1 INTRODUCTION

To borrow Prince Metternich's characterization of Italy before its unification, Asia was not much more than a Western geographical expression at the end of World War II. Before the war, most of the region had been colonized or, in the case of China, dominated by foreign powers, and then during the war much of East Asia was forcibly embraced by the Japanese Empire. In the wake of the war, an upsurge of nationalist movements dispossessed the colonial powers. The postwar emergence of nation-states in most of the region for the first time had a transformative effect, with the new states ardently committed to the Westphalian concept of sovereignty. However, the evolution of nation-states in Asia was complicated by the importation of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War from its European cockpit. Even after the end of the Cold War, the effects of broader influences continued to shape the geopolitical landscape of Asia as a new century unfolded.

This history is an effort to provide a systemic perspective on these complex developments, focusing not on the outlook and actions of any single state but on the interactions of states and other forces within both a regional and a global context. The goal is to provide an interpretive account of how Asia became a region of increasingly consequential nation-states, leading to a shift in the global center of gravity toward the region—and prompting some observers to descry the advent of "the Asian century." Another aspect of this effort is to identify deep-seated continuities, in particular to track the origin and evolution of key issues still at the top of the international agenda, such as the division of Korea and nuclear proliferation, the Taiwan issue, the rise of China, Japan's role, the Kashmir issue and the now nuclearized Indian-Pakistani conflict, and the increasing salience of transnational issues such as terrorism.

Key documents, some public at the time and others later declassified, are used to examine the mind-sets and policy choices of the various protagonists in order to assess their goals and evaluate the effects of their decisions, anticipated and not. Excerpts from some of these documents appear throughout the text.

TWO MAJOR NARRATIVE THEMES

The narrative of this history interweaves the two threads that have dominated Asia's international relations since World War II. One is the competition between the great powers of the postwar era—the United States and the Soviet Union—to enlist the region's states as assets in their global competition, the Cold War. The other is the struggle of Asian nationalistic leaders to establish independent nation-states and to develop the domestic support and the elements of national power to sustain sovereignty in a dangerous international context.

The interplay between these two trends was a direct consequence of World War II, which, from a global perspective, was a genuine watershed. The structure of international relations after the war was fundamentally different from that preceding it, the war having decisively altered the cast of great powers that had played major roles both globally and in Asia. Also, in the aftermath of the war, statesmen's ideas and approaches regarding international affairs, though they were based in part on lessons they drew from the war and its origins, were different from those that led them into it. Finally, the war set in motion trends that continued to define the features of the international landscape into the next century. For these reasons, the war makes a natural starting point.

The Cold War emerged almost immediately from the geopolitical environment created by World War II. During this period, the United States and the Soviet Union—the first superpowers in world history—built powerful alliance systems and contended in an ideological, political, military, and economic struggle for global power and predominance in every part of the globe. Asia was one of the principal arenas of this struggle, and the Cold War had a powerful impact on the region, shaping relations among the Asian states and their interactions with the rest of the world.

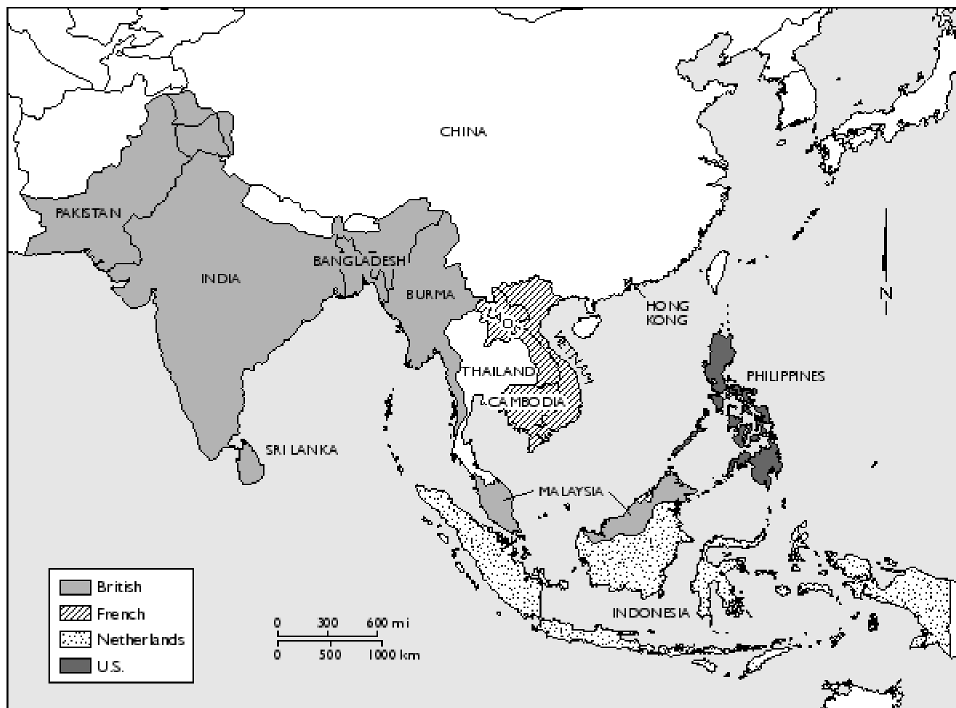
From a regional perspective, World War II reshaped the place of every Asian society in the international order. At the beginning of this period, the imperial powers that had colonized nearly every part of Asia over the course of the preceding four centuries—Britain, France, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States—lost those colonial empires. Japan lost its East Asian empire, acquired over the preceding fifty years, as a direct consequence of its defeat in the war. The end of Britain's and America's colonial control in the early postwar years came about largely through political means. In contrast, the French and the Dutch were forced to quit their colonies after failing to reimpose colonial administrations through military means in the early postwar years.

World War II itself played no small part in this outcome. On the one hand, the war weakened the European colonial powers and their capacity to maintain their prewar empires in Asia and elsewhere; on the other, it helped enflame and mobilize simmering nationalistic sentiments within the colonies and created opportunities for indigenous elites to build independence movements immediately after the war was over. Although the British, French, and Dutch sought in different measure to restore colonial holdings, each abandoned or was forced to give up these ambitions in Asia in the early postwar years. Having accepted by the end of the war that recouping its position in India, the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire, was no longer possible, London sought through

negotiations in the early postwar years to preserve as strong as possible an association with an independent and sovereign India. The independence of Burma, until the mid-1930s a part of British India, was now a foregone conclusion, and independence for British Malaya followed in train, delayed for several years only by the decision to suppress a Communist insurgency.

Paris and The Hague less easily accepted the fate of their colonies. They saw recovering their empires as essential to restoring their status as major powers in the postwar international order. Each therefore fought brutal struggles to reassert its hold over Indochina and the East Indies, respectively. By 1949, however, the Dutch—under international pressure—were forced to accept the dissolution of their East Indies colony, and by 1954 the French withdrew from Indochina following their humiliating defeat at the hands of Vietnamese Communist forces in the siege of Dienbienphu and the political settlement at the Geneva Conference the same year.

Though far from weakened by the war—quite the opposite—Washington followed through on its prewar promise to grant its Philippine colony independence in 1946 (evocatively, on the Fourth of July). The United States maintained a strong and enduring presence in the Philippines, however, and retained its post–World War I mandates over western and South Pacific islands, as well as control over islands seized by force from Japan in the course of the war.



Map 1.1 Postwar Colonial Possessions in Asia

The second major narrative theme emerged as a direct consequence. The dissolution of the European, American, and Japanese empires in Asia created new nation-states in a region that had until the war been almost completely subordinated under or colonized within the great-power empires over the preceding four centuries. In place of the prewar British colonies in Asia there emerged in the early postwar years the new nation-states of India, Pakistan, Burma (now Myanmar), Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and Malaysia. Singapore emerged later, and the sultanate of Brunei much later. The French Empire gave way to the nation-states of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Out of the Dutch East Indies came the Republic of Indonesia. Only Thailand managed to escape outright colonization, preserving its autonomy by bandwagoning with the region's prevailing hegemon—the British in the mid-nineteenth century, the Japanese during World War II, and the United States after the war.

Although never colonized outright, the Republic of China (ROC), founded in Beijing in 1912 and reconstituted in Nanjing in 1928, used its participation in the war to win acquiescence in 1943 by the leading great powers—Britain and America—to end the treaty-port system that had encumbered full Chinese sovereignty for a century. At the same wartime conference in Cairo at which Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) won the end of the treaty-port system in China, the prospect "in due course" of an independent and sovereign nation-state of Korea, which had fallen under Japanese suzerainty in 1905 and under direct colonial rule in 1910, was registered.

World War II and the subsequent dissolution of the prewar empires marked the establishment of the Westphalian nation-state system of international relations (created in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) both in Asia and in what came to be called the third world. By the early postwar years, the dynamics of international relations in Asia could no longer be discussed in terms of competing empires; rather, they dealt with the competing agendas of newly created sovereign nation-states. Each of these new Asian states faced daunting challenges of consolidating statehood and sovereignty. At home their leaders had to channel the emotions of the aroused nationalism that had fueled their independence struggles and brought them to power into an enduring national consensus that would make stable governance possible. They had to find ways appropriate to their respective economic endowments and acceptable to their particular social constituencies to pursue national development, which was critical to their prospects, both at home and abroad.

Externally, the leaders of the new nation-states of Asia had to configure foreign policies that would allow them to defend their newly established sovereignty in an international order that very quickly became polarized in a new global struggle for power between the United States and its principally Western allies, on one side, and the Soviet Union and its bloc, on the other. In their efforts to come to terms with the pressures of bipolarity, the new Asian states followed varied paths. One way was to align with one of the superpowers, creating a polarized region in which the line of confrontation in some cases divided individual countries. Another was to remain neutral and nonaligned, a path chosen by India, among others, though it was pushed off course by a collision with China over territorial issues and the effects of the Cold War on the subcontinent. The new People's Republic of China, wrestling with the implications of bipolarity for its own interests, followed a tortuous path, leaning first one way, and then—after a period of deep isolation—the other,

until finally pursuing an independent line while taking highly consequential steps toward opening up to the global economy.

These divergent strategies reckoned the benefits of security and economic cooperation through alignment with one of the competing superpowers against the costs to hard-won sovereignty, independence, and legitimacy, both at home and in each state's foreign entanglements. As a result, the foreign and domestic policies of the new Asian states were thoroughly intertwined. Most of the regimes in the new states were relatively weak and in need of external economic and military support at the outset. At the same time, in many cases, leaders of the new states faced political opposition that complicated and at times even threatened their hold on power. In such circumstances, the nationalist sentiments that fueled their independence struggles became potent political instruments in the hands of both the leaders and their opponents, and foreign policy issues played easily into domestic political struggles.

Nor could the two superpowers discount the political agendas of the elites they dealt with in Asia and the implications that their competition had in the domestic politics within the new states. Both Washington and Moscow shaped their strategies in Asia with these regional and local realities in mind. As a consequence, as much as the Cold War strongly affected the international politics of the Asian region, it is fair to say that the priorities and politics of the Asian states themselves also skewed, sometimes radically, the strategic competition of the two superpowers.

For no states were these calculations more complex than for the divided states that World War II and the early Cold War years produced in Asia—in Korea, China, and Vietnam. In these cases, in order to maximize its influence, each superpower helped to create and support a contender for national power from among the indigenous nationalist elites. The indigenous parties sought to maximize support from their respective patrons, all the while seeking to retain as much independence as possible to sustain their nationalist credentials and eliminate their rivals. As a result, the struggles for power and civil wars between the indigenous contenders in these three countries took on the complicating priorities of the Cold War, and vice versa.

All three divided countries emerged quickly as major flash points in the Cold War. In Korea and Vietnam, civil wars erupted into brutal and debilitating international conflicts with heavy involvement by their superpower patrons. In China, a civil war struggle whose roots antedated World War II was frozen short of completion by being pulled into the gravitational force of the global bipolar contest. Two of these three struggles—in Korea and in the present-day China-Taiwan standoff—remained unresolved and among the most dangerous flash points long after the close of the Cold War. The Vietnamese conflict was resolved, in 1975, with unification under a Communist regime, but only after a long struggle at enormous cost.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 closed the bipolar struggle and thus removed the powerful external dynamic that had shaped Asian international relations over the preceding decades. Among the changes that had taken place were the watershed 1968–72 transition marked most prominently by the U.S.-PRC rapprochement; the rise of Japan and an increasingly united Europe as emerging centers

of power in what had been primarily a bipolar global structure; the end of the Vietnam War; the economic takeoff of South Korea, Taiwan, and the Southeast Asian "tigers"; and the rise of China under Deng Xiaoping and his successors.

Nevertheless, trends set in motion in Asia during the Cold War continue to shape the region's international relations in unmistakable ways. In addition to the remaining divided-country conflicts on the Korean peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait, other issues on the region's international relations agenda are unintelligible without reference to the Cold War. The deep disparity in economic fortunes and overall prospects between North and South Korea registers with dramatic clarity the superiority of the market-based approaches to national development over the variations of Soviet-style planned economies adopted—and to varying degrees abandoned—by other states in the Cold War era. At the same time, many of the ongoing dilemmas regarding trade—apparent most clearly in the perennial American bilateral trade deficits with Asian economies—trace their roots to the export-led development strategies adopted by the Asian market-based economies. Meanwhile, the structure of security alliances constructed by Washington against the Communist countries in Asia survived the end of bipolarity, seeking new rationales but still shaped in fundamental ways by Cold War circumstances.

Trends that matured in the region during the Cold War also made possible some of the new features of post–Cold War Asia. Emerging gradually across the period has been a stronger sense of solidarity among Asia's nation-states, where little had existed previously. It is true that Japan's rise—and its defeat of Russia in 1905—sparked a sense of common circumstance at the hands of Western imperialism that had been reflected in the pan-Asian sentiments among many politically active intellectual elites by the end of the nineteenth century. A sense of Asian solidarity based on Marxist-Leninist anti-imperialist internationalism was also galvanized by the electrifying success of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the creation of Communist parties in the region after the establishment of the Comintern (Communist International, the Moscow-directed international coordinating agency) in 1919. But through the pre–World War II decades and in the early postwar years, there was little perception among the subregions of Asia that their destinies were linked and no institutional expression of such solidarity.

In the post–Cold War period, however, there has been a gradual but steady advance of Asian multilateralism on regional and broader issues, despite persistent predictions of failure. Whether an outgrowth of common suspicions of both Cold War superpowers among the region's nonaligned countries, a result of solidarity in the face of regional threats—as in the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—or a consequence of accelerating interdependence attending the takeoff of many of the region's economies, a sense of solidarity among the Asian states is reflected in the creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Plus Three linkages with China, South Korea, and Japan, and other emerging regional groupings. In an era of presumed American hegemony in Asia, Washington nevertheless needed to adapt its agenda in the region to address complications posed by regional groupings that took their impetus in part from reaction to preponderant American power and in some cases have self-consciously excluded the United States.

The central themes of this history of Asia's international relations since World War II, then, derive from the intricate interplay between the United States and the Soviet Union for influence and power in the region, on one hand, and the struggles of the region's new nation-states to consolidate and sustain their newly gained sovereignty, on the other. Out of this interaction emerged secondary themes—the success of new varieties of market-based political economies and the failure of planned-economy approaches, the slow emergence of Asian solidarity and multilateralism, and others—that thread through the period and feature prominently in the Cold War's aftermath.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ORIGINS OF WORLD WAR II IN ASIA

World War II was by far the most destructive and, from both a regional and a global perspective, most transformative war in modern world history. For that reason alone, it is useful for the purposes of this history to gain some appreciation of the war's origins in Asia.

The origins of World War II in Asia may be understood from a variety of perspectives. One approach, for example, might be to see the origins of the war as a consequence of Japanese aggression. Japan's efforts to construct an Asian empire may be traced back into the nineteenth century, coincident with its transformation since the 1868 Meiji Restoration into an increasingly modern great power. In this view, Japan's imperialism was registered in its incorporation of the Ryukyu Islands in 1879, the defeat of China in 1895 and Russia in 1905 in wars for predominance on the Korean peninsula, and the resulting annexation of Taiwan and Korea. It continued with the effort to establish a predominating influence in Northeast Asia and North China, including stringent demands on China during World War I and its Siberian expedition during the Russian civil war.

More proximately, Japan's advance into China—beginning with the severing of Manchuria in 1931 and full-scale invasion in 1937—moved the region well down the path to wider war. By this time, Japan's expansionism, as depicted by wartime Allied propaganda, was increasingly guided by militarist fanatics who had hijacked the nation's foreign policy. Japan's empire building began to acquire broader implications with its advance into the Asian colonies of the Western empires. This began with its move into northern Indochina following the fall of France to Nazi Germany in May 1940, then its incursion into southern Indochina in the summer of 1941, and finally its attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and its push into the Philippines and into British and Dutch Southeast Asia immediately thereafter.

From this perspective, the origins of the war may be understood as the consequence of Japanese aggression, whether one traces the roots of expansion deep into the early decades of the Meiji era or more immediately into the 1930s. The logic of expansion followed directly from the famous distinction, drawn by Meiji oligarch and founder of the Imperial Japanese Army Yamagata Aritomo in an 1890 memorandum, between Japan's "line of sovereignty" and its "line of advantage." The line of sovereignty demarcated the Japanese islands themselves. The line of advantage referred to adjacent areas, the disposition of which directly affected Japan's fundamental interests. By this logic, securing predominant influence on the Korean peninsula—the "dagger pointed at the heart of Japan," which in

the 1890s fell within Japan's line of advantage—was necessary to preserve its line of sovereignty, the Japanese homeland. Once Korea was made a colony outright in the Japanese Empire, the line of advantage moved outward to include areas of eastern Russia, Mongolia, and North China. Securing predominant influence over territories within this new line of advantage was critical to sustaining Japan's new line of sovereignty. By this logic, Japan's imperialism followed a step-by-step calculus of expansion.

This approach, however, has its limitations as a framework for analysis. In locating the causes of the war in the behavior of only one of its antagonists, it not only lends itself to the moralism of wartime propaganda but also ignores the impact of broader trends and the actions of other states that make more intelligible the reasons for Japan's expansion and contributed to the outbreak of the war. A more interactive perspective tries to understand the origins of the war in Asia as a collision between two rising Asian-Pacific powers—Japan and the United States—as the relative power of the region's traditional hegemon—Britain—slowly declined. From this perspective, the outbreak of the war reflected the failure of these contestants to accommodate each other's interests.

Viewed in this framework, the United States and Japan embarked on a collision course at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Japan acquired special rights in southern Manchuria as a consequence of its victory over Russia in 1905. From an American viewpoint, this violated Washington's Open Door policy in China, enunciated at the turn of the century, which sought to ensure equal access to China's markets and resources among all great powers active in China. Washington and Tokyo clashed again in 1915, when Japan's Twenty-one Demands levied five groups of special economic, political, and security rights on the weak Republican regime of Yüan Shih-k'ai that effectively made China a protectorate of Japan. U.S. diplomacy succeeded in rolling back one group of demands (which required Chinese employment of Japanese advisers and joint police arrangements) but not the other four. In 1917, the Lansing-Ishii Agreement papered over the emerging clash of interests, exchanging Washington's acceptance of Japan's "special rights in China" for Tokyo's declaration of adherence to the Open Door policy and respect for China's territorial integrity.

These conflicts of interest between Japan on one side and the United States and Britain on the other continued into the 1930s. Ultimately, talks in Washington between Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Japanese Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburō, which ended in failure as Japan's forces advanced into southern Indochina in the summer and fall of 1941, and the ultimatum Washington delivered to Tokyo thereafter marked the last attempts to avert a collision between the two. Faced with equally unacceptable alternatives of disastrous American economic sanctions and loss of most of its empire, Tokyo resorted to force.

This essentially bilateral approach to analyzing the genesis of World War II in Asia is more effective than the one locating the origins of the war solely in Japanese aggression. But it still falls short of a satisfactory account that adequately encompasses all of the actors and events that led to the war. For that, a more comprehensive, systemic approach is necessary. That approach must focus on the rise and decline of the Washington treaty system in the 1920s and 1930s.

THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE TREATIES

From November 1921 to the following February, delegations from eight countries gathered in Washington to address common interests in East Asia and the western Pacific with Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes. The Washington Conference produced three treaties that together addressed the central issues in a post–World War I order in the region: security, the balance of naval power, and the powers' approach to China, the most important interest they shared in the region. Taken together, the treaties embodied a system of relationships and expectations that was intended to guide and stabilize the great powers' interaction in the region indefinitely.

The need for a new treaty system for the East Asian–Pacific region was a consequence of World War I. Although the war had not spread directly to the region, it nevertheless significantly altered the cast of great powers that had interacted there before 1914. Germany lost its possessions on China's Shandong Peninsula and among the South Pacific island groups early in the war to Japan, which had moved quickly to seize them after declaring war on the side of the Allies soon after the war began. The war also weakened Britain and France, the two leading colonial powers in the region when the war began. Although their hold on their colonial possessions in the region was not in doubt as a consequence of the war, their colonial administrations now confronted emerging nationalist sentiments among the indigenous and often metropolitan-educated elites in their colonies, and their capacity to project power in the manner they had through the nineteenth century up to 1914 was diminished.

The United States emerged from World War I stronger in international affairs. Its late entry into the war tipped the conflict against Germany, and President Woodrow Wilson's voice on behalf of a new approach to world affairs spoke with enhanced authority in postwar peace deliberations. Wilson's internationalist agenda was inherited and extended by Hughes, who served in the administration of Wilson's successor, Warren G. Harding, a man who took little interest in foreign affairs.

Finally, in 1917, the Bolsheviks seized power with the October Revolution, taking Russia out of the war and radically transforming its place in world affairs. Moscow eventually resumed an active role in the international affairs of Asia, but for several years after 1917 the new Bolshevik regime was effectively isolated by the Western great powers and Japan as a pariah in international politics.

A new international order in East Asia and the Pacific was thus needed to address these changes, paralleling the agreements made for Europe at Paris in 1919. In that sense, the Washington Conference treaties extended the postwar settlement to East Asia and the Pacific, and the same approach to international relations incorporated in the Paris treaties informed the agreements arrived at in Washington three years later.

A four-power treaty, concluded by the United States, Britain, France, and Japan, was designed to provide a mechanism by which the four strongest powers in East Asia and the Pacific would address disputes in the region that might result in conflict. The treaty stipulated that any "controversy arising out of any Pacific question" among the four powers that could not be resolved through direct bilateral diplomacy would be referred to a

conference of all for "consideration and adjustment." Further, if any other power in the region resorted to "aggression" affecting the rights of the four in the region, the four would "communicate with one another fully and frankly in order to arrive at an understanding as to the most efficient measures to be taken, jointly or separately," to deal with the situation. Finally, the Anglo-Japanese alliance, concluded in 1902 and renewed in 1911, would be abrogated upon ratification of the treaty.

Next, a five-power treaty, concluded by the same four plus Italy, limited the size of navies that each power would maintain. The treaty limited the total tonnage for "capital" ships (mainly battleships and aircraft carriers) to ratios of 5 (each, Britain and the United States) to 3 (Japan) to 1.75 (each, France and Italy). It also froze construction of new fortifications and naval bases by Britain, the United States, and Japan in the territories each held in the region.

A nine-power treaty, concluded between China and eight powers having interests in China, formalized the "principles" of the Open Door policy toward China that had been enunciated by Secretary of State John Hay in 1899 and 1900. The eight agreed to "respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity" of the ninth, China, and to aid it in establishing "effective and stable government." The treaty also obligated the eight to refrain from seeking exclusive rights and privileges and so to maintain equal access for all to commerce and industry in China.

Taken together, the Washington Conference treaties reflected the attending powers' efforts to arrange a stable structure of relationships and commitments in East Asia through which to address their interests for the future.[1] The three treaties incorporated new concepts of international relations that became prominent in world politics as a consequence of the war's devastation and in response to what were perceived to have been the war's causes. For Europeans and Americans, World War I had been the most destructive in their history. Although the American Civil War had earlier demonstrated the potential of the Industrial Revolution for mechanizing warfare, World War I reflected the maturation of this potential, deploying the full panoply of increasingly devastating weapons of modern war, including tanks, chemical weapons, aircraft, and submarines. The war resulted in an appalling total of more than twenty million dead, and it left horrific devastation of large areas that had served as battlegrounds, especially in France. For these reasons, the war had to be "the war to end all wars," and a new approach to international affairs, different from that preceding the war, had to be established that would end war and the devastating weapons that nations now had in their arsenals.

The causes of World War I were thought at the time to have been inherent in realpolitik, or realism, the outlook that had characterized the statecraft of the European powers.[2] In a realist outlook, states address conditions of perpetual international anarchy in which they engage in an unending competition for power in pursuit of narrow national interest, leading inevitably to conflict and war. Realist views of international politics complement a pessimistic, conservative analysis of human society such as that of the seventeenth-century English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* depicted human nature as intrinsically selfish and human society as a ruthless competition among individuals in pursuit of narrow self-interest—"a war of all against all," making lives "nasty, brutish, and

short." Hobbes argued on behalf of an authoritarian political regime—an absolute monarchy—to contain English society's self-destructive impulses.[3]

In international politics, according to realists, no such overarching authority is possible. The best that can be achieved is a temporary peace, created and sustained by states' efforts to maintain a balance among all competitors for power that inhibits any one state from gaining hegemony over the others. Skillful practice of these precepts sustained the long European peace from the 1815 Congress of Vienna to 1914. But in the wake of World War I, reliance on balance-of-power tactics by means of alliances, ententes, and secret pacts—usually arrived at among aristocratic elites who were unresponsive to the peoples they governed and manipulated by arms merchants and international bankers—was blamed for the onset of general war in August 1914. It took only the assassination of an Austro-Hungarian prince to trigger the cascading entry of all of the European powers, linked in intricate webs of alliance commitments, into the war.

Based on these perceptions of realism's failure, an alternative approach to securing peace—usually referred to as idealism or liberalism—gained currency in the wake of the war and informed many of the postwar agreements, including those adopted at the Washington Conference. Following another seventeenth-century English philosopher, John Locke, idealists argue that conflict can be resolved and peace established through collective assent to a "social contract," by which individuals surrender some measure of autonomy in exchange for assurance of some fundamental level of security. At the level of international relations, idealists posit that an analogous process of collective assent to overarching norms, laws, and ultimately institutions may permanently ensure international peace. The narrow causes of war may be redressed through mechanisms of open and collective deliberation, in which disputes and grievances in international relations that might lead individual states to war may be resolved fairly by statesmen reasoning together. More broadly, the impulse toward war and hegemony on the part of any individual state may be deterred by the collective commitment of all states to oppose it together, based on the logic that the power of the whole is always greater than the power of any single state. States therefore agree to surrender some measure of sovereignty—the right to go to war to pursue some national interest—in exchange for collective security.

In contrast to realists' preference for mercantilist policies with respect to international economic relations, idealists espouse free trade. They do so not only because, as Adam Smith and David Ricardo argued, foreign trade is a positive-sum interaction in which all partners may profit through comparative advantage. Idealists also argue that free trade enhances the prospects for peace over war by giving states whose prosperity is sustained through economic interdependence an interest in enduring stability.

In the post–World War I era, the man whose views most vividly reflected this outlook was Woodrow Wilson, whose January 1918 address to Congress justifying the American entry into the war and projecting the terms of peace—the Fourteen Points—incorporated several of its essential elements. After declaring over "the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments," Wilson made as his first point an insistence on "open covenants openly arrived at" through which "diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view." The second and third points—positing "absolute

freedom of navigation upon the seas" and "removal . . . of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations assenting to peace"—endorsed the idealist commitment to free trade. The fourth point called for steps to reduce "national arms," resting on the belief that smaller arsenals reduce the capacity of states to wage war, provide assurance to states committed to collective security, and undercut the ability of arms merchants and bankers to manipulate states and profit from war. The fifth point endorsed the principle of popular sovereignty in resolution of "colonial claims," which Wilson intended to be applied to the disposition of Austro-Hungarian imperial claims in the Balkans, where nationalistic sentiments had fueled the outbreak of the war. But, more broadly, it also registered the belief that representative, democratic governments go to war less easily because they must be more responsive to the desires of their citizens than must autocratic regimes, which can pursue foreign policy agendas unencumbered by popular opinion. Finally, the fourteenth point addressed the core idealist notion of collective security, calling for "a general association of nations" that would be "formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." The establishment of the League of Nations in 1919 reflected this outlook, though Wilson lacked the domestic backing to bring the United States into the organization that he had espoused. Similarly, the Washington Conference treaties embraced a collective security pact, an arms-limitation agreement that was the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region, and an agreement formalizing free trade principles.

Weakness of the Washington Conference Treaties

The Washington treaties thus reflected a new, idealist departure in the great powers' approach to securing their interests in East Asia and the Pacific. As historian Akira Iriye pointed out, the treaties composed a system intended to provide a foundation for enduring stability in the region and a mechanism for resolution of disputes that might disturb the equilibrium.[4] The signatories did not intend a perpetual status quo. Thus, the nine-power treaty provided for revision of China's less than fully sovereign status over time, calling on the powers to aid reform in China, which might eventually lead to restoration of tariff autonomy and revocation of extraterritoriality once China established a stable, modern regime according to contemporary Western standards. In addition, the entire treaty system, as Iriye noted, also rested on the commitment of all of the major powers to the gold standard in foreign exchange.

Although the treaties were intended to provide a comprehensive system to ensure stable relations among the great powers interacting in the Asia-Pacific region, the treaty system suffered from weaknesses that figured in its demise in the 1930s. First, the treaty system was not in fact comprehensive. Although the United States was a signatory to the three Washington treaties, it was not a member of the overarching institution intended to provide a forum to resolve disputes, the League of Nations. The consequences for the Asia-Pacific region were made apparent in Western diplomacy following the 1931 Manchurian Incident, which led to the Japanese puppet state of Manzhouguo (Manchukuo). When Washington

proposed collaboration with London to press Japan to reverse its course in Manchuria, London rejected a bilateral initiative, arguing that to proceed on that basis would undermine the effectiveness of working through the League to address the affair.

The Washington Conference system was also incomplete in not including Bolshevik Russia. Wilson, like other Western leaders, expected that the Bolshevik regime would quickly collapse as a result of its own internal contradictions and at the hands of its domestic resistance, and in 1918 he twice sent American troops to participate in the Allied intervention in the Russian civil war. No major Western government recognized the Moscow regime until 1922, and Washington did not do so until 1933. Under these circumstances of diplomatic isolation in its early years, the Bolshevik government was not invited to participate in the Paris Peace Conference or the Washington Conference. Its exclusion from the Washington Conference system was reflected in 1929, after Soviet and Chinese forces clashed over control of the China Eastern Railway, which traversed northern Manchuria. After Washington enjoined Moscow to cease hostilities and honor the provisions of the nine-power treaty, Moscow replied that since it had not been invited to participate in the Washington Conference, it felt no obligation to observe the terms of its treaties.

The Washington treaty system was also weak because it lacked effective mechanisms for enforcement. The four-power treaty called upon its signatories only to consult in the event of a dispute among the powers in the region. The 1902 Anglo-Japanese alliance that the treaty replaced did have real consequences—joint British-Japanese military cooperation—in the event of a widening conflict involving either of its signatories. Japan's seizure of Manchuria in 1931–32 provoked consultation among the powers, both on the basis of the Washington treaties and through the League, which appointed the Lytton Commission to investigate the affair. In the end it resulted only in Tokyo's decisions to leave the League and to renounce the Washington treaties.

Breakdown of the Washington Conference Treaty System

Despite these flaws, the Washington treaty system worked well for most of the 1920s. Two events at the end of the decade, however, set in motion trends that undermined the system and led to its breakdown. The first of these was the reunification of China under Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang [KMT]). The KMT rose to power in part by drawing on a mass nationalism new to China and aroused by the failure of the Republican government after the 1911 Revolution, which ended the Qing dynasty's long reign, and by the continued great-power encroachments on Chinese sovereignty after the creation of the Republic of China. This mass nationalism was expressed most spectacularly in the 1919 May Fourth protests in Chinese cities upon the Paris conference's award of Germany's concessions in Shandong Province to Japan, and in the series of antiforeign boycotts and demonstrations that erupted through the 1920s.

In addition, the KMT succeeded in establishing a reunified Republican regime thanks to its raising, with Soviet assistance, a military force that enabled it to overcome the regional warlords as well as crack down on the Chinese Communists, previously its allies.

Under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership, this force embarked on the Northern Expedition in July 1926, conquering most of China's south, designating Nanjing as the new capital, and asserting the new regime's sovereignty over the north within two years.

The Nanjing regime's nationalistic agenda was evident from the outset. In July 1928 the government declared its ambition to revise all of the "unequal" treaties on which the treaty-port system rested in China. This ambition was not necessarily out of step with the provisions of the Washington Conference treaties—conferences on tariff revision had convened, for example, in 1925–26. Nor did the Nanjing regime seek the immediate renunciation of the treaty-port system that the nine-power treaty sustained; rather, seeking international recognition and assistance in China's development, it pursued its goals with respect to the treaty-port system through negotiation, not outright rejection. In response to the Nanjing regime's call for treaty revision, the treaty powers might have responded in concert through multilateral negotiations, in keeping with the spirit if not the letter of the Washington treaties. They responded unilaterally, however, led by Washington itself, which signed a new bilateral tariff treaty with Nanjing later in July; most of the other treaty powers followed suit in the following months.

In addition, the reunification of China presented problems for Japan's special position in Manchuria. Until 1928, Japan's interests in Manchuria were secured through its rights to the South Manchuria Railway and the ports on the Liaodong Peninsula, won from Russia in the 1904–5 war, and through its patronage of the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin. Zhang had consolidated his position in the 1920s by playing off Japanese backing against the weak regime in Beijing, which he sought to take over himself, and succeeded in doing in April 1926. When Chiang Kai-shek's armies moved north against Zhang in Beijing in the spring of 1928, Japan faced a dilemma regarding its position in Manchuria: either support Zhang in north China or deny him support at the risk of spreading the Chiang-Zhang struggle to Manchuria itself. When Zhang abandoned Beijing to Chiang and retreated to his Manchurian home base, he was assassinated by officers of Japan's Kwantung (Guandong) Army. His son, Zhang Xueliang, who immediately succeeded him, consolidated his hold over his father's position in Manchuria and at the end of 1928 brokered Nanjing's recognition of his role in Manchuria in exchange for his declaration of allegiance to the Nanjing regime. As a consequence, Manchuria lay open to Nanjing's authority and to penetration by KMT agitators for revocation of Japan's rights in the region. The reunification of China by Chiang Kai-shek's regime thus posed a particular challenge to Japan's interests.

The second event that set in motion trends that undermined the Washington treaty system was the onset of the world Great Depression in 1929. Rather than pushing free trade to stimulate growth, the principal Western trading states responded to the Depression by seeking to protect their domestic markets by raising high tariff barriers to foreign imports and by going off the gold standard in foreign exchange transactions. This resort to protectionism dramatically undermined the idealist free trade outlook that underlay the Washington treaties and, in the opinion of many economic historians, made the Depression worse and harder to overcome.

The resorting by major Western nations to strongly protectionist trading blocs—the 1930 American Smoot-Hawley tariffs were representative—affected Japan severely,

particularly as it decided in November 1929 to return to the gold standard as most Western nations were about to abandon it. As Japanese exports dwindled, unemployment in the export sector of the Japanese economy—especially textiles—rose, generating political dissatisfaction with the succession of liberal party governments. As economic conditions declined, extremist voices found a larger hearing in Japanese politics. Some right-wing extremist groups in the military resorted to violence in pursuit of a revolutionary change of regime, launching a string of assassinations of government officials beginning with the murder of the prime minister in 1931 and culminating in an attempted coup in 1936 by a group of army officers seeking to "restore" real power to Emperor Hirohito by assassinating the members of the cabinet. As the Depression wore on, discrediting cabinets of parties committed to liberalism, and as extremist right-wing groups resorted to political violence, conditions were set for conservative cabinets to take over in the name of imposing order. These cabinets were composed mostly of military men and bureaucrats from the government ministries rather than party politicians; by the mid-1930s, military-bureaucrat cabinets were the rule and liberal party government was at an end.

The impact of the Depression on Japan's domestic politics had consequences for its foreign policies, especially in China. As one scholar has observed, until 1930 two alternative approaches to securing Japan's interests in China had coexisted, each represented by distinct clusters of constituencies and government institutions.[5] One approach addressed Japan's interests in the treaty ports in China, interests best secured through the idealist internationalist logic of the Washington Conference treaties that served the treaty-port interests of all the signatory nations. The Japanese constituencies and government bureaucracies engaged in this approach included the export business sector, especially textiles, and the government's foreign and light-industry ministries. Idealist multilateral diplomacy in conjunction with the two major maritime trading nations—Britain and the United States—in the 1920s reflected these economic interests and rested on a distinct base of institutional interests in Tokyo.

Meanwhile, another approach addressed Japan's interests in Manchuria, where over the decades since the Russo-Japanese War it had secured an ambiguous recognition from the other powers of its "special" interests. Because Manchuria was important as a source of iron and coal for Japan's heavy industries, which in turn served Japan's military, a coalition of powerful interests developed among the Japanese military, the heavy-industry ministries, and large industries that consumed Manchurian resources. These interests were not well served by the multilateralism of the Washington system and, in view of perennial concerns about Russian interest in the region, were best served by more direct and at least informal if not outright control.

The impact of the 1929 Depression undermined the multilateralism of the Washington treaty system in Japan economically and politically, discrediting the liberal party governments that had pursued it through the 1920s. At the same time, it made resorting to unilateralist courses to secure interests in Manchuria and in other locations deemed critical to Japan's security all the more inviting. These economic, political, and foreign policy trends set the stage for the Manchurian crisis in September 1931.

The events of September 1931 in Mukden (Shenyang), in which Kwantung Army officers engineered a pretext for a takeover of all of Manchuria and creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, under the last Qing emperor, forced Tokyo to decide between multilateral internationalism and unilateral pursuit of exclusive control in this critical area. Weak cabinets eventually acceded to occupation of all of Manchuria in January 1932 and the creation of the puppet regime thereafter.

The weak international response only solidified Tokyo's decision on behalf of unilateralism in Manchuria. In January 1932 Washington enunciated a "nonrecognition doctrine" according to which it would not recognize any step that violated the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact's outlawing of war as a means of foreign policy, but it did little more. In the same month, the League of Nations appointed a commission under Britain's Lord Lytton to investigate the course of events in Manchuria. After the League's February 1933 endorsement of the commission's report censuring Japanese actions in Manchuria, Tokyo responded the next month by withdrawing from the League. By January 1936 it had withdrawn from all of the Washington Conference treaties. With these steps, Tokyo had decided firmly on a unilateralist course toward autarky and exclusive control over resources in northeast Asia and China.

THE ROAD TO WORLD WAR II IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Over the next several years, Japan's expansion into north China followed the logic inherent in the aforementioned 1890 doctrine demarcating Japanese lines of "sovereignty" and "advantage." As each new area was secured within Tokyo's line of sovereignty, a new line of advantage necessary to buffer the broadened territory was created. Step by step and without a grand master plan of expansion, Japan's empire expanded incrementally and opportunistically. From Manchuria it sought to secure predominant influence in north China. After a clash between Japanese and local Chinese forces at Marco Polo bridge outside Beijing in July 1937 and Chiang Kai-shek's fateful decision to move Nationalist main forces into the area, Japan launched a full-scale military invasion into the heavily populated economic heartland of eastern and southeastern China, taking the major cities of Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, and Canton by the end of 1938. With the fall of France in May 1940, Japan moved into northern Indochina the following September, an action that it justified as being required to sever supply lines to the Chinese. Finally, following the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Japanese forces moved into southern Indochina in July and seemed poised to expand deeper into Southeast Asia, thereby menacing British and Dutch possessions.

Japan's southward expansion into Southeast Asia reflected the resolution of differences in Tokyo over which powers—the Soviet Union or Britain and the United States—presented the greater danger to Japan's position in Asia. The Soviet Union had been the focus of Imperial Japanese Army planners' concern because of its proximity and perennial interest in Manchuria and, in the 1890s, Korea. Conclusion between Germany and Japan (and later Italy) of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 was followed in 1937 by the Sino-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, setting the stage for a simmering confrontation between Japan and the

Soviet Union in northeast Asia over the next three years. However, heavy losses suffered by the Imperial Japanese Army in clashes with Soviet forces, first along the Soviet frontier with Manchuria at Zhanggufeng (near Vladivostok) in July 1938, then the following summer along the Mongolian frontier at Nomohan, surprised Tokyo with the strength of the Red Army's capacities under Joseph Stalin's accelerated program of military preparation since the early 1930s. Finally, the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 (as the Nomohan clashes were coming to an end), of the Tripartite Pact with Berlin and Rome in September 1940, and finally of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941 stabilized the Japanese-Soviet confrontation in continental northeast Asia.

The United States and Britain had been the particular focus of Imperial Japanese Navy planners as far back as the Soviet Union had been for their army counterparts. The U.S. Navy represented the principal challenge to the Japanese Navy's supremacy in the western Pacific, but at the same time Japan's dependence on imported oil, scrap iron, and cotton from America posed a long-term dilemma for Tokyo. The navy brass had grumbled at Tokyo's accession to the 1922 five-power treaty limiting naval forces, and they fumed over the acceptance at the 1930 London Naval Conference of a revision of Japan's ratio of capital ships to those of the United States and Britain, even though the new ratio fell only slightly short of what they had sought. Tokyo's renunciation of the five-power and London naval treaties in 1934 had come under the administration of a former admiral, Prime Minister Okada Keisuke.

In July 1939, Washington informed Tokyo of its intention to allow a bilateral commercial treaty to lapse in 1940 as part of an emerging program of economic sanctions against Japan's expansionism in China. Thereafter, Tokyo's dilemma steadily sharpened into a fateful choice. Either it could pursue further expansion in East Asia to secure the means of autarkic economic development that would free it from dependence on American imports at the risk of conflict with the United States, or it could acquiesce in Washington's pressures and continue its economic interdependence with America.

Events in 1940 and 1941—the fall of France and the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact—inclined Tokyo to the first alternative. After the Japanese thrust into northern Indochina, which had the assent of Vichy France's collaborationist regime, Washington responded with new sanctions embargoing the sale of scrap iron to Japan, following an embargo on the sale of aviation fuel. With the conclusion of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941 and then the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June, Japanese forces moved into southern Indochina. Washington responded by freezing Japanese assets in the United States and suspending oil shipments. In negotiations with Japanese Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburō (an admiral and former foreign minister) in the fall of 1941, Secretary of State Cordell Hull sharply increased American pressure by demanding Japan's pullback not only from southern Indochina but from all of its advances in China since 1931.

The convergence of widening opportunities for expansion into Dutch and British Southeast Asia and escalating American sanctions brought Tokyo's dilemma regarding the United States to a strategic crossroad. Either it could acquiesce in Washington's pressures and accept retreat to the position of a secondary power in East Asia, or it could continue its unilateral advance to ensure economic autonomy at the risk of war with America,

Britain, and the Netherlands. In December it chose the latter course, attempting to cripple American naval power in the Pacific at Pearl Harbor and moving immediately into the Philippines and British and Dutch possessions in Southeast Asia.

More forceful British and especially American steps earlier in the 1930s might have deterred Japan's aggression in Manchuria and north China and so its advance to this critical point. Or, as late as the fall of 1941, had Hull presented Tokyo with less sweeping demands, Tokyo might have regarded them less as an all-or-nothing ultimatum and more as an opening for a negotiated political outcome. But continued American reliance in the 1930s on the diplomatic assumptions of idealism that framed the Washington Conference system while departing from its economic tenets and resorting to economic sanctions contributed to this outcome. President Hoover's belief that the United States could not be the policeman of Asia and the doctrine of "nonrecognition" in 1931 did little to deter a Japan that was itself facing increasingly difficult choices between continued reliance on the idealist internationalism it practiced in the 1920s and unilaterally securing direct control over the critical economic resources it needed. The U.S. Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936, and 1937 were also ineffective and may have harmed China more than Japan. After the full-scale Japanese invasion of China in July 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt may have desired stronger steps in response, but domestic sentiment favoring isolationism constrained his options politically, despite a growing sympathy for China with the 1938 release of an emotionally stirring movie based on Pearl Buck's 1933 novel *The Good Earth*. His "quarantine" speech in Chicago in October 1937 offered no real deterrent to Japan's advance in China. His resort to economic sanctions in 1939, on the eve of the German invasion of Poland, and in 1940 and 1941 only sharpened the alternatives Tokyo faced.

THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II IN ASIA

The war in Asia had lasting consequences for the structure of power in the region and invited conclusions that impressed postwar statesmen in designing a new international order in the region and in responding to events for a long time after. With respect to the war's impact on the international structure of power, Japan itself suffered two million dead in the war and became an occupied country at the war's conclusion. Japan's empire was dissolved, offering Koreans an opportunity to turn a promise of independence into a reality after thirty-five years as a Japanese colony. In China, the war dead totaled upward of thirteen million. Chiang Kai-shek's Republican government spent the later years of the war bottled up in China's southwest, cut off from its base of power in the wealthy cities of eastern China. Meanwhile, the war had given the Chinese Communists, on the verge of extinction in 1936, an opportunity to rebuild. By the end of the war, their strength presented a significant challenge to the ambitions of the Chiang regime to reestablish itself and restore national unity. China loomed as the greatest power vacuum in Asia after the war.

In South and Southeast Asia, the war kindled nationalistic sentiments among the indigenous peoples who had seen Japan rout the Western colonial powers in the region and animated their attempts in the postwar years to resist the reestablishment of colonial

regimes. The rise of nationalistic movements for independence in the broad band of Asian colonies that existed before the war was abetted by the war's weakening of the colonial powers themselves. France and the Netherlands had been occupied countries themselves under the Nazis, and it was left to the British to attempt to reimpose colonial order on their behalf in the East Indies and Indochina.

Only the United States stood strengthened by the war, which confirmed overarching American dominance in the global order, replacing Britain's position before the war. The United States emerged from the war with its economy strengthened though distorted by war spending priorities, in possession—with the Soviet Union—of one of the two largest military forces in the world, and in sole possession of nuclear weapons.

The war thus provided Washington with new opportunities to recast the world order. To this task American leaders applied conclusions drawn from their understanding of the causes of the war to designing a postwar peace. Among these were the injunction "no more Munichs" and an appreciation of the weaknesses of idealist approaches to peace. The war evoked powerful critiques of idealist ideas in international relations—embodied at the onset of the war in E.H. Carr's classic *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919–1939* and in the early postwar years in Hans Morgenthau's text *Politics Among Nations*. But the war did not altogether discredit idealist ideas, and American leaders in particular continued to apply them, now tempered by elements of realism. To these efforts we now turn.