What's Inside

work combines a large historical perspective with a tight focus on the importance of individual leaders in shaping the strategies of the world's superpowers. Kissinger concludes that the United States must temper its historic idealism and

j Book Basics

AUTHOR

Henry Kissinger

YEAR PUBLISHED

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GENRE

History

AT A GLANCE

Diplomacy is the seminal work of world-renown historian and policy adviser Henry Kissinger (b. 1923). Kissinger's *Diplomacy* examines multiple centuries of politics to determine the structure of the international system of the 21st century. *Diplomacy* draws on Kissinger's practical experience as secretary of state of the United States (1973–77). Kissinger's

> find ways to combine its ideals with a rational assessment of American national interest and the balance of power.

ABOUT THE TITLE

The title *Diplomacy* refers to the interaction of states in the international system. U.S. statesman Henry Kissinger's simple title belies the expansive scope of his book, which covers hundreds of years of Western diplomacy. The title also hints at Kissinger's major focus on the key practitioners of diplomacy—the statesmen and diplomats who make international politics.

a Main Ideas

Constructing World Order

Although a work of history, Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy* has a very practical objective: to draw lessons from the history of international politics to aid future leaders. Kissinger argues that in every period of history the most powerful states forge rules and institutions that

govern how world politics functions—the "world order." These institutions serve to regulate power and provide legitimating ideals to justify its exercise. For much of human history world order was defined in terms of universal empires, like that of ancient China, with one powerful state ruling over all its weaker neighbors.

In Europe, however, world order evolved in a different direction, with many states maneuvering between a few "superpowers." Kissinger predicts that in the 21st century the European multistate model will now expand around the globe and that a new set of superpowers—the United States, Europe,

Russia, China, Japan, and India—will set the rules of a new world order. By recounting the history of previous world orders, Kissinger provides advice for how the new superpowers might build the world order of the future.

Realism versus Idealism

In *Diplomacy* Kissinger explains how states pursue two different types of objectives. All states have objectives determined by their material circumstances like geography, population, wealth, and power. These materially determined objectives, like security and prosperity, are generally referred to as "the national interest" (or *raison d'état*) and a policy that pursues them is called "realism" (or *Realpolitik*). Because each state has a different set of material circumstances, each state also has its own particular national interest, which is different from that of any other state.

States also have objectives that are determined by their culture and dominant ideologies. A policy that pursues cultural or ideological objectives is known as "idealism." The ideas that guide states' policies have changed significantly throughout history—the divine right of kings; liberal democracy; or socialist utopia. Unlike the national interest, which is unique to each country, states can share foreign-policy ideologies. In practice, most states will pursue a mixture of realist and idealist goals, although certain states may lean more toward their own national interest, while others may be more motivated by ideals.

Balance of Power versus Wilsonianism

Just as individual states can have "realist" or "idealist" objectives, world orders can be premised on either material power or dominant ideals. One model of world order assumes all states will be basically "realist" and will pursue their own materially determined national interest, without regard for the interests of others. When those interests clash, the outcome will ultimately be determined by the material capabilities of the states involved—a state that is more powerful will be able to better achieve its national interest. In theory, this might mean that a single powerful state could dominate all the others, but when there are multiple powerful states, they are able to counterbalance each other's capabilities. The result is an equilibrium in which each state is able to achieve *some* but not *all* of its national interest. This system for world order is known as the "balance of power."

Another model for world order begins by taking an important political idea and insisting the entire world order should be structured in accordance with this ideal. There is no single idealistic world order: a world built on the idea of natural law will promote strong monarchical rulers and deference, while one built on the idea of liberalism will promote democratic governments and rules-based interactions. In the 20th century one of the most influential universal ideals was "Wilsonianism," which promoted an American vision of liberalism and democracy. Unlike the equilibrium of the balance of power, Wilsonianism had no limiting principle, insisting the entire world should be structured like the United States. Kissinger concludes that neither approach to world order is sufficient. The strongest world orders are those that justify the balance of power on the basis of a convincing ideological framework.

Role of Statesmen

In Kissinger's account world order does not emerge automatically: rather, world order is built by the statesmen of the most powerful countries. Kissinger's interest in statesmen is twofold. As a historian, Kissinger's research focused on the leading statesmanship of 19th-century Europe: Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859), Irish statesman Lord Castlereagh (1769–1822), French emperor Napoleon III (1808–73), and chancellor of the German Empire Otto von Bismarck (1815–98), to name a few. Kissinger then became a famous statesman himself, serving as the assistant for national security affairs and then the secretary of state under American presidents Richard Nixon (1913–94) and Gerald Ford (1913–2006). In *Diplomacy* Kissinger combines his historical and practical experiences to examine how statesmen seek to build world orders, why they succeed, and why they fail. In doing so, he seeks to extract specific lessons for future statesmen and leaders as they seek to build the new world order of the 21st century.

d In Context

Henry Kissinger begins *Diplomacy* with an overview of the international politics of the early 1990s and the challenges the United States will face in seeking to build a new world order after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Kissinger believes American leaders can learn important lessons from the efforts of previous statesmen to build world order through diplomacy.

Concert of Europe

In the early 19th century the French Empire of Napoleon I (1769–1821) nearly conquered all of Europe, overthrowing older monarchies in the name of liberalism and nationalism. A coalition of the other superpowers—Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia—came together to destroy France's armies and depose Napoleon. The victorious superpowers met at the Congress of Vienna in 1814 to build a new international order, one that would prevent major wars like those provoked by Napoleon. The international order they designed was known as the Concert of Europe. Despite many trials and difficulties, the Concert would successfully prevent another war for a century.

The key architect of the Concert was Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859). Metternich's Concert had two major pillars: power and legitimacy. Power was managed through the congress system, in which the superpowers would meet to resolve future international disputes based on the balance of power. The French specifically would be contained by the Quadruple Alliance of Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia. At the same time France would be represented at the congress meetings to ensure French interests were also represented. By maneuvering through the congress system, the superpowers would prevent any single country from becoming powerful enough to conquer the rest, as Napoleon had nearly done.

Metternich's Concert system was legitimized through the Holy Alliance among Austria, Prussia, and Russia. With France contained, Metternich realized Russia was perhaps the greatest threat to Austria's security. Fortunately, Russia and Austria also faced a common threat from liberal reformers, who wanted to replace absolute monarchies with constitutional governments like that in Britain. Metternich drew Russia and Prussia into the Holy Alliance, where each country promised to aid the other against liberal revolution. By uniting the three eastern powers in a common cause, Metternich was able to redirect Russian power away from threatening Austria to helping Austria. The common conservative legitimacy helped stabilize international relations and prevent further conflict for many years.

German Unification

For many centuries Germany was divided into many smaller principalities, whose politics were dominated by their larger neighbors in Austria, France, and Prussia. By the mid-19th century many inhabitants of Germany began to argue that all German-speaking people should be united into a single national state. German national aspirations were fulfilled by Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815–98).

Bismarck was an unlikely national hero: in the early 19th century most German nationalists were also liberal reformers, while Bismarck was a conservative monarchist. Bismarck's genius lay in recognizing that German nationalism could be harnessed to increase the power of his ruler, Prussian king William I (1797–1888). Bismarck's method for uniting Germany was to wage wars, giving the German people common enemies against which to unite. Prussia won territories back for Germany from Denmark in the Second Schleswig War of 1864. Prussian armies then turned south, destroying Austrian armies in 1866 and pushing Austria out of German politics. Finally, Bismarck provoked a war with France in 1870, in which Prussia and its German allies were quickly victorious. In 1871 the princes of Germany united in declaring William I emperor of a new united German Empire.

The unification of Germany into a single powerful state created a major dilemma for European politics, since the new German Empire had the potential power to dominate all of Europe. Having overthrown the European balance of power to create the German Empire, Bismarck spent the remainder of his career attempting to put the balance of power back together, forming a series of alliances with Austria, Russia, and Italy while trying to isolate France. Bismarck's genius at power politics prevented the

emergence of an anti-German coalition, but when he left office in 1890, his successors struggled to match his achievements.

Treaty of Versailles

The growing power of the German Empire ultimately broke the Concert of Europe and led to World War I in 1914. The conflict destroyed European civilization: by its conclusion in 1918, most of the Austrian, German, Ottoman, and Russian Empires had totally collapsed, and even the victorious allies of Britain, France, and Italy were utterly spent. The biggest winner of the conflict was the United States, which entered the war late and carried its allies to victory with its expansive resources. The allied leaders met in Paris in 1919 to produce a new postwar settlement.

The leading figure of the Paris Peace Conference was American president Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). Wilson was an American idealist, who believed the best way to prevent another war was to rebuild the international system in America's image: democracy, national self-determination, and rule of law. Wilson's major objective was to found a new League of Nations, an international organization based on American ideals that would join together to prevent further war. Wilson ran into opposition from British and French leaders, who were more concerned with punishing Germany for the war and preventing further German aggression.

The Treaty of Versailles was a compromise between Wilson and his allies. Wilson got his League of Nations to secure future world order, and British and French leaders weakened Germany by forcing it to disarm, pay reparations, and hand over territories to the new states of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Unfortunately, the compromise pleased no one. The U.S. Senate refused to ratify the league, and the United States instead withdrew into isolationism. German leaders resented the harsh penalties placed upon them and sought to undermine the treaty at every opportunity. Britain and France, weakened by war and abandoned by the United States, struggled to hold the Versailles system together. By the 1930s Germany had regained much of its former power and began attacking its neighbors to regain lost territory. Britain and France went to war again with Germany in 1939, sparking World War II (1939–45).

The Cold War

The United States and the Soviet Union had been allied against Germany and Japan during World War II, but when the war ended American and Soviet leaders quickly fell into dispute over how to build the postwar world order. As they had after World War I, American leaders sought to build a new world order based on democracy, national self-determination, and rule of law. Soviet leaders remained dedicated to bringing about a global communist revolution, and expanding Soviet power to prevent the capitalists from launching another invasion of Soviet territory. Recognizing that Soviet power threatened their new world order, American leaders opted to contain the Soviets, surrounding the Soviet Union with a network of military bases and allies designed to prevent further Soviet expansion. The long-running conflict between American and Soviet world orders was known as the Cold War (1947–91).

Although initially focused on Europe, the Cold War quickly took on a global dimension. The British and French empires, weakened by the world wars, quickly decolonized, as their former colonies were replaced by newly independent nation states across Africa and Asia. The competition between the American capitalist and Soviet communist worlds spread to the newly decolonized countries, as each side tried to win further allies. While the United States and the Soviet Union never fought a direct war with each other, their parallel quests to demonstrate the superiority of their ideologies led to repeated armed conflicts, as the United States fought against local communists in Korea (1950–53) and Vietnam (1954–75), while the Soviets fought against local reformers in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979–89).

Both superpowers suffered setbacks, but the weaknesses of the Soviet communist system meant it was increasingly unable to match the United States in economic performance or military power. By the mid-1980s Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931) recognized that to survive, the Soviet Union would need to reform and end the Cold War. Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan and Eastern Europe, leaving the United States and its allies triumphant. Gorbachev's attempts at domestic reform set off a revolution that tore the Soviet Union apart. By December 1991 the United States stood as the world's only remaining superpower.

a Author Biography

Early Training in Politics

Henry Kissinger was born on May 27, 1923, to Louis Kissinger and Paula Stern Kissinger, a German Jewish couple. Fleeing Nazi persecution, Kissinger's family immigrated to New York City in 1938. At age 19 Kissinger was drafted into the United States Army and served in the 84th Infantry Division during the American invasion of Germany in 1945. Assigned to military intelligence, Kissinger served as a special agent for denazification (act of getting rid of Nazism and its influence). Returning to the United States, Kissinger earned a PhD in history from Harvard University in 1954. His first book, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (1957), detailed the efforts of Austrian statesman Prince Metternich (1773–1859) and Irish statesman Viscount Castlereagh (1769–1822) to rebuild the international order following the Napoleonic Wars (c. 1801–15), which established French dominance over much of Europe. Much of his later historical writing focused on the diplomacy and strategy of Prussian Otto von Bismarck (1815–98), founder and first chancellor of the German Empire.

In addition to teaching at Harvard, Kissinger achieved success as a foreign-policy consultant. He was a cofounder of the Harvard Center for International Affairs. Kissinger also worked as a political consultant on European and Soviet issues for the Council on Foreign Relations; New York governor, later Vice President, Nelson Rockefeller (1908–79); President John Kennedy (1917–63); and President Lyndon Johnson (1908–73).

Nixon Administration

Kissinger joined the upcoming administration (1969–74) of President Richard Nixon (1913–94) in late 1968, serving as Nixon's assistant for national security affairs. In this role Kissinger worked closely with the president to plan and coordinate the foreign policy of the United States. Nixon placed tremendous trust in Kissinger, often dispatching him as a secret back-channel negotiator to meet directly with foreign heads of state. From 1973 to 1977 Kissinger also served as the secretary of state of the United States for Presidents Nixon and Gerald Ford (1913–2006).

Legacy

During his time in government, Kissinger was instrumental in a number of major foreign-policy successes, including:

- the 1972 Paris Peace Accords, which set the stage for American withdrawal from the Vietnam War (1954–75);
- The 1972 SALT I arms agreement, which placed limits on the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union;
- The February 1972 Beijing Summit, which began the process of normalizing American relations with mainland China;
- The 1975 Sinai Interim Agreement, which set the conditions for an eventual peace treaty between Israel and Egypt; and
- The 1975 Helsinki Accords, which established important international precedent for the observation of human rights.

Kissinger has received numerous honors for his service to the United States, including the Nobel Peace Prize (1973), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1977), and the Medal of Liberty (1986).

After leaving government, Kissinger remained one of the foremost commentators on international affairs. In his capacity as a political consultant, Kissinger advised American presidents and contributed to Track Two Diplomacy (unofficial or casual interaction) between the United States, Europe, and China. He also remained a prodigious author: his later book, *World Order* (2014), is a sequel to *Diplomacy*.

h Key Figures

Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger is a historian who worked as a professor and political consultant at Harvard University in the 1950s. He provided advice to the John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson administrations on Europe and Vietnam. In 1969 Kissinger became national security adviser to President Richard Nixon. Kissinger was Nixon's chief negotiator with the North Vietnamese, arranging for the withdrawal of American forces

from Vietnam. Kissinger also aided Nixon in establishing a new relationship with communist China. Kissinger continued pushing for better relations with the Soviet Union and China after Nixon resigned. Since leaving government, Kissinger has remained one of the foremost foreign-policy commentators in the United States.

Woodrow Wilson

As president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson was a strong proponent of the exceptionalism of American values: democracy, capitalism, and rule-of-law. He sought to promote a world system based on international law and national self determination. At least initially, Wilson opposed becoming involved in World War I (1914–18), which he saw as a European conflict. By 1917, however, Wilson was convinced the United States needed to enter the war: by joining Britain and France, Wilson hoped to build a new postwar order based on American values. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Wilson organized the League of Nations, a new international organization in which all countries would agree to defend each other from future aggression. Many Americans disliked Wilson's promise to deploy American power to defend a new world order, preferring the United States stay home and tend to its own affairs. These "isolationists" blocked the United States from joining the League of Nations, undermining Wilson's signature accomplishment. However, Wilson's ideas about an American led international order would remain influential among American leaders across the 20th century.

Klemens von Metternich

Klemens von Metternich was an Austrian nobleman who rose to prominence in Austrian politics during the Napoleonic Wars (c. 1801–15). With Austria weakened by the wars Metternich maneuvered cleverly between the powerful British, French, and Russians, ensuring Austria ended up on the winning side. To avoid further major wars, Metternich organized the Concert of Europe, a series of agreements designed to prevent further conflict among the superpowers. Metternich's system was effective in preventing major wars for nearly a century. Metternich was also a staunch monarchist, believing in the divine right of kings to rule their kingdoms. Metternich also founded the Holy Alliance, an agreement between Austria, Prussia, and Russia to suppress any liberal reforms that might undermine monarchic rule.

Otto von Bismarck

Otto von Bismarck rose to prominence in Prussian politics as a conservative opponent of liberal nationalism. Once he became chancellor of Prussia, however, Bismarck promoted a new conservative German nationalism, designed to unite Germany's various princes under the rule of the king of Prussia. Bismarck was a genius at power politics, manipulating the other rulers of Europe to aid Prussia's rise to prominence. He orchestrated a series of wars against Denmark, Austria, and France, which gave Germany's princes common enemies against which to unite. In the end the princes of Germany proclaimed William I emperor of the new German Empire. Once the German Empire was established, Bismarck turned his genius toward keeping the peace, trying to prevent an anti-German alliance from forming. His diplomatic ploys kept France isolated while building relations with Russia, Austria, and Britain. Once Bismarck left office in 1890, however, his intricate system of alliances fell apart.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Like Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) was an international idealist, believing in the ability of American ideals to build a better world order. Roosevelt struggled against American isolationists, who insisted the United States should stay home and not be involved in world affairs. As Nazi Germany became more powerful and threatened to provoke a major war in Europe, Roosevelt began maneuvering the United States to join Britain and France in the war against Germany. Roosevelt was convinced that if Germany were not defeated, it would ultimately threaten the United States. Through his successful lobbying Roosevelt brought the United States into the war as an ally of Britain and France. The Allies won World War II (1939–45), but Roosevelt's hopes for a more peaceful and just international order were dashed. Roosevelt hoped the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China could work together to keep the peace. However, American ideals and Soviet ideals proved to be incompatible. Roosevelt died shortly after the war ended, and the United States and the Soviet Union ended up as enemies in the Cold War (1947–91).

Richard Nixon

As president of the United States, Richard Nixon promoted a more "realistic" foreign policy, based on an assessment of American national interest. Nixon still believed in promoting American ideals but worried that without a more realistic policy the United States would deplete its power and be unable to pursue those ideals. Nixon worked closely with his national security adviser Henry Kissinger to promote this policy. In the pursuit of a more realistic foreign policy, Nixon sought to negotiate with America's enemies, to constrain their international behavior. Nixon orchestrated the American withdrawal from Vietnam. He also began a series of negotiations with the Soviet Union and China, playing the two against each other to America's advantage. Nixon's foreign policy was largely successful, but he was unable to convince many Americans to follow him. The Watergate Scandal (political scandal over a break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee) led to Nixon's resignation from office. As a result, he was unable to establish his new foreign policy in the way Franklin Delano Roosevelt had.

Mikhail Gorbachev

By the time Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in 1985, the Soviet Union was in dire straits. Its economy was sluggish, its allies in Eastern Europe were restless, and its armies were mired in endless war in Afghanistan. Gorbachev realized that to save the Soviet Union, he would have to embark on a major program of reform. In foreign affairs Gorbachev did everything he could to end the Cold War, which was depleting the Soviet Union's strength. He withdrew Soviet forces from Afghanistan and Eastern Europe, even though this meant the end of Soviet allies in these regions. He negotiated new agreements with the United States and its allies to end the arms race and reduce the cost of armaments. Gorbachev's domestic reforms were less successful. He attempted to reform the Soviet government to allow the economy to be more productive, but he made many enemies among the Soviet leadership. Gorbachev's reforms were so disruptive that despite Gorbachev's best efforts the Soviet Union fell apart.

Full Key Figure List

Key Figure	Description
Henry Kissinger	German American statesman Henry Kissinger (b. 1923) is one of the foremost foreign-policy commentators of the United States. He served previously as the national security adviser and secretary of state of the United States in the Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administrations (1969–77).
Woodrow Wilson	Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) was president of the United States from 1913 to 1921. He is remembered as a proponent of "Wilsonianism," the idea that American values should inform American foreign policy.
Klemens von Metternich	Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859) was foreign minister of the Austrian Empire from 1809 to 1848. He was the chief architect of the Concert of Europe, the European international order of the 19th century.
Otto von Bismarck	Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) was the first chancellor of the German Empire from 1871 to 1890. He is remembered as the genius statesman behind the unification of Germany into a single state.
Franklin Delano Roosevelt	Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945) was president of the United States from 1933 to 1945; he was elected four times. He is widely regarded as America's leading statesman of the 20th century.
Richard Nixon	Richard Nixon (1913–94) was president of the United States from 1969 to 1974. His legacy is divided between domestic political controversy and foreign-policy successes.
Mikhail Gorbachev	Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931) was the last general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991. His reform efforts are widely credited with ending the Cold War and causing the collapse of the Soviet Union.
Alexander I	Alexander I (1777–1825) was tsar of Russia from 1801 to 1825. He was a leading member of the coalition that destroyed the First French Empire and founded the Concert of Europe.
Clement Attlee	Clement Attlee (1883–1967) was British prime minister from 1945 to 1951. He replaced Winston Churchill as Britain's representative at the Potsdam Conference in 1945.
Willy Brandt	Willy Brandt (1913–92) was chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1969 to 1974. His government pursued a policy of *Ostpolitik* which aimed at improving relations with the communist states of Eastern Europe.
Karl von Buol James Byrnes	Karl von Buol (1797–1865) succeeded Klemens von Metternich as foreign minister of the Austrian Empire from 1852 to 1859.
Lord Castlereagh	James Byrnes (1882–1972) was secretary of state of the United States from 1945 to 1947. He was one of the early advocates for "containing" Soviet power in the Cold War.
Konrad Adenauer	Lord Castlereagh (in full Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, 1769–1822) was an Irish statesman and the leading member of the coalition that destroyed the First French Empire and founded the Concert of Europe.
Neville Chamberlain	Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967) was the first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963. He is remembered for remaking Germany into a liberal democracy following World War II.

statesman and foreign minister from 1812 to 1822. Alongside Klemens von Metternich, he is remembered as one of the architects of the Concert of Europe.

Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940) was British prime minister from 1937 to 1940. He is remembered for his efforts to appease Germany in the lead up to World War II.

States from 1953 to 1961. A famed hero from World War II, he established much of the Cold War policy of the United States toward the Soviet Union.

Winston Churchill

Franz Ferdinand

Winston Churchill (1874–1965) was British prime minister from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. He is widely regarded as Britain's leading statesman of the 20th century.

John Kennedy

Farouk I (1920–1965) was king of Egypt from 1936 to 1952. A close ally of the British, Farouk was removed from power by a nationalist military coup in 1952 led by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Georges Clemenceau

Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929) was French prime minister from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1917 to 1920. He was one of the key figures at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

Nikita Khrushchev Kim Il Sung

Franz Ferdinand (1863–1914) was archduke and heir presumptive of the Austro–Hungarian Empire from 1896 to 1914. His assassination by Serbian terrorists sparked World War I.

Walter Cronkite

Walter Cronkite (1916–2009) was an American journalist. He was the most prominent television anchorman for much of the Cold War.

Gerald Ford

Gerald Ford (1913–2006) was president of the United States from 1974 to 1977. His short tenure as president was marked by increasing controversy over U.S. *détente* policy toward the Soviet Union.

Charles Dawes

Charles Dawes (1865–1951) was an American banker and statesman who served as vice president of the United States from 1925 to 1929. He was the chief architect of the Dawes Plan for German reconstruction following World War I.

Charles de Gaulle

Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970) was president of France from 1959 to 1969. He is widely regarded as France's leading statesman of the 20th century.

John Foster Dulles

Adolf Hitler Henry Jackson

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) was dictator of Germany from 1934 to 1945. His violent efforts to restore German power led to World War II.

Anthony Eden

John Foster Dulles (1888–1959) was secretary of state of the United States from 1953 to 1959. His strong anti communism shaped the foreign policy of the Dwight Eisenhower Administration.

Lyndon Johnson

Henry Jackson (1912–83) was a United States senator from 1953 to 1983. He was one of the foremost critics of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford's *détente* policy toward the Soviet Union.

Dwight Eisenhower

Anthony Eden (1897–1977) was British prime minister from 1955 to 1957. His decision to invade Egypt in 1956 provoked the Suez Crisis.

George Kennan

Lyndon Johnson (1908–1973) was president of the United States from 1963 to 1969. His decision to send American forces to South Vietnam in 1965 drew the United States deeper into the

Farouk I

Dwight Eisenhower (1890–1969) was president of the United

Vietnam War (1954–75).

George Kennan (1904–2005) was an American diplomat and historian. His writing on Soviet foreign policy led the United States to adopt a strategy of "containment" toward the Soviet Union.

John Kennedy (1917–63) was president of the United States from 1961 to 1963. He avoided major nuclear war with the Soviet Union in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and deepened American involvement in Vietnam.

Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) was first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1964. Khrushchev was an erratic leader, remembered both for his nuclear crises and his attempts at "peaceful coexistence" with the West.

Kim Il Sung (1912–94) was the ruler of North Korea from 1949 to 1994. His decision to invade South Korea in 1950 led to the Korean War (1950–53).

and Henry Kissinger negotiated the Paris Peace Accord of 1972, which ended American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Le Duc Tho

Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) was a Russian revolutionary and statesman. He is most famous for founding and leading the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1924.

Vladimir Lenin

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) was president of the United States from 1861 to 1865. He is widely regarded as America's leading statesman of the 19th century.

Abraham Lincoln

Walter Lippmann (1889–1974) was an American journalist and political commentator. He was a leading "realist" critic of American Cold War strategy.

Walter Lippmann

David Lloyd George (1863–1945) was British prime minister from 1916 to 1922. He was one of the key figures at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

David Lloyd George

Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) was an American military leader during World War II and the Korean War. His public dispute with President Truman over military strategy led to his dismissal.

Douglas MacArthur

Harold Macmillan (1894–1986) was British prime minister from 1957 to 1963. His close attention to Anglo American relations allowed him to build a "special relationship" with American leaders during the Cold War.

Harold Macmillan

Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976) was a Chinese revolutionary and statesman. He is most famous for founding and leading the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1976.

Mao Tse-tung

Le Duc Tho (1911–90) was a North Vietnamese statesman. He

George Marshall (1880–1959) was secretary of state of the United States from 1947 to 1949 and secretary of defense from 1950 to 1951. He is remembered for spearheading the Marshall Plan for European economic reconstruction.

George Marshall

Guy Mollet (1905–75) was French prime minister from 1956 to 1957. His decision to invade Egypt in 1956 provoked the Suez Crisis.

Guy Mollet

Joseph McCarthy (1908–57) was a United States senator. In the early 1950s he made unproven claims of communist infiltration in high levels of the U.S. government.

Joseph McCarthy

Vyacheslav Molotov (1890–1986) was foreign minister of the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1949 and from 1953 to 1956. He is widely remembered as Stalin's chief negotiator of the 1940s.

Vyacheslav Molotov

Benito Mussolini (1883–1945) was prime minister and then dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. He was a close ally of Nazi Germany during World War II.

Benito Mussolini

Imre Nagy (1896–1958) was Hungarian prime minister from 1953 to 1956. His attempt to steer Hungary toward a more neutral position led the Soviet Union to invade Hungary and depose Nagy's government in 1956.

Imre Nagy

Napoleon I, also called Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), was the emperor of France from 1804 to 1814. Under his leadership French armies overthrew the European balance of power and nearly united Europe under a single French Empire.

Napoleon I

Napoleon III (1808–1873) was president of France from 1848 to 1852 and emperor of France from 1852 to 1870. His erratic foreign policy helped overturn the Concert of Europe, but his defeat by Prussia in 1870 would lead to the unification of Germany.

Napoleon III

Union against each other to gain further aid for Egypt.

Gamal Abdel Nasser

Ngo Dinh Diem (1901–63) was President of South Vietnam from 1955 to 1963. He struggled to suppress South Vietnam's communist insurgency and was ultimately killed in a U.S.- backed coup.

Ngo Dinh Diem

Nicholas II (1868–1918) was the last tsar of Russia from 1894 to 1917. He led Russia into World War I and was deposed and ultimately executed by revolutionaries.

Nicholas II

Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) was president of the United States from 1981 to 1989. His administration saw major breakthroughs in U.S.-Soviet relations, leading to the end of the Cold War.

Ronald Reagan

Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946) was foreign minister of Germany from 1938 to 1945. He negotiated Nazi Germany's alliance with the Soviet Union in 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop

Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) was first minister of France from 1624 to 1642. Under his direction France pursued a strategy of *raison d'état*, inventing modern international politics.

Cardinal Richelieu

Nelson Rockefeller (1908–79) was vice president of the United States from 1974 to 1977.

Nelson Rockefeller

Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) was president of the United States from 1901 to 1909. He promoted a realist foreign policy in which the United States would maintain the global balance of power.

Theodore Roosevelt

Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–1970) was president of Egypt from 1954 to 1970. An Egyptian nationalist, he played the United States and the Soviet

Anwar Sadat

Joseph Stalin

Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929) was foreign minister of Germany from 1923 to 1929. He worked cleverly to break Germany free from its restrictions under the Treaty of Versailles.

Gustav Stresemann

Sophie, Countess von Chotek (1868–1914), was the wife of Franz Ferdinand. She and her husband were assassinated in 1914.

Sophie, Countess von Chotek

Harry Truman (1884–1972) was president of the United States from 1945 to 1953. He led the United States into the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

Harry Truman Henry Wallace

Henry Wallace (1888–1965) was vice president of the United States from 1941 to 1945. He was a leading opponent of America's Cold War strategy of containment.

William I

William I (in German *Wilhelm*, 1797–1888) was king of Prussia from 1861 to 1871 and emperor of Germany from 1871 to 1888. He worked with his chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, to unite Germany under his rule.

William II

William II (in German *Wilhelm*, also called Kaiser Wilhelm, 1859–1941) was emperor of Germany from 1888 to 1918 and grandson of William I. He led Germany into World War I and was deposed by revolutionaries in 1918.

William III

Anwar Sadat (1918–81) was president of Egypt from 1970 to 1981. He negotiated with the United States and Israel to end Egypt's decades-long conflict with the Israelis.

William III (also called William of Orange, 1650–1702) was king of England from 1689 to 1702. He led England into war with France to preserve the balance of power in Europe.

Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) was premier of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1952. A brutal dictator, he led the Soviet Union through World War II and into the Cold War.

William Pitt, the Younger

Boris Yeltsin (1931–2007) was president of Russia from 1991 to 1999. He led Russia out of the Soviet Union, precipitating its total collapse.

Boris Yeltsin Zhou Enlai

Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) was premier of the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1976. He was the chief negotiator in China's rapprochement with the United States in the early 1970s.

William Pitt, the Younger (1759–1806) was prime minister of Britain from 1783 to 1801 and from 1804 to 1806. He championed deploying British power against Napoleonic France.

invention of "international politics," in which independent states like France pursued their own national interest, or *raison d'état*. The interactions of these states were regulated by the balance of power, in which weaker states would combine to prevent stronger states from dominating the system. Kissinger details the evolution of the balance of power in Europe throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as France's near success in overturning the balance during the Napoleonic Wars (c. 1801–15).

Following the defeat of Napoleon I (1769–1821), the statesmen of Europe built a new and stabler balance of power through cooperation—the Concert of Europe, designed by Austrian Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859). Metternich's system was successful for decades but was destroyed by the rise of nationalism in Europe, and especially Prussian prime minister Otto von Bismarck's (1815–98) unification of the smaller German states into a German Empire in 1871. The rise of a powerful Germany produced a period of remarkable instability and violence, leading to two world wars in which Germany was the primary instigator. These conflicts destroyed the European balance of power and left a vacuum in which the United States and the Soviet Union rose as the world's new superpowers.

k Plot Summary

Roosevelt and Wilson

Kissinger introduces the general framework for his book by contrasting two influential American leaders of the early 20th century: Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) and Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). Roosevelt stood for a foreign policy based on the American national interest, those particular policies that advanced America's own security and prosperity. Roosevelt believed the United States should engage with the other superpowers to maintain the balance of power. Wilson advocated a foreign policy based on American values—democracy, free enterprise, self-determination. Wilson believed that if American power were harnessed to promote these goals, then universal peace could be achieved. The foreign policy of the United States in the 20th century largely followed Wilson's program. In the 21st century, however, Kissinger believes the United States will need to adopt Roosevelt's more calculating perspective.

Historical Narrative

Diplomacy's historical narrative begins with the Thirty Years' War (1618–48, a series of wars fought in Europe over religion, borders, and trade, which reconfigured the map of Europe), and the French statesman Cardinal Richelieu's (1585–1642)

The United States and the Soviet Union had been allies in World War II, but once the Germans were defeated the superpowers disagreed over how to organize the world. American presidents from Harry Truman (1884–1972) onward tried to contain the expansion of Soviet power, producing a long-running competition known as the Cold War (1947–91). Kissinger provides a detailed account of the Cold War's many episodes, based on his own experiences as a consultant and then as the secretary of state. The United States's anti communism policy led to its involvement in the Vietnam War (1954–75) , where American leaders committed hundreds of thousands of American soldiers to prevent the spread of communism to a country where America had no real interests. Despite the error in Vietnam, in the end the Soviet Union *did* collapse, much as American leaders had predicted. By the early 1990s the United States was the world's sole remaining superpower.

Future Diplomacy

Diplomacy concludes with Kissinger's reflections on the future of American foreign relations. He predicts new

superpowers—Russia, China, Japan, Europe, and India—will vie with the United States for power and influence, much as the European states did in centuries past. Kissinger warns that if the United States pursues a crusade for its universal values, it will overextend itself and fail, much as it did in Vietnam. Kissinger concludes by recommending the United States pursue a more realistic policy guided by its particular national interests.

c Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1

Summary

At the dawn of the 21st century the United States remains the world's greatest power. Americans have always built their foreign policy on the universality of their ideals, alternating between isolation from an imperfect world and crusade to take American ideals abroad. Unfortunately, the American ideal of international politics—one based on democracy, free trade, and law—is utopian (related to a perfect society). In the future American leaders will need to adapt to being one superpower among many in a new world order.

Europeans have a much more pessimistic view of international politics. The United States is the only superpower in its hemisphere, but the historical superpowers of Europe were packed into a relatively small space, creating a pervasive sense of insecurity. Faced with such divisions, European leaders have traditionally secured world order through the balance of power, ensuring no country can become so powerful it can dominate the others. For centuries balance-of-power politics permitted the states of Europe to live side by side—not always in harmony but avoiding total destruction. But the balance broke down in the early 20th century, leading to the destruction of European civilization in two brutal world wars. In the aftermath the United States rose to global prominence, eschewing the balance of power in favor of an ideological crusade against its adversary, the Soviet Union.

While during the Cold War (1947–91) the United States faced a single adversary, in the 21st century it will face multiple challenges from emerging superpowers—Europe, Russia, China, Japan, and India. America will not be able to face these challenges through an ideological crusade: rather, it will need to accept that the balance of power that once characterized European politics has expanded to encompass the globe. All the superpowers, including the United States, will need to adjust themselves to this new world order. Building the order will be difficult, because none of the emerging powers have much experience operating as one power among many. American leaders would do well to consider the lessons of past superpowers, and their efforts at building world order.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger lays out the purpose of his book early on—he is writing a new history of international politics for the explicit purpose of guiding future policymakers in their own efforts. Because the book is written for future leaders, Kissinger's analysis rests squarely on the actions of past leaders: the dilemmas they faced, the choices they made, and the consequences they suffered. Of special importance to Kissinger is the uncertainty leaders face and the judgment they are required to exercise in the face of this uncertainty. By adopting the perspective of past leaders, Kissinger believes today's leaders, who operate under similar conditions of uncertainty, can draw the most relevant lessons for today's problems.

Chapter 2

Summary

The differing strands of American foreign policy are exemplified by two American presidents from the early 20th century: Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) and Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). Roosevelt believed American foreign policy should pursue the particular national interests of the United States and engage the European superpowers in their balance of power politics. By contrast Wilson believed American foreign policy should be guided by America's universal ideals, overturning the balance of power and replacing it with a new and more transparent system of law and commerce.

Roosevelt and Wilson were products of the same American history. From its very beginning America's geographic distance from the other superpowers made it uniquely secure, able to pursue its own interests without much caring what the other powers did. The founders of the United States realized this, and they bequeathed to America a foreign policy of isolation, distancing itself from the European balance of power, preferring that America serve as an example to the rest of the world rather than an active participant. This position was formalized in the 1820s under the Monroe Doctrine, in which the United States warned the superpowers of Europe to stay out of the Western Hemisphere. By the late 19th century, however, increasing power of the United States made it impossible to remain aloof from the world's problems.

Both Roosevelt and Wilson advocated abandoning America's traditionally isolationist foreign policy in favor of greater engagement with the rest of the world. As president, Roosevelt sought to integrate the United States into traditional world politics. When World War I broke out, Roosevelt advocated siding with Britain against Germany, in the name of American national interest. The United States *did* go to war against Germany but under Wilson's command and for entirely different reasons. Unlike Roosevelt, Wilson retained America's traditional disdain for European-style politics. When he urged Americans to abandon isolation, he called upon them to join in a crusade for a new world order, built on democracy and international law. Wilson sought to embody this new world order in the League of Nations (1920–46), an international organization that would bind the superpowers together in preventing future wars. Although he would not live to see it, Wilson's ideas would nonetheless dominate American foreign policy for the remainder of the 20th century.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger uses Woodrow Wilson as the primary example of America's idealistic foreign policy, what he calls "Wilsonianism." Wilsonianism is the view that America's power is best used to try to spread American values—like democracy, capitalism, and the rule of law—abroad. It is premised on a fundamentally optimistic view of human nature: that people are generally inclined to live peacefully with one another and that only perverse forms of politics and culture divide people and promote violence. Seeing the United States as the pinnacle of peace and security, Wilsonianism argues other countries should become more like America *and* that world order should be organized in accordance with American values.

Chapter 3

Summary

Europeans did not set out to design the balance of power. Throughout the Middle Ages Europe was organized around the combined power and legitimacy of the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. By the 16th century this system was challenged by the Protestant Reformation (c. 1517–c. 1600), which undermined the legitimacy of the ruling Habsburg Dynasty and led to the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), destroying much of Central Europe in the process.

The initial architect of Europe's balance of power was Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu (1585–1642), the first minister of France from 1624 until his death. Although he was a devout Catholic, Richelieu believed the French monarchy benefited from a weakened Habsburg Empire, which would allow France to pursue its own particular objectives—what Richelieu described as the *raison d'état*. As a result, Richelieu provided support to the Protestant opponents of the Habsburgs, ensuring the Thirty Years' War ended in stalemate. In 1648 the Habsburgs concluded the Peace of Westphalia, which recognized the right of various European leaders to pursue their own policies, extending the *raison d'état* across many different polities. Richelieu's policy of dividing his enemies left France as the strongest of the new sovereign states.

Although Richelieu had been successful, his policy contained a serious contradiction—what if France's *raison d'état* conflicted with that of another sovereign state? With France as the most powerful of the new states, French leaders after Richelieu were tempted to expand France's domain at the expense of its neighbors. The solution to this dilemma would be the balance of power, in which many weaker states would team up to prevent the stronger states from getting their way. Great Britain led the way in this regard, when its new King William III (also known as William of Orange, 1650–1702) brought England into alliance with the Dutch and German princes to contain French expansion. By the late 18th century British leaders under William Pitt, the Younger (1759–1806) elevated this pursuit of the balance into a formal strategy, arguing Britain would remain secure so long as the continent of Europe was divided between competing superpowers. While the balance of power did not always keep the peace, it did keep wars relatively limited.

Britain's efforts to regulate a balance of power were greatly tested in the early 19th century, when a liberal nationalist revolution swept France in 1789. Under Napoleon I (1769–1821) the French sought to spread the virtues of liberalism to the remainder of Europe under the guise of a French Empire. Napoleon's rise to power provoked a similar response from the Russian Empire, whose new tsar Alexander I (1777–1825) also saw himself as the conservative moral compass of Europe, a bastion against French liberalism. Britain's liberal leaders were uninterested in Alexander's ideology, but they needed his power to check French expansion, so they cut a deal. Together, Britain and Russia assembled a coalition of the other European powers, including Prussia and Austria, which overthrew Napoleon's empire and restored sovereignty to the many states of Europe.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes the international situation of the present day is rather similar to several previous episodes in European history. In the 17th century a world order based on universal, Catholic values was replaced by a pluralistic balance of power system. Kissinger predicts the 21st century may be much like this transitional period, in which the various superpowers improvised their way into a relatively stable balance of power arrangement through a series of *ad hoc* alliances.

Chapter 4

Summary

Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia came together in Vienna in 1814 to build a new world order, an arrangement known as the Concert of Europe. While the emerging system relied on the balance of power to keep the peace, it also relied on a common set of legitimating assumptions, which dampened conflict in a way that the earlier balance based purely on power had not. Although the concert system was not perfect, it was relatively effective in maintaining the peace; for almost a century Europe suffered only a single general war: the Crimean War (1853–56).

The central problem for the statesmen gathering in Vienna was how to organize Central Europe. To establish the new balance, the German principalities were consolidated into a few larger states, with the lion's share of gains going to Prussia and Austria. The four victorious powers also entered the Quadruple Alliance to prevent further French expansion. In exchange, the victorious powers agreed to negotiate further disputes in a series of European congresses, in which France would participate. Led by Irish statesman Lord Castlereagh (1769–1822), British leaders hoped this new system of congresses would keep the peace between the states of Europe, while requiring minimal British involvement in day-to day affairs.

The Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859) worried that a system with no commitment to shared values would prove brittle. Metternich especially worried that with France so weakened, and Britain withdrawing from continental affairs, Austria would be left to face Russia's power alone. As such, Metternich sought to ground the new world order in a set of shared values. Metternich was a conservative, who believed in natural law and the divine right of sovereigns. Fortunately, this was a perspective he shared with Tsar Alexander I of Russia, providing an opportunity for legitimating the new order. Together, Metternich and Alexander built the Holy Alliance, a combination of Austria, Russia, and Prussia designed to maintain monarchical governments on European thrones and head off liberal revolutions like the one that had occurred in France. The genius of the Holy Alliance was its ability to tame Russian power, by convincing Russian leaders to turn their power toward a common goal with Austria and Prussia, rather than seeking to dominate them.

Metternich wanted *both* the Holy Alliance with Russia to prevent liberalism *and* a close relationship with Britain to contain Russian power, but British leaders were unwilling to cooperate. Castlereagh recognized Austria was Britain's key ally in containing both France and Russia and sought to produce some sort of compromise that would keep Britain and Austria aligned; when he failed, Castlereagh took his own life in 1822. Absent British support, Metternich's system still kept Russia and Austria as close allies, but after Metternich left government in 1848, his successors failed to keep alive his vision of conservative legitimacy. Austria's foreign minister Count Karl von Buol (1797–1865) ultimately sided with Britain and France against Russia in the Crimean War, ruining Austro Russian relations in the process. For their part British leaders after Castlereagh remained staunchly devoted to the detached balance of power, failing to recognize the importance of legitimating principle in buttressing their world order.

Analysis

Although Metternich and Castlereagh are remembered primarily as devotees of the balance of power, Henry Kissinger draws interesting comparisons between them and Woodrow Wilson, the quintessential American idealist. Like Wilson, Metternich sought to ground his new world order in a sense of shared values, although unlike Wilson Metternich's values were anti-liberal and aristocratic. Castlereagh also saw the wisdom of Metternich's plan, but like Wilson he was unable to convince his countrymen of the importance of more active participation in European politics, leading his country to retreat into a form of isolation. In drawing these comparisons Kissinger also sets up an important contrast: while Wilson sought to advance his values by overturning the balance of power, Metternich saw his values and the balance of power as mutually reinforcing. Kissinger argues that the success of the Concert in maintaining the peace depended on this

interrelationship of idealism and power politics, unlike either the pure idealism of Wilson or the pure power politics of Castlereagh's colleagues.

Chapter 5

Summary

From the 1850s onward the Concert of Europe was undermined by two unlikely collaborators: Emperor Napoleon III (1808–73) of France, and Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815–98). The two were very different. Flamboyant and romantic, Napoleon had risen to ultimate power in the Second French Empire (1852–70) through a series of revolutions and coups. The unsentimental and realistic Bismarck rose conventionally through the Prussian legislature and foreign service to become chancellor, directing policy while serving the Prussian king (and then German emperor) William I (1797–1888). What the two shared was a desire to overthrow the Concert of Europe constructed by Metternich, though for very different reasons.

Napoleon III saw himself as a champion of liberalism and nationalism and saw Metternich's system as shackling both. By smashing the Concert, Napoleon III believed he would become the preeminent statesman of Europe. At first Napoleon was successful: during the 1853 crisis between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, he maneuvered both Britain and Austria into alliance with France against Russia, restoring France's status as a great power and breaking the Holy Alliance between Austria and Russia. But Napoleon was indecisive—he could not decide whether he wanted to divide Europe, as Richelieu had, or dominate it. After dividing Austria from Russia, he turned on the Austrians in Italy in 1859, supporting Italian nationalists in their fight for independence. When his intervention in Italy received international condemnation, Napoleon pulled back, angering the Italians, as well. In the 1860s Napoleon helped provoke a war between Austria and Prussia, hoping for a bloody stalemate that would allow him to save the day through a peace settlement. Napoleon's previous weakening of Austria in Italy allowed Prussia to win the war handily.

In contrast, Bismarck was the most skilled practitioner of power politics in modern history, an approach that Bismarck called *Realpolitik*, the practice of politics according to practical factors rather than idealistic ones. Bismarck opposed Metternich's system because he resented Prussia's second class status to Austria. Bismarck played along with Napoleon's weakening of Austria in Italy and then crushed the Austrian military in a brief, decisive war in 1866, granting Prussia the predominant position in Central Europe. Realizing his error, Napoleon belatedly attacked Prussia, but his political antics had left him isolated. Prussia and its allies defeated the French in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. For his defeat Napoleon III was deposed, and his empire replaced by the Third Republic (1870–1940). During the war the German states rallied around Prussia, agreeing to form a new German Empire under the rule of William I. Where Napoleon failed, Bismarck achieved his goals of uniting Germany and upending the old Concert system.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger compares the characters of Napoleon III and Bismarck at length, commenting on their relative strengths and weaknesses. Napoleon took ideas like nationalism and liberalism seriously, but he lacked the skill at power politics to advance his goals. Bismarck was the opposite: although he was personally conservative and opposed to liberal revolution, he saw in Napoleon a useful ally for overturning the Concert of Europe. Perhaps Bismarck's greatest accomplishment was to decouple German nationalism from liberalism, creating a German empire that was both nationalistic and conservative. At the same time, Bismarck's cynicism and insistence on power and pragmatism made it difficult for him to consolidate his

success, because unlike Metternich Bismarck lacked a legitimating ideal for his new European order.

Chapter 6

Summary

Having unified Germany under Prussian leadership in 1871, Bismarck had achieved his major goal. From that point on, Bismarck's primary goal was to win acceptance for the new Germany from the other European superpowers. With France humiliated, Britain isolated, Italy consolidating, and Austria and Russia at each other's throats, Bismarck found himself as Europe's leading statesman.

Bismarck's first attempt, the 1873 League of Three Emperors between Germany, Russia, and Austria, quickly fell apart because of Europe's increasing nationalism. Russian leaders saw themselves as the natural protectors of the Slavic nations breaking free from the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans (the

peninsula of southeastern Europe). Austria especially viewed the Balkans as its own sphere of influence and resented Russian efforts to poach its territory. In the old system of European diplomacy, some compromise might have been possible to divide the Balkans between Russia and Austria, but by the late 19th century nationalistic politics made a solution difficult, since compromise would be seen as defeat. Continued disputes between Russia and Austria made it impossible for Bismarck to hold the league together; the Russians withdrew in 1887.

Unable to keep the Austrians and the Russians on the same side, Bismarck at least tried to keep France isolated, concluding separate treaties with Austria and Russia that denied France an ally on the continent. By diverting French attention toward expanding their colonial empire in Africa and Asia, Bismarck also generated tensions between Britain and France, which prevented them from joining together against Germany. Finally, Bismarck managed to bring Germany, Austria, and Italy together in the Triple Alliance of 1882, forming a powerful Central European bloc to secure Germany's interests. Bismarck's intricate series of alliances kept European diplomacy relatively stable, but even his genius could not resolve the basic questions of increasing nationalism and rising tensions over territory in the Balkans.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger describes Bismarck as being one of the great geniuses of history, a statesman with an incredible ability to cajole allies and manipulate adversaries, and above all to maintain the balance of power in Europe to avoid conflict. But Bismarck's genius had a downside: the "system" he constructed was inherently unstable. As long as a genius like Bismarck was on hand to manage it, the system worked, but when Bismarck departed politics, he left a system no other statesman was equipped to handle.

Chapter 7

Summary

By the first decade of the 20th century, European order had broken down into two competing alliances. After Bismarck's departure in 1890 German leaders like Emperor William II (commonly known as Kaiser Wilhelm, 1859–1941) became obsessed with using their power to bully their neighbors. Germany was not the only aggressive militarist: the Russian Empire under Nicholas II (1868–1918) also continued to expand in the Balkans, in Central Asia, and in the Far East, all while ignoring the growing imperative for domestic political reform. Austria still wanted to expand in the Balkans; France remained intent on revenge against Germany; and British leaders feared their power was declining. All of these countries had nationalistic publics that preferred confrontation to compromise. The political atmosphere was increasingly dangerous.

By flaunting its power and threatening its neighbors, Germany provoked a major alliance against it. William II canceled the treaty with Russia in 1890. In response, Russia and France formed a new alliance, the *Entente Cordiale*, surrounding Germany. German leaders should have tried to bring Britain onto their side, but they antagonized Britain by building a large navy and criticizing Britain's empire. Afraid of Germany, Britain resolved its colonial differences with France, and effectively joined the *Entente* in 1904.

Germany was surrounded by France, Russia, and Britain. William II responded by doubling down on his aggressive policies, hoping to break up the allies. Germany challenged the *Entente* in North Africa and the Balkans, trying to split Britain and Russia from France by threatening war. German aggression drove the *Entente* closer together. By the summer of 1914, politics had become so tense that any further crisis would likely spark a major war.

Analysis

According to Henry Kissinger, the Concert of Europe was able to maintain the peace because the five superpowers could switch sides, if necessary, to prevent any one or two powers from becoming dominant. By 1904 that flexible five-power system had been replaced by two major alliances, whose members were locked into conflict with each other. Germany and Austria had joined together against their respective enemies, France and Russia. Once Britain joined the *Entente*, the balance of power ceased to function, because British leaders could not maneuver between the other powers to preserve the peace. The superpowers amassed as much military strength as possible, preparing for a clash. Under those conditions war became inevitable.

Chapter 8

Summary

The political dysfunction in Europe was worsened by the military leaders of the superpowers. The development of railroads allowed the superpowers to amass huge armies with great speed. The speed of railroads created new problems, because the side that mobilized first could attack and destroy the enemy before he had time to assemble his own army. As a result, military leaders emphasized the importance of mobilizing and attacking first, to gain as much advantage on the battlefield as possible.

Pressure from militaries to attack quickly meant political leaders had less time to negotiate during a crisis, since each country needed to mobilize before its enemies did. Military leaders on all sides planned for rapid attacks, especially Germany's "Schlieffen Plan." Under the Schlieffen Plan, if Germany went to war, its first move would be a full-scale invasion of France—even if the French were not involved in the war! Blinded by their fantasy of total victory, military leaders

> promoted faster and faster war plans. Political leaders did not question this military advice, ignoring the destructive consequences should such plans be enacted.
>
> On June 28, 1914, a Serbian nationalist terrorist assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria (1863–1914) and his wife, Sophie, Countess von Chotek (1868–1914). Austria blamed the attack on Serbia and, backed by Germany, began making preparations for war. Russian leaders would not abandon their Serbian ally and began mobilizing their armies. When German leaders saw the Russian mobilization, they concluded war was inevitable and attacked France, just as the Schlieffen Plan had prescribed. When German armies passed through neutral Belgium on their way to France, Britain declared war on Germany and began sending soldiers to Europe. World War I (1914–18) had begun. By the time it was over European civilization was shattered, and 20 million were dead.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes the need for rapid attack was worsened by the military alliances. If a country mobilized too slowly, its allies might be defeated before it was ready to fight. If that happened, then the country would face its adversaries alone. As a result, military leaders advised statesmen to attack quickly to avoid being isolated from allies and destroyed. The "military doomsday machine" had an important political component, in addition to its military and technical characteristics.

Chapter 9

Summary

European leaders stumbled into World War I, but the huge casualties of the opening battles and the public demand for victory made it difficult to negotiate a solution. Since neither side could win on the battlefield, the conflict expanded into a *total* war, in which each side aimed to demoralize and destroy the enemy's society. By 1918 the costs of the war led to revolutions in Russia, Austria, and Germany, where the imperial regimes were overthrown by their own people. Britain and France's victory was assured when the United States entered the war in 1917, providing fresh resources to outlast Germany.

While the United States provided the resources to win the war, its entry also complicated the peace process. America's leader, Woodrow Wilson, insisted Europe's balance-of-power politics had been responsible for the conflict, and that any new international order ought to be based on American values: democracy, the rule of law, and national self-determination. British and French leaders disagreed, but they needed American support, so they deferred to Wilson. When the German government collapsed, the leaders of the superpowers arrived at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 to hammer out the details of a new world order.

In place of the balance of power, Wilson proposed an international organization—the League of Nations—to prevent future wars. Wilson's strongest opponent was French prime minister Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929), who was determined to prevent further German attacks on France. Clemenceau wanted to break up Germany into smaller states, but this idea contradicted Wilson's principle of national self determination. Alternatively, Clemenceau wanted an iron-clad alliance with Britain and the United States to deter further German attacks, but Wilson insisted that as long as the League of Nations existed, France would have nothing to fear. French leaders were not persuaded, and the resulting Treaty of Versailles was a compromise between Wilson and Clemenceau. Wilson agreed to disarm Germany and to divide some of its territory among the new states of Eastern Europe in exchange for French

support in founding the league. Although he was not entirely satisfied, Wilson believed that over the longer run the league could rectify whatever injustices emerged from the initial agreement.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Congress rejected the Versailles Treaty and refused to join the League of Nations, retreating into isolation. The compromise struck by Wilson and Clemenceau ended up being the worst of both worlds: Germans were angry and humiliated but still powerful. Perhaps if the United States had remained in the league, it could have contained and reconciled Germany. In the end Wilson's principled league failed, because the victorious countries all considered it flawed in some way. As German power recovered, none of the other superpowers were willing to stand in the league's defense.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes a number of inconsistencies between Wilson's principles and the Treaty of Versailles. Wilson had promised a fair and impartial peace, but the treaty specifically blamed Germany for the war and inflicted harsh reparation payments on the new German government. Wilson had called for a new system based on national self-determination, but many Germans ended up living in newly created Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. Wilson wanted all the superpowers to disarm, but the Treaty of Versailles disarmed only Germany. German leaders accused Wilson of hypocrisy and cited these inconsistencies as reasons to overturn the Versailles settlement. It was only Wilson's dedication to his ideals that prevented Germany from being completely dismantled by the French.

Chapter 10

Summary

With America retreating into isolationism, Britain and France were left to uphold the postwar order, but they struggled to cooperate. British leaders strongly favored disarmament negotiations, but the French insisted on maintaining a large army to defend against future German attacks. The Germans played on British and French divisions, arguing it was the French with their large army that threatened the peace. British leaders increasingly agreed with the Germans that the Treaty of Versailles was an unfair arrangement. The British also worried the new Weimar Republic in Germany would not be able to make its reparations payments. French leaders preferred that Germany struggle to make its reparations payments, since this would slow Germany's economic recovery and keep France safe. In an attempt to work out these economic and military issues, British prime minister David Lloyd George (1863–1945) called an international conference in the Italian city of Rapallo in 1922.

The British also invited representatives from the Soviet Union to Rapallo. After a bloody civil war the communist Bolshevik Party had seized control of the former Russian Empire, founding a new communist great power. Although motivated by an ideological desire to spread communism to the rest of the world, when it came to foreign policy, Soviet leaders like Prime Minister Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) were realists like Richelieu or Bismarck. Lenin preferred to bide his time and negotiate with the capitalist superpowers, the better to divide the capitalists against each other and prevent the formation of an anti-communist coalition.

Lenin realized the easiest way to divide the capitalists would be to pit Germany against Britain and France. In realist terms Germany and the Soviet Union were natural allies, since each wanted to overthrow the Versailles system. At Rapallo British and French leaders foolishly played into Lenin's hands, leaving the German and Soviet representatives on the sidelines of the conference while the British, French, and Italian delegates negotiated the "main event." Spurned, the German negotiators quickly concluded the Treaty of Rapallo with the Soviet Union. The treaty created the coalition that, under German dictator Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin (1878–1953), would ultimately overthrow the Versailles system.

Analysis

Under the League of Nations world peace was supposed to depend on "collective security," in which all nations work collectively to punish any aggressors. In practice, collective security has always proved disappointing, because countries are rarely willing to go to war in the defense of other countries without a good reason. Far more effective are alliances based on specific common interests or threats. When interests align, states are far more likely to stand by each other. French leaders

recognized the weakness of collective security and consistently pursued specific alliance commitments from Britain and the United States to contain the threat of Germany. Unfortunately for the French, neither the British nor the Americans were willing to make this commitment.

Chapter 11

Summary

In the 1920s German foreign policy was directed by Chancellor Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929), first as foreign minister and eventually as chancellor. A conservative nationalist, Stresemann pursued a policy of "fulfillment," aimed at overturning the Versailles settlement and returning Germany to the dominant power of Europe. Unlike many German conservatives, however, Stresemann understood Germany lacked the capabilities to challenge the Versailles system directly. Stresemann used diplomacy to divide the British and French. Recognizing Britain's discomfort with the Versailles limitations on Germany, Stresemann played on British fears of German collapse to remove the restrictions Versailles had placed upon his country.

Stresemann's first challenge was to escape the heavy reparations payments Germany was obligated to provide to Britain and France. When the French invaded Germany in 1923 to extract reparations payments, Stresemann organized a neutral mediation by American banker and future vice president Charles Dawes (1865–1951), who promised to loan Germany money so it could make its payments. The French did not like Dawes's plan, since they wanted to keep Germany weak economically, but British and American pressure convinced the French to accept. Stresemann also used diplomacy to prevent an Anglo-French alliance. Stresemann proposed the Locarno Pact, a common security agreement in which Germany and France promised not to attack each other, with Britain and Italy as guarantors. Locarno seemed like a victory for the French, but in practice it positioned Britain as a neutral third party in any dispute between Germany and France. The French increasingly fell back on public relations efforts like the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, in which the major powers promised to make war illegal. Since Kellogg-Briand contained no enforcement mechanism to punish violators, it did little to advance French security.

Stresemann was very successful in dismantling the Versailles system: In exchange for the Locarno Agreement, Germany was allowed to join the League of Nations, as Stresemann continued to criticize France for its unwillingness to disarm. Despite German pressure the first major blow against the league actually came in Asia. In 1931 Japan invaded China, occupying the region of Manchuria. Although Japan was widely criticized, none of the superpowers were willing to risk war with the Japanese. The League of Nations dispatched a fact finding mission to determine what had happened. When the mission found Japan had acted illegally in attacking China, Japanese leaders simply withdrew from the league. Germany would join them a few short years later.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger points out that Stresemann's image has evolved over time. For many years historians had characterized Stresemann as a "good European" who accepted the Versailles system and sought to build good relations with Britain and France. Only after Stresemann's private papers were opened did historians realize Stresemann was a canny practitioner of *Realpolitik* (statesmanship based largely on practical considerations, rather than idealistic ones), manipulating British and French leaders to restore German power. Stresemann was nonetheless very different from the Nazis who followed him. A consummate diplomat, Stresemann believed Germany could restore its power without a major war.

Chapter 12

Summary

In 1933 Germany came under the rule of a demagogue, Adolf Hitler, and his Nazi Party. Hitler continued Stresemann's program of dividing the British and the French, but he also prepared for a major war to destroy the Versailles system. British leaders were slow to recognize the threat posed by Hitler. A few like Winston Churchill (1874–1965) wanted to join France in containing German power, but most were so traumatized by World War I they insisted on the need for continued disarmament and collective security. Without British support France sought allies elsewhere but could find no good partner against Germany. Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania were too weak to balance German power, and French leaders were unwilling to cooperate with Soviet communists. France's best partner might have been Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (1883–1945), who initially opposed Hitler. When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935, the British and

French condemned his aggression and drove him over to Hitler's side.

Hitler saw the Ethiopian Crisis as a sign of British and French weakness and decided to make his move. In 1936 Hitler began publicly rebuilding the German Army and reoccupied the Rhineland region along the French border, a blatant violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler's policy was risky, because if Britain and France had attacked in 1936, Germany would almost certainly have been defeated. Hitler gambled on the psychological weakness of British and French leaders—and won. In response, Britain and France did nothing. Further emboldened, Hitler supported fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), solidifying his alliance with Mussolini. In March 1938 German soldiers marched into Austria, uniting it with Germany without any British or French opposition. As German armies continued to mobilize, it was clear Hitler's next target was Czechoslovakia, which contained regions that had previously been part of the German Empire.

Faced with Hitler's expansion, British leaders adopted a policy of appeasement, hoping that if they gave Hitler what he wanted, they could satisfy Germany and prevent a major war. British leaders fundamentally misunderstood Hitler, who had always assumed war with the Western democracies was inevitable—Hitler's diplomacy sought to extract as many concessions as possible before war occurred. As German forces prepared to invade Czechoslovakia, British and French leaders met with Hitler and Mussolini in the German city of Munich in September 1938 to cut a deal. British prime minister Neville Chamberlain (1869–1940) agreed to return large parts of Czechoslovakia to Germany, in exchange for a promise from Hitler to expand no further. At least initially, the leaders of the Western democracies celebrated the Munich Agreement. In March 1939, however, Hitler revealed his true intentions: German forces attacked anyway and conquered all of Czechoslovakia. Belatedly, British leaders realized Hitler could not be appeased and joined the French in preparing for war.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger reflects on the role Wilsonian idealism played in the diplomacy of the interwar period. Britain's policy of appeasement was based on Wilsonian ideals: that Britain should not balance against German power but rather preserve the peace through negotiation and international law. Hitler played on British idealism to advance his agenda, but in 1939 Kissinger believes Hitler made his first crucial mistake. If Hitler had followed the Munich Agreement, he would have been able to continue building German power while avoiding a major war with Britain, until Germany became unstoppably strong. By violating the Munich Agreement, Hitler offended Britain's Wilsonian principles, destroying whatever goodwill Stresemann had built with British leaders. As a result, Britain quickly shifted from appeasement to crusade, prepared to fight to defend far off Poland. Hitler believed Britain's idealism made it weak, but he underestimated how hard the British would fight once they decided to. By rushing to war in 1939, Hitler ultimately destroyed the Nazi regime.

Chapter 13

Summary

Hitler and Stalin were both monsters, but very different people. While Hitler was eclectic and impatient, rising to power primarily through his oratory, Stalin was patient and implacable, relying on his skills at brutal bureaucratic infighting. Despite his ideological beliefs, Stalin was the consummate realist of the interwar period, pursuing a policy Richelieu and Bismarck would have recognized and appreciated. The leaders of the Western democracies misunderstood Stalin, assuming Stalin's hatred of fascism meant the Soviets would always be available as a partner against Hitler.

At least initially, Stalin did try to form common cause with the Western democracies, announcing in July 1939 that communists should seek a "united front" with liberals against fascism. Stalin's "united front" policy failed. Britain and France remained suspicious of communism and refused direct military cooperation. More importantly, Britain and France were unwilling to allow Stalin to expand his territory in Eastern Europe. France still wanted to keep Poland and Romania as allies against Germany, but Stalin wanted to retake Polish and Romanian territories that had been part of the Russian Empire. Since they opposed Hitler's territorial aggression, British and French leaders could not bring themselves to condone Stalin's similar aggression.

Following the Munich Conference in 1938, Stalin had announced

the Soviet Union would build alliance with whatever country it chose, inviting Germany to bid for Soviet support, setting up "Stalin's Bazaar." Focused on Hitler's actions in Czechoslovakia, British and French leaders did not see the major transformation taking place. While Stalin hated the Nazis, he and Hitler shared a common interest in destroying the states of Eastern Europe and taking their territory for themselves. In August 1939 Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov (1890–1986) met with German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946) for secret negotiations. After a few days they announced the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in which Germany and the Soviet Union promised not to attack each other. Secret provisions in the pact also agreed to divide Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union. The invasion of Poland would set off World War II.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes communist ideology, unlike Wilsonianism, is compatible with realism. Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders had an unshakable faith that history was on their side and that socialism would eventually triumph over capitalism. This faith actually allowed Stalin to be very flexible, because he assumed the outcome was inevitable whatever he did. Bolshevik ideology also saw no difference between liberal and fascist capitalists. Wilsonian idealism is full of assumptions about "good" and "bad" actors, which in the 1930s made it difficult for the Western democracies to cooperate with a "bad" actor like Stalin. As the only communist power, the Soviet Union saw all the other superpowers as "bad" actors. This ideological inflexibility actually made it much easier for Soviet leaders to maneuver between the capitalist powers, since Soviet leaders had no emotional or ideological stake in either democracy or fascism.

Chapter 14

Summary

In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. In response, Britain and France declared war on Germany. At least initially, Britain and France pursued a "phony war," hoping their blockade would destroy the German economy without a major battle. In the meantime Stalin seized territories across Eastern Europe, including eastern Poland and the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania. The Soviets also invaded Finland, which they failed to conquer, but which agreed to become a Soviet satellite.

In May 1940 German armies invaded and conquered France in a few months, surprising the entire world. Also surprised were the Germans themselves, who had expected the conquest of France to be long and difficult. Unsure of how to proceed, Hitler first tried to negotiate peace with Britain, but Britain's new prime minister Winston Churchill refused any compromise. Enraged, Hitler then tried to coerce the British into surrendering via aerial bombardment in the Battle of Britain. Under Churchill's leadership the British continued to fight back, resisting the aerial attacks and launching their own bombardment of Germany.

Even without a plan to defeat Britain, the collapse of France put Germany in an excellent strategic position. Britain was effectively isolated; the United States was paralyzed politically; and the Soviet Union was weakened by Stalin's latest purge of the military leadership. Given his strength, Hitler ought to have bided his time and consolidated his control over all of Europe. The Nazis broke the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and invaded the Soviet Union in July 1941. Nazi ideology had always foreseen an ultimate showdown with the eastern communists, whose destruction would pave the way for a great German empire across Eurasia. Surprised by the German attack, Soviet armies fell back with heavy losses. Stalin fell into a brief period of depression, but within a few weeks he reemerged, calling on the Soviet people to fight tooth and nail against the German invasion. Although German armies penetrated deep into the Soviet Union, they were unable to take Moscow and knock the Soviets out of the war entirely.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes Stalin's greatest strength was his ability to calculate and manipulate the balance of power in his favor, but Stalin's greatest weakness was that he assumed other leaders were just as calculating and risk-averse as he was. Stalin failed to predict the German invasion in 1941 because he realized a German attack would be foolish and assumed Hitler would not choose to fight a war on two fronts, as Germany had in World War I. By 1941, however, Hitler had abandoned rational calculation, convinced he was invincible and always right. As Kissinger notes, both Stalin and Hitler made serious errors in judgment, but Stalin was able to recover from his error, while Hitler was not.

Chapter 15

Summary

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s American leaders insisted the United States did not want any involvement in Europe or Asia, hoping public opinion and international law would keep the peace without American power. To prevent the United States from being involved in any future wars, in the 1930s Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts that forbade Americans from providing money or weapons to any country in a war, even if it were a war of self-defense. In the mid-1930s President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945) began maneuvering the United States toward a more activist foreign policy. At least initially, Roosevelt was vague as to his objectives, arguing the United States might join with other countries to "quarantine" aggressors, without providing any details. After the Nazis conquered Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Roosevelt became more explicit, calling on the Americans to help Britain and France rearm, so they could contain Hitler.

Once Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, Roosevelt pushed the United States to become involved in the war. Roosevelt lobbied Congress to amend the Neutrality Acts to allow American companies to sell weapons to Britain, which Congress did in November 1939. After France's defeat the new "Lend-Lease Act" of November 1940 also allowed Britain to purchase weapons on credit, to be paid after the war was over. In addition to weapons sales Roosevelt also began naval cooperation with the British against the Germans. The U.S. Navy began extending patrols far out into the Atlantic Ocean and passing information to the Royal Navy on the location of German submarines. When the Germans responded by attacking American warships, Roosevelt called them pirates and ordered the U.S. Navy to sink any German submarine on sight.

In August 1941 Roosevelt met with British prime minister Winston Churchill in Newfoundland, where the two leaders signed the "Atlantic Charter." The charter laid out a Wilsonian plan for the postwar world, based on democracy, rule of law, and national self-determination. Churchill also believed the balance of power would play an important role, but he needed American support against Germany and so signed the charter anyway. When the Japanese attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Roosevelt was finally able to convince the American public to join the war directly. Because of Roosevelt's extensive prewar preparations, the United States was ready to leap into action against the fascists, transforming the conflict into a truly worldwide war.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger believes Roosevelt is the foremost statesman and leader of American history, matched only by President Abraham Lincoln (1809–65). As a statesman, Roosevelt had the foresight to predict the challenge the Nazis would pose to American security, long before most Americans saw this. As a leader, Roosevelt educated the American public on the nature of the threat, convincing them of its severity. Roosevelt was very successful: in May 1940 two-thirds of Americans opposed involvement in the war, but a year later only one-third remained opposed. Roosevelt's crafty policies outwitted his isolationist opponents, since he presented every step in his plan as a measure to uphold the status quo, while secretly entangling America in Britain's war against Germany. Kissinger is less enamored with Roosevelt's dishonesty but argues that in the end Roosevelt helped save both America and the world from the Nazi threat.

Chapter 16

Summary

By early 1943 the German and Japanese militaries were broken, and the Allies—the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain—began planning for the postwar era. All three allies hoped to avoid the mistakes of the Treaty of Versailles. Given their different backgrounds, however, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin each developed very different plans for how to structure the new world order.

Like most Americans Roosevelt rejected balance-of-power politics. Roosevelt wanted to build the postwar order on the "Four Policemen," with the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China each taking responsibility for the peace and stability of its own region of the world. Roosevelt's plan made no provision for what would happen if the policemen disagreed with each other. Fearing Soviet expansion, Churchill sought to draw the United States into an alliance to balance against Soviet power after the war, much to the annoyance of American leaders. Much as Churchill feared, Stalin intended to use the war as an opportunity to expand the Soviet Union's sphere of influence and build a buffer zone against further capitalist aggression in Eastern

Europe. While German armies were still on Soviet territory, Stalin was conciliatory to Roosevelt and Churchill, but as Soviet armies pushed the Germans back and began rolling over Eastern Europe, Stalin's willingness to compromise evaporated.

In an effort to work out their differences, the three leaders met in Tehran in 1943 and again at Yalta in 1945. The meetings reflected the balance of power, as Soviet armies occupied much of Eastern Europe. All three agreed that after the war they would divide Germany into occupation zones. Roosevelt was eager to win Soviet approval for his Four Policemen concept, and Churchill hoped to sign some agreement limiting Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. In the end Stalin got most of what he wanted: Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to let the Soviets redraw Eastern Europe's borders, in return for Stalin's promise to allow "free elections" in Eastern Europe. It quickly became apparent that Stalin's definition of free elections was very different from that of Roosevelt or Churchill, as Stalinist communist governments rose to power across Eastern Europe. Although the Yalta Conference established the basis for the postwar order, it did little to resolve the growing antagonism among the Allied powers.

Analysis

Like many historians Henry Kissinger wonders whether Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin might have come to a different agreement that would have prevented the Cold War. In the end Kissinger is critical of Roosevelt's "Four Policemen" concept, which he sees as overly idealistic and impractical. Perhaps if Roosevelt and Churchill had joined together earlier to force a settlement on Stalin, the Soviets would have limited their hold on Eastern Europe, and conflict might have been avoided; at least, this is what Churchill claimed. On the other hand, Kissinger notes that the same idealism that poisoned Roosevelt's "Four Policemen" concept had propelled America into World War II in the first place and would later serve as the wellspring of America's commitment to contain communism. Although American idealism had its drawbacks, Kissinger is not sure the world would be a better place without it.

Chapter 17

Summary

Roosevelt died in April 1945, only months before World War II ended. His successor, President Harry Truman (1884–1972), had very little foreign-policy experience and had been excluded from the Yalta Conference. Truman inherited Roosevelt's advisers and his foreign-policy concepts, trying to make the "Four Policemen" model work. Unlike Roosevelt,

Truman quickly ran out of patience with Stalin, especially as the Soviets set up communist governments in Eastern Europe. Stalin did not understand how seriously American leaders took the Yalta commitment to "free elections," but the progress of communism made Truman suspicious.

Truman, Stalin, and Churchill met at Potsdam, New York, in July 1945 to develop a more detailed plan for the postwar world. Stalin agreed to Truman's request to enter the war against Japan, and Truman revealed to Stalin the existence of the U.S. nuclear weapons project—a fact Stalin already knew through the Soviet Union's network of spies. Overall, though, the Potsdam Conference did go well. Churchill was defeated in a national election halfway through the conference and was replaced by Prime Minister Clement Attlee (1883–1967). Truman and Attlee refused to allow the Soviets to collect reparations payments from the American and British occupation zones in Germany. Stalin would not hold elections in Poland that would meet Truman's standards. The three allies agreed to disagree: they affirmed the division of Germany into occupation zones and pushed off the outstanding disagreements to later meetings by their foreign ministers.

The Potsdam Conference began the process of dividing Europe into spheres of influence, the very outcome American leaders wanted to avoid. Further meetings by American secretary of state James Byrnes (1879–1972) and Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov failed to solve the disagreements over Germany or Eastern Europe. As a result, the temporary occupation zones in Germany gradually morphed into a permanent division. Stalin and Truman escalated their rhetoric, each accusing the other of poisoning the peace settlement. Now out of government, Churchill also sounded the alarm in his March 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech, in which he accused the Soviet Union of intentionally dividing Europe. Stalin continued his efforts to intimidate Western leaders into accepting the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. In the end Stalin only provoked America into forming a new anti-Soviet coalition.

Analysis

Although he is critical of American leaders' idealism, Henry Kissinger places the blame for the Cold War squarely on Stalin's shoulders. A master of *Realpolitik*, Stalin promoted Soviet power,

building a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, and refusing to hold free elections, contrary to what he had promised at Yalta. Stalin once again misunderstood the nature of his adversary. American leaders were less concerned with the balance of power than they were with Stalin's good faith. By the time Stalin realized his policies were alienating American leaders, it was too late. Truman had concluded Stalin was unreliable and would not trust his professions of good faith.

Chapter 18

Summary

Despite Franklin Delano Roosevelt's and Harry Truman's best Wilsonian efforts, Europe was divided between an American and a Soviet sphere of influence. American leaders realized they needed a new strategy to prevent further Soviet expansion, but they wanted a strategy based on something other than the balance of power. The answer came from American diplomat and Russian expert George Kennan (1904–2005), who in his February 1946 "Long Telegram" claimed the Soviet Union was ideologically aggressive but inherently unstable. Kennan claimed that in time the Soviet Union would collapse by itself and that in the meantime the United States simply needed to "contain" further Soviet expansion. Kennan's strategy of containment became the basis for American foreign policy during the Cold War.

The Truman Administration began taking steps to contain Soviet expansion. When the British revealed they could no longer support the Greek and Turkish governments, Truman announced in March 1947 the "Truman Doctrine," in which the United States would provide aid to any country seeking to resist Soviet aggression, including Greece and Turkey. By June 1947 Secretary of State George Marshall (1880–1959) announced an even larger economic aid program to recovering European nations, known as the Marshall Plan. By extending aid to allies, the United States was at the same time shoring up capitalism against communist subversion, while also building a coalition to contain Soviet power. Stalin sought to break up this emerging coalition by staging a communist coup against the government of Czechoslovakia in February 1948. In response, the United States and its European partners joined together to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). American, British, and French leaders also agreed to join their occupation zones in West Germany into a new German state, the Federal

Republic of Germany, without any Soviet participation. Through the strategy of containment American leaders were able to fight against Soviet power in the name of defending American principles.

Truman's strategy of containment faced criticism within the United States from three groups. Realists like American journalist Walter Lippmann (1889–1974) worried that containment's vague and expansive goals would drain U.S. resources and leave the country vulnerable. Negotiators like Winston Churchill argued the United States should use its preponderant power to strike a deal with the Soviets before they had time to recover their strength. Former vice president Henry Wallace (1888–1965) spoke for moral critics, who argued the United States was not fundamentally better than the Soviet Union and that it was *American* policies that were driving conflict with the Soviets. Wallace's critique was largely ignored in his own time, but his ideas became the basis for radical opposition to the Cold War and would move to the center of foreign-policy debates during the Vietnam War (1954–75). Whatever its shortcomings, containment was ultimately a very successful policy: the Soviet Union was contained, Europe was rebuilt, and America ultimately emerged as the world's sole superpower.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes that the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union mirrored the division of Europe into two alliance blocs in the years leading up to World War I. The European alliances of the early 20th century comprised several equally powerful members, each of whom depended on the other for self-defense. The uncertainty inherent in this relationship led each country to adopt extreme positions, leading to war in 1914. In contrast, the Cold War alliances were each dominated by a single superpower, both of whom had the good sense to avoid war. As a result, Cold War antagonism was relatively stable.

Chapter 19

Summary

For several years containment worked in Europe primarily as it had been conceived, uniting the European democracies and preventing further Soviet expansion. American leaders were surprised when in June 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea. North Korean leaders had misunderstood President Harry Truman, who was determined to uphold international norms

against aggression and avoid any hint of appeasement. Truman dispatched thousands of American soldiers at the head of an international coalition to thwart the attack. American and allied forces were overwhelmingly successful, but as the North Koreans retreated Truman found it difficult to define America's objectives in the larger war. The American military commander Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) argued the United States ought to launch a counter-invasion of North Korea, to show that aggressors would be punished. Truman agreed, and American forces pursued the communists northwards.

Unfortunately, Chinese leaders saw the advancing American forces as a threat to their position in Manchuria. In December 1950 Chinese armies counterattacked, driving American forces back down the peninsula. The two armies ended up in a stalemate near where the North-South border had been before the North Korean attack. MacArthur argued the United States should continue to escalate the war, even if it meant invading China, but Truman was worried this sort of escalation would only lead the Soviet Union to join the war directly and perhaps set off a third world war. When MacArthur took his disagreement with the president public, Truman was forced to fire him. But Truman was unable to produce a viable strategy of his own. The United States sought a negotiated solution to the conflict, but once Chinese leaders realized Truman would not escalate the war further, they lost any incentive to negotiate seriously. The stalemate lasted until Dwight Eisenhower (1890–1969) became president in 1953, at which point the United States signed an armistice dividing the Korean peninsula once again.

The Korean War revealed both the strengths and the weaknesses of America's strategy of containment. On the one hand, containment helped American leaders justify why the United States ought to meet communist aggression in Korea, by arguing that the United States needed to uphold American values like nonaggression. On the other hand, American leaders struggled to translate their ideals into policies, as when

Truman failed to produce a strategy to win the war. Truman's inability to win led to major debates in American domestic politics, including the harmful anti-communism of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy (1908–57). These domestic divisions presaged the much deeper disputes that would emerge a decade later over Vietnam. At the same time Chinese leaders recognized the tremendous costs of confronting America directly, even when they were successful. The biggest loser turned out to be the Soviet Union, since Truman blamed the Soviets for the war and began a major arms buildup that imperiled Soviet security.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger explains that at the time of the Korean War, most Americans believed the Soviets were behind the war, that Joseph Stalin had ordered North Korean president Kim Il-Sung (1912–94) to launch his attack, and then ordered Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976) to reinforce the North Koreans. Later evidence suggests this was not the case. In fact, Kim lobbied Stalin hard for permission to invade the South, which Stalin gave only grudgingly. Throughout the war Stalin provided little aid to either North Korea or China, an early instance of the Sino-Soviet tensions that would emerge in greater force a decade later.

Chapter 20

Summary

Concerned about America's military buildup, in March 1952 Joseph Stalin sent a Peace Note to the Western Allies, proposing a conference to settle all their differences over Germany and Eastern Europe. Stalin offered to reunify Germany into a single neutral state, if the United States would recognize the Soviet clients in Eastern Europe. Only a few years earlier the Western Allies would probably have agreed to Stalin's offer, but by 1952 the Korean War was still raging, and East-West relations had deteriorated too far. Stalin still might have succeeded given more time, but he died in March 1953 before he could follow through on his plans.

Stalin's efforts to create a single neutral Germany also failed because of the opposition of West Germany's new leader, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967). Adenauer was convinced Germany needed to abandon the strong and neutral position Otto von Bismarck had created and pursue good relations with its Western European neighbors and the United States. Adenauer bet that over the longer term Germany would be more secure and more prosperous if it were part of the Western Alliance than if it were a neutral pariah. As such, Adenauer repeatedly refused Soviet proposals to produce an independent and neutral Germany, insisting German unification could occur only on West German terms and as part of NATO.

Winston Churchill, back in office as prime minister from 1951 to 1955, was the strongest proponent of meeting Stalin for

negotiations, arguing NATO should cut a grand deal with the Soviets to formalize the spheres of influence in Europe and prevent further Soviet expansion. Churchill believed that even if the negotiations were unsuccessful they were necessary to show the citizens of Western nations their leaders were doing everything they could to end the Cold War. Adenauer was opposed, but Churchill also struggled to convince American president Dwight Eisenhower that negotiations were a good idea. Eisenhower worried negotiations would undermine Western solidarity if the United States and Britain alienated Adenauer. Eisenhower opted to bring West Germany fully into NATO in 1955, including the construction of a new West German military. By the mid-1950s Eisenhower felt secure enough to reach out to the new Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), but their meeting in Geneva in 1955 accomplished little. West Germany's consolidation and integration into NATO effectively froze the spheres of influence in Europe.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger notes that although the Soviets were masterful in using negotiations to unsettle the Western alliance, over the longer term the Cold War stalemate was weakening the Soviet Union fatally. When Eisenhower finally agreed to meet Khrushchev in 1955, Khrushchev drew the exact opposite conclusion, seeing Eisenhower's attempt at negotiation as a sign of *American* weakness. As a result, the Soviets continued to ignore domestic reform and pursue foreign adventures, a process that ultimately led to the country's collapse.

Chapter 21

Summary

In 1955 Nikita Khrushchev extended military aid to Egypt, leapfrogging the American containment barrier in Europe and provoking a major crisis that divided NATO. Khrushchev's gambit in the Middle East targeted Britain, which still considered itself the great power of the Middle East. Britain's position in the Middle East was challenged by Arab nationalism, especially after Britain's ally King Farouk I of Egypt (1920–65) was overthrown in a military coup by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–70). At first, Dwight Eisenhower tried to bring Nasser back into the Western camp through military and economic aid. Nasser pocketed this aid but also built relationships with the communist bloc, purchasing weapons from Czechoslovakia, recognizing Communist China, and soliciting aid from the Soviet Union. Finally, in July 1956 Eisenhower decided to cut off support for the Nasser regime, hoping the loss of American aid would coerce Nasser into leaving the Soviets.

American leaders did not think they were provoking a crisis with Nasser, but the Egyptian president responded to the cancellation of aid by seizing the Suez Canal zone from its British administrators, while also announcing support for the Algerian rebels fighting against France. British and French leaders saw this as an affront; British prime minister Anthony Eden (1897–1977) compared Nasser to Adolf Hitler. Nasser's actions put Eisenhower in a difficult position. Eisenhower wanted to contain Soviet encroachment in the Middle East, but he did not want America to uphold British and French imperialism. Eisenhower pressured the British and French leaders to negotiate with Nasser, but Eisenhower's insistence on goodwill and cooperation infuriated Eden and French premier Guy Mollet (1905–75).

Unwilling to wait, Eden and Mollet worked with the Israelis to take back the Canal Zone without American help. In October 1956 Israeli forces invaded the Sinai Peninsula. In an obvious ploy Britain and France announced they were intervening to protect the canal zone. Although they seized control of the canal, Britain and France underestimated the American response. Eisenhower was enraged, and he joined the Soviet Union in condemning Britain, France, and Israel for their aggression. The Soviets began calling themselves Egypt's "protector," and threatening war against Britain and France. Eisenhower threatened to destroy Britain and France's economy through sanctions, at which point the allies gave up and withdrew from the Canal Zone.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger is critical of Britain and France's invasion of Suez, but he believes Eisenhower could have responded to the crisis better. Britain and France were both important NATO allies, and the United States ought to have avoided weakening them. Eisenhower's policy reflected American values of nonaggression, regardless of what that policy meant for balancing against the Soviets. Although Eisenhower undercut his own allies, he did not

win much goodwill from the developing world. Nasser's success showed decolonizing countries how they could play the superpowers against each other. In the end, weakening Britain and France meant the United States had to assume much greater responsibility for containing Soviet influence in the developing world.

Chapter 22

Summary

The Suez Crisis occurred at the same time as a major crisis in Hungary, which revealed deep divisions within the Soviet sphere of influence. After World War II Joseph Stalin had imposed one-party communist states on Eastern Europe, whose leaders ruled ruthlessly through secret police and intimidation, as Stalin had. Following Stalin's death in 1953 his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, sought to promote partial reform of the Soviet system. Khrushchev's attempts to reform communism spiraled out of control, leading to riots against the Polish and Hungarian communist governments. The Polish Communist Party accommodated the protestors, purging several Stalin-era officials. Khrushchev considered invading Poland, but at the last minute Polish communist leaders promised to remain within the Warsaw Pact, averting a major showdown.

Events proceeded very differently in Hungary. Protests in Budapest turned violent, with rioters attacking Soviet soldiers in the streets. To placate the rioters, the Hungarian Communist

Party promoted reformist leader Imre Nagy (1896–1958) as the new head of government. Khrushchev was inclined to accept the Nagy government and cut a deal as he had in Poland, but protests continued to accelerate. On October 30, 1956, rioters seized control of the headquarters of the Hungarian Communist Party and murdered its occupants, calling for a new coalition government between communists and noncommunists. Nagy's new coalition government soon announced that Hungary would be leaving the Warsaw Pact and pursuing a policy of neutrality in the Cold War.

Nagy's timing was poor. By November 1956 world attention was fixed intently on the unfolding crisis in Egypt. Sensing an opportunity, Khrushchev acted swiftly. On November 4, Soviet forces sprang into action and crushed the uprising with much violence. Nagy and most of his government were arrested and executed. Dwight Eisenhower and U.S. statesman John Foster Dulles (1888–1959) were unwilling to risk war with the Soviets over Hungary and so did little in response. While the Soviets restored communist rule in Hungary, over the longer run the Hungarian Crisis signaled the weakness of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. Imperialism in Eastern Europe would drain the Soviet Union of precious resources and continue to unite the Western democracies in their determination to contain Soviet expansion.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger is critical of American policy during the Hungarian Crisis. The American companies Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe broadcasted encouragement to the rebels to avoid compromise with the Soviets, raising hopes that America might intervene to support the protests. American broadcasts and public statements increased Khrushchev's suspicions, pushing him toward a violent solution. Eisenhower was wise not to risk a nuclear war over Hungary's independence, but the United States ought to have avoided inflaming the crisis as much as it did. On the other hand, Eisenhower made no effort to link Soviet imperialism in Hungary to British and French imperialism in Suez, missing a major opportunity to criticize the Soviets for their imperialist practices.

Chapter 23

Summary

The Suez and Hungarian crises convinced Nikita Khrushchev that the Soviet Union's power was rising. To challenge containment Khrushchev selected Berlin as his point of attack. The Potsdam Conference (1945) had divided Berlin into four smaller zones, one for each of the occupying powers. When West Germany was founded, Britain, France, and the United States combined their three zones into the city of West Berlin. Although it was part of West Germany, West Berlin itself was deep inside East Germany, isolated from the remainder of NATO. Over time West Berlin posed a major challenge to the Soviets, since East Germans could easily flee to the West through the city, revealing how bankrupt the Soviet-backed German communist system really was.

On the other hand, Berlin's location deep within East Germany created an opportunity for the Soviets to pressure the West, since NATO had no way to defend it against attack. On November 10,

1958, Khrushchev delivered a speech threatening to allow East German leaders to cut off access to West Berlin. Khrushchev challenged Western leaders to abandon the city and hand it over to the new East German government. NATO leaders were divided over how to respond. Dwight Eisenhower and his successor, President John Kennedy (1917–63), were unwilling to risk nuclear war over West Berlin, and together with British prime minister Harold Macmillan (1894–1986) tried to negotiate a new access agreement with the Soviets and the East Germans. But Konrad Adenauer claimed the only real German government was West Germany and argued that any American negotiation with the East Germans would be a betrayal of the West. French president Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970) sided with Adenauer, insisting the status quo be maintained.

Khrushchev's ultimatum had divided the Western Alliance, but he failed to exploit his advantage. Had Khrushchev accepted American and British offers to negotiate, he would have divided them from France and West Germany. Khrushchev refused to negotiate, repeating his initial ultimatum that the West depart Berlin entirely. When the deadline of his ultimatum arrived, however, Khrushchev did nothing, simply reissuing his threat with a new deadline. Once Western leaders realized Khrushchev was bluffing, the crisis within the alliance ended.

Unable to force the West out of Berlin, in August 1961 the Soviets closed off West Berlin with a wall, which prevented East Germans from escaping through the city, while still allowing free passage between West Germany and West Berlin. In a last-ditch effort to improve his bargaining position, Khrushchev tried to deploy Soviet nuclear missiles to Cuba. The ensuing Cuban Missile Crisis nearly resulted in a U.S.–Soviet war, but in the end Khrushchev once again backed down, and the missiles were not deployed.

Analysis

The Berlin Crisis is in *Diplomacy* because it is the first incident in which Henry Kissinger himself is a character in the story. While working as an academic in the 1950s, Kissinger had the opportunity to meet Adenauer on a trip to Germany. Because he knew Adenauer, the Kennedy Administration hired Kissinger as a consultant in 1961 and sent him to explain the details of American nuclear war plans to Adenauer, to show why the United States was not ready for a major nuclear showdown with the Soviets over Berlin. Adenauer was not pleased with the American position and realized West German and American interests might diverge over time. As a result, Adenauer committed himself more closely to European integration, especially with France.

Chapter 24

Summary

The Berlin Crisis had revealed deep divisions in the Western alliance over the future organization of Europe. These divisions were most clearly expressed in the differences between British prime minister Harold Macmillan and French president Charles de Gaulle over how Europe should relate to the United States. Macmillan built a "special relationship" with the United States, making Britain an invaluable junior partner to the American superpower. Building this relationship was not easy, because British leaders remained proponents of the balance of power, while American leaders were Wilsonian idealists. De Gaulle adopted a much more confrontational attitude toward the United States. While Macmillan tried to sustain British influence by building ties across the Atlantic, de Gaulle focused much more on building ties within Europe. In doing so, de Gaulle hoped to build a European order in which France would remain the dominant power.

The differences between Macmillan and de Gaulle were best shown in the realm of nuclear weapons, where Britain and France pursued very different policies. Both presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy believed nuclear deterrence required centralized American control over NATO's nuclear arsenal. Macmillan and de Gaulle both insisted Britain and France retain control over their own nuclear forces. But Macmillan doubled down on the special relationship, meeting with Kennedy in 1962 at a summit in Nassau, Bahamas. Kennedy agreed to sell Britain new nuclear missile submarines, in exchange for a promise from Macmillan that the submarines would be under the command of American NATO officers. Macmillan accepted this subordinate position, recognizing that as long as the submarines were captained and crewed by British sailors, they would remain under effective British control.

De Gaulle would not accept a subordinate position for France. He insisted any nuclear cooperation between the United States and France would need to be between equals, involving close consultation between the American and French presidents on developing a common nuclear strategy. When Kennedy rejected this approach, de Gaulle went his own way, withdrawing France from NATO's military command structure and relocating all American forces outside France's borders. The French military maintained its own nuclear weapons, with relatively little input

from the United States.

Analysis

In comparing Kennedy and de Gaulle, Henry Kissinger also compares the larger American and European understandings of international politics. As a Wilsonian, Kennedy assumed all people shared the same basic common interests and that the role of diplomacy was simply to remove obstacles to those common pursuits. De Gaulle was a practitioner of the old *raison d'état*, who believed states had fundamentally different interests and that the role of statesmanship was to build bridges between fundamentally different societies. As a result, American and French leaders struggled to understand each other: Kennedy resented that de Gaulle did not trust the United States, and de Gaulle resented that Kennedy did not respect France as an equal. In the end, Kissinger concludes, de Gaulle's *raison d'état* was self-defeating. France lacked the power to defend itself from Soviet aggression and needed the United States. De Gaulle's realist logic may have been sound, but his abrasive approach alienated France's most important ally.

Chapter 25

Summary

America's policy of containment faced its greatest challenge in Vietnam, where the connection between American values and American polices broke down. The major dilemma of containment was whether the United States needed to contain communism *everywhere*. In response to the Korean War, President Harry Truman expanded American involvement in Asia more generally, including sending military aid to French forces fighting against the Vietminh communist insurgents in Indochina. Truman's policy set an ominous precedent: he did enough to entangle America in the conflict but not enough to win decisively.

Dwight Eisenhower inherited Truman's indecisive Indochina policy and continued it. Eisenhower continued to extend military aid to France, but when French forces were trapped by the Vietminh at their base of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Eisenhower refused to send American forces to fight alongside the French. Eisenhower promoted a negotiated solution at the Geneva Conference of 1954. Defeated on the battlefield, the French agreed to leave Indochina. The Vietminh were given control over the northern half of the Vietnam region, while a temporary government was established in the southern half.

Eisenhower was willing to negotiate, but he remained committed to preventing further communist expansion in Indochina. To support his containment strategy, Eisenhower tried to build an alliance like NATO for Southeast Asia: SEATO. Unlike NATO, the members of SEATO were not powerful enough to contribute to their own collective self-defense, relying almost exclusively on the United States for military support. At the same time, the anti-communist dictator Ngo Dinh Diem (1901–63) rose to power in South Vietnam, refusing to cooperate with his northern communist counterparts. In response, the North Vietnamese supported a major communist insurgency against Diem's regime. In the name of containing further communist expansion, Eisenhower allowed Diem to join SEATO and dispatched American military advisers to help the South Vietnamese army defeat the communist insurgents.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger believes the Vietnam War resulted from the overly extreme pursuit of American values. American leaders ought to have remembered Cardinal Richelieu's original formulation that power should be guided by the national interest, in which case American leaders would have realized Vietnam was not that important to the United States. In their determination to contain communism *everywhere*, American leaders committed the power and prestige of the United States to the defense of an otherwise unimportant country.

Chapter 26

Summary

President John Kennedy continued Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower's policies in Vietnam, but he believed the communist insurgency could be defeated by building up South Vietnam's economy and democratizing its government. Kennedy and his advisers misunderstood the nature of insurgency, since it was nearly impossible to build a successful economy and democracy while insurgents were working to tear it down. Instead of recognizing this basic dilemma, American leaders increasingly blamed Ngo Dinh Diem for not implementing their strategy properly. Kennedy eventually incited the Vietnamese military to stage a coup that killed Diem and his family. In destroying the

Diem regime Kennedy did most of the insurgents' work for them. Insurgencies succeed when they can portray the ruling government as illegitimate, and none of Diem's American-backed successors could claim serious political legitimacy.

Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, but his successor, Lyndon Johnson (1908–73), accelerated Kennedy's policy of escalation in Vietnam. From 1965 onward Johnson began a major bombing campaign against the North while committing large numbers of American soldiers directly to fight the insurgents in South Vietnam. The failure of Johnson's strategy to produce immediate results fractured the American domestic political consensus on the Cold War. Initial criticism was largely

practical, focusing on whether the United States *could* win the war, but criticism escalated into a moral critique, describing American policy as *unjust*. Many moral critics began to question the role of the United States in the world more broadly, wondering whether containment might be making the world a worse place, and arguing America should come home. Both moderate and radical critics insisted Johnson was not doing enough to negotiate a compromise with the North Vietnamese.

Critics of the war generally misunderstood the North Vietnamese leadership, who were interested in total victory, not negotiation. But North Vietnamese leaders quickly realized the divisions within American society could work to their benefit and encouraged the perception that they were ready for negotiations and that Johnson was to blame for the continuing conflict. In the meantime the North Vietnamese continued to pursue victory on the battlefield, launching a major attack in early 1968 during the Vietnamese New Year celebration of Tet. On the battlefield the Tet Offensive was a major communist defeat, as American forces demolished the insurgent offensive. Psychologically, however, the Tet Offensive was a major communist victory, as many American leaders became convinced victory was impossible. Faced with a growing domestic political catastrophe, Johnson announced he would not run for president again, leaving the quagmire in Vietnam to his successor.

Analysis

Henry Kissinger argues the collapse of American confidence in the Vietnam War was an elite-driven phenomenon. Public opinion polls from the late 1960s showed the majority of Americans still supported the war effort. The harshest moral criticism of Johnson's policies came primarily from academia, where many scholars questioned America's role in the world more broadly. Following the Tet Offensive, American elites lost their nerve. Many supporters of containment became convinced the United States needed to exit Vietnam as soon as possible and at any cost. These political elites were joined by the American news media, with Walter Cronkite (1916–2009) and the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* reporting to Americans that the war in Vietnam was a lost cause.

Chapter 27

Summary

President Richard Nixon (1913–94) faced an impossible dilemma in Vietnam. Nixon was determined to achieve peace with honor, through a negotiation that would allow South Vietnam to determine its own fate through free elections. Nixon was caught between the North Vietnamese, on the one hand, and the Peace Movement, on the other. The North Vietnamese leadership had no desire for compromise and wanted the total subjugation of the South. The Peace Movement worried that if Nixon succeeded in withdrawing from Vietnam with honor American would continue to pursue aggressive containment policies elsewhere. As a result, both the North Vietnamese and the Peace Movement preferred the United States be defeated in Vietnam, supporting negotiations only to ratify America's terms of surrender.

Caught between foreign and domestic opposition, Nixon opted for a strategy of "Vietnamization," in which American forces were withdrawn gradually, while building a viable South Vietnamese military that could stand on its own against the Northern communist threat. Vietnamization involved a difficult balancing act between limiting American involvement while still incentivizing the North Vietnamese into negotiations. Nixon delegated the difficult task of negotiating with the North Vietnamese to Henry Kissinger, who served as Nixon's national security adviser. Kissinger negotiated in Paris directly with Le Duc Tho (1911–90), a high-ranking member of the North Vietnamese Politburo. Initially, Tho stonewalled in negotiations and blamed Nixon for the lack of progress. In the end, however, Nixon's strategy was largely successful: American and South Vietnamese forces destroyed communist havens in Cambodia and Laos, while American aircraft bombarded North Vietnam and mined North Vietnamese harbors. In October 1972 Tho suddenly accepted all main U.S. negotiating points, including a withdraw of North Vietnamese forces from the South, the mutual return of prisoners, and free elections in South Vietnam.

Nixon achieved peace with honor, but America's fractured domestic politics snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. Nixon and Kissinger insisted the peace agreement required

Embroiled in the Watergate Scandal, Nixon lost the domestic political capital to support South Vietnam. After a few years of rebuilding, the North Vietnamese attacked again in 1975. Without American assistance South Vietnam was overrun and destroyed, at tremendous human cost. Vietnam had been a mistake from the beginning, and future American presidents should avoid committing the United States to conflicts in which it has no clear compelling interest.

Analysis

Kissinger's work on strategy during the Vietnam War is the most controversial aspect of his career in government. Critics accused the Nixon Administration, and Kissinger in particular, of perpetrating war crimes, especially the deployment of American forces to Cambodia in 1970. Critics allege that the U.S. invasion was illegal and that it led to the rise of the communist Khmer Rouge movement, which perpetrated genocide against several million people. Kissinger spends a good portion of this chapter refuting those claims. He emphasizes that Cambodian neutrality had already been violated by the North Vietnamese, who had illegally constructed military bases in Cambodia, and that the United States attacked these bases only with the permission of the Cambodian government. Kissinger is especially dismissive of the claim that the United States was responsible for the Khmer Rouge's mass murder, since the United States fought *against* the Cambodian communists and did everything it could to support the Cambodian government against communist infiltration.

Chapter 28

Summary

President Richard Nixon wanted to end the Vietnam War so the United States could rebuild its power around the world. American idealism had turned on itself in Vietnam, and Nixon believed the path forward was building a foreign policy firmly rooted in America's national interest. Nixon argued the pursuit of the national interest was essential so American power could be preserved, the better to pursue a long-term Wilsonian vision. For Nixon, power politics and American ideals went hand-in-hand.

active American enforcement to prevent North Vietnamese cheating, but domestic peace activists were determined the United States should disengage entirely from Vietnam.

Nixon's largest foreign-policy objective involved trying to build a more normal relationship with the Soviet Union through a process called *détente*. Détente was unpopular with both liberals *and* conservatives in the United States, both of whom retained an idealistic focus on the Soviet Union's domestic communist society. Nixon's détente policy focused on altering Soviet international behavior, not its internal political structures. The main tool of Nixon's détente policy was the strategy of "linkage," which sought to concede areas important to Soviet interests in exchange for Soviet concessions on areas important to American national interests. Nixon's linkage policy became closely associated with the major arms-control negotiations with the Soviet Union. Linking arms control to Soviet behavior was actually very difficult, because the negotiations were intensely technical, and liberal arms-control advocates continually pressed Nixon to move quickly in negotiations, leaving little room for broader bargaining.

Linkage was much more successful once the United States opened up to the People's Republic of China, initiating a period of "triangular diplomacy" that reshaped great power relations. The United States and China had had little contact with each other since the Korean War (1950–53), but in the 1960s Chinese leaders accused their Soviet allies of imperialistic practices. Nixon was determined to establish better U.S.-China relations but struggled to do so, because the United States had no embassy in China. Nixon's efforts ultimately paid off in a series of high-level visits to Beijing: Henry Kissinger traveled there secretly in July 1971, and Nixon made a major summit visit in February 1972. In establishing new positive relations with China, the United States was able to play the Soviet Union and China against each other, extracting concessions from each.

Analysis

Reflecting on his participation in the negotiations, Kissinger points out the importance of personal connections between American and Chinese leaders in building a new U.S.-China relationship. Nixon and Kissinger found Chinese leaders Mao Tse-tung and Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) to be very gracious hosts. Like Nixon and Kissinger, Mao and Zhou believed Sino American relations should be built on broad commonalities of interest, rather than on technical details of policy. The United States and China remained divided on a number of issues, but Nixon, Mao, Kissinger, and Zhou all believed opposition to the

Soviet Union transcended those differences. The American opening to China was based on both common interests and

effective statesmanship.

Chapter 29

Summary

President Richard Nixon's détente policy and triangular diplomacy resulted in major foreign-policy successes. In Europe Nixon supported West German chancellor Willy Brandt's (1913–92) *Ostpolitik*, which sought to normalize East West German relations. Détente contributed to this process through the 1971 Four-Power Agreement on Berlin, which finally normalized Western access to the city and prevented further Berlin crises. In the Middle East Nixon used détente to pursue a more aggressive policy of limiting Soviet influence. Under Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt had drifted into the Soviet sphere of influence, but Nixon and Henry Kissinger managed to convince Nasser's successor, President Anwar Sadat (1918–81), that the road to peace and prosperity ran through Washington, not Moscow. Sadat expelled Soviet military advisers from Egypt, and after a disastrous 1973 war against Israel, he embraced an American-led peace process, which set the stage for later important agreements like the 1979 Egypt Israel Peace Treaty and the 1993 Oslo Accords. In this regard détente both limited Soviet influence *and* advanced the cause of peace.

Despite its demonstrable successes, Nixon's policy of détente quickly came under attack in American domestic politics. Nixon's foremost critic was Senator Henry Jackson (1912–83), a relatively conservative Democrat who insisted on a continued ideological confrontation with the Soviet Union. Jackson became a major critic of the arms-control process, arguing the negotiations gave the Soviet Union more missiles than the United States. Jackson also criticized Nixon on human rights, especially the rights of Jews in the Soviet Union. Through his strategy of linkage, Nixon offered economic concessions to the Soviets, in the hopes that improved trade with the United States would put pressure on the Soviets to make concessions in the fields of arms control and human rights. Jackson attacked Nixon's trade policy, arguing the United States should not trade with countries that violated the human rights of their citizens. As with arms control, the larger issue was ideological: Jackson wanted to generate confrontation about the evils of the Soviet system, while Nixon preferred to modify Soviet international behavior through a combination of inducements and penalties.

Nixon resigned from office in 1973 and was succeeded by President Gerald Ford (1913–2006). The same criticisms of détente were leveled against the Ford Administration. By the mid-1970s even major foreign-policy successes received nothing but criticism in the American domestic political scene. A case in point was the massive Conference on European Security and Cooperation, which produced the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In exchange for the recognition of Soviet-drawn borders in Eastern Europe, the Soviets signed a guarantee of human rights for their citizens. Within a decade Soviet and Eastern European citizens would point to the promises made in the Helsinki Act to oppose communist rule, hastening the decline of Soviet power. Although it was a major success—and on human rights, no less—the Helsinki Act was criticized by American media as an empty agreement that had no serious impact on U.S.-Soviet relations.

Analysis

Kissinger emphasizes that any president who wants to change the direction of American foreign relations will face political opposition. Nixon's struggle was similar to that faced by Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Harry Truman in earlier decades. Unlike these earlier statesmen, Nixon's domestic political position collapsed in the Watergate Scandal, which prevented him from consolidating his successes by educating the American public. Nixon's détente policy was both wise and necessary, but it was not appreciated by Americans, who expected a more exciting and moralistic approach.

Chapter 30

Summary

The Cold War ended with the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, brought about by the collaboration of two very different men: American president Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) and Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931). Reagan understood the moralistic motivations of the American soul better than any other postwar president, and he deployed

America's moral self-image to justify his policies. Reagan combined an insistence on the evils of communism with a deeply held belief that communists could be redeemed: lasting peace was possible, if only the United States could convince communists to abandon their Marxism-Leninism. Reagan criticized the Soviets on human rights, confronted them in the Third World, and accelerated the arms race, but he also believed this pressure would allow for more successful negotiations. Reagan eagerly sought out face-to-face meetings with Soviet leaders, in the hope he could convince them to abandon communism and end the Cold War. While rapidly expanding the American military, Reagan was also a proponent of universal nuclear disarmament, which he pursued at summit meetings with Soviet leaders.

Reagan never had to confront the contradictions of his foreign policy approach, because under Mikhail Gorbachev the Soviet Union collapsed. More than any other Soviet leader, Gorbachev recognized the weaknesses of the Soviet system, and the role the overextension of Soviet policy had played in exacerbating them. As a result, Gorbachev accepted Reagan's offers for negotiations, relaxing tensions with the West so Soviet power would have time to recover. In conserving Soviet resources Gorbachev cut off support for Soviet clients in the Third World and ultimately withdrew Soviet forces from Eastern Europe. Without Soviet troops to back them up, the Eastern European governments were forced to rely on elections to legitimate themselves, which they lost. In the fall of 1989 Europe's communist governments were overthrown and replaced by new democratically elected regimes. The collapse of Soviet power around the world heralded the end of the Cold War, as the United States and the Soviet Union joined in new major arms-control agreements, and East and West Germany were reunited as a Western-oriented democracy.

Gorbachev's foreign policy could not resolve the Soviet Union's basic dilemmas, which were domestic. By insisting the Soviet Union could coexist peacefully with capitalism, Gorbachev undermined the very foundations of Marxism-Leninism. The Soviet Communist Party opposed most of Gorbachev's reforms, so Gorbachev sought to bypass the central party by promoting reform in the regional governments. In doing so, however, Gorbachev set in motion a process that tore the Soviet state apart, as regional parties adopted more nationalistic policies. The Baltic states announced their intention to secede from the Soviet Union in 1990. By late 1991 Russian president Boris Yeltsin (1931–2007) announced *Russia* would secede, effectively ending the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's power.

Analysis

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Henry Kissinger notes that many liberals in the United States argued the Soviet Union had always been weak and that the U.S. strategy of containment had provoked and prolonged the Cold War needlessly. It was Marxist commentators who recognized the Soviet Union had failed because of the worsening balance of power vis-à-vis the United States in the 1980s. American leaders may have understood the Cold War as a moral crusade, but the effect of their policy had always been to balance against Soviet power. In this sense, containment actually worked. Although Kissinger himself disagreed with many of the specific policies pursued in the name of containment, the framework was very effective in rallying Americans to balance against Soviet power.

Chapter 31

Summary

In the post–Cold War period America will be tempted to use its overwhelming power in a crusade to build a new international order based on American domestic values. This would be a mistake. In the 21st century the United States will face a nationalistic world inhabited by many superpowers—China, Russia, Europe, Japan, and India. American idealism will be insufficient, just as Woodrow Wilson's idealism was insufficient to build world order following World War I. The major question is how the United States can remain true to its values, while also promoting a more peaceful and prosperous world.

American leaders should look to the 19th century Concert of Europe. Americans have always hated Cardinal Richelieu's *raison d'état* and the balance of power, but the Concert was the international system that lasted the longest without major wars. Most importantly, Klemens von Metternich built the Concert not solely on the balance of power but also on the legitimating ideals of divine sovereignty. A similar international order can be built on American ideals of democracy, capitalism, and rule of law, but only if the United States can find a way to work jointly with other superpowers in a balance, in which American ideals provide the legitimating framework, but

American policy hews closely to its specific national interest.

Analysis

The United States should expect to retain a close relationship with Europe, the great power that shares its values and security interests. American leaders should build a new relationship with Russia, but they should also be prepared for continued tension, as post-imperial Russia seeks to define its new place in the world. America will need to strike a balance between China and Japan, maintaining strong relations with each and helping to bridge the gap between them. To shore up its own power, the United States should also pursue reform and free trade in the Western Hemisphere. In reconciling these differing goals, the United States can look to Otto von Bismarck's policy and build consensus on shared objectives with differing groups of countries. By combining institutional balance of power with American values, the United States can produce a more peaceful and prosperous world order for the 21st century.

g Quotes

"In every century there seems to emerge a country with the power ... to shape the entire international system."

— Narrator, Chapter 1

Henry Kissinger describes world order as being shaped by the diplomacy of successive hegemonic countries (countries that have a dominant position): France, Britain, Russia, Germany, and the United States. Kissinger's account is told primarily from the perspective of these superpowers, and especially their leading statesmen.

"America's journey through international politics has been a triumph of faith over experience."

— Narrator, Chapter 1

Kissinger argues America's historical experiences have generated its sense of exceptionalism. Unlike the superpowers of Europe and Asia, America was the sole great power in its hemisphere and safe from external attack. This sense of security shaped the American worldview. Americans believe all people are peaceful and that a world order should be possible based on the mutual common interest of mankind. While Kissinger admires America's optimism, he argues it is at odds with the experience of most other societies, which are more familiar with the insecurity that comes from having powerful neighbors.

"Yet the rise and fall of previous world orders ... is the only experience on which one can draw."

— Narrator, Chapter 1

Kissinger is speaking here about understanding the challenges facing contemporary statesmen. He advocates looking at previous international systems for insight into how peace can be maintained. The focus of Kissinger's effort is the 19th century's "Concert of Europe," which regulated the affairs of Great Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria for 40 years in relative peace.

"The two international systems that were the most stable ... had the advantage of uniform perceptions."

— Narrator, Chapter 1

Kissinger is often recognized as a proponent of *Realpolitik*, in which countries pursue their national interests by the exercise of power not by idealistic considerations. However, in *Diplomacy* Kissinger emphasizes the importance of common culture and values for regulating the balance of power.

"The statesman must act on assessments that cannot be proved at the time he is making them."

— Narrator, Chapter 1

Kissinger insists the past must be understood from the perspective of leading statesmen, rather than from individual perspectives, since they did not have the luxury of knowing how things would turn out. One of the major themes of *Diplomacy* is the difficulty of making life-or-death decisions under conditions of uncertainty. Kissinger maintains that only by understanding the past from this perspective can nations derive useful lessons for the future, which is, by definition, unknown.

"The security of America was inseparable from the security of all the rest of mankind."

— Narrator, Chapter 2

This is Kissinger's summary of Wilsonianism. While Kissinger admires America's altruism, he is wary of its tendency to pursue that vision of altruism with no sense of limits. One of the major themes of *Diplomacy* is that statesmen must live within their means and pursue only those objectives their power allows them to achieve. When states pursue objectives beyond their capabilities, the result is always disaster.

"Power without legitimacy tempts tests of strength; legitimacy without power tempts empty posturing."

— Narrator, Chapter 3

through the Treaty of Versailles. Kissinger believes the Versailles settlement failed because its legitimating principles—liberalism and collective security—were rejected by so many of the superpowers needed to defend the system from attack. As a

Kissinger believes a stable world order must combine an accurate assessment of the balance of power with a uniting concept of legitimacy. A system that lacks legitimacy will be wracked by crises, as states test their power against each other. On the other hand, a system without power will fall as soon as any powerful country rejects its legitimating principle. The 19th-century Concert of Europe combined the power of the main states in the system with the legitimating principle of aristocratic rule, a combination that allowed 40 years of peace.

"Bismarck preserved the peace and eased international tension with his moderation and flexibility."

— Narrator, Chapter 7

Kissinger portrays German chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) as the ultimate practitioner of power politics. After uniting Germany Bismarck turned his genius to maintaining the peace. For all his skill at power politics, Bismarck never developed a legitimating principle for his system, something other than power that would hold the German-led Europe together. As a result, the rise of Germany led to world wars and the total destruction of Europe.

"The Versailles settlement was stillborn because the values it extolled clashed with the incentives needed to enforce."

— Narrator, Chapter 9

Following World War I, the victorious allies—Britain, France, Italy, and the United States—tried to build a new world order

result, a world order premised on peace and fairness was overthrown as soon as Germany became powerful enough to challenge it, because no powerful country would stand up to defend it.

"Statesmen always face the dilemma that, when their scope for action is greatest, they have a minimum of knowledge."

— Narrator, Chapter 12

While Kissinger is critical of British and French leaders not taking a stronger stand against Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), he also recognizes the basic dilemma of their situation: their unwillingness to take their countries to war while Hitler's motives were still unknown. The "advantage" of hindsight can sometimes distort the nature of these dilemmas, since historians have a clearer picture than policymakers do.

"All great leaders walk alone. Their singularity springs from their ability to discern challenges that are not yet apparent."

— Narrator, Chapter 15

Kissinger holds up American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945) as an example of successful leadership. Roosevelt recognized German power would pose a long-term threat to the security of the United States, in an era when most Americans insisted the United States remain isolated from European politics. Because he saw the threat coming, Roosevelt was able to bring the United States into the war, ensuring the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"A great leader must be an educator ... But he must also be willing to walk alone."

— Narrator, Chapter 15

If the test of statesmanship is perceiving the future, the test of a statesman's leadership is convincing others to follow him or her into that future, even when they cannot see what he or she sees. Kissinger believes Roosevelt succeeded in both his statesmanship and his leadership. Kissinger contrasts Roosevelt's success with President Richard Nixon (1913–94), whom Kissinger admires as a statesman but who failed to educate the American public in the wisdom of his approach.

"Great enterprises are often driven by a touch of naivete."

— Narrator, Chapter 18

Kissinger is often critical of American leaders' inability to place limits on their ambitions, but he also recognizes that America's tremendous confidence and dedication have been assets in its efforts to transform the world.

"Imperialism in Eastern Europe drained the Soviet Union of resources and frightened the Western democracies, without enhancing Soviet strength."

— Narrator, Chapter 22

During the Cold War (1947–1991) the Soviet Union taxed its resources by trying to build a major empire, first in Eastern Europe and then in the developing world. When Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931) sought to limit his country's ambitions, the Soviet Union tore itself apart.

"The quest for moral consensus becomes self-defeating when it destroys the equilibrium."

— Narrator, Chapter 31

Kissinger believes America will best be able to promote its ideals in a world that is orderly and peaceful. If America rejects the balance of power and pushes beyond its capability in a crusade for democracy, it will ultimately fail at promoting the very values Americans cherish. The United States should follow the example of past statesmen in building a new world order based on an equilibrium of power.

m Glossary

communism political philosophy that emphasizes the importance of economic power and promotes the spread of economic power equally among working people, often through violent revolution

containment strategy that seeks to prevent another country from expanding its power and influence

democracy system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives

détente easing of hostility or strained relations, especially between countries

disarmament policy that seeks to reduce or eliminate military forces and weapons, usually with the aim of preventing war

human rights political philosophy that emphasizes the inalienable rights of all human beings, and promotes protecting those rights for all people, regardless of who they are or where they live

isolationism policy of remaining apart from the affairs or interests of other groups, especially the political affairs of other countries

nation stable community of people sharing a common culture, history, and language

- **nationalism** political philosophy that advocates for the political independence and interests of a particular nation

- **nuclear weapon** bomb or missile that uses nuclear energy, capable of causing explosions of tremendous strength

- **superpower** state that is one of the most powerful in any given world order

- **Versailles** massive palace in France, the site of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, often used as a metonym for the world order of the 1920s and 1930s

- **world war** armed conflict taking place across most of the world's surface, or involving all the great powers of a world order