

IR THE NEW WORLD *of* INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

FOURTH
EDITION



Michael G. Roskin
Nicholas O. Berry



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Preface

Unfortunately, most young people now enter college with little or no background in twentieth-century history. Ask students questions about the major events of this century and you are likely to face silence. It is all news to them. But they cannot be blamed; they don't know it because they have never been taught. Accordingly, we take it as our task to do considerable backfilling in twentieth-century history, which we arrange largely by geographic area and use to illustrate one or more concepts of international relations. Many instructors have thanked us for this approach.

Some new texts in international relations may pay relatively little attention to twentieth-century history, instead leaping into the twenty-first century. These are the "world-order" texts that, we think, implicitly argue the following: "The twentieth century was a horrible century that showed the worst that humans can do to each other. But it was only an episode in the maturation of humankind and has little to teach us. The twenty-first century, a time of global cooperation, ecology, and equality, is upon us. We must concentrate on it and not on the unhappy past."

We find "world-order" approaches unjustified, or at least grossly premature. The world became more chaotic after the Cold War, which kept numerous problems suppressed or frozen. And the mechanisms to deal with these problems still depend on sovereign nations deciding if and when they want to participate. When people are determined to fight for what they believe is justly theirs, UN "peace-keeping" forces are useless. War—"contending by force," in Grotius's classic words—remains a part of international relations and cannot be wished away. Although we argue in the concluding chapter that war is losing its effectiveness in settling disputes, conflict is still the "stuff" of international politics. If world order does break out, rest assured we will be among the first to write a textbook on it.

We begin in Chapter 1 with system change and an overview of the international systems that have marked modern history. The post-Cold War system still defies easy characterization. "Multipolar" is perhaps too general a term; we sharpen this concept by seeing trade blocs as the "poles" and their economic competition as the new world dynamic. The chapter also introduces the concepts of "state" and "sovereignty," which we believe are still fundamental to international relations.

System change has touched almost everything in international affairs, not just the obvious—the end of Cold War bipolarity between the superpowers. In the Persian Gulf, a tyrannical ruler strives to expand his realm and acquire weapons of mass destruction because his previous superpower patron no longer has the means to restrain him. Elsewhere in the Middle East, guerrillas start talking with a regime they hate just as the Soviet Union goes into retreat and collapse, and the guerrillas

realize they have lost their chief backer. Economic relations among the major industrial blocs—Europe, the Pacific Rim, America—grow testier. There is no longer the fear of the Soviets to hold them together under a U.S. strategic umbrella. Proliferation of nuclear weapons, a minor issue a decade ago, has become major. The UN, previously little more than a talk shop, now emerges as a valuable crisis stabilizer. We discuss these and other spinoffs of system change in this book.

We believe that, because system change is occurring before our very eyes, IR is more exciting and relevant than ever. In this new world, there are new threats to guard against and new opportunities to take advantage of. As in earlier editions, we are trying to awaken young newcomers to the field to its fascinating and sometimes dramatic qualities, as well as acquaint them with its basic concepts and vocabulary. Toward this end we include feature boxes titled “Concepts” and “Classic Thought,” as well as “Economic Background” and “Historical Background” boxes. We also include “Reflections” boxes, which recall the authors’ personal experiences or ponder issues that affect students personally, to show that IR is not a distant abstraction.



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Acknowledgments We owe a great deal of thanks to specialists who read and commented on our chapters and saved us from foolish misstatements. Ambassador Theresa A. Healy and Charles Ahlgren of the State Department made valuable suggestions on the Diplomacy chapter. Dr. Ed Dew of Fairfield University perceptively reviewed our South Africa and Central America chapters. At the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where one of the authors spent three fascinating years as a visiting professor of U.S. foreign policy, a host of regionalists deserve our thanks: Dr. Gabriel Marcella on the Third World and Central America, Colonel Robert Ulin on Europe, Colonel David Twining on the Soviet Union, Colonel Dale Ackels on South Africa, Dr. Leif Rosenberger on economics, James Coyle on the Persian Gulf, James S. McCallum on peacekeeping, and Colonels Don Boose and Lynn Stull on the Pacific Rim. William O’Neill, long a journalist in the Far East, also commented on the Pacific Rim chapter.

Responsibility, of course, lies with the authors, who are happy to receive your comments directly for incorporation into possible future editions.

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Contents

Preface ix

Part I The Cold War Come and Gone 1

1 Strange New World: Systems and States in Transformation 3

The European Balance-of-Power System	4
The Unstable Interwar System	8
The Bipolar Cold War System	10
What Kind of New System?	12
Are States Here to Stay?	18
Is Sovereignty Slipping?	20
Key Terms	21
Key Websites	22
Further Reference	22

2 America's Changing National Interests 23

Independence	23
Manifest Destiny	25
Imperialism	29
World War I	32
Isolationism	33
World War II	34
The Cold War	36
Key Terms	41
Key Websites	41
Further Reference	42

3 "Wrong, Terribly Wrong": The United States and Vietnam 43

The Colonized Colonialists	44
The First Indochina War	45
The United States and the Geneva Accords	48
Kennedy's Commitment	50
LBJ: Victim or Villain?	52
Extrication without Humiliation	55
Morality and Feasibility	57
Key Terms	59

Key Websites	60
Further Reference	60

4 Can the United States Lead the World? 61

From Interventionism to Caution	62
Are Americans Basically Isolationists?	63
Budgetary Limits	65
A Petulant Congress	68
Is the Structure Out of Whack?	69
Do Bureaucracies Make Foreign Policy?	73
To Lead or Not to Lead?	74
Key Terms	75
Key Websites	75
Further Reference	75

5 From Russia to the Soviet Union 77

Invasion from the West	81
War and Bolshevism	81
Spreading the Revolution	85
Stalin's Policy Mistakes	86
The Great Patriotic War	88
Yalta	90
The Cold War	91
Key Terms	93
Key Websites	93
Further Reference	93

6 From the Soviet Union Back to Russia 94

Khrushchev and the Loss of China	95
Restive East Europe	96
Khrushchev and the Cuban Missiles	99
Brezhnev and Détente	101
Afghanistan: A Soviet Vietnam	102
Why the Soviet Collapse?	104
Gorbachev and Collapse	105
Is Foreign Policy Generated Internally or Externally?	108
It Ain't Over 'til It's Over	110
Key Terms	112
Key Websites	112
Further Reference	113

Part II The Global South 115

7 South Africa and the End of Colonialism 117

The Colonial Mentality	118
The Wind of Change	121
Reform Instead of Revolution	125

God Save Africa	127
Key Terms	129
Key Websites	129
Further Reference	129

8 Arabs and Israelis: The Rocky Road to Peace 131

The Making of Jewish Nationalism	131
The Making of Arab Nationalism	134
World War I and the Mandate	135
The 1948 War	138
The 1956 War	140
The Six Day War	142
The 1973 War	145
The Rise of Palestinian Nationalism	147
The 1982 War	149
Israel's Dilemma	150
A Breakthrough	151
The Rocky Road	151
Lessons of the Arab-Israeli Conflict	153
Key Terms	153
Key Websites	154
Further Reference	154

9 Oil and Turmoil: The Persian Gulf and Central Asia 155

Irascible Iran	156
The First Gulf War	161
The Second Gulf War	163
Could Arabia Go the Way of Iran?	
Back to the Great Game	166
Lessons of Two Gulf Wars	170
Key Terms	171
Key Websites	171
Further Reference	172

10 Central America and the Caribbean: From Sphere of Influence to Growing Independence 173

Spain in Central America	174
The United States Takes Over	176
Cuba Leaves the U.S. Sphere	179
A New Wave of Revolutions	183
The Panama Problem	186
The End of a Long War	188
The Last Intervention	189
Two Policy Choices to Deal with Castro	190
The Trends toward Independence	191
Key Terms	192
Key Websites	192
Further Reference	193

11 Economic Development: The Rich and the Poor 194

- Whose Fault? 197
- Why Did the West Rise? 199
- The Population Explosion 202
- The Great Migration 205
- Socialist versus Market Paths 207
- Can Capitalism Uplift the Global South? 209
- Key Terms 213
- Key Websites 213
- Further Reference 213

Part III The Eternal Threats 215

12 National Security: How States Protect Themselves 217

- Technology and Security 219
- Deterrence 220
- Détente Diplomacy 226
- Disarmament 229
- Defense 231
- A Combination? 232
- Key Terms 233
- Key Websites 233
- Further Reference 234

13 Nuclear Politics: Is the Bomb Here to Stay? 235

- Weapon of War 235
- Nuclear Deterrence 237
- Alliance Building 238
- International Prestige 239
- Deterrence II 240
- Nuclear Proliferation 241
- Arms Control 243
- Nuclear Proliferation II 244
- The Nasty Consequences of Nuclear Use 247
- Nuclear Weapons: Blessing or Curse? 249
- Key Terms 250
- Key Websites 251
- Further Reference 251

14 Terrorism 252

- What Motivates Terrorists? 258
- The International Effects of Terrorism 262
- The Future of Terrorism 268
- Key Terms 271
- Key Websites 271
- Further Reference 271

Part IV The Economic Blocs 273

15 The Shaky Rise of a United Europe 275

- The Basis of Alliance 277
- Europe Gropes for Unity 279
- Wider or Deeper? 284
- How to Defend Europe? 286
- The Uses of NATO 289
- If Not NATO, What? 290
- The Challenge of Trade Blocs 291
- Key Terms 293
- Key Websites 294
- Further Reference 294

16 Pacific Tremors 295

- Japan Encounters the West 299
- The Road to Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima 300
- From Rubble to Riches 305
- The Dangers of Success 307
- Key Terms 315
- Key Websites 315
- Further Reference 316

17 The United States in the Global Economy 317

- What Is a Dollar Worth? 318
- The Biggest Debtor 322
- The Addiction to Cheap Oil 325
- What Went Wrong with the U.S. Economy? 326
- The Coming of NAFTA 328
- Trade Wars? 331
- Key Terms 332
- Key Websites 332
- Further Reference 333

Part V The Politics of a New World 335

18 Diplomacy 337

- The Rise and Decline of Diplomacy 338
- The Uses of an Anachronism 341
- Diplomats 342
- What Goes on in a Typical Embassy 345
- Diplomacy and War 348
- Key Terms 351
- Key Websites 352
- Further Reference 352

19 International Law 353

- Consistency and Reciprocity 354
- Commands 357
- Sanctions 360
- The Development of International Law 364
- Recognition 366
- Rights and Duties of States 368
- Status of Individuals 369
- Territory 370
- International Agreements 371
- War 372
- The Future of International Law 373
- Key Terms 374
- Key Websites 374
- Further Reference 374

20 The United Nations 376

- Why the Turnaround? 377
- Theory of World Government 378
- The Short, Sad League of Nations 379
- The Rise of the UN 384
- The UN: Early Idealism 387
- Disillusion with the UN 388
- The Uses of the UN 391
- The Functionalist Dream 392
- The UN: Humankind's Last, Best Hope? 394
- Key Terms 397
- Key Websites 397
- Further Reference 397

21 Peacekeeping: Beyond War 398

- War as an Instrument of Policy 398
- The Future of War 403
- Peace Operations 406
- Preventive Diplomacy 407
- Peacemaking 408
- Peacekeeping 410
- Peace Enforcement 413
- Peace Building 414
- Conclusion 416
- Key Terms 416
- Key Websites 417
- Further Reference 417

Index 418

PART I



The Cold War Come and Gone

The Cold War dominated the latter half of the twentieth century and left its mark on both of the main antagonists—the United States and the Soviet Union—long afterward. How they reached their present situations is thus worth a good deal of our attention, for it provides several lices of history and numerous basic concepts of international relations.

Chapter 1 looks at the big picture—the transformation of the international system in the twentieth century. Chapter 2 reviews America's encounters with the world and uses them to illustrate the slippery and changeable concept of *national interest*, which is easier to proclaim than to define. Over various periods of U.S. foreign policy—the independence war, manifest destiny, imperialism, World Wars I and II, isolationism, and the Cold War—U.S. national interests and the strategies to carry them out have changed widely and repeatedly in response to new threats and opportunities. George F. Kennan's celebrated "containment" policy, for example, may be brilliant for one era but useless and unworkable for the next (as Kennan himself would be quick to point out).

Chapter 3 covers America's Vietnam War for several reasons. First, most young people are blank on Vietnam—when and why the war took place and even who was involved. The gap between *political generations* is great. Few high schools get around to Vietnam in their crowded history curricula. Second, Vietnam was a searing U.S. national tragedy, altering our foreign policy, undermining the dollar and our confidence in government, and spawning a counter-culture generation. To this day, decision makers in Washington fear getting us stuck in another *guerrilla war*. Third, young people must be made aware that because government can be "wrong, terribly wrong," in the words of Robert McNamara, we are entitled and even obliged to examine and criticize government policy.

Chapter 4 brings us into the new world U.S. foreign policy faces. Can we lead in this new, complex situation? Do we even wish to practice *interventionism*? Is a sort of *foreign policy cycle* at work that has pushed us into an *isolationist* mood? Should we be motivated by *ideals* or *self-interest*? Do we have the budget, armed forces, and congressional support with which to lead a world that often does not wish to follow us? Finally, do the institutions of our foreign policy tend to lead to policy errors and *bureaucratic politics*?

With Chapter 5 we turn to our Cold War antagonist, the Soviet Union, and how it came to be. One critic urged us to drop the whole Soviet package because,

since the USSR no longer exists, it is irrelevant to the tasks at hand. But the twentieth century is unintelligible without an examination of how Russia turned into the tyrannical Soviet Union, just as the twenty-first century will have to deal with the aftermath of its collapse. Russia raises questions of *geopolitics*: To what extent is geography destiny? To what extent can *ideology* play a role in foreign policy? Was the Cold War inevitable?

Chapter 6 focuses chiefly on why the Soviet Union collapsed. It considers how *misperception* of the outside world, *hegemony* over a costly empire, a failed *détente*, and increasingly critical *elites* driven by the *fear of falling behind* undermined regime *legitimacy*. Was Soviet foreign policy largely *internally* or *externally* generated? Finally, a word of warning: Russia is a very big and problem-plagued country where much can go wrong. Do not suppose our difficulties with Russia are over.



Strange New World: Systems and States in Transformation

In two world wars, Europe committed suicide, leaving two continental giants—the United States and the Soviet Union—to glare at each other in what became known as the Cold War. But now this “bipolar” system of superpower domination has ended. What has taken its place? What kind of a world do we have now? Conceivably, the new system could be a lot better than the Cold War system. It could bring peace and economic improvements for all humankind. There is also a chance that the new system will be so chaotic and dangerous that we’ll wish we had the bipolar system back.

It’s an exciting experience to watch the international system change before your eyes. It doesn’t happen very often, and it leaves people confused and unprepared. To gain some perspective on system change, let us review the turbulent succession of systems in the twentieth century.

1. Pre-World War I: Dominance of the great European empires from the nineteenth century until 1914. In systems theory, this period exemplifies a “balance-of-power” system, but by 1910 it had decayed.
2. World War I through World War II: The empires destroy themselves from 1914 to 1945. With several major players refusing to respond to threats, the period might be termed an “antibalance-of-power” system. It is inherently unstable and temporary.
3. Cold War: The collapse of the traditional European powers leaves the United States and USSR dominant in a “bipolar” system. But the superpowers block and exhaust themselves from 1945 through the 1980s, and the bipolar system decays.
4. Post-Cold War: The collapse of the Soviet Union ends bipolarity, but no one is sure what the new system is like. Thoughts on a new system range from “unipolar” (U.S. dominance) to “multipolar” (several power centers) to “zones of chaos.” We will consider several possibilities.

Questions to Consider...

1. What is an international system?
2. What kind of systems has the world gone through over a century?
3. What kind of a system are we now heading into? Multipolar? Stratified? Globalized?
4. Will this new system be stable or unstable?
5. Are states and sovereignty still the foundations of international relations?

KEY TERMS

system The interaction of many components so that one cannot change without changing the others.

bipolar The world divided into two power centers, as in the Cold War.

multipolar The world divided into many power centers.

Do not *reify* (take a theory as reality) these periods and systems. They are just attempts to get a handle on reality; they are not reality itself. Reification is a constant temptation in the social sciences. Students especially like to memorize neat tables in preparing for exams. Okay, memorize them, but take them with a grain of salt. Notice in the *foregoing* breakdown there is a great deal of overlap from one period to the next. The European empires, for example, did not turn off with a click in 1945; they phased out over three decades. To try to understand a confusing world, social scientists are forced to simplify a very complex reality into theories, models, time periods, and conceptual frameworks, all of them artificial. The "**systems**" approach is one such framework.

Why should we bother naming and analyzing international systems? Because if we misunderstand the nature of the system in which we operate, we can make terrible, expensive mistakes. For example, if we try to continue operating under the rules of the **bipolar** system of the Cold War, we will become *frustrated and perplexed* that our allies no longer follow our lead, that we are slipping behind economically, and that we have no more worthwhile enemies. It will be like trying to play a game whose rules have changed. If we try to *operate* on the basis that the world system is now strictly a **multipolar** economic race, we might neglect our military strength and be caught short when an aggressor goes on the warpath. Understanding the world system, then, means you can go with the flow of events (and sometimes *manipulate* them) instead of working against them.

The European Balance-of-Power System

As we will consider in Chapter 7 on South Africa, in the nineteenth century Europe carved up the globe into empires and spheres of influence. There was no very good *reason* for this imperial expansion. Imperial costs usually *outweighed* profits. Prestige and fear of someone else getting the territory were the main *motivators*. It was perhaps a foolish system, and terribly unfair to the "natives," but it was a reasonably stable system and had several advantages for preserving peace. By denying their imperial subjects self-rule, the imperial powers also denied them the possibility of going to war. Britain held down the *latent* violence between Hindus and Muslims in India. Upon India's independence in 1947, violence erupted as two lands emerged from the *raj*, India and Pakistan, and they have fought three wars since. Their next war could be nuclear; both have the capability. The imperial system, then, was not all bad.

Second, by carving up the globe in an agreed-upon fashion, the great empires mostly avoided wars among themselves. All powers understood that Britain had India, France had Indochina, the Netherlands had the East Indies, Belgium had the Congo, and so on. This has been called a **balance-of-power** system.

KEY TERM

balance of power Theory that states ally themselves with other states to balance the power of threatening states.

CONCEPTS

SYSTEMS

A system is something composed of many components that interact and influence each other. Systems thinkers argue that if the logic of a system can be discovered, one can roughly predict its evolution or at least warn what could go wrong. The crux here is "interact." If something is truly a system, you can't change just one part of it, for if you do, all the other components also change. Systems thinking originated in biology. The human body, for example, is a system of heart, lungs, blood, and so on. Take away one component and the body dies. Alter one, and the others try to adjust to compensate. Systems can be stable and self-correcting, or they can break down, either from internal or external causes.

After World War II, systems thinking spread to almost every discipline, including international relations. Here thinkers—some focusing just on Europe, others on the entire globe—found that various systems have come and gone over the centuries, each operating with its own logic and producing variously stable and unstable results. Obviously, an unstable system doesn't last long.

States and other components in a system interact to ward off threats and to take opportunities to advance their interests. And when they do so, they create threats and opportunities for each other. Knowing this, we can better predict what is going to happen. We can even come up with rules on how states can handle threats and take advantage of opportunities.

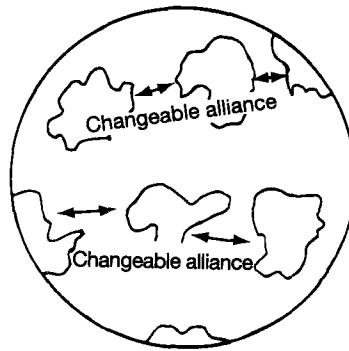
The strong point about systems thinking

is that it trains us to see the world as a whole rather than just a series of unrelated happenings and problems. It also encourages us to think about how a clever statesman may attempt to create and manipulate a system to get desired results. If he presses here, what will come out there? Will it be bad or good? To some extent, international systems are artificial creations of varying degrees of handiwork. A system that obtains the assent of the major powers and goes with the forces of history may last a long time. A system that doesn't suit one or more major players and goes against the forces of history will surely soon be overturned. Systems don't just fall from heaven but are crafted by intelligent minds such as Metternich and Bismarck. This brings an element of human intelligence and creativity into international politics. It's not just science; it's also an art that brings with it hopeful thinking.

Does the world form a political "system"? It is surely composed of many parts, and they interact. The trouble is, few thinkers can totally agree on what the systems were, their time periods, and the logic of their operation. Looking at the four systems of the twentieth century, some would say there are only three, because the first and second should really be merged (the second was merely the decayed tail end of the first). Others would say, no, actually there are five, adding the period of the Axis dictatorships as a separate system. Now we debate the nature and workings of an emerging system. Systems thinking is fascinating but imprecise, not yet a science.



Some writers argue that during certain periods, the power of the several major nations was similar, and they arranged this power, by means of alliances, to roughly balance. If country A felt threatened by country B, it would form an alliance with country C, hoping to deter B from aggression. Then later, all of them might form an alliance to protect themselves from the growing power of country D. It didn't always work, but it helped to hold down the number and ferocity of wars. For a balance-of-power system to function, theorists say, it took at least five major players who shared a common culture and viewpoint and a commitment not to wreck the system. Balance of power was like a poker game in which you decide you'd rather keep the game going than win all the money, so you refrain from bankrupting the other players. Graphically, it looks like this:



Some historians detect two great ages of balance of power, from 1648 to 1789 and again from 1814 to 1914. The Thirty Years War, mostly fought in Germany, pitted Catholics against Protestants and was the bloodiest in history until World War II. By the time it was settled in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, Europe's monarchs had had enough of bashing each other and so constructed a balance-of-power system that endured until the French Revolution (1789) and Napoleonic wars (ending in 1814).

Napoleon overturned the old system with unrestrained ambition and a mass army that conquered most of Europe. When Napoleon played poker, he tried to bankrupt all the other players. (He also cheated.) Gone was the element of restraint that had characterized the old system. Once Napoleon was beaten, Europe's conservatives met under the guidance of Austrian Prince Metternich to construct a new balance-of-power system, sometimes called the "Metternichian system." The system worked moderately well for some decades, but only as long as monarchs restrained their ambitions and shared the values of legitimacy and stability. This slowly eroded with the effects of nationalism in the nineteenth century—especially with German unification in 1871—until it disappeared by World War I. There has not been a balance-of-power system since then. Some say there cannot be one again.

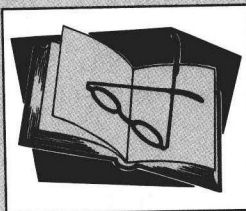
Many scholars reject the balance-of-power theory, pointing out that there were some nasty wars when power was supposed to be balanced. How do you

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

BISMARCK: UNWITTING SYSTEM CHANGER

If someone had told Prussian Chancellor Bismarck that the unified Germany he was creating would lead to two world wars and the destruction of the nineteenth-century imperial system, he would have totally disbelieved it. Bismarck was a conservative, yet his handiwork wrought radical, systemic change. Remember, in systems theory you can't change just one thing, because everything else changes too. Bismarck supervised a gigantic change in the center of Europe—German unification—but this rippled outward, changing the global political system. Something similar is happening in Central Europe today.

Before unification, Germany had been a patchwork of small kingdoms. After unification, Germany had the location, industry, and population to dominate Europe. Such was not Bismarck's intention. He thought a unified Germany could live in balance and at peace with the other European powers. Bismarck was neither a militarist nor an expansionist and fought such thinking in Berlin. Instead, after unification, Bismarck concentrated on making sure an alliance of hostile powers did not form around his



Second Reich. Trying to play the old balance-of-power game, Bismarck made one treaty after another with the other European powers proclaiming friendship and mutual aid.

But the Bismarckian system was not as stable as the earlier Metternichian system (see page 6). Bismarck's very creation of a unified Germany had changed the European—and to some extent global—balance. German nationalism had been unleashed. A new

Kaiser and his generals were nationalistic and imperialistic. They thought Bismarck was too cautious and fired him in 1890. Then they threw themselves into empire building, arms races, and alliance with Austria. The French and Russians, alarmed at this, formed what

Kennan called the "fateful alliance." Thus on the eve of World War I, Europe was arrayed into two hostile blocs, something Bismarck desperately tried to avoid. Without knowing or wanting it, Bismarck helped to break down the old system. Germany's unification in 1990 again made Germany the leading power of Europe and produced a more assertive German foreign policy.

explain the Seven Years War (what Americans call the French and Indian War) of the 1750s or the Crimean War of the 1850s? Balance-of-power theorists counter by saying these were *relatively* small wars that did not wreck the overall system.

KEY TERM

hierarchy of power

Theory that peace is preserved when states know where they stand on a ladder of relative power.

Some writers hold that not balance of power but **hierarchy of power** acts to preserve peace. When nations know their position on a ladder of power they are more likely to behave. The aftermath of a great, decisive war produces a clear hierarchy with a victor on top and a loser on the bottom, and this brings a few decades of peace. Critics say balance-of-power proponents have mistaken this hierarchy, a temporary one that is overturned by the growth of weaker states, for a balance of power that never existed.