

Chapter 2

Past Eras of Great Power Competition

Historical Insights and Implications

By Thomas F. Lynch III and Frank Hoffman

The chapter reviews the major contemporary theories about interstate power competition and state power transitions. It surveys many of the recent major studies about Great Power transitions since 1500, establishing that the vast majority of such transitions include some form of direct Great Power clash (war). The chapter develops a framework for evaluating the main competitive categories of Great Power competition (GPC): political and diplomatic, ideological, informational, military, and economic. It then applies these categories in analysis of four distinct dyadic rivalries contested in three post-1780 eras of GPC: the United Kingdom (UK) and France; UK and Imperial Germany; UK and the United States, and the United States and Imperial Japan. These eras were chosen due to several important parallels with the emerging era of GPC. It concludes with 10 major insights that hub around the broad conclusion that although periods of Great Power rivalry that involve major power transitions generally lead to direct clash (war) between them, adept statesmanship can arrest this tendency if properly attentive to both the geopolitical and domestic drivers of Great Power war.

This chapter provides a short overview of the historical context and construct for understanding the emerging era of Great Power competition (GPC). It begins with a discussion of the theoretical bases for understanding power: hard power and soft power, as well as the manner in which scholars of international affairs have understood the nature of Great Power competition and the transition between Great Powers. The chapter then operationalizes the main historic dimensions of interstate competition, focusing on five major categories of Great Power interaction: political and diplomatic, ideological, informational, military, and economic. It provides a compact overview of the major research literature findings about GPC dynamics and outcomes over the past 500 years. The chapter then features an analytical review of four cases of rivalry dyads contested during eras of GPC, evaluated across the five categories of state-to-state interaction. It concludes with delineation of 10 major insights and implications about Great Power competitions and transitions that seem germane for the dawning era of GPC.

Understanding Great Power Identities and Transitions

For the past several decades, political scientists and international relations theorists have written about global interactions while referencing the relative difference in power between the major protagonists. In realist theories, states are the primary actors, and they are locked in a constant struggle for security (a security dilemma) in a system that features anarchy (the absence of any supreme authority or sovereign). For realists, the anarchic international system gravitates toward confrontation and war absent a dominant power, or a balance of power among several states.¹ Realist musings focus on the relative disparity between post-Westphalian states' military power (or hard power) differences. In neorealist theory, military power remains the basis of the relative power measurement—but the disparity is understood with reference to the “polarity” of the wider international system, or the number of states with “top drawer” hard power capabilities.² Alternatively, liberal and institutionalist theories dispute the deterministic nature of international system anarchy. They believe that durable interstate cooperation is feasible with the right international framework—like some constellation of cooperative rules, norms, and institutions. They compare international actor power with a wider array of measures, or soft power aspects, including economic size, diplomatic capability, cultural and social attractiveness, and informal relationships built on rules, norms, and protocols.³ Finally, constructivist international relations theory disagrees with the notion that anarchy or any permanent tendency conditions the international system at all. For constructivists, the individual actors together make the international system anything they want it to be.⁴

International relations scholars also pay some attention to the rise and fall in the relative power positions of international actors—with greatest attention on the transitions in power positions among and between those actors on the high end of the power spectrum, that is, the Great Powers.⁵ The realist framework for understanding Great Power transitions focuses on military capabilities and the manner in which these rise and fall based on individual states' choices about developing and projecting military power. The neorealist modification of realism agrees that military power capabilities establish the essential framework for relative status transitions, but neorealists argue that it is the distribution of military power across the international system (the relative polarity of the system)—not individual state choices—that sets in motion power shifts among the states. Neorealism foretells unipolarity (a circumstance where one state is militarily dominant over all other states) is not only least likely to result in catastrophic violence but also inherently untenable. The multitude of smaller states will combine in balance against that dominant power, reducing it with a thousand tiny cuts until its military capabilities are exhausted. The once-dominant state then is caught and passed by one or more rising states. Neorealists contend that while bipolarity is inherently most stable, all other forms of multipolarity across the international system will encourage greater degrees of instability, direct violence among and between the Great Powers, and drive turbulent, hard power-dominated transitions among the major powers.

Hegemonic stability theory (HST) advances an alternative framework for understanding power transitions among the major actors, that is, the states. While not a realist theory, HST agrees with realism that relative military power is the bedrock for understanding status relations among the states at any given time. HST contends that a Great Power's temporal dominance in military attributes (its relative position as a hegemon) enables the framing of

system-wide rules, norms, and procedures in interstate relations that favor that dominant state's ideology and policy preferences. These rules also reduce the costs to police that system. HST is an international political economy-based, game theory aligned understanding of the conditions for interstate cooperation rather than competition. Yet most HST proponents align with realists in one critical point: it is the hard power capabilities and the will to use of the dominant state that underwrite the rules-based relationships among the actors. Thus, without a dominant state (hegemon) willing to use its hard power for enforcement, cooperative and collaborative arrangements inevitably will give way to the inherent chaos and violence of the anarchical world system. Then a new state will seek the dominance necessary to establish its own norms and institutions as ascendant across all elements of international interaction.⁶

Liberal and institutional constructs contend that Great Power state transitions need not become violent contests. As noted earlier, they do not believe that anarchy is the default setting for international relations. Instead, they view durable interstate cooperation as feasible with proper arrangements. Thus, in limited agreement with HST, liberal institutionalists believe that a hegemon (or even a combination of Great Powers) can establish norms, rules, and procedures for interstate relations that are fundamentally cooperative and collaborative. Unlike HST advocates (and also realists and neorealists), liberal institutionalists believe that well-constructed cooperative and collaborative norms, rules, and institutional arrangements can take on a life of their own, long outlasting the military power and dominance of the state(s) that created them. In liberal institutionalism, it is the cumulative cost of challenging cooperative arrangements with more competitive and conflictual ones that dissuades a break from well-established, peace-sustaining norms.⁷ For constructivists, the transitions in global order—from cooperative to conflictual or from clash to collaboration—are dependent on the state-to-state interactions. It is about the choices made by the states themselves—and in particular the role of individual decisionmakers in each state and how leadership decisions shape the understandings of their people and other leaders in the global system—that establish the basic conditions of the system itself.⁸

The history of Great Power transitions over the past 500 years does not provide optimism for those hoping to see modern U.S. dominance culminate with a peaceful ascent of a successor state or combination. American political scientist Graham Allison's study of 16 major cases of rising power(s) versus an established Great Power found that only 4 of those cases—or 25 percent—ended without war.⁹

Allison's work—and that of many other international relations analysts and historians over the past decade—captures the dominant worry of the moment: Must the transition of relative power dominance between the United States and its successor become violent? During the generation from 1992 to 2008, this worry was mooted. The United States stood alone—atop the power structure at a unipolar moment in history.¹⁰ Its post-World War II bipolar rival, the Soviet Union, was vanquished, and with it Moscow's vision of universal communism and the superiority of command-directed economics.¹¹ The next most feasible rising power, China, had declared itself in 1978 an aspirant to the international capitalist economy and found itself over the ensuing 30 years to be the benefactor of an American orthodoxy. In this orthodoxy, the rise of a Chinese entrepreneurial middle class would inevitably demand political liberalization and individual freedoms that would swamp the

"In the 1990s and 2000s, American leaders believed that Russia and China were converging with the West on basic questions of world order. Countries would work together on common challenges while old geopolitical rivalries would matter much less. The 'era of convergence' came to an end because Russian and Chinese leaders concluded that if the liberal order succeeded globally, it would pose an existential threat to their regimes."

—Thomas J. Wright, *"The Return to Great-Power Rivalry Was Inevitable,"*
The Atlantic, September 12, 2018

Chinese Communist Party and see Beijing become a co-stakeholder in the web of liberal rules, norms, and institutions nurtured by American power from 1945 to 1990.¹²

After 2008, the promise of a reliably cooperative set of relations among these states was shaken, but not fully jettisoned. Almost a decade into his increasingly illiberal domestic political regime, Russian President Vladimir Putin oversaw a short, sharp invasion of neighboring Georgia and declared Russia a badly treated country that deserved Great Power recognition that the United States was unwilling to grant. That same year, Beijing—long wary of America's insistence that Western values of liberal democracy and human freedoms were lagging in China—witnessed American capitalism narrowly avoid a complete, catastrophic financial

meltdown. China took away a lesson that there can and must be a Chinese alternative to American global dominance. By 2014–2015, the dawn of a new competition-dominant era came fully into view—as a de facto if not fully acknowledged era of Great Power rivalry. Russia conducted a covert military invasion of Crimea and annexed it from the Ukraine. U.S.-led Western countries slapped Russia with various forms of economic sanctions and expelled Moscow from diplomatic and economic organizations that it had belonged to for a couple of decades. During those same years, Chinese territorial assertiveness in the South China Sea and its increasingly restrictive business and communications practices at home catalyzed competitive-to-confrontational American responses: insistence of unfettered freedom of navigation, open condemnation of Chinese industrial espionage practices, and exclusion of China from planning for a broad new trans-Pacific trading partnership.

It took another couple of years, but the passing of America's "unipolar moment" began the U.S. National Security Strategy of 2017 and National Defense Strategy (NDS) of 2018. Both declared that a two-decade-long dominant paradigm of cooperation in international relations was over, and competition would be the hallmark of the way forward among the three dominant states. A fully acknowledged era of GPC had begun. As noted in chapter 1, the dominance of a competitive framework in the emerging era does not exclude many parallel residual and dynamic elements of cooperation and collaboration from the past. Liberal institutionalist theories are under duress, but far from disproved. At the same time, growing competition among the Great Powers does not make realists or neorealists correct; it remains uncertain that the only potential outcome from this new era of GPC is overt confrontation and violent conflict.

Instead, the reemergence of GPC in this new era puts the world in a phase that has been the norm over the past 500 years, just not in recent memory. It is thus informative to extract a set of representative historical cases in which competition among the Great Powers provides useful lessons about the nature and evolution of such competitive eras and the transformation of relative power that often ensues. First, we must establish the key

Table 2.1. Frameworks for Thinking About Categories/Dimensions of Competition

	Howard (1974)	Friedberg (1988)	Kennedy (1987)	NDS (2018)
Social and Cultural	X			
Military		X	X	X
Political and Diplomatic				X
Science and Technological	X		X	X
Logistical	X			
Ideological		X		
Economic	X	X	X	X
Financial		X		
Informational				X

dimensions of GPC: How do they compete? Then how have some critical cases of historic competition been conducted in the contested categories?

How Do States Compete? The Dimensions of Interstate Competition

It is important to establish the main historic dimensions of interstate competition. Since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 codified statehood as the recognized form of geopolitical organization, state-to-state competition has been multifaceted, incorporating an array of state interactions. The international relations and security studies communities have used a variety of different dimensions of strategy or national power to capture the complexity of competition.

In the post-Vietnam era, British historian Sir Michael Howard identified four dimensions of national strategy and competition reflective of successful wartime circumstance.¹³ A decade later, American political scientist Aaron Friedberg defined four different categories of state-to-state power competition resonant during a Great Power transition in his assessment of Great Britain's relative power decline over the late 1800s and early 1900s.¹⁴ About the same time, Yale historian Paul Kennedy in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* stressed three major areas focusing on a state's economic production base and productivity as key dimensions of Great Power competition while highlighting the importance of the military dimension.¹⁵ Leveraging these three authors and more, the NDS defined five dimensions of GPC in its conception of the expanded competitive space relevant to the future security environment. The various concepts found in these major works about GPC are summarized in table 2.1.

"The competition is likely to be multilayered and interactive. No single theme or model will capture the complex mosaic of global competition, and the intersections among diverse types of competition—how success or failure in one area exacerbates or mitigates others—will be a crucial determinant of relative success."

—Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, RAND (2018)

Subsequent to the publication of the NDS, RAND political scientist Michael Mazarr and his colleagues conducted a historical review and identified seven objectives of traditional interstate competition:

- power and security
- status, standing, and prestige
- material and economic prosperity
- resources
- territory and sovereign claims
- values and ideology
- rules, norms, and institutions of the system.¹⁶

The seven objectives added texture but did not fundamentally reshape the construct of the five competitive categories (or aspects of competition) delineated in the NDS. Thus, for purposes of this chapter and the wider framework found in the volume, the competitive categories listed in table 2.2 will be applied to analyses of Great Power interactions.

Understanding Prototypical GPCs: Four Cases

In the past 5 centuries, Great Power transitions have played out over decades, not years. As noted earlier in this chapter, in 16 historical cases of GPC from the late 1400s to the present studied by a Graham Allison–led team at Harvard in the 2017 version of the *Thucydides’s Trap Case File*, 12 of them (75 percent) resulted in Great Power war.¹⁷ In a review of great strategic rivalries from the classical world to the Cold War, U.S. Marine Corps War College military historian James Lacey’s 2016 edited volume *Great Strategic Rivalries* demonstrated that rarely do strategic competitions during eras of major state power shifts end without at least one direct major military clash. The U.S.-Soviet Cold War denouement and the United Kingdom (UK) accommodation of U.S. power at the end of World War II stand out as just 2 of 15 Great Power transition cases where a major direct military clash did not occur.¹⁸ The University of Michigan’s decades-old *Correlates of War Project* chronicles major and minor wars since the Napoleonic era and provides significant evidence that the dawn of Great Power rivalries inevitably introduces a heightened risk of major war into the international system.¹⁹ Moreover, since the fall of Napoleon in 1815, over half of all wars have been between enduring Great Power rivals. If one adds early conflicts among proto-rivals, that number climbs to over 80 percent.²⁰ Thus, the most persuasive research done on past eras of GPC demonstrates that a majority of them involved power transitions among Great Powers and that a full three-quarters of them culminated with—or featured within the competitive transition period—a destructive period of violent Great Power clash (war).

And yet the inevitability of direct military clash among Great Powers during times of relative power transition is not foreordained. As neorealists observe, the structure of the international system can mitigate competition so that it culminates without direct combat—with a bipolar system being most likely to remain stable and great state competition settling into patterns of rivalry short of war.²¹ Other systemic factors may help Great Powers channel (or expend) their worst animus in one of the other four nonviolent categories of interstate competition: politico-diplomatic, economic, ideological, or informational. Liberal

internationalists offer a “liberal peace” theory, arguing that states with shared ideological values—including liberal democratic political institutions and deference to individual human rights—are resistant to major war with each other.²² An alternative institutionalist thesis asserts that states with a high degree of economic interdependence are more likely to compete in categories and a manner short of war.²³ Constructivists assert that national leadership can condition interactions and cultures to refrain from confrontation and clash with attention to social norms and cultural symmetries that build identities and communities of peace.²⁴ Great Powers also may vent violent tendencies in surrogate conflicts and proxy wars. They may seek out networked partnerships or alliance systems with combinations of lesser powers in order to increase their prospects for successful competition in nonmilitary categories and/or to deter any move toward armed clash. Or they may seek common arrangements to restrain confrontation and inhibit armed clash within agreements such as the informal Concert of Europe (1815–1854), the League of Nations (1919–1930), and the United Nations (1945–present).²⁵ Finally, the enormous destructive power and generational damage wrought by nuclear weapons may—as it has seemingly done since 1945 with rare exception—inhibit a resort to major violence and warfare between Great Powers.²⁶

With the five primary dimensions of interstate competition established and the general understandings of research into past GPCs and power transitions highlighted, this chapter now turns to a short analytical review of several representative historical cases.²⁷ Four dyadic cases within broader periods of GPC have been selected:

- France and the UK, from the late 18th to the early 19th centuries
- the UK and Imperial Germany, from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries
- the UK and the United States, from the late 19th to mid-20th centuries
- the United States and Imperial Japan during the early 20th century.²⁸

These four rivalries were contested in a multipolar global system, like the era emerging in 2020. All four featured an ascendant Great Power worried about relative power decline and at least one rising power seeking recognition and status—also evident in 2020. Finally, all four were contested during periods of emergent, disruptive technologies driving global economic dynamics from one paradigm to another. In the late 1700s, agrarian economies and mercantilist trade preferences were giving way to industrialization and free trade networks across Western Europe. By the late 1800s and early 1900s, maturing industrial economies acted out globally across a landscape featuring contested colonial empires and a growing number of protectionist trading networks. In 2020, the world is moving beyond industrial economies and even digitized ones to those featuring the hallmarks of a fourth industrial revolution: the blurring of boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological worlds.²⁹ At the same time, powerful political forces are questioning the wisdom of global free trade, but without any clear alternative framework.

Three of these rivalries resulted in war—a percentage consistent with the broader historic percentage of Great Power competitions culminating in war discussed earlier. The wars fought out of these competitive transition eras were three of the five most deadly conflicts in human history: World War II, World War I, and the Napoleonic Wars, respectively.³⁰ Only in the case of the rise of the United States in an era of relative UK power decline did a

Competitive Aspect/Category	Main Competitive Elements
Political and Diplomatic	Levels of influence in multilateral institutions, key posts held that control multilateral institutions, number and strength of political alliances.
Ideological	Values and political systems' appeal.
Informational	The manner and degree of transnational communications: open and transparent vs. closed and restrictive. Extent of denigration of "the other" in mass communications.
Military	Size, posture, technological edge of armed forces. Cohesion and capacity of military alliances.
Economic	Size, technological breadth, diversity, and resource base of national economy. Innovation ecosystem of national economy, including access to and management of financial capital.

	France/UK	UK/Germany	United States/UK	United States/Japan
Political and Diplomatic	UK ascendancy challenged	Competition over global colonies; later continental hegemony by Germany	UK global colonies preeminence and UK dominance of western Atlantic Ocean challenged	U.S. Asia-Pacific hegemony and rules for China
Ideological	Aristocracy vs. Populist, charismatic rule	Limited ethnic prestige issues; later clash over human rights and liberties	Limited ethnic tensions, only lingering with Irish-Americans	Liberal democracy vs. divine rule and messianism
Informational	Exchange among elites vs. empowerment of popular passions; negative popular imagery	Press-fueled nationalism/xenophobia; later clash over state-dominated propaganda and expression limitations	Limited and linked to economic concerns; favorable reciprocal popular press	Open, individual communications vs. hierarchical information; xenophobic press eventually
Economic (with science and technology factors)	Trade and commercial dominance across Europe (level of industrialization)	Lines of communication and colonial preferences (chemical and industrial manufacturing industries)	UK colonial trade order vs. U.S. commerce preferences (manufacturing innovation mainly in electromagnetic spectrum)	"Open Door Policy" vs. Co-Prosperity Sphere (access to metals, oil products, rubber)
Military	Royal Navy vs. France's Conscripted, Massed Army	Naval arms race	Limited to naval parity	Naval supremacy (emerging aviation)

century of chilly interstate contestations resolve short of war. The U.S.-UK dyad ultimately produced an alliance and partnership during two global wars against other Great Power competitors. Their victorious alliance in the Second World War made way for the final accommodation of ascendant U.S. power into an alliance oriented toward a wider period of system stability and international peace.

A summary of the major dynamics of these four GPC dyads across the five dimensions of interaction listed in table 2.2 is provided in table 2.3. A short analytical review of each of



Figure 2.1. Britain (William Pitt) and Napoleon Carving Up the World. Source: James Gillray, *The Plumb-Pudding [sic] in Danger* (London: H. Humphrey, 1805).

these episodes follows that table. The reviews illuminate wider lessons about GPC histories, transition dynamics, and patterns of competitive interaction with relevance for 2020.

France and the United Kingdom, Late 18th to Early 19th Centuries

Between 1790 and 1820, longstanding European powers and rivals France and the United Kingdom entered a period of intensified competition and confrontation that resulted in two major wars—the French Civil War (and its continental spillover from 1792 to 1802) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815). The international system at that time was multipolar, with other Great Power contestants including Russia, Austria-Hungary, Prussia, and the Ottoman Empire.

The UK and France had been competitors for more than a century. From the 1680s through the 1780s, the two jostled globally over colonies and international resource access and on the continent of Europe over economic and religious ascendance. For the 100-year period from 1648 to 1763, France was the dominant power and the UK its rising challenger.³¹ By the end of the 1700s—after four decade-long periods of continental war and interrelated colonial proxy war between the two conducted over a century—the power relationship had flipped. The UK commenced the 1790s as the dominant global and European power in command of the seas with its Royal Navy, flourishing as the most rapidly industrializing state astride Europe.³²

From the 1500s to the mid-1700s, Great Britain and France contested economic supremacy in a mercantilist system. Mercantilist economics was based on the premise that

a nation's relative wealth and power were best secured by the accumulation of land, gold, and silver. The accumulation of overseas colonies also generated national wealth and relative power by assuring the export of home country goods to loyal colonists while limiting the number of foreign products available for purchase in those colonies. In the mid-1700s, France squandered its mercantilist advantages in continental land mass and in its overseas colonial presence. It lagged in modern techniques of crop rotation and fertilizer use, and its industrial advances in textiles, mining, and metallurgy came mainly from innovation by British entrepreneurs. The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) increased royal debt and then lost France nearly all its North American colonial possessions. At the same time, the British industrial revolution began. Its innovations in steam engines, textile machines, tool-making, and railroads vaulted the UK into position as the world's most prosperous economy. In turn, UK businessmen became leaders in international commerce, trade, shipping, and banking—with London quickly becoming the financial capital and focus of the world economy. The British military, and especially its Royal Navy, grew from the wealth of the nation. London leveraged this military advantage to assure preferential trade and exchange between growing British colonies and the home country.

Early British public empathy for the 1789 French Revolution waned by 1793. Never amused by the revolution, the British government first supported a failed Austro-Prussian military effort to march on Paris and end the revolution in the fall of 1792. Then the vulgar beheading of King Louis XVI and the bloody excesses of the Reign of Terror compromised all but the rashest British common folk sympathies for the rebels. Britain passed an Aliens Act that prohibited French radicals from travel into the UK, and London kept a wary eye on France's activities. While the early years of revolutionary chaos in France helped Britain's overall power status, persistent French-inspired turbulence on the continent left London worried about roiling instability there. The populist interim French government and its successor Napoleonic Empire both promised to topple or replace the Divine Right and standing of the monarchies across Europe. With this persistent ideological threat, the French Revolution introduced outright political and ideological conflict into what had been a serious but often constrained competitive rivalry among fellow monarchies. The rules of competition that dominated (and often moderated) the normally bitter French-English competition from the late 17th to mid-18th centuries vanished.

Populist France also posed a threat to the UK and fellow continental monarchies' preferred means of communication and information exchange among royal elites—threatening to directly agitate anti-monarchy massed unrest in London and across the continent.³³ The UK's economic access to the continent through the Low Countries and Spain was put in jeopardy by revolutionary France's crusade-like activism, sending mass armies into Austria, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. England's lead in industrial productivity also seemed in jeopardy should France conquer England's favored European economic partners.³⁴ France's turn to universal military conscription for its army (*levée en masse*) and a new preference for total war instead of limited, seasonal campaigns—begun during the Directorate and perfected by Napoleon—disadvantaged traditional monarchic armies and threatened unconstrained French continental dominance. Fearful that France might establish absolute continental power and turn that power outward into serious confrontation against the UK's overseas colonial holdings—a fear crystalized during the 1798–1801

French campaign into Egypt and Syria—British resolve steeled. London forged continental military alliances against France and commenced armed military conflict geared to contain and then collapse France's expansionist aims and ambitions.³⁵

This UK-France period of dyadic rivalry was contested during a 26-year period following a dramatic upheaval in French politics and against a backdrop of multiple Great Powers jockeying for position in Europe—a relatively unstable multipolar system. It peaked into full-out warfare when London's ascendance on the seas and largely unfettered access to preferred overseas colonies, once contested by Spain and France, seemed to be jeopardized by a radicalized France. The period of French-British competition turned exceptionally violent when the prospects for collaboration and/or accommodation between them in the five major areas of state-to-state interactions became seemingly impossible. The UK turned to anti-French military ground alliances across continental Europe and leveraged its superior navy to destroy the French fleet at Trafalgar in 1805. These direct military clashes confined revolutionary France into a landlocked country with limited economic activities and constrained ideological reach.³⁶ The UK's clever exploitation of allied and partner continental armies to converge against French military forces from 1813 to 1814 and again in 1815 eliminated the main French threat and reset the norms of monarchy-to-monarchy power competition on the European continent in political, ideological, informational, and economic areas of interaction. In a display that realist theorists would label an astute balance of power maneuver, Great Britain reestablished—for a time—its self-perceived relative power advantage against all European states, its general freedom of economic action on the continent, and its unrivaled ascendance in overseas commerce. It is important to note that the main domain of commerce and communications/information of that time—the high seas—was the arena of competition where the UK worked most vigorously and independently to sustain its dominance and to secure future ascendance over its Great Power rival, revolutionary France.

Great Britain and Imperial Germany, Late 19th to Early 20th Centuries

From 1870 to 1945, the United Kingdom again found itself challenged by a new and rising Great Power, Imperial Germany. Germany rose to challenge UK dominance in an era marked by a multipolar distribution of global power. The UK was the globally ascendant power; France was an established but constrained Great Power; Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire were established but declining Great Powers; and the United States, Germany, and Japan were economically rising states and aspiring Great Powers.

Berlin threatened London by direct competition for overseas colonies enabled by an ascent to be a global sea power and with potential dominance on the European continent. This dyadic rivalry played out within a wider era of GPC and culminated in two major global conflagrations: World War I and World War II. Initially, Imperial Germany's challenge to an ascendant United Kingdom was an economic one and without sharp competition in the other four categories of major state interaction (see table 2.2). As they consolidated control of a majority of the European continent via wars in 1864, 1866, and 1870–1871, Imperial Germany's founders effectively leveraged expanding German access to natural resources and labor. They forged a state with industrial prowess and manufacturing capacity that surpassed that of the long-dominant United Kingdom.³⁷ In 1870, the UK produced almost

Table 2.4. Great Power Iron and Steel Production in Selected Years (in Tons)

	1870	1910	1935	1950
UK	5,819,492	12,050,361	12,905,243	18,800,000
Germany	1,560,000	25,500,000	6,498,873	10,600,000
United States	375,000	25,643,871	51,100,000	80,100,000
France	1,417,073	11,200,000	33,301,000	10,600,000
Russia	2,336,000	11,900,000	27,918,000	53,200,000
Japan	0	180,000	4,703,000	7,800,000

Sources: Tibor Fabian, "A Linear Programming Model of Integrated Iron and Steel Production," *Management Science* 4, no. 4 (July 1958), 415–449; M.S. Birkett, "The British Iron and Steel Industry," *Economica*, no. 5 (June 1922), 149–161; John B. Parrish, "Iron and Steel in the Balance of World Power," *Journal of Political Economy* 64, no. 5 (October 1956), 369–388; Muzaffer Erselcuk, "Iron and Steel Industry in Japan," *Economic Geography* 23, no. 2 (April 1947), 105–129; Abraham Berglund, "The Iron and Steel Industry of Japan and Japanese Continental Policies," *Journal of Political Economy* 30, no. 5 (October 1922), 623–654; Charles Will Wright, *The Iron and Steel Industries of Europe*, Economic Paper 19 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939); S.L., "Iron and Steel in the Soviet Union," *The World Today* 8, no. 5 (May 1952), 210–222; Robert C. Allen, "International Competition in Iron and Steel, 1850–1913," *The Journal of Economic History* 39, no. 4 (December 1979), 911–937; James E. Rowe, "The Development of the Russian Iron and Steel Industry," *The Geographical Bulletin*, vol. 10 (May 1975), 24–30; Daniel J. Morrell, "Iron and Steel," in *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1878*, vol. 3, *Iron and Steel, Ceramics and Glass, Forestry, Cotton* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 1–112; William P. Blake, "Ceramics," in *Reports of the United States Commissioners to the Paris Universal Exposition, 1878*, vol. 3, 113–224; John B. Parrish, "Iron and Steel in the Balance of World Power," *Journal of Political Economy* 64, no. 5 (October 1956), 369–388; Henry Harrison, "Iron Ore, Pig-Iron, and Steel Production," *Scientific American* 110, no. 22 (May 1914), 444.

four times as much iron and steel as Imperial Germany and by 1910 the Germans twice as much as the British (see table 2.4). In the subset of steel—the product of a more advanced industrial process and of greater use in modern machine tools, construction, and advancing implements—the UK produced twice as much steel as Imperial Germany in 1870, but by 1910 the Germans twice as much as the British.³⁸

Over the same 40-year period, Germany increased coal production by 800 percent; the British increase was only 200 percent.³⁹ As it grew, Imperial Germany protected its industrial manufacturing and its agricultural production from outside competition with steep import tariffs.⁴⁰ The UK had quit protectionism and embraced free trade in 1840 so had no similar import tariffs to counter the German taxes (or, for that matter, similar American tariffs). Despite recurring British government efforts to establish countervailing protectionist tariffs, domestic British export merchant and financial interests prevailed in preventing any new UK tariff regime that could hurt their strong export businesses.⁴¹ In 1910, the UK had twice as much in credit bank assets as Germany.⁴²

Beginning in the 1890s, Berlin turned its growing manufacturing advantage—especially in steel—into the quest for a world-class navy. The Kaiser and key German interest groups (or leagues) wanted a navy that could rival that of the UK for prestige and that could compete with imperial London for acquisition and maintenance of global colonies.⁴³ In 1897, Imperial Germany began emphasis of a so-called world policy (*Weltpolitik*) that shifted popular attention from growing domestic social issues to foreign policy by focusing on overseas colonial expansion and the construction of a high seas fleet.⁴⁴

Kaiser Wilhelm II perceived Germany's quest for a dominant navy as one to gain London's respect as a peer Great Power to be accommodated. But this fateful policy choice had an opposite effect in London.⁴⁵ Badly spooked, the UK made diplomatic moves during the 1890s to curtail Anglo-French enmity that had lasted over 800 years. London's diplomats also took steps to moderate a 60-year, often intense competition with Russia over colonies and boundaries in the Near East and Far East: the "Great Game."⁴⁶ London took these steps in order to seek an agreement with Paris and later Moscow to constrain Germany's rise on the European continent.⁴⁷ British diplomacy also undertook a "Great Rapprochement" with another putative Great Power rival of the era—the United States.⁴⁸



Figure 2.2. Germany, Britain, and Russia in Pursuit of Colonies. Source: Thomas Nast, "The World's Plunderers: Germany, England, and Russia Grab What They Can of Africa and Asia," *Harper's Weekly*, 1885 (Sarin Images/Granger).

By 1905, the UK turned the full British Empire's attention—including London's notorious press—toward the German threat. Germany returned the favor. The popular press in both Germany and the UK played a substantial role in accelerating Anglo-German hostilities. From about the mid-1890s, the British mass press featured a steady diet of invective against a militarized and menacing Germany. At the same time, the German press took delight in selling copy by accusing Britain of standing in the way of Germany's rightful place as a global leader. German papers also made their mark by publicizing British troops in South Africa as cravenly bayonetting to death innocent Boer babies in their conduct of the Boer War.⁴⁹ German publications fanned the flames of extreme nationalism advocated by the Pan-German League, founded in 1891 by Ernst Hasse.⁵⁰ This xenophobic, right-wing league had a notable influence on German public opinion against Anglo-Saxons, Yankees, and Russians before World War I and set the stage for the interwar rise of Nazism's hateful intolerance of all things insufficiently German.⁵¹

Of note, Imperial Germany and the UK had relatively similar political systems during their pre-World War I era of rivalry. Both were constitutional monarchies, and their aristocratic classes were heavily intermarried and related by blood. Both were growing more democratic during the period, each enfranchising more and more voters into its political systems. But unlike the cases of the UK and the United States addressed later, this political "sameness" did not limit descent into toxic rivalry.⁵²

UK fears of decline vis-à-vis Germany and German grievances against British haughtiness contributed to the development of a European military alliance structure steeped in complex animosities and tethered to hair-trigger war plans in the event of crisis. Germany's

major alliance partner, Austria-Hungary, was wrapped into a mesh of self-determination breakaway wars across Eastern Europe where Russian meddling fueled military grievance and a seemingly inevitable Russo-Austrian armed clash. In turn, the UK's 1907 Entente with Russia did not fully appreciate St. Petersburg's risky adventurism in the Balkans or the degree to which the Russian army was no match for the German war machine. Thus, each rival tethered itself to allies with great incentives to fight, and these incentives produced extremely risky war plans that set the conditions for the miscalculations of 1914 and the calamity of World War I.⁵³

The aftermath of World War I featured a "victor's peace," with stifling economic war reparations against Germany, insufficient British economic power to moderate global economic shocks, and a postwar economic titan—the United States—unwilling to undertake an economic or diplomatic leadership role.⁵⁴ These conditions accelerated global economic instability and military rivalries that fueled the rise of fascist and communist ideologies. The struggle over power transition and ascendance that generated World War I also set the conditions of fragmentation and confrontation between the UK, its allies, and Nazi Germany that followed the Great War. By the early 1930s, Nazi Germany and the UK again had major, intractable grievances across the political, economic, ideological, and informational dimensions of state-to-state interaction. These combined to produce a second, even more all-consuming global conflagration: World War II in Europe and the North Atlantic.⁵⁵

The Anglo-German competitive dyad was contested over a 75-year period and in a multipolar world—one that neorealism views as the least stable and most prone to interstate war. It evolved from a period of wary competition between the UK and Germany that lasted from 1870 to 1895, when political, ideological, informational, and economic forms of interaction were reasonably collaborative.⁵⁶ By 1900, this GPC dyad devolved into stark competition, confrontation, and major war when Germany moved to turn its economic advantage toward creation of a globally relevant navy and sought to become a colonial power on equal footing with the UK and France. After World War I, Germany's grievances, Britain's inability to fully recognize its accelerating decline of economic and political power as an outcome of the Great War, and the very wide differences between London's and Berlin's narratives about proper political, economic, human rights, and institutional norms set the stage for another violent and even more vicious clash of arms, World War II.

It is again worth noting that the UK became most worried that it would be eclipsed once Germany asserted a clear challenge for dominance over the principal medium of commerce and communications in that era—the high seas. After London's early 1900s determination of the primacy of Germany's challenge, the UK shifted into diplomatic, informational, and then military confrontation and clash with Imperial Germany.

The United Kingdom and the United States, Late 19th to Mid-20th Centuries

The United States and the UK participated in a dyad of Great Power competition from the 1880s through 1940. Their competition nested in the multiple rivalries between the many Great Power states of the era. The UK was the ascendant but declining power and the United States the rising one. London and Washington mainly contested naval dominance across the Western Hemisphere and about the rules and ascendant order in global economic exchange.⁵⁷ In 1870, U.S. gross domestic product became equal to that of the UK. By 1890, American industrialization rapidly eclipsed that of the UK, and by the turn of the



Figure 2.3. U.S. and UK Rapprochement—Uncle Sam and John Bull Shake Hands. Source: Victor Gillam, "Hands across the Sea," *Judge*, June 11, 1898.

century, American economic industrialization and manufacturing prowess was on the path to eclipse the size of the entire economy of the British Empire.⁵⁸ While the UK pursued an economic policy of openness, the United States established and maintained post-Civil War protectionist tariffs with special preference to industrial manufacturing and agriculture.⁵⁹ Yet U.S.-UK trade expanded throughout the period as London tolerated American protectionism while pursuing the consumer and financial services economic benefits of liberal international trade.

A century of Anglo-American political and ideological animus began a slow decline in the 1880s. From before the American Revolution, the United States demonstrated a strong distaste for the British colonial empire. So, too, British politicians had a deep disdain for American views about liberal democracy that denigrated constitutional monarchies and often called for toppling old European dynasties and the demise of colonial empires.⁶⁰ But during the 1880s and 1890s the UK became more democratic by enfranchising more voters, and the United States gained its own form of territorial empire.⁶¹ This growing sense of sameness along political and ideological lines allowed London and Washington to view each other's power in less threatening ways. Between 1887 and 1901, London concluded a number of treaties and agreements with the United States that settled residual questions about Canadian boundaries, Alaskan fisheries, and the future of the Panama Canal Zone, among others.⁶²

By the late 1890s, Americans began to convert economic might into diplomatic initiatives and naval military power. Where the Royal Navy had been ascendant over the Atlantic Ocean from the late 1790s, a small but increasingly capable and active U.S. Navy now began to assert itself. Rumors of possible war between the United States and the UK during 1895

	1900	1910	1920	1935	1950
United States	14	11.1	22.4	11.6	16.7
Germany	10.9	11.2	3.8	8.9	3.2
UK	14.6	13.5	14	12.1	10
France	7.9	7.6	7.5	5.3	5
Russia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Japan	1	1.4	3.1	4	1.3

Source: United Nations (UN), *International Trade Statistics 1900–1960* (New York: UN, 1962).

and 1896 involving a territorial row between London and Venezuela caused panic in New York and worry in London.⁶³ Yet cooler heads prevailed in both countries. Diplomats navigated Anglo-American frictions, so they were viewed less moralistically and with greater realism, inhibiting the potential for violent clash.

Around the same time, dynamics in the multipolar international system came to reinforce the nascent U.S.-UK rapprochement. As previously noted, the UK perceived greater risks to its colonial holdings and to a hostile takeover of the seas from Germany.⁶⁴ British admiralty worries about the German naval buildup closer to home caused the War Office of the early 1900s to de-prioritize planning for possible war with the United States. Gradually, British politicians joined Royal Navy analysts in determining that America's economic might meant that Washington could afford a navy that Britain could never hope to match. Moreover, without any powerful UK allies in the Western Hemisphere, it would be folly to engage in a military quarrel with the United States.⁶⁵ The UK's decision to seek accommodation and collaboration with the United States at the turn of the 19th century (the Great Rapprochement) paid future dividends.⁶⁶ A historically isolationist United States eventually joined the UK in its fight against Imperial Germany during World War I and later against the consolidated European fascist powers led by Adolf Hitler's Germany in World War II. The United States also became the global standard bearer for liberal democratic norms and institutions after World War II when the UK's power and prospects for global influence sharply declined. Yet the British decision to accommodate rather than confront U.S. power negatively impacted long-term UK interests in one significant area—economics. Washington's distaste for the British colonial empire generated a post-World War II set of global commercial and financial rules and norms that transferred fiscal and trade dominance from the UK to the United States and that saw the rapid disintegration of the once mighty British colonial empire and an attendant decline in British trade as a percentage of global trade (see table 2.5).⁶⁷

The Great Rapprochement between the UK and the United States during 1895 and 1915 was far from the certain thing that is often assumed today.⁶⁸ In many ways, the Anglo-American competition prior to the 1880s featured more areas of confrontation (political, economic, and informational) than areas of collaboration (ideological and military). However, Britain made a proper assessment of its inherent economic and military-industrial power limitations compared to those held by a late 19th-century America. It also came

to see the United States as a Great Power rival with tolerable political, ideological, and information preferences. Realists contend that it was London's balance of power calculus against Germany that led to a strategic decision to contest the rise of Berlin and convert tensions with its former American colonists into a long-term special relationship and geostrategic partnership. Liberal institutionalists argue this as a case where common norms, values, and political systems facilitated a peaceful Great Power transition. HST proponents view British acquiescence to the ascent of American power as a logical outcome between a dominant, declining hegemon and a rising state that viewed the future of global norms, orders, and procedures in a similar way.

The United States and Imperial Japan, Early 20th Century

Japan and the United States engaged in a 45-year period of rivalry over economic influence across the Asia-Pacific and for control of the Pacific Ocean sea lines of communication. Although both were largely rising powers in the Asia-Pacific region when compared to established Great Powers such as Britain and France, the United States perceived itself as the dominant commercial and maritime power in the region and the Japanese as the rising challenger to its regional hegemony. This contest culminated in a 5-year, deeply destructive war across Asia-Pacific fought as part of World War II.

American interest in commerce and free enterprise in the Asia-Pacific traced back to Commodore Matthew Perry's maritime engagement with the Japanese in the early 1850s. U.S.-Japan relations were relatively positive and featured modest economic trade and cooperation during the late 1800s. After the Spanish American War of 1898, the United States took a great and growing interest in setting the rules for trade and commerce across the Asia-Pacific. Rapidly increasing American industrial might resulted in high-volume exports that needed import partners across Asia. American industrial prowess also was invested into a modern recast: iron- and steel-hulled U.S. Navy capable of enforcing commercial exchange in the Pacific Ocean. The 1899 U.S. declaration of an Open Door Policy calling for equal trading rights for all nations in China and recognition of Chinese territorial integrity set the stage for increasing friction with Imperial Japan. Japan already had territorial interests in China and on the Korean Peninsula, secured during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). Tokyo believed that it had to control selected tracts of territory on the Asian land mass to access natural resources and control markets necessary to be a regional Great Power. Japan reaffirmed its intent and its capability to assert imperial control of continental Asian territories with victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) where Japanese victory confirmed its control of land in Korea and Manchuria. In 1915, Japan announced its Twenty-One Demands for the Republic of China, asserting a far greater Japanese economic and territorial remit there.⁶⁹

During late World War I and its immediate aftermath, the United States sought modest accommodation with Japan in a manner that enhanced Japan's belief that it had the right to special territorial interests in China due to its geographic proximity but that maintained the public perception that America's Open Door Policy remained intact.⁷⁰ The United States and the UK also sought to constrain the burgeoning post-World War I naval arms race among them, Japan, France, and Italy with a Five-Power Treaty (1921–1922) that locked warship ratios among the UK, United States, and Japan at a 5:5:3 ratio.⁷¹ Initially acceptable to Japanese



Figure 2.4. U.S. Army Anti-Japanese Propaganda Poster. Source: "Our Next Boss?" World War II propaganda poster (U.S. Army/University of Minnesota Libraries, Upper Midwest Literary Archives).

World War I recession and an early 1930s depression jolted by the U.S. stock market collapse and subsequent draconian U.S. tariffs on all imports.⁷³

Jarred by severe economic depression, Japan's military leaders gradually muscled aside its political leaders from 1931 to 1937, pressing the government into ever greater military adventures throughout eastern Asia. Japanese military and strident nationalist politicians became increasingly assertive in claims for colonial ascendance across Asia and in China. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, exciting international condemnation. It withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933 over this criticism and increasingly turned away from international diplomatic and economic fora. In 1937, Japan launched an open war against China in Beijing, seeking expanded control of critical infrastructure and resources. From 1937 to 1940, the United States and Japan coexisted in an uneasy truce—with the United States refusing formal entry into the war on the side of China and continuing to abide by the terms of the 1911 U.S.-Japan Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. But by 1940, Japan's continually brutal war in China, coupled with its diplomatic and economic overtures toward the Axis powers of Germany and Italy and its formal declaration of a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" against all Western interests in the Pacific, triggered a much sharper U.S. reaction.

politicians, this treaty became a growing aggravation with Japanese military leadership during the 1920s and 1930s. It also became a poster child codifying Tokyo's grievance that, led by the United States, Western powers were treating Japan unfairly as a second-class power.⁷² At the same time, longstanding ideological and racial tensions between the United States and Japan hardened when President Woodrow Wilson refused a Japanese request for a racial equality clause or an admission of the equality of the nation in the League of Nation's charter. U.S. isolationism in the 1920s and early 1930s meant that competition between Washington and Tokyo festered beneath the surface in the United States. But Japanese frustration with the United States grew increasingly palpable as its 1920s economy suffered from a post-

As a strong signal of growing worry about Japan's unrelenting war in Asia and its growing naval fleet, America repositioned its Pacific Fleet Headquarters from San Diego to the territorial port of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, during the summer of 1940. In late 1940, Washington levied restrictive sanctions against Japan's economy and stepped up overt aid and assistance to China. America sought to contain Japanese imperial expansion in the Asia-Pacific with an embargo of Japan's access to critical materials, such as oil, rubber, and scrap iron. Japan viewed this policy with increasing alarm and perceived that it was being placed under existential threat. After the United States placed a full oil embargo on Japan in the middle of 1941, Japan's military leadership resolved to preemptive war—hoping to strike a decisive blow against the U.S. Pacific Fleet early in a clash that would cause Washington to sue for peace in the Asia-Pacific. Japan properly recognized that U.S. industrial might and latent military capability would inevitably dwarf that of Japan, but its military junta would not auger long-term accommodation with Washington, instead gambling on success in a short, sharp 6-month war.⁷⁴ This military gambit failed at Pearl Harbor, and 4½ years later, Japan's imperial ambitions and its country lay in ruins.

During the early 1900s, U.S.-Japan GPC in the Asia-Pacific was contested in a multipolar world where the major powers of Europe along with Japan and the United States sought political and economic influence on the continent of Asia. A relatively dominant United States—led by its modern growing navy and strong economic influence—managed the palpable tensions with Japan through restraint and a number of frequently secret bilateral and multilateral arrangements involving Tokyo's continental aims. Economic interests on the continent of Asia greatly diverged, but Japan and the United States continued direct trade with each other in a number of key categories, including those of energy and mineral resources. The two countries also found space for mutual financial benefit in secret deals impacting China. Ideological differences were obvious as U.S. aversion to Japanese and Chinese immigrants played out in public, but American and Japanese diplomacy sidestepped the issue until the outbreak of war. Japan's growing military might was addressed in a series of temporal arms control treaties that weathered poorly when Japanese military leadership took center stage in Tokyo during the 1930s. Disarmament and arms control efforts at collaborative competition also fell short because they did not address emerging technologies with critical warfighting impact such as naval aviation and aircraft carriers, submarines, and electromagnetic sensing devices. Political and diplomatic niceties remained ascendant until the 1930s, but then sharply eroded once Japan's government took a militaristic and fascist tone.

A destructive U.S.-Japan military clash was not foreordained. But the deep divisions in all the major dimensions of state-to-state interaction between them by the 1930s made peaceful competition exceptionally fraught. Economic accommodations made from the early 1900s to the late 1930s waned as Japan's government turned militaristic, and long-festered cultural and ideological differences were thrown into stark relief as Japan pursued empire and America pushed back. Japan's military became Tokyo's preferred means of interaction as its quest for self-contained regional economic hegemony in the Asia-Pacific confronted America with a choice to abandon the region or engage in confrontation. Japan's initial advantage in naval aviation and amphibious military operations did not hold up well in the face of America's enormous industrial and manpower advantages. Its quest for ascendant power in the Asia-Pacific lay in ruins by late 1945.

Insights from Selected GPC History

There are a number of insights about GPC that can be drawn from analysis done in this chapter—including the selected analysis made of our four historic rivalry dyads. Among these insights, 10 stand out.

First, for all but liberal-institutionalist theorists, international relations scholars and modern strategic analysts identify the historical relations among the most powerful states (the Great Powers) as critical to determining the levels of peace and stability across the international system. All agree that GPC involves more than just military power, and many view military power as the most critical attribute. Geopolitical scholars agree that soft power matters to GPC and includes political, ideological, informational, economic, and emerging technological dimensions. Most of these strategic dimensions or instruments are interdependent to some degree.⁷⁵

Second, over the past 500 years, interactions among Great Powers in the international system normally are dominated by competition in one or more of the major interactive categories (see table 2.2) with simultaneous elements of collaboration and conflict. Pure cooperation (unfettered peace and stability) and direct violent clash (war) among them have been the rarest forms of interaction.⁷⁶ Thus, the unipolar moment featuring unchallenged American military ascendance, absence of war among major states, and the primacy of cooperation and collaboration in the international order from 1992 to 2008 was atypical.

Third, Great Power transitions play out over decades or centuries, not years. Three-quarters of transitions since 1500 have culminated with—or featured during—a destructive period of war. The inevitability of war among states during times of transition is not foreordained; Great Powers may channel or expend their worst animus in one of several other nonviolent categories of competition: politico-diplomatic, economic, ideological, and informational. Great Powers also may vent matters of confrontation or clash through surrogate agents, covert activities, and proxy forces short of war. In addition, GPC among nuclear armed actors may decrease the likelihood of rivalry moving into direct violent conflict due to the swift, comprehensive destruction threatened should nuclear weapons be used.⁷⁷

“The history of relations among Great Powers is a story of persistent rivalry and recurrent warfare, punctuated by occasional, usually brief, periods of peace. . . . In the absence of a [global] higher power, states are always, in some measure, insecure. . . . The mistrust, military buildups, and diplomatic maneuvering . . . can sometimes result in periods of dynamic balance and tenuous stability . . . however, these have always broken down eventually, giving way to major wars.”

*Aaron L. Friedberg,
A Contest for Supremacy (2012)*

Fourth, an alignment of conflictual demands or grievances across the five major areas of interstate competition (political and diplomatic, ideological, informational, economic, and military) sets the conditions for GPC to drift toward direct military clash. This fateful five-layer negative alignment occurred between the United Kingdom and Revolutionary France, and again between the United States and Imperial Japan. Such alignment did not occur between the United States and the UK. Late 19th-century leaders in Washington and especially in London found enough common ground in political, ideological, and economic interactions that they moved beyond residual diplomatic challenges and military

power realignments. Here, enlightened leadership mattered. Like those in late Victorian England and the United States, leaders can inhibit the alignment of intractable demands across all five areas, looking for avenues to undertake collaborative or cooperative activities where such opportunities exist.

Fifth, once a GPC rivalry is under way, the most reliable indicator of when a clash will erupt is when one side or both recognizes a shift in the relative alignment of economic and military power that is perceived as immutable and untenable. As states view the relative power alignment moving against them in an unacceptable way, they are much more inclined to risk a preemptive conflict than when they perceive a stable power status quo.⁷⁸ The UK most acutely feared loss of naval ascendancy in its rivalry with Revolutionary/Napoleonic France and later Imperial/Nazi Germany. Also, Imperial Japan perceived its imperative for naval dominance in the Pacific untenable if it did not strike first against encroaching U.S. forces. Applied to 2020, longstanding U.S. ascendancy at sea, in space, and in cyberspace points to areas where a perceived shift in relative power among the Great Powers in these areas could foretell growing risk of direct armed clash.

Sixth, although incompatible ideologies and caustic informational exchanges about the rival's people are not a lone determinant of when Great Power rivalry will devolve into direct violent clash (war), they are strong lagging indicators of insurmountable contentiousness. Limited but noteworthy UK popular support for the French Revolution turned irredeemably hostile when an increasingly bloody insurrection generated popular press revulsion for everything French across Great Britain. The UK press and that of Imperial Germany turned to ad homonym attacks on each other's national character, and this crescendoed as the contest over colonies and naval ascendancy peaked. U.S. antipathy for Japanese militarism and governance choices played out in crass press attacks against Japanese society during the late 1930s, and Tokyo propaganda returned the favor. Conversely, U.S. and UK similarities in culture, governance, and general worldview found positive press in America and Britain during the dawn of their late 1800s rapprochement. Modern analysts must beware when U.S. and/or Chinese press caricatures of "others" become uniformly negative—a historically bad sign for peaceful resolution of GPC transitions.

Seventh, during power transition periods, competitors may not perceive their own various forms of power accurately. Moreover, even when accurate assessments of relative decline or vulnerability are made, domestic or bureaucratic interests may retard agile adaptation necessary to mitigate risks. The UK of the late 1800s was afflicted by this challenge. It was aware of relative economic decline and made sensible foreign policy changes regarding the United States. But it found itself unable to persuade domestic constituencies favoring unfettered free trade to consider some targeted tariffs as a means to generate manufacturing innovation into new critical technologies. This inability to adapt domestic resource priorities left the UK disadvantaged versus Imperial Germany in emerging technologies such as industrial chemicals, machine tools, and military-grade steel. London required Swedish, Swiss, and U.S. assistance to compensate during World War I. Like the UK a century ago, American politicians in 2020 already may be finding themselves confronting similar resistance from exporters and financial business leaders to any adaptation of national production priorities and trade activities toward Great Power competition.

Eighth, perceptions of relative power, rather than detailed and empirical assessments of power, are likely to inform and then drive policymakers.⁷⁹ Late 19th-century America and Germany might have benefited more domestically and seemed less threatening abroad with reduced economic tariffs as they grew, but politicians could not sway powerful agrarian and export political constituencies demanding such immutable protections. Here again, leadership matters. Enlightened state leaders can seek and promulgate factual assessments of national strengths and weaknesses. They can guard against the pitfall of blaming others and then acting out violently based on false perceptions, instead turning to and educating their people about empirical assessment of relative economic or military strengths.⁸⁰ As the siren's song of rapacious protectionism plays out in 2020, the United States and China might benefit from contemplation of this lesson from past GPC.

Ninth, during periods of dynamic technological change, the likelihood of strategic surprise or operational obsolescence is greater in the military dimension of GPC. States may overestimate or underestimate the potential combat power of new innovations, whether they are technological or conceptual. Napoleon's tactical genius and his innovative use of massed artillery made him a formidable land opponent but did not translate into strategically vital sea power in his rivalry with the UK. Similarly, Imperial Germany's superior battlefield use of railways and Nazi Germany's perfection of the tactical use of airpower in blitzkrieg did not translate into an effective strategic challenge to the Royal Navy. Imperial Japan had a temporary advantage in strategic naval airpower, but insufficient national economic power to survive a U.S. industrial onslaught when its Pearl Harbor gambit fell short. In 2020, the rapid rise of new and novel forms of military and protomilitary technologies may contribute to improper estimates of relative power.

Finally, Great Power success in geostrategic competitions requires extraordinary political leadership, in both the conduct of statecraft and generating requisite forms of domestic renewal and institutional adaptation.⁸¹ The UK exhibited such statecraft in its competitions with post-revolutionary France and with a rising United States. The UK proved less adept during competition with Imperial and then Nazi Germany. Japan did not succeed in its contest with the United States over ascendance in Asia-Pacific. The challenge for leaders in 2020 is at least as great as it was for those in past eras of GPC.

Conclusion

The history of Great Power competition and related debates over power rise and decline offer numerous insights. The most important conclusion is that while GPC is the historical norm, relative decline and violent clash among rivals are not predestined in any way. Instead, these outcomes reflect choices that leaders make and their capacity to assess and adapt. In 2020, contemporary debates about the evolving era of GPC among the United States, China, and Russia often betray a degree of fatalism about American power and where Washington stands in economic, military, or geostrategic influence terms.

As Aaron Friedberg noted in the afterword to his 1988 study of Great Britain's policies vis-à-vis the United States at the dawn of the 20th century, "it would be unwise to bet against the resilience and adaptability of the American system."⁸² But it would be equally unwise to allow complacency or inertia to drive national security strategy. In a world defined by disruptive political and socioeconomic change, and a potentially revolutionary

altered character of warfare, the United States finds itself at the dawn of an era where it can no longer assume that its power advantages will adapt. Leadership matters. Understanding the emerging dynamics in an era of interstate relations dominated by three Great Powers across the five major arenas of interaction—politico-diplomatic, ideological, informational, economic, and military—cannot be underappreciated. When it comes to the proper development and utilization of U.S. power from 2020 to 2025, a competitive mindset in Washington is necessary. In turn, a solid historical understanding of GPC is important. Finally, a proper assessment of the strategic imperatives and relational dynamics as well as the competitive elements and power toolsets available to Washington, Beijing, and Russia must be established. The next two chapters provide an overview of these critical geostrategic elements for our new era of GPC.

The authors thank Michael S. Bell, Bernard Finel, Laura J. Junor, and James Lacey for helpful reviews and suggestions for this chapter.

Notes

¹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Knopf, 1948).

² Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979).

³ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977). In this seminal work on this topic, Keohane and Nye identified three pillars of soft power: political values, culture, and foreign policy. Each extends these constructs in subsequent works, including Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002); Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: Perseus Books, 2011); Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (New York: Westview Press, 1989); Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁴ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992), 391–425; E. Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1998), 319–363; Steve Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (1998), 29–46.

⁵ Robert Gilpin, *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment* (New York: Basic Books, 1975); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Jack S. Levy, "Theories of General War," *World Politics* 37, no. 3 (April 1985), 344–374.

⁶ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*; Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 39, no. 4 (Autumn 1985), 579–614. Economist Charles Kindleberger also is considered a proponent of hegemonic stability theory, but with a focus on trade and finance tools (soft power), rather than military ones, as the primary means for the hegemon to establish and sustain a liberal, free trade order. See Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 288–305.

⁷ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: International Change and Financial Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁸ E. Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1998), 319–363.

⁹ Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2017), 244–286. Even the conclusion of 25 percent is generous; one of the four cases studied was that of Germany versus the United Kingdom and France for political influence in Europe from 1990 onward. Arguably, this case is indeterminate because the overwhelming influence of American military power and political preferences across Europe remains both dominant and an inhibitor of political tensions migrating toward violent confrontation, and because the case is not yet concluded, so no final outcome is known.

¹⁰ Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1991), 23–33; Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: Norton, 2008); Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

¹¹ As the Soviet Union was wavering, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama questioned whether this moment of ascendant Western liberal democracy represented an unabashed and irreversible victory of economic and political liberalism. His pregnant question was premature. Liberalism and free trade orthodoxy may prove rather fragile achievements. Instead, the "desire for recognition and respect" may not be satisfied by prosperity or political participation. See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, no. 16 (Summer 1989), 3–18; Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

¹² Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, "The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2018).

¹³ Michael Howard, "Military Science in an Age of Peace," *The RUSI Journal* 119, no. 1 (March 1974), 4–23.

¹⁴ Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3–20.

¹⁵ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

¹⁶ Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives*, RR2726 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018), available at <www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2726.html>. These seven objectives meld classic realist definitions of state competitive objectives and those later defined by liberal institutionalists. See Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 29–114; Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 11–19.

¹⁷ Allison, *Destined for War*, 244–286.

¹⁸ James Lacey, ed., *Great Strategic Rivalries: From the Classical World to the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁹ See "COW Typology of War: Defining and Categorizing Wars" and "COW War List" at the *Correlates of War Project*, available at <www.correlatesofwar.org/>.

²⁰ Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, "Enduring Rivalries: Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Patterns," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (June 1993).

²¹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

²² But that same research into this "democratic peace theory" indicates that war is more likely between liberal democratic states and those that are not and that the propensity for war between liberal democracies and those perceived as illiberal democracies also is greater than between two similar liberal democratic states. See Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1983), 222; David Lake, "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War," *American Political Science Review* 86, no. 1 (March 1992), 24–37.

²³ The economic interdependence argument is made in Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*. The counterargument regarding the origins of World War I and the intense economic interdependence among European monarchies that did not inhibit major Great Power war is found in Barbara Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890–1914* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

²⁴ Walt, *Theory of International Politics*, 40–42.

²⁵ Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*, 6–11.

²⁶ This controversial "nuclear peace theory" is established in such major works as Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better," *Adelphi Papers* 21, no. 171 (1981), available at <<https://fliphtml5.com/lhec/zexq/>>; John Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (Summer 1993), 50–66; Robert Rauchhaus, "Evaluating the Nuclear Peace Hypothesis: A Quantitative Approach," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 2 (2009), 258–277, available at <www.jstor.org/stable/20684584>. The rare but important exception is the war between nuclear weapons states India and Pakistan in July 1999, known as the Kargil War. While neither state was a Great Power by the definition used in this volume, the fact that each state possessed large and relatively modern militaries and engaged them in a month-long major war despite the specter of nuclear escalation stands as a caution against any

orthodoxy that an absence of Great Power war in the nuclear weapons era is valid. See Neil Jocke, "The Kargil War and Nuclear Deterrence," in *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia Crisis Behavior and the Bomb*, ed. Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur (New York: Routledge, 2008).

²⁷ We chose a short list of historical cases that represents several important dimensions of modern Great Power competition (GPC). This case study exercise is intended as illustrative rather than comprehensive. In that context, the U.S.–Soviet Union Cold War competition from 1945 to 1991 was considered but not chosen for review. It was omitted due to the expansive trove of analytical literature that already exists to describe the critical dynamics and outcomes from the 46-year rivalry. Cold War case study literature establishes in great detail the kinds of analytical observations featured in this chapter about the four less well-understood cases chosen. Under Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union (temporarily) ended the Cold War rivalry by quitting the competition in its three key dimensions: ideology, economic organization, and political identity. In this chapter and those that follow, the authors refer to many of the authoritative texts on the Cold War, with special consideration to the following seminal works: John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005); Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962–1967* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

²⁸ Some of our reviewers specifically questioned why the rise of Japan from the 1970s to 1990s was not chosen for this chapter. Although briefly considered, the Japan–U.S. trade competition of the Cold War was not selected as a critical case for understanding modern GPC for a number of reasons. Three stood out. First, Japan never met the operational definition of a Great Power provided in chapter 1. Specifically, Japan never had unusual capabilities in terms of the other states during the Cold War and was never perceived by the other states in the system as a state able to leverage its commercial capabilities for a change in the international order. Second, Japan at that time was a veritable client of the United States in its military, political, and diplomatic activities, thus not truly an independent actor (much less a Great Power) in four of the five aspects of international competition defined in table 2.2. Third, the "competition" between the United States and Japan over economic practices had no parallel ideological, informational, communications, or military competitive dimensions. Also, the limited economic dimensions contested in this power dyad never infected other critical bilateral interactions. For these and additional conclusions rendering the U.S.–Japan trade competition during the Cold War relatively unhelpful for understanding GPC historically or today, see Keyu Jin Keyu, "No, China Is Not the 'Next Japan,'" *World Economic Forum*, October 13, 2016, available at <www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/10/no-china-is-not-the-next-japan/>; and Wendy Wu, "Why China's U.S. Trade Stand-Off Is Not a Replay of Japan's in the 1980s," *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), April 16, 2018, available at <www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2141824/why-chinas-us-trade-stand-not-replay-japans-1980s>.

²⁹ For details, see Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2016).

³⁰ World War II took an estimated 70 million lives over the course of 15 years. World War I cost about 17 million dead in a 4½-year period. The Napoleonic Wars ended an estimated 6.5 million lives over a 14-year series of military clashes. Only the 13th-century Mongol conquest of Europe (about 60 million dead) and the 17th-century, 60-year Qing Dynasty conquest

of China (about 25 million dead) rank in the same category of deadliness for Great Power warfare. This accounting omits incorporation of civil war periods such as the multiple instances in China and that in 19th-century Russia—many of which are estimated to have killed more than 10 million people. See Matthew White, *Atrocities: The 100 Deadliest Episodes in Human History* (New York: Norton, 2011).

³¹ In the 1500s, Portugal and Spain were ascendant Global Powers with international trade reach, naval prominence, and growing colonies. But in 1578, King Sebastian I of Portugal, who had no heir, was killed in the Battle of Ksar El Kebir. This led to the Portuguese succession crisis of 1580, which allowed Philip II of Spain to unite the two kingdoms under the rule of the Spanish kings for the next 60 years. Philip II mismanaged Portuguese colonies, declared war on England, and suffered the disastrous destruction of a large part of the Spanish Armada in 1588, which marked the end of Spanish colonial supremacy. During the 1600s, France, England, and the Netherlands overtook Spain and Portugal in commercial and naval supremacy. The Dutch gained an early trade advantage in South Asia, the Far East, and North America. England and France reduced the Dutch advantage with a century of shifting alliance combinations, continental battles, and proxy fights over disputed colonies. Beginning with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) and culminating during the collapse of the Spanish monarchy and the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714), France attained an ascendant power position on the European continent and a relative ascendancy in global colonies that it retained during the early 18th century. See Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 99; John A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667–1714* (Harlow, UK: Longman, 1999), 17; and Francois Crouzet, *Britain Ascendant: Comparative Issues in Franco-British Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 12.

³² Many historians mark the UK rise and ascendancy over France to the erosion of France's colonial reach and its naval prowess, highlighted most dramatically in Paris's loss of the Seven Years' War to the UK and its allies in 1763, and from the attendant erosion of its colonial possessions worldwide—especially in North America—that ensued from the 1763 Treaty of Paris. See Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 120.

³³ William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 197; Michael V. Leggiere, “Enduring Strategic Rivalries: Great Britain vs. France During the French Wars (1792–1815),” in *Great Strategic Rivalries: From the Classical World to the Cold War*, ed. James Lacey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 289–390.

³⁴ Ironically, British economic concerns with Revolutionary France lagged in the finance markets. In 1803, England's Barings Bank financed two-thirds of the U.S. Louisiana Purchase price of \$15 million by giving the French \$10 million in cash for American bonds used in the purchase, then selling the bonds on international markets. Since Napoleon sold the Louisiana territories to fund France's military war efforts, a major British bank basically enabled the growth of its Great Power military rival. See Paul Strathern, *Empire: A New History of the World* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2020), 225.

³⁵ Clive Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2014), especially 53–76; Michael V. Leggiere, *The Fall of Napoleon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2–5; and Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 124.

³⁶ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, 2nd ed. (New York: Humanity Books, 1983), 123–148.

³⁷ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 202.

³⁸ Joachim Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871–1914* (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press, 1967), 77–78.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁰ These German import tariffs, forged from the so-called Marriage of Iron and Rye and implemented in 1879, became sacrosanct domestic political features that limited Germany's politicians from adjusting to British calls for tariff reductions as Germany's manufacturing moved from developing to dominant in the early 1900s. See Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey, “Parties and Interests in the ‘Marriage of Iron and Rye,’” *British Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 2 (April 1998), 291–332; Edgar Crammond, “The Economic Relations of the British and German Empires,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 77, no. 8 (July 1914), 777–824; Friedberg, *The Weary Titan*, 39–40.

⁴¹ Friedberg, *The Weary Titan*, 33–36.

⁴² Crammond, “The Economic Relations of the British and German Empires,” 784–785.

⁴³ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914* (New York: Humanity Books, 1980), 410–432; Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871–1914*, 35. For more on the role of Germany's influential web of “interest leagues” and their important role in colonialism and a growing navy, see Gordon Craig, *Germany, 1866–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 250–297.

⁴⁴ *Weltpolitik* took over as Germany's foreign policy at the same time as the Kaiser's adoption of the Tirpitz Plan (named for its author, Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, head of the German navy). The plan was for Germany to achieve world power status through buildout of its navy while at the same time co-opting and minimizing growing economic and social issues by elevating a domestic policy of social imperialism. See James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 1984), 131–134.

⁴⁵ Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871–1914*, 78–80.

⁴⁶ After almost 40 years of intense rivalry over influence in Central Asia and South Asia, British and Russian conflicting interests in 1900 centered on Afghanistan, Iran, and Tibet. Each of these states comprised competitive buffers between Britain's and Russia's colonial possessions in Asia. Germany's rise as a competitive empire with global aspirations, along with the Russian navy's embarrassing defeat by the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, persuaded key leaders in London and Moscow to resolve their respective differences across Asia. By 1914, Russia and Britain agreed on terms to divide Iran, to recognize the standing Afghanistan border, and to conclude an agreement on Tibet that established the McMahon Line. See George P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914*, vol. 4, *The Anglo-Russian Rapprochement, 1903–07* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929), 618–621.

⁴⁷ London's diplomacy resulted in the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia. See George P. Gooch, “Chapter V: Continental Agreements, 1902–1907,” in *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1793–1919*, ed. A.W. Ward and George P. Gooch, vol. 3, *1866–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 305–365; Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871–1914*, 44–46.

⁴⁸ Charles S. Campbell, *From Revolution to Rapprochement: The United States and Great Britain, 1783–1900* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), especially 194–204.

⁴⁹ Remak, *The Origins of World War I, 1871–1914*, 82–85.

⁵⁰ Mildred S. Wertheimer, *The Pan-German League, 1890–1914* (New York: Octagon, 1924), 101–102.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

- ⁵² Some argue that Imperial Germany's democracy was too new to withstand the rapid rise of its industrial era and social interest groups, thus making it less resilient than the UK. See Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914*, 361. A Chinese author on Germany's rise even goes so far as to intimate that it was too much democracy in Germany that set a course for German adventurism and eventual clash with the UK. This interpretation is far from persuasive given other factors but is a window into a potential particular psyche in modern China regarding the inherent dangers of too much democracy in a rapidly expanding economic state. See Xu Qiyu, *Fragile Rise: Grand Strategy and the Fate of Imperial Germany, 1871–1914* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 150–153.
- ⁵³ Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914*, 167–222; James Lacey, "Great Strategic Rivalries and the Return of Great Power Politics," *The Strategy Bridge*, August 22, 2018, available at <<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2018/8/22/great-strategic-rivalries-the-return-of-geopolitics>>; H.C. Allen, *Great Britain and the United States: A History of Anglo-American Relations, 1783–1952* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1955), 518–610; Gordon Martel, *Origins of the First World War*, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017).
- ⁵⁴ Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939*, 288–300. For evidence of U.S. economic ascendance during the interwar period, see table 4.2, where steel and iron production is a good proxy for relative economic size and strength.
- ⁵⁵ Williamson Murray, "Britain and Germany: 1914–1945," in Lacey, *Great Strategic Rivalries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 371–416; William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960).
- ⁵⁶ Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914*, 291–410; William Harbutt Dawson, "Chapter III: Imperial Policy in the Old and the New World, 1885–1899," in Ward and Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, vol. 3, 125–130, 200–222.
- ⁵⁷ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, 149–176.
- ⁵⁸ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 200–201; Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War, America, and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916–1931* (New York: Viking, 2014), 13. Also see table 4.2 for relative steel and iron production.
- ⁵⁹ Douglas A. Irwin, *Historical Aspects of U.S. Trade Policy* (Cambridge, MA: The National Bureau of Economic Research, 2006), available at <<https://data.nber.org/reporter/summer06/irwin.html>>.
- ⁶⁰ Allen, *Great Britain and the United States*, 30–52, 518–548, 941–948; Charles Kindleberger, *World Economic Primacy, 1500–1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 35–36, 125–148, 172–189.
- ⁶¹ While London and many other world capitals viewed American expansion and subsequent acquisition of former Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific as evidence of Washington's own imperialism, American lore rejects any notion of American empire in favor of manifest destiny and expulsion of Spanish empire. It was the British perception that helped advance UK–U.S. rapprochement irrespective of divergent viewpoints about empire. See Kori Schake, *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2017), 280–281; Strathern, *Empire*, 10–11, 224–225.
- ⁶² Dawson, "Chapter III," in Ward and Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 223–227.
- ⁶³ Campbell, *From Revolution to Rapprochement*, 174–189; Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), 57–59; Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815–1908* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 351; Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 101–121; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, 185–210.
- ⁶⁴ Kaiser Wilhelm II's 1896 telegram of congratulations to the Boer president after the capture of British citizens in the Transvaal of Africa was effective as well. The Kaiser's missive led many Americans to take the British side and reminded the British that they could use friends offshore from Europe. Campbell, *From Revolution to Rapprochement*, 183–184; Valentine Chirol, "Chapter IV: The Boer War and the International Situation, 1899–1902," in Ward and Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783–1919*, vol. 3, 263–266.
- ⁶⁵ Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815–1908*, 351; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 203; Friedberg, *The Weary Titan*, 97.
- ⁶⁶ Campbell, *From Revolution to Rapprochement*, 91–204.
- ⁶⁷ Allen, *Great Britain and the United States*, 944–948; Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939*, 302–305.
- ⁶⁸ For a similar conclusion, see Schake, *Safe Passage*.
- ⁶⁹ Herbert Feis, *Road to Pearl Harbor: The Coming of the War Between the United States and Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 3–7, available at <www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x0wpg.4>; S.C.M. Paine, "China, Russia, and Japan and the Competition to Create a New World Order," in Lacey, *Great Strategic Rivalries*, 417–448; William M. Morgan, "Enduring Strategic Rivalries: U.S.–Japan Strategic Rivalry to 1941," in Lacey, *Great Strategic Rivalries*, 479–510.
- ⁷⁰ Of particular note in this respect was the Lansing–Ishii Agreement of 1917, where the United States and Japan agreed in public that the Open Door Policy would remain intact but established in a secret annex that Japan had "special rights" in territories across China and that the two would share financial spoils from major rail and infrastructure investments into China in a special banking consortium. Lansing–Ishii set the stage for numerous other secret post–World War I treaties that promised colonial enclaves in China be passed from Germany, Russia, and Austria–Hungary to Japan and the victorious World War I Allies. See Barbara Tuchman, *Stillwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–1945* (New York: Grove Press, 2001); J. Chal Vinson, "The Annulment of the Lansing–Ishii Agreement," *Pacific Historical Review* 27, no. 1 (February 1958), 57–69.
- ⁷¹ Michael Graham Fry, "The Pacific Dominions and the Washington Conference, 1921–22," in *The Washington Naval Conference, 1921–22*, ed. Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (London: Frank Cass & Company, 1994), 60–101.
- ⁷² Sadao Asada, "From Washington to London: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the Politics of Naval Limitation, 1921–1930," in Goldstein and Maurer, *The Washington Naval Conference, 1921–22*, 147–191.
- ⁷³ "Japanese–American Relations at the Turn of the Century, 1900–1922," *Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations* (Washington, DC: Department of State Office of the Historian, n.d.), available at <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/japanese-relations>>; Masato Shizume, *The Japanese Economy During the Interwar Period: Instability in the Financial System and the Impact of the World Depression*, Bank of Japan Review 2009–E–2 (Tokyo: Institute for Monetary and Economic Studies, May 2009), available at <www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps_rev/rev_2009/data/rev09e02.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Hiroyuki Agawa, *The Reluctant Admiral: Yamamoto and the Imperial Navy*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo: Kodansha International, Ltd., 1979), 202–223. The 6-month quote is to Fumimaro Konoe, *Konoye Ayamaro Ko Shuki: Memoirs of Prince Ayamaro Konoye* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun-sha, 1946), 3.

⁷⁵ Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*; Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2017).

⁷⁶ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*; Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition*.

⁷⁷ On proxy wars, see Andrew Mumford, “The New Era of the Proliferated Proxy War,” *The Strategy Bridge*, November 16, 2017, available at <<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/11/16/the-new-era-of-the-proliferated-proxy-war>>; Zack Gold and William Rosenau, “The Future of Conflict Is Proxy Warfare, Again,” *Defense One*, July 25, 2019, available at <www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/07/future-conflict-proxy-warfare-again/158697/>; Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Chicago: Independent Publishers Group, 2012).

⁷⁸ Lacey, “Great Strategic Rivalries.”

⁷⁹ Friedberg, *The Weary Titan*, 14–17, 286.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 282–283, 286.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 10, 15–16; Brian D. Blankenship and Benjamin Denison, “Is America Prepared for Great Power Competition?” *Survival* 61, no. 5 (October–November 2019), 43–64.

⁸² Friedberg, *The Weary Titan*, 318.