

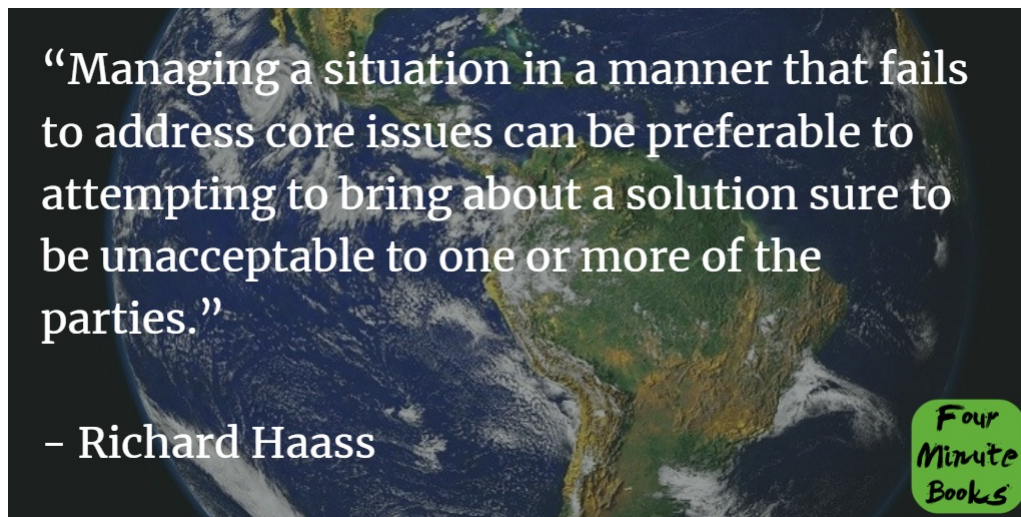
A World In Disarray Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *A World In Disarray* opens your mind to ways that you make the world more peaceful by guiding you through the major changes in global affairs since World War II.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Do you feel like the world is a pretty peaceful place right now? Depending on what country you are in, your answer might vary. Residing in the United States, I feel pretty safe here, but not all have that luxury.

It seems that everywhere you turn there's conflict and fighting of all kinds, political and military. Although we haven't had a major world war in a while, recent events might make us worry that another one is just around the corner. Everything seems to be in chaos.

That's what Richard Haass discusses in his *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*. This book taught me some chances we have to make our world more peaceful, and I believe it can do the same for you. Hopefully one day the idea of world peace is more of a reality than just an answer in a beauty pageant.

Here are the 3 most interesting lessons I got out of this book:

1. Things have been relatively peaceful since World War II because of power balances, nuclear weapons, and economic agreements.
2. New policies concerning intervention in international events were born when the world stood by during the tragedies in Rwanda.

3. The three major superpowers must thrive and cooperate if we want to have a peaceful world.

Let's dive right in to see how our world has gotten into such disarray!

Lesson 1: Economic agreements, nuclear weapons, and power balances have all made for a relatively peaceful order after World War II.

It seems like not much conflict came up once World War II was over. That wasn't an accident though. A harmony between global leaders and balance of their powers was the start of it.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for example established an alliance between European nations and North American countries. The purpose for this was to unify military efforts. It set the standard that if any of the nations involved were attacked, they all considered themselves attacked. This made other countries less likely to go to war with any NATO nation.

What's more, the US set up the Marshall Plan to support Western Europe to help them against the growing Soviet Union. When West Berlin was blockaded by the Soviets, no fights broke out. Instead, Western nations sent supply drops into the city.

As economic interests increased after the war, countries also wanted a way to unite on this also. The *Bretton Woods* system was born to unite world currency, setting the dollar as the standard by which they would measure everything else. It also set in motion a plan so gold would back up all paper money.

Possibly the best deterrent against war though is nuclear weapons. The nations that had them knew the destructive power they had and didn't want to lay waste to much of the world. This made them a lot less likely to engage in any sort of altercation.

Lesson 2: The international intervention policies that came as a result of Rwandan tragedies are important but difficult to implement.

All seemed well within the allied nations, but outside there was still work to do. The African nation of Rwanda, for example, saw some rough times without any help from the outside.

The Hutu and Tutsi tribes' conflict came to a head in 1994 when almost a million Tutsi were killed. Sadly, the world's superpowers sat idly by, failing to help out. The power to save hundreds of thousands of people with little military effort was in the hands of other nations who did nothing.

This tragedy led to a dramatic change in international relations. The United Nations establishment of the *responsibility to protect* is just one example. **This creed states that sovereign countries are responsible for safety from war crimes and genocide.** If a nation fails to protect its citizens or commits these crimes itself, others can intervene to help. And with military power, if necessary.

This innovative new idea changed things. It made it possible for a country to invade another, even in cases where that nation hadn't committed crimes against others. Such a power is helpful, but the application of it is difficult.

Take Syria's civil war, for example. When the majority Sunni Muslim citizens rebelled against the smaller government, things got violent. Many Syrians died in the conflict and millions of others had to emigrate. And all of this while the rest of the world stood idly by doing nothing.

Lesson 3: A peaceful world requires that all three of the big superpowers are thriving and cooperating.

Does the growth of other nations worry you? Perhaps you're afraid about Russia's looming expansion into Ukraine. Or maybe you're anxious about China overcoming territories in the South Seas. The truth is, there isn't any evidence that these countries intention is to expand like that.

Because of this, it's imperative that Western nations like the US work to unify with these countries. We can work together for everyone's benefit. Some of these connections can have dramatic effects on the stability of the new world order.

In the Cold War era, most nations wanted only that which would benefit them. **But today, we don't need to worry so much about that. In reality, what benefits us is if we all learn to cooperate as often as we can, regardless of how much it might benefit our nation alone.** That might mean the US needs to restrain itself when opportunities to intervene arise, but it's worth it.

Most of all, it's in everyone's best economic interest to work together. If China and Russia get the opportunity to expand their chain of bilateral agreements, a stronger world economy could result.

For that reason, the US should avoid intervening in these affairs to allow the greatest opportunity for economic growth. Our best scenario for a prosperous world for all is one where each of the three superpowers is flourishing and content.

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A World In Disarray Review

A World In Disarray had some interesting lessons, but it wasn't my favorite. It seems odd that it identifies some policies which, to me, seem like they're a good groundwork for a world not in disarray only if leaders followed them. Either way, this is an important topic to understand if we all want to work toward unifying our world.

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Who would I recommend the A World In Disarray summary to?

The 23-year-old political science major with an interest in international relations, the 46-year-old history buff who wants to learn more about foreign policy, and anyone who is curious to discover what's made our world so chaotic so they can find ways to make it more peaceful.