what had been literally hundreds of states and principalities became strong and ambitious, inclined to risk and aggression in the less judicious hands of those who succeeded Bismarck.

From World War I Through World War II (1914–1945)

War came in the summer of 1914. The leaders who plunged their countries into war envisioned a short contest—they famously said their soldiers would be home for the holidays—but the fighting dragged on through the fall of 1918. On one side was the Triple Entente: Britain, France, and Russia. Japan later joined them, while Russia withdrew from the war following the start of its revolution in 1917. On the other side was the Triple Alliance: Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, although Italy stayed neutral in 1914 and subsequently opted to join the Entente powers.

Despite its intimate ties to Great Britain and France, the United States attempted to sit out the war. This reflected the country's long-standing avoidance of discretionary involvement abroad, above all getting enmeshed in what it viewed as the intractable conflicts of the old world. This tradition can be traced as far back as President George Washington, who in his farewell address of 1796 advised Americans to eschew entangling alliances and remain detached from the affairs of other nations. It was consistent, too, with the views of John Quincy Adams, who in 1821 as Secretary of State explained that the United States ". . . goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."

What brought the Americans into the war in April 1917 was the German decision to engage in unrestricted submarine warfare, in which Germany used submarines to target ships carrying American supplies to stop them from reaching Britain and France. Americans who were on board these ships lost their lives, and the public outcry in the United States was considerable. It is possible that the United States also entered the war in part owing to the publication in early 1917 of a secret diplomatic message (the so-called Zimmermann Telegram) in which Germany promised Mexico the territory of Texas and several other states in return for its entering an alliance with Germany should the United States enter the war on the other side. Whatever the explanation, the U.S. entry into the war was significant, because it was on the threshold of becoming a major power, one with a population of 100 million and a growing

economy and military. U.S. involvement in the fighting helped to tip the scales against Germany and bring about an end to the war sooner than would have been the case had it remained on the sidelines.

The war itself was the deadliest and most expensive conflict to date due to innovations such as modern railways, the telegraph, mass conscription, more powerful long-range weapons, and the use of airpower. Adding to the cost was the gradual ascendance of defense over offense; if there was an image of World War I, it was that of the trenches where so many fought and died. As many as 200,000 British forces were killed or wounded in a single campaign in which the British and their allies sought unsuccessfully to seize the Gallipoli peninsula from the Ottomans. (This campaign nearly ended the political career of a young government minister by the name of Winston Churchill.) The use of chemical weapons only added to the human cost of the war. The gap between the naive, even optimistic expectation of what war would bring and the horrific reality was and is breathtaking. The poetry of Wilfred Owen —"Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots, / But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind; / Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots / Of gas-shells dropping softly behind"—captures this contrast as well as any history book.

The war's cost was immense and horrific: some nine million soldiers lost their lives. Another twenty-one million were wounded. Civilian deaths numbered in the millions or even tens of millions if those who succumbed to infectious disease made worse by the war are counted. All this was at a time when the world's population was on the order of 1.5 billion, roughly one-fifth of what it is today. You would need to multiply each of these statistics by five in order to come up with a figure that would represent proportionate costs were an event of this magnitude to happen now.

It was thus a war that was costly for combatants and civilians alike. Adding insult to injury, it was a war that resolved little. World War I and its aftermath sowed many of the seeds for the second great war of the century that came merely two decades later. It is one of history's ironies and tragedies that "The Great War" and "The War to End All Wars," as World War I was dubbed, turned out to be but a prelude to another, even greater war.

THE END OF WAR AND THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

Interestingly, there was more than a little optimism in the wake of World War I, and diplomatic efforts to shape what was to be the postwar world began while fighting was still under way. Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth president of the United States, prioritized the creation of a standing international organization (which became the League of Nations) that he believed would all but preclude such a war from ever happening again by eliminating what would cause countries to go to war. This was the last of his Fourteen Points, first articulated in a speech to Congress in January 1918.

President Wilson's points were for the most part generous and idealistic. He wanted all diplomatic agreements not just to be made public but also, when possible, to be negotiated in the open. There was to be freedom of navigation at sea at all times. Trade barriers were to come down. Armaments were to be collectively reduced through what we today would call arms control. Colonial arrangements would be adjusted so that the claims of the people being governed would be equal to the claims of the colonial government. (This principle of giving more voice to those governed grew into what became known as the right of self-determination.) Borders throughout Europe

maintain their colonial holdings supportive of the new League of Nations.

World War I toppled four empires, and with President Wilson's promotion of self-determination nationalism asserted itself throughout the world. Nationalism in its most basic form has to do with populations in a particular area coming to see themselves as sharing a distinct identity, the result of a common history, language, religion, ethnicity, and/or set of political beliefs. Nationalism often gains momentum when people are ruled by those they consider outsiders. Frustrated with their status as subjects or a colony, populations desire to rule themselves, to be independent, to enjoy religious freedoms and speak in their native language and shape their own destiny.

President Wilson returned home to the United States from France in mid-1919. He went on a whirlwind trip around the country in a futile effort to translate domestic political support for the League into persuading a majority of senators to vote for it. Working against Wilson were both isolationists, who did not want the United States involved in the world to any significant degree, and unilateralists, who wanted the United States to retain a free hand and not be constrained by commitments to the League. The exhausted president returned to Washington, only to suffer a stroke. Weeks later, in November 1919, the Senate defeated the proposed treaty that would have led to the United States becoming a founding member of the new organization.

The League of Nations—which was created, in part, to peacefully settle disputes that might arise between countries—never recovered from the failure of the United States to join. It also suffered from a requirement for unanimity before collective action could be taken and an inability to enforce its decisions. The truth, though, is the League failed less because of its structural shortcomings than from the fundamental reality

that the countries at its core, above all Britain and France, lacked the will and the means to act on behalf of its principles. At this moment in history, the United States, Great Britain, and France were more committed to pacifism than they were to building and maintaining an international order. The Europeans were depleted after World War I, while the United States was determined to avoid being embroiled in Europe's conflicts.

THE PATH TO WAR (AGAIN)

Nothing captured the empty idealism of the age so much as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which was initially signed by fifteen countries in 1928 and eventually included 62 signatories. The parties committed not to resort to war to settle disputes among them. It was less an act of serious foreign policy than an alternative to it—a high-minded statement without teeth. Interestingly, among the original signatories were Germany, Japan, and Italy, the three countries most responsible for triggering World War II a decade later.

Meanwhile, the major countries were fast coming undone from within. Germany for its part established a parliamentary democracy (known as the Weimar Republic) in the aftermath of World War I. The country labored under the weight of a lack of democratic experience, reparations, and hyperinflation that destroyed the value of its currency and much of Germany's middle class with it. Internal stability began to break down.

Politics everywhere were affected by the Great Depression that began in 1929. A lack of prudent regulation and reckless speculation combined to bring about a stock market crash in the United States. The crash in turn left many individuals and businesses unable to pay their debts. American gross domestic product (GDP) fell sharply, unemployment soared, and banks

failed. The Federal Reserve's response was inadequate, as it did not take sufficient measures to stimulate the American economy. In addition, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which imposed tariffs to discourage imports, led other countries to retaliate in kind and is seen by many observers as having deepened the Depression everywhere by reducing international trade. One school of thought is that significant economic ties, known as economic interdependence, make war too disruptive and hence too costly to contemplate. By decreasing these economic linkages, protectionist trade policies reduced the cost of going to war and thereby increased its likelihood.

In Germany, the Depression was the final nail in the coffin of the Weimar Republic. Germany needed loans to pay its reparations, but once the Depression hit, its funding dried up and hyperinflation ensued as the government printed more money in a desperate effort to come up with the funds to repay what it owed. The collapse of the Weimar Republic was a textbook case of what happens when democracy and capitalism fail; angry, desperate people became willing to go along with a suspension of the most basic civil liberties in the hope that order and prosperity would be restored. Parties and politicians embracing fascism—a philosophy animated by extreme nationalism that called for government control of virtually all aspects of political and economic life—gained ground in Germany, Italy, Austria, and Japan. By 1932, the Nazi Party had become the largest party in the German parliament; a year later, Adolf Hitler became chancellor. He quickly consolidated power, dismantled democratic protections, formalized harsh discrimination against Jews and others, and began rearming Germany. Hitler broke through the military constraints set by the Versailles Treaty. The absence of a French or British response taught Hitler the dangerous lesson that he could assert German rights as he saw them with little to fear.

Nations presaged a retreat into isolationism, which gained traction in America during the two decades between the two world wars. Making matters worse was a simultaneous embrace of protectionism that weakened economies and democracies around the world along with a decline in U.S. military readiness. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the U.S. president from 1933 to nearly the end of World War II in 1945, encountered political resistance when he attempted to provide help to the Allies facing Germany, because a good many Americans feared doing so would get the United States dragged into European fighting. (The isolationist movement went by the name of America First. One of its principal representatives was Charles Lindbergh, whose solo flight across the Atlantic had made him a public hero.) The opposition to Roosevelt signaled to German and Japanese leaders that they could invade others with a degree of impunity. A balance of power requires both military capability and the political will to use it, and during the 1930s the United States possessed neither. The public and many of its elected representatives failed to appreciate how American economic and physical security was tied to events in Europe and Asia.

The European Allies also share some of the blame. As is often the case in history, it was not what the major European countries did as much as what they chose not to do. The lack of military preparation, the embrace of symbolic but toothless international pacts, the appeasement of German acts of aggression throughout the 1930s—all set the stage for World War II.

In the end, it took the Japanese attack on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, to bring the United States into the war. Given the alliance among Japan, Germany, and Italy, the U.S. declaration of war on Japan quickly translated into mutual declarations of war. By then,

Both were transformed into robust democracies through occupations that can best be described as farsighted and benign. Both were integrated into regional and global economic, political, and security arrangements.

We can debate how much of this was because of lessons learned and how much was because of the need to enlist them as partners into what would become the Cold War. But what can be said with confidence is that the seeds of the Cold War were not sown during World War II in the way that World War II can be traced back to World War I. The Cold War was the result of its own dynamic, one that grew out of the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union with their fundamentally different political and economic systems, opposing ideologies, and no less different global interests and ambitions.

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