

PREFACE

Matters of security and insecurity are endemic to the globalizing world that marks daily existence. Not conditions of one's own choosing, they are inseparable from personal experience. So, too, this book is about big, powerful structures. But there is also a story behind it. Not mere abstractions, the concerns in the pages ahead stem from my journey through life. Although not wanting to detain the reader with an autobiography that may be intrinsically uninteresting, I offer a brief personal history in the Preface, for I believe in the importance of self-reflectivity.

Born during World War II, I vividly recall my father and uncles recounting a history of U.S. military valor. Having served in the European and Pacific “theaters” of war, the veterans in my family returned to “the home of the brave”—in the artful language of the national anthem, which we often recited—and found it painful to relive the grit of armed conflict. Nonetheless, these former soldiers continued to fight this war as a war of words. I was tutored in passionate narratives of masculinity, heroism, patriotism, and American invincibility. As my father put it, “We’ won every war that ‘we’ ever fought.” And some family friends, Holocaust survivors, did not have to voice their horrific stories. Tattooed in blue with numbers from concentration camps, their forearms evinced such gruesome tales. Time and again, children of my age viewed war movies that graphically portrayed threats posed by the “enemies of the free world.”

At school, my teachers reinforced the narrative about U.S. military courage and love of freedom. In the wake of a shadowy war against a putative transnational enemy (“the communist threat”) in Korea, distinctions between “we” and “they” were inscribed in the consciousness of American youth. During drills in the 1950s, sirens sounded an alarm, signaling that teachers and students should quickly move to the schools’ interior corridors and put heads down on folded

arms as a form of self-protection against impending nuclear attack. Although as a youngster, I had little knowledge of McCarthyism, I vaguely recall witnessing this scaremongering on television and radio, which alerted citizens to “enemy” agents within U.S. national borders.

Imperiled by the Soviet Union, the font of international communism, the United States no longer faced fascist dictatorships as its chief enemies. In this fearsome climate, our neighbors built “fallout shelters,” as they were called, and stockpiled such home fortifications with ample supplies supposedly to help them withstand the mushroom cloud that atomic bombs would visit upon us. If one needed a reminder of the gravity of this struggle, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, spurring the United States in the space race.

Growing up in Ohio, I resided in an area subject to restrictive covenants applied on the basis of classifications of race, class, and religion at least until the 1960s, when rioters torched inner cities. In these heady times of conflict over civil rights and black power, parts of my hometown went up in flames.

So, too, many of my memories of university life in Michigan revolve around exclusion—boundaries between friends and enemies. Of those who attended a lecture by Martin Luther King Jr., some students refused to stand and applaud; they remained seated in a show of disapproval of King’s values and goals. Their behavior was a sign of resistance to restructuring in not only the United States but also the transnational realm. For me, as for many Americans of my age, the assassinations of King and John F. Kennedy, and next his brother Robert, caused a deep sense of loss and soul-searching about violence.

An intellectual awakening occurred in my courses on international relations. Political and moral awareness came in a seminar on international organization in which I was shocked to learn about the protracted conflict over South Africa’s system of racial exclusion known as apartheid.

Later, less than satisfied with my first year of graduate studies in the United States, I felt a kind of intellectual itching and wanderlust. I then enrolled in an M.A. program in African studies at Makerere University in Uganda (at the time, a branch of the University of East Africa). Johan Galtung, the distinguished Norwegian peace researcher who pioneered this field, taught one of my courses.

Having arrived shortly after decolonization and a violent civil conflict in Buganda, the country’s heartland area, I learned firsthand about postconflict reconstruction. I visited refugee camps for Rwandans who were fleeing a wave of genocide; met mercenaries fighting in the Congo (today the Democratic Re-

public of the Congo) and white fathers, Belgian priests who ran copper mines there; and traveled to or across the border (not entirely demarcated) with the southern Sudan, which was ensconced in a long, bloody conflict with the north. Some of my fellow students in Uganda had escaped violence in their own countries and were members of liberation movements. Spontaneously, I joined a demonstration at the British High Commission in Kampala to protest the decision of Ian Smith's white-settler regime to hang three blacks in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), only to be grabbed and roughed up by a mob. Luckily, Makerere students happened by and rescued me. In a sense, I have never recovered from the good fortune of my formative experience in East Africa, a turnaround in my life.

When I returned to the United States to undertake a Ph.D. in political science, with a specialization in international organization, I was greeted by the anti-Vietnam War movement, the takeover of buildings by activists on university campuses, and fervent debates over peace and conflict. During this period, I also interned at the United Nations in New York, where I profited from a broad and practical exposure to matters of security and insecurity.

Another turning point came when I attended my first professional association meeting, held in Montreal. There, the former head of department and dean at Makerere asked what I would be doing next year. Unabashedly, I responded to the effect of "Something interesting; why do you ask?" Without hesitation, I pounced on his invitation to rejoin Makerere as a special tutor (instructor) and carry on with my doctoral research.

Not long after, on the night of January 25, 1971, gunfire disturbed my sleep. At first, I thought that it was mischief perpetrated by *kondos*, or thieves, whose gunshots sometimes troubled residents of Kampala. Living in the placid quarters of the Makerere Institute of Social Research just inside the University's secure main gate, I heard a knock at my door. I peered through the peephole and spotted a black Mercedes Benz, a government car. The man outside was a stranger, but his face looked familiar. "Sir," he said to me, "may I take refuge in your flat?" He was a minister in the government of President Milton Obote, who had just been toppled by a military coup led by Idi Amin.

After witnessing grotesque scenes in Kampala, I subsequently moved to Tanzania and then to Mozambique toward the end of its armed struggle for political independence, which was soon to erupt in civil war. There, I had an opportunity to befriend freedom fighters from neighboring South Africa, a country where, after the defeat of apartheid, I served as a visiting professor. In

the interim, I lived and worked in Singapore and Malaysia, including during the 1997–98 turbulence, which provides a case study in this book. Also, on six occasions, I taught, gathered documentary material, and conducted interviews in China and Japan, similarly important to this project.

While recording my findings from these visits, I was in Washington, D.C., when the 9/11 attackers struck the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. Suddenly, political authorities defined a new “enemy”—not the same kinds of fascists or communists of earlier decades but transnational terrorists against whom a U.S.-led coalition pledged to fight a “global war.”

By this point in my life, successive leaders of the United States had told me to prepare for world wars against a series of enemies: fascists, communists, terrorists. Years earlier, I had been subject to the military draft (but not called up) during the Vietnam War and, not long after, the Cuban missile crisis, when a confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union almost triggered an outbreak of war. And overseas, on four occasions, I was on the unfortunate end of the deeds of armed combatants and thugs (no exaggeration: some of these personal stories appear in Mittelman and Pasha 1997). Yet answers to the why questions seemed to be grossly lacking.

Having carried out research on the ground on coups d'état, revolutions, liberation struggles, ethnic conflicts, civil and regional wars, and other aspects of political violence, I long puzzled about whether these pieces are part of a whole. I am convinced that a worm's-eye view of specific hotspots is invaluable, up to a point. But the big picture is perplexing. How can it be drawn? How to combine bottom-up and upstairs-downstairs perspectives from multiple research sites?

A place to begin is with the basic questions, Does globalization promote security or fuel insecurity? and, What are the implications for world order? To come to grips with these matters requires building a bridge between the geopolitics and geoeconomics of globalization, one that extends to the geostrategic sphere. Few researchers have sought to span this gulf, and these efforts have produced sharply divergent views (Chapter 2).

Some analysts maintain that globalizing processes are prone to peace because the expansion of commerce, the spread of democracy, and technological advances bring the world closer together and favor cooperation. Yet other observers argue to the contrary: the same global structures provoke conflict over trade, are used to enable criminal and terrorist networks, and lower the costs of transactions, including flows of weapons.

These debates stumble over major issues, especially on how the “fringe”

zones of the world, as policy planners and strategic thinkers in Washington call them, relate to the American epicenter of power. Based in New York and Washington for most of my career, I have benefited from ample exposure to their orientations, talked to key actors in international organizations and government, collected a vast amount of data, and learned about the core processes under consideration in this book. As vital as a wealth of up-to-date information is, the standpoints adopted at these locales in the United States are wanting insofar as they focus on the here-and-now without grasping what is behind short-term events and where they are heading.

To fill the void, this book contends that beneath the exigencies of our times lie the systemic drivers of global security and insecurity. One of them may be found in the geoeconomy: a shift in the reconstitution of competition, with the development of a more belligerent form. The other driver is embedded in geopolitics, namely, the extraordinary distance between the capacities of the United States and those of other states. Furthermore, the United States is the principal node in hyperpower, which exceeds the power of a territorial state. Hyperpower includes a vast network of military bases and private security contractors, a long economic reach, dominance in the knowledge industry, technological prowess, and the wherewithal for widespread cultural diffusion, with the propagation of the American version of the English language as its most apparent sign. This argument does not however underestimate the extent to which the United States as the lead power has profound difficulty effectively using the means at its disposal.

That said, I claim that as a result of the confluence of these forces, insecurity is being globalized. And the dynamics portend *hyperconflict*. This emergent condition may be best understood as an evolving galaxy of social power relations and historical narratives. The ensuing chapters lay out the characteristics of hyperconflict, document this trend, and assess its prospects.

My main thesis does not at all cut against the findings of empirical studies of war and peace, which painstakingly show that in recent decades the frequency of armed conflict has decreased or, some say, remained level. But given structural shifts in the global political economy, why should one believe that the future will be more of the same? If the rosy view about the incidence of conflict cannot be projected in a linear manner, another perspective is worth considering.

Tilting against both classical liberal thinkers, including Adam Smith, who posited the harmony of motives, and contemporary institutionalists, who seek

to trace international regimes that ensure stability, I hold that in a globalizing era, the balance is swinging in another direction. It changes course, for history is dysrhythmic and without a predefined end. If so, what are the plausible scenarios for future world order? And if the central power is imploding, how to prevent a gathering storm of hyperconflict? These themes are the landing at the close of this book.