

# INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

THIRD EDITION

ANTHONY BEST, JUSSI M. HANHIMÄKI,  
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# INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

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‘Students love this textbook on the international history of the twentieth century; so do their teachers. This third edition is most welcome. We enjoy a main story vividly and clearly told in chapters that also live their own independent lives. The historiographical surveys are marvels of clarity and compactness, and the questions that are addressed to the literature provide excellent pathways to further reading and classroom discussions. For this third edition the authors have succeeded admirably in bringing the book into the second decade of the twenty-first century. I am particularly pleased with the chapter on human rights, a topic for far too long neglected by most historians of international relations.’

**Helge Pharo**, *Professor of International History, University of Oslo*

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- **Antony Best**
- **Jussi M. Hanhimäki**
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- **Kirsten E. Schulze**

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Map 7.1 German expansion, 1935–39. Based on a map from Margaret Lamb and Nicholas Tarling, *From Versailles to Pearl Harbor: The Origins of the Second World War in Europe and Asia* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2001); adapted from *A Map History of the Modern World*, by Brian Catchpole. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education.

Map 8.1 German expansion in Europe, 1939–40. Based on maps from Joseph S. Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History* (New York: Harper Collins College Publishing, 1993); adapted from *A Map History of the Modern World*, by Brian Catchpole. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education.

Map 8.2 Japanese expansion in Asia, 1940–42. Based on maps from Joseph S. Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History* (New York: Harper Collins College Publishing, 1993); adapted from *A Map History of the Modern World*, by Brian Catchpole. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education.

Map 16.1 The United States and Latin America since 1945. After Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford and Kenneth J. Hagan, *American Foreign Policy: A History*, Vol. 2: since 1900, third revised edition (D.C. Heath and Company, 1991). Used with permission.

## NOTE ON THE TEXT

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In this book the following styles have been used for the romanization of foreign words and names. Japanese names have been converted into the Western style, whereby the family name comes last. Chinese words and names have been rendered in Pinyin, with the sometimes more familiar Wade-Giles transliteration appearing in brackets for well-known figures. Where countries changed names during the course of the twentieth century we have used the old name when it was in contemporary use with the new name following it in brackets.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ACC	Allied Control Commission
ANC	African National Congress
ANZUS	Australian–New Zealand–United States Pact
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASA	Association of South-East Asia
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
BRICS	(Brazil Russia India China South Africa)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CoCom	Co-ordinating Committee
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
Cominform	Communist Information Bureau
Comintern	Communist International
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DJIA	Dow Jones Industrial Average
DOP	Declaration of Principles
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
EC	European Community
ECA	Economic Co-operation Administration
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EDC	European Defence Community

EEC	European Economic Community
EFSM	European Financial Stabilization Mechanism
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMS	European Monetary System
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Co-operation
ERP	European Recovery Programme
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia
FIDES	<i>Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Economique et Social des Territoires d'Outre-Mer</i>
FLN	Front de Libération National
FMLN	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front
FNLA	National Front of Liberation of Angola
FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSA	Free Syrian Army
G-7	Group of 7
G-8	Group of 8
G-20	Group of 20
G-77	Group of 77
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GMD	Guomindang
GNP	gross national product
GSPC	Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	inter-continental ballistic missile
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
ISA	Internal Security Act
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham
ITT	International Telephone and Telegraph
JCA	Jewish Colonial Association
Ji	Jemaah Islamiyya
JNF	Jewish National Fund

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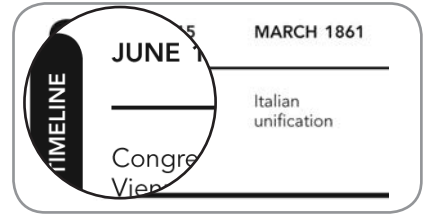
JSP	Japanese Socialist Party
KOR	Workers Defence Committee
KWP	Korean Workers Party
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MAD	mutually assured destruction
MERCOSUR	Southern Cone Common Market
MFN	most favoured nation
MIRV	multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NLF	National Liberation Front
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	overseas development aid
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PA	Palestinian Authority
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PKI	Communist Party of Indonesia
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PPS	Polish Peasants Party
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
PT	<i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i>
ROC	Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
R2P	'responsibility to protect'
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (or Treaties)
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers
SDF	Self-Defence Force
SEA	Single European Act
SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organization
SED	Socialist Unity Party
SEZ	Special Economic Zone

SHP	Smallholders Party
SLA	South Lebanese Army
SLBM	submarine-launched ballistic missile
SMR	South Manchurian Railway
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (or Talks)
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UFCO	United Fruit Company
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	UN Commission on Human Rights
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNEF	UN Emergency Force
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	UN Human Rights Council
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSCOP	UN Special Commission on Palestine
VNQDD	Vietnamese Nationalist Party
WHFTA	Western Hemisphere Free Trade Area
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	weapons of mass destruction
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

# A VISUAL TOUR OF THE FEATURES OF INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

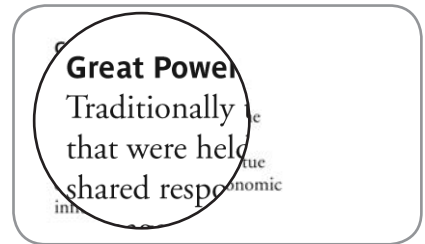
## Chapter timelines

At the beginning of each chapter, a number of key dates are set out in a timeline to give a chronological context to those issues to be discussed.



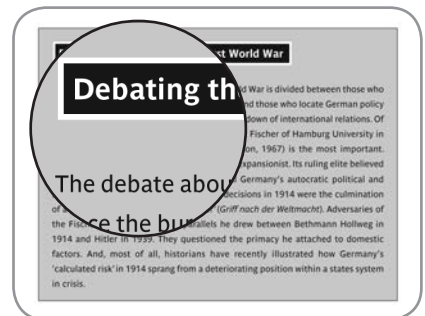
## Emboldened glossary terms and marginal definitions

Where key terms are used for the first time in each chapter they can be found in **bold**. The definitions can be found in the margin nearby. A full glossary can be found at the back of the book.



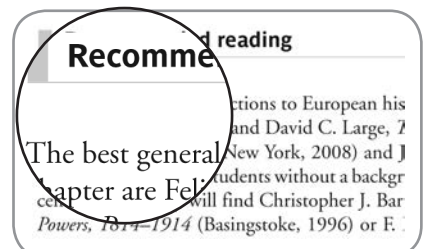
## Debate boxes

Throughout the text debate boxes can be found which discuss controversial issues in greater depth to support the reader through the complex issues under consideration.



## Recommended reading

At the end of each chapter there is a considerable list of further reading.



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# Introduction

## The third edition

Since the publication of the second edition of this book in 2008, world politics has in some cases taken surprising turns, such as the Sri Lankan government's victory over the Tamil Tigers in May 2009 and the killing by US Navy SEALs of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011 in Abbottabad, Pakistan. In other cases, familiar problems such as the India–Pakistan dispute over Kashmir and the Israeli–Palestinian crisis persist. The end of the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan seemed to have tempered American enthusiasm for armed intervention and regime change in the Middle East and elsewhere. George W. Bush's 'war on terror' gave way to Barack Obama's less conspicuous but no less controversial 'drone war' against armed extremists. Events since 2008 have underscored that the threat of terrorism was never simply an American problem. India, Russia, China and other countries have suffered large-scale terror attacks. However, the threat of terrorism, whether perpetrated by 'lone wolf' attackers such as Anders Breivik in Norway or national and international terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, was not the only focus of international relations. Conventional inter-state disputes in Eastern Europe and Asia have reemerged as pressing threats to international peace, accompanied by talk of a return to 'cold war' conditions between the US and its regional allies pitted against Russia and China. In addition, North Korea's nuclear



tests and uncertainty about Iran's nuclear intentions fuel local arms races. The 'Arab spring' swept away dictators in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt and in April 2011 triggered a bloody civil war in Syria that has destabilized the entire region and became the new arena for international jihadism. The rapid territorial conquests by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in June/July 2014, its brutal treatment of the civilian population in the areas now under its control, and its call for Muslims to carry out attacks in the West, placed terrorism and the question of military intervention firmly back in the centre of the international agenda. Perhaps most unsettling of all, the drama of international politics, revolution and war took place against a backdrop of intractable financial crisis and irreversible environmental change. The authors would like to thank our publishers for the wonderful opportunity to produce a third edition of this book that takes into account these events and elaborates on these themes.

Like the two earlier editions, the third edition offers the benefits of a cohesive view of international history by four specialists with regional expertise. It also offers the benefit of having received considerable feedback from lecturers and students using the book on their courses. In light of their suggestions we have updated all chapters and the suggested reading lists and added a new chapter on the international history of human rights. We have also added additional or new illustrations to many chapters and included a timeline for each chapter to help students to appreciate how events have unfolded over time. The accompanying website has also been revamped and updated and it includes a full Bibliography: [www.routledge.com/cw/best](http://www.routledge.com/cw/best).

## **The second edition**

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Since publication of the first edition of *International History of the Twentieth Century* in 2004, world events have evolved rapidly. The search for al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden and the efforts to destroy his power base and cut off his finances led to the US and its allies attacking Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. However, they failed to destroy or even contain al-Qaeda; instead al-Qaeda-inspired terror spread. In 2002 suicide bombers targeted Bali, in 2003 Jakarta, in 2004 Madrid and in 2005 London. As unsuccessful as the global war on terror were efforts to resolve the Arab–Israeli conflict. The second Palestinian *intifada* continued unabated and after the death of Yasser Arafat the already existing rivalry between different Palestinian factions descended into internecine fighting. In 2007 Hamas took over the Gaza Strip while the Palestinian Authority continued to govern the West Bank. The situation along Israel's northern border also heated up, culminating in Israel's Second Lebanon War in 2006, which like the first one was a complete failure. In South-East Asia Indonesia consolidated its democracy and ended the conflict in Aceh in 2005 while in Thailand prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra was ousted in a bloodless coup in 2006; and in 2007 Buddhist monks in Burma tried to achieve regime change in what became dubbed the Saffron Revolution.

In order to incorporate all these new events it was necessary to change the title to bring the book into the twenty-first century. Like the first edition, the second edition offers the benefits of a cohesive view of world history by four specialists with regional expertise. It also offers the benefit of having received considerable feedback from lecturers and students using the book on their courses. In light of their excellent suggestions we have updated all chapters, reorganized some and added two new chapters: one on European integration and the other on the global war on terror. We expanded the material on the Middle East to include a more detailed discussion of the second *intifada*, the 2006 Lebanon War and post-2000 attempts at resolving the Arab–Israeli conflict. We also added illustrations to each chapter and included additional web links to primary resource sites for students to link to from the support website.

## Introduction to the twentieth century and beyond

In the twentieth century the history of international relations revealed four powerful trends. The first, and the one that received the greatest attention at the end of the century, was that the years between 1900 and 2000 witnessed a shrinking world in which the rapid growth of trade and finance created a truly global economy, while advances in communications and transport radically reduced the boundaries of time and space. Moreover, this trend towards **globalization** was reinforced by the fact that closer contacts and interdependence between political communities spurred on the formation of permanent inter-governmental institutions as well as a mushrooming of non-governmental organizations. Linked to this trend was a second major theme, which is that the twentieth century was a period defined by the quest for modernization and the perfection of modernity. Accordingly, more than any previous century, its course was shaped by ideological innovations and confrontation, ranging from the progressive utopianism of communism to the outwardly nostalgic visions of political Islam. Another major trend was that the century saw the steady diffusion of power away from Europe, which had dominated the world in 1900. At the level of **Great Power** politics, Europe was eclipsed by the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union, but this change to the international order also had another vital element, the proliferation of new nation-states in Asia and Africa, which acquired sovereignty as the European colonial empires broke up. These dramatic transformations in the world led to the fourth trend, the century's all-too-frequent tendency to descend into conflict. Fed by ideology, nationalism and advances in technology and institutional administration, no previous century can claim the violent death toll of the last one, in which lives were not just lost in war, but also in barbarous acts of organized state violence.

Our purpose is to offer students a one-volume, clear and wide-ranging account of the twentieth century and to explain why world politics followed this complex and often violent course. Such an exercise contains the danger that, in explaining

### globalization

The cultural, social and economic changes caused by the growth of international trade, the rapid transfer of investment capital and the development of high-speed global communications.

### Great Powers

Traditionally those states that were held capable of shared responsibility for the management of the international order by virtue of their military and economic influence.

long-term historical developments, the historian can, if not careful, erase the fundamental variable in all human affairs – contingency. There was no overriding reason why the last century had to be plagued by war, economic upheaval and political turmoil, for other routes to the future were open as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth. Indeed, many on the cusp of that transition, such as Norman Angell in his 1910 book, *The Great Illusion*, foresaw a new age of perpetual inter-state harmony ushered in by the rise of industrial economies and new technologies. Unfortunately, however, these prophets of peace proved to be wrong, and thus the history that we have to account for is defined by the violent dissolution of the old order dominated by Europe and the emergence of a titanic struggle between two hostile coalitions that possessed enough firepower to completely extinguish all human life.

In approaching our task, we have emphasized the international politics and the ideological doctrines of the last century. This approach may strike some as old-fashioned, especially as the historical discipline now considers the ways in which cultural, gender, social, economic and scientific factors, as well as the actions of non-governmental bodies, have influenced international affairs. We do not dismiss the influence of these factors on the structure and character of international politics, but nevertheless we had to make choices about what should be included in a one-volume book designed to cover the whole of the century and much of the globe. As this text is aimed at history, international relations and politics undergraduates, we agreed that this book should provide a solid foundation in international politics, for it is only by understanding such a framework that students can make sense of the diversity and complexity of the twentieth century.

Our intended audience also influenced the choices we made about structure. We rejected a thematic approach on the grounds that in our experience students find the study of events over time the most rewarding way to learn history. Hence the book is divided into 23 chapters arranged in a roughly chronological manner, with the origins and course of the world wars and the Cold War providing the core of the book. This overall structure introduces the tricky issue of periodization. It has recently been common in history texts to talk of the artificiality of centuries as objects of study; for example, historians of eighteenth-century Europe tend to end their studies either in 1789 or 1815. Similar objections can be made to analysis of the twentieth century. Arguably the century really began in terms of its broad themes not in 1900 but in 1914 when the outbreak of the First World War destroyed the **Concert of Europe** that had arisen in the nineteenth century and did not end in 2000 but with the resolution of the Cold War in 1991. However, the authors felt that the distinct period of hyper-competitive inter-state relations between 1914 and 1991 could not be comprehended clearly unless our study included some discussion of the years both before and after. Moreover, while the core of the book deals with the major international conflicts of the century, more than half of the chapters examine developments in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East and raise questions about how far and in what ways the Great Powers have shaped the destinies of these areas.

### Concert of Europe

The nineteenth-century European system of regulation of international affairs by the Great Powers. Although much of the historical literature argues that the system was successful in keeping the general peace of Europe because it was based on a 'balance of power', more recent work has stressed the importance of shared rules of conduct, values, goals and diplomatic practices in relations between the Great Powers.

How should this book be used? All the chapters relate to each other in a coherent and chronological manner, and we encourage students to read the book from beginning to end, but each chapter may also be read independently as background before lectures and seminars. Indeed, course organizers may wish to design a full introductory course around this compact text. The book incorporates special features with both the beginner and their teachers in mind. Since history is about arguments over causation, continuity and change, structure and agency, values, definition and the limits of historical knowledge, each chapter contains a 'debates and controversies' section that discusses historiographical disputes or issues. Our aim in highlighting historiography in this way is to show students that they must learn to identify the main points of contention between different historical perspectives and to locate historians' arguments within one of the conflicting perspectives. Students fresh to the topic of twentieth-century international history will encounter many key names and terms that will be unfamiliar to them. We have therefore included a glossary of names and terms at the end of this book. Names and terms that appear in the Glossary are highlighted in bold the first time they appear in a chapter. So, for instance, in this Introduction, as we are sure you noticed earlier, **globalization**, the **Concert of Europe** and **Great Powers** were rendered in bold. Turn to the Glossary and you will find these terms explained.

While encountering many of the terms contained in this volume for the first time may be bewildering enough, locating all the places, nation-states and shifting frontiers discussed on the pages that follow would be impossible without a healthy supply of maps. Accordingly, you will find 23 maps in this book dealing with all parts of the globe. Finally, because no single book, no matter how lengthy or thorough, could cover every aspect of every topic in twentieth-century international relations, readers will find an annotated list of further reading at the end of each chapter. A book this size covering such a wide expanse of time and range of issues is ultimately a work of synthesis. When writing this book, we have endeavoured to use the latest scholarship and to include up-to-date secondary sources. However, in order not to clutter up the text, we decided not to use footnotes or the Chicago form of citation. Instead, the recommended reading sections may be taken as indicative of the sources that we have used. We strongly urge students to make use of the recommended reading sections, for a textbook can never be more than a general introduction.

TIMELINE	JUNE 1815	MARCH 1861	JANUARY 1871	APRIL 1877	JULY 1878	OCTOBER 1879	MAY 1882
	Congress of Vienna	Italian unification	German unification declared at Versailles	Outbreak of Russo-Turkish War	Congress of Berlin on Eastern Question	Austro-German Dual Alliance	Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy)

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# Great Power rivalry and the World War, 1900–17

## Great Powers

Traditionally those states that were held capable of shared responsibility for the management of the international order by virtue of their military and economic influence.

## Congress of Vienna (1814–15)

The European conference of Great Power foreign ministers and heads of state that settled the peace after the Napoleonic Wars.

## Introduction

Europeans lived in relative peace in the nineteenth century, although the recent upheavals that had wracked the continent loomed large. After the revolution of 1789, France had exploded with a seemingly unbounded potential for ideological war and after 1804 Napoleon had harnessed this power to destroy the independence and security of the **Great Powers** and to make France the master of all continental Europe. Undisputedly Napoleon possessed a genius for war, but eventually he overreached himself both militarily and politically, and Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia prevailed on the battlefield. The **Congress of Vienna** of 1814–15 founded a lasting peace based on Great Power management of international politics and moderation in the pursuit of self-interest. This

1884–85	JUNE 1887	JUNE 1888	MARCH 1890	AUGUST 1891	AUGUST 1892	JANUARY 1894
Berlin Conference on West Africa	Russo-German 'Reinsurance Treaty'	Wilhelm II becomes German Emperor	Bismarck resigns as German Chancellor	Franco-Russian political agreement	Franco-Russian military convention	Franco-Russian alliance

management was not perfect, for national antagonism and egotism did not evaporate and war remained an instrument of policy. The general peace was broken by the Crimean War of 1853–56, and then by the three Great Power wars of Italian and German unification between 1859 and 1871. Yet these Great Power conflicts were limited in scope and fought for limited objectives, and once these objectives were achieved, order was restored. After the 'long' peace of 1815–53 came that of 1871–1914.

As a consequence, by the end of the century, Europe dominated the globe. Of course other factors played an essential part: Europe possessed the population size, the machine power and a massive organizational and technological edge over its rivals. But stability at home permitted the impulses of the so-called 'new imperialism' to translate steam engines, machine guns and administration into supremacy abroad. In the 1880s and 1890s these impulses ushered in not only the 'scramble for Africa', but also competition to extend empire in Persia (Iran), South-East Asia and the Pacific. Europe's commercial, intellectual and cultural influence also spread. Under this corrosive pressure, the last great non-European empires, Qing China and Ottoman Turkey, crumbled, while Europeans contemplated partition. Afghanistan and Siam (Thailand) remained in part independent because they served as useful buffers between the Russian and British and the British and French imperial spheres of influence. Japan escaped European domination through modernization: after 1868 Japan was transformed into a quasi-European power – through the adoption of modern Western financial, military and industrial methods. Even so, the European Great Powers called the shots. When Japan defeated China in 1894–95, the Europeans intervened to rein the Japanese in and to take for themselves some of the spoils at China's expense.

Unfortunately, the legacy of one century proved to be short lived in the next. If 1815–53 and 1871–1914 are the conspicuous features of the nineteenth century, then the two world wars and the Cold War blot the twentieth. Europe lost its capacity to contain inter-state violence just when the process of modernization handed Europeans an unprecedented capacity to wage **total war**. The killing machine of 1914–18 was the result. Between the wars the European system lurched forward slowly, as political **isolationism** and revolution preoccupied America and Russia. The coming of Hitler's war finally extinguished the European system, and with it European world primacy. The Soviet Union and the United States emerged as superpowers. Their ideological, strategic and economic rivalry began in Central Europe but quickly spread beyond, drawing in revolutionary China and the newly independent states of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The German question disturbed the peace intermittently, but only as one front in

#### **total war**

A war that uses all resources at a state's disposal including the complete mobilization of both the economy and society.

#### **isolationism**

The policy or doctrine of isolating one's country by avoiding foreign entanglements and responsibilities. Popular in the United States during the inter-war years.

TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 1894	MARCH 1896	MAY 1897	MARCH 1898	APRIL 1898	SEPTEMBER 1898	MAY 1899
Nicholas II becomes Russian Emperor	Battle of Adowa	Austro-Russian Balkan Agreement	German Naval Law	Ivan Bloch publishes <i>War in the Future</i>	Fashoda Crisis (Britain and France)	First Hague Peace Conference



Map 1.1 Europe in 1914

Source: After Norman Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy: 1814–1914* (New York, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 1992)

a global Cold War. Until 1989 Germany, like the European continent as a whole, remained split between the two hostile coalitions. Europe enjoyed another ‘long peace’, but not on its own terms. Only after the USSR collapsed did Europeans begin to reshape the political landscape without the boundaries drawn by the world wars.

To understand why the European era of international politics came to an end requires an answer to why the nineteenth-century states system broke down in the first decade and a half of the twentieth. Before addressing this question, however, it will be helpful to set out some of the terms and concepts essential to an understanding of the history of Great Power relations.

OCTOBER 1899	JUNE 1900	JANUARY 1902	DECEMBER 1902	FEBRUARY 1904	APRIL 1904	JANUARY 1905
Outbreak of South African War	German Naval Law	Anglo-Japanese alliance	Venezuela crisis begins	Russo-Japanese War begins	Anglo-French colonial agreement ( <i>Entente Cordiale</i> )	Revolutionary unrest in Russia

## The Great Powers, power politics and the states system

Only five European states undisputedly held Great Power status when the twentieth century opened – Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. The statesmen of 1815 would have recognized this arrangement, although Germany (then Prussia) had greatly expanded its power and that of Austria (Austria-Hungary after 1867) had shrunk just as swiftly. At the crudest level, the term ‘Great Power’ applied to those states with the greatest capacity for war. Here, in the calculations of diplomats and strategists, the hard currency of power counted: size of population, territory, finance and industrial output.

On this scale the five did not measure up equally, and clear-cut comparisons are problematic. Russia had by far the largest population, but Britain, France and Germany had large, literate urban populations and this pool of educated workers and soldiers helped to offset numbers in the era of machine production and complex weapons. Still, mass conscript armies recruited on the basis of universal military service required numbers: by 1900, Russia called up 335,000 men annually, Germany 280,000, France 250,000, Austria-Hungary 103,000 and Italy 100,000. Because of the low birth rate in France, its military planners looked on with unease at the growth of Germany’s population. Austria-Hungary suffered another problem – its birth rate was fastest in the backward regions of the empire. France and Britain could call upon their empires for reserves, but the wisdom of the day assumed rapid mobilization and decisive opening battles, in which there would be no time to train colonial levies. Britain, at any rate, with its far-flung maritime empire, did not adopt conscription but instead concentrated on its fleet.

see Table 1.1

Table 1.1 Total populations of the Great Powers, 1890–1913 (millions)

	1890	1900	1910	1913
Russia	116.8	135.6	159.3	175.1
United States	62.6	75.9	91.9	97.3
Germany	49.2	56.0	64.5	66.9
Austria-Hungary	42.6	46.7	50.8	52.1
Japan	39.9	43.8	49.1	51.3
France	38.3	38.9	39.5	39.7
Britain	37.4	41.1	44.9	45.6
Italy	30.0	32.2	34.4	35.1

Source: Adapted from Kennedy (1988, p. 255)