Introduction
The Rise and Fall of Great Powers

When I come to study what has been, at different times and epochs of history among different peoples, the effective reason why ruling classes have been ruined, I note the various events and men and accidental and superficial causes, but believe me, the real cause, the effective one, that makes men lose power is that they have become unworthy to exercise it (Tocqueville 1970, p. 14).

In order to probe a topic as vast as 'the rise and fall of world orders' it is important to have clear and simple definitions of the key concepts used. Thus, it is a problem that the term 'world order' is a notoriously slippery notion. In most discussions 'world order' refers to a stable pattern of relations among sovereign states. These discussions have a problem. For states are groupings of people, and people can be grouped in many ways. As investigations of non-Western societies and of Western societies in the past suggest, most of these groupings are not states at all. World order, then, conveys more than stable patterns of state relations. What additional factors need to be considered in discussions of 'world orders'? This is one of the key questions of this book.

If the key concept of 'world order' is inadequately clarified at the beginning of this journey, it is all the more important that other key concepts are all the more precisely defined. The 'world' is in this study defined within narrow temporal and spatial boundaries. First of all, the 'world' is limited in time to the modern ages; it is understood as a sphere of social action which took shape in the sixteenth century and which ended in the second decade of the twentieth. The 'world' is limited by the Italian Wars (1494-1525) in one end and by World Wars I and II (1914-1945) on the other. This world was marked by the rise and the expansion of the West. Through modern history the world, under the aegis of
Western Powers, became progressively unified and integrated. At the same time, the world became increasingly unequal in terms of the distribution of wealth and force.

'Order' exists when a relatively stable pattern of human relations characterize the international scene. Such stability, it is claimed here, is upheld by rules for international conduct. Since order is the outcome of rules, the nature and origins of these rules will be an important focus in the discussions which follow. Different authors have different views about these rules. However, they tend to agree on one thing: that the rules, whether they are formal or informal, are in the main defined by the most powerful actors in the system. This point harmonizes with the notion that wealth and force are unequally distributed among states -- that some states are weak, while others are strong; some are small while others are great and powerful.

'Power', then, is a decisive background determinant of 'order' and is here defined in the commonest of ways: as the ability to influence others. This ability is commonly identified as a composite of military force, economic wealth and command over public opinion.¹ 'Great' Power is understood not in a Rankean² but in a Braudelian sense. For Braudel the evolution of the modern world has been attended by a division of the world into three regions or zones: a Western core zone of powerful territorial states; a peripheral zone of weaker and poorer social formations; and an intermediate zone (Braudel 1979). Great Powers are, in this study, found only in the core zone of the modern world. And the Great Powers which are selected here are the leading core states of Braudel's modern world -- Spain, the United Provinces, England and the United States.³

Two comments on 'power' are in order before the run-through of key terms is completed. First, that this simple definition of power as a composite of military, economic and normative capabilities help shine some additional light on the concept of 'world order'. At the very least, it allows 'world order' to be probed in terms of the key resources that states
draw on in their interaction and in the kind of interaction which actually take place among states. Thus, military interaction can be considered one aspect of world order -- i.e. violent interaction in which states muster their punitive capabilities and project their military power in wars and skirmishes. Also, economic interaction can be considered an aspect of world order -- initially this kind of interaction concerned barter and trade, but it rapidly became more complex as Western states developed money, banks and systems of exchange, credit, finance and insurance. Finally, societal interaction must be considered an aspect of world order -- as a system of relations which cannot be reduced to military and economic interaction, but which must be understood in terms of rules, norms and values (Bull 1977, pp. 13ff). Every society possesses some kind of rules and norms which specify the rights and duties of its members. The most essential evidence for the existence of an international society is the formalisation of norms and rules into a recognized body of international law. Although all international actors do not obey international law all the time, they obey it often enough for law to constitute an important formative fact in modern international relations. This point (that international actors are influenced by social realities other than military threats and economic promises) is refined by the claim that international actors are influenced not only by the formal institutions of law, but also by informal institutions -- by norms, values, obligations, decency and commonality of purpose (Kratochwil 1989; North 1990; Katzenstein 1996). Indeed, not only are international actors conditioned by other social realities than force and wealth, it is these 'other social realities' which infuse material realities with . Rules, norms and values provide meaningful ends in the light of which force and wealth are activated. They provide political purpose towards which material resources are harnessed and applied (Finnemore 1996; Adler 1997).

Second, it is important to note that the Braudelian understanding of power harmonizes with the notion that capabilities like wealth and force are unequally distributed among states. This difference in capabilities is
expressed in a hierarchical ordering of states. At the apex of the hierarchy are the most powerful states in the world -- this amounts to very few, at the most a handful, of Great Powers. Below the Great Powers are the lesser states, ranked by capabilities and status. The most obvious difference between the Great Powers and the lesser states is their difference in resources and capabilities, and in their abilities to influence others. In addition there is a not-so-obvious difference between greater and smaller Powers: viz., the various ways in which they benefit from the extant world order.

The final key term of this study is 'rise' and 'fall' -- this is among the looser historical terms, to say the least. Sometimes the term is employed simply as a synonym for 'international change'. But on other occasions it involves a cyclical vision of history. Here, the 'rise and fall' of world orders denotes a cycle -- a periodic repetition of macropolitical themes and constellations through time.

One of the most discussed patterns of periodicity identified in the International-Relations literature concerns the regular emergence of great wars. In contrast to the Middle Ages, when warfare was endemic in the West, the Modern Ages is marked by conspicuous recurrences of large-scale wars -- by 'cycles of conflict' or 'waves of great wars'. This tendency for modern war to arise in great waves is noted by Robert Mowat, who explains that from the fifteenth century on

... social and political changes are discernible, which may be taken to begin modern history. In this modern period, from about 1491, warfare is far less common than in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, war does arise, war on the grand scale, as it were in great waves, with long intervals of general or comparatively general peace between the waves. Each wave of great wars is ended by diplomatic action, by a peace treaty or peace congress. Every such war, as brought to an end by diplomacy, is followed by about thirty or forty years of peace (Mowat 1928, p. 1).
BOUNDARIES OF THE WORLD
Different studies of world orders entertain different notions of the ‘world’ whose order they venture to probe. Robert Keohane (1984) tends to focus on a comparatively short time span -- with tentative expeditions into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he largely covers the last 200 years, with industrial England and the United States as cases of hegemony. Peter Taylor (1996) includes the United Provinces among the Great Powers, thus extending the analysis back to the mid-1600s. Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) begins his analysis with imperial Spain in the early 1500s. Fernand Braudel (1977) dips into the Renaissance by including fourteenth-century Venice and sixteenth--century Antwerp and Genoa as ordering Powers. Modelski and Thompson (1996) ventures as far back as the turn of the millennium and shows how European Renaissance orders may have been affected by impulses from Sung-China.

This study follows the example of Wallerstein and begins with the ‘long sixteenth century’. This choice coincides with Geoffrey Barraclough's selection of the Italian Wars as representing an important origin in Western politics. Furthermore, it greatly simplifies the basic notion of the relevant ‘world’ as framed by two great events. The first occurred around the Italian Wars; the second around World War I. The first great event marks the beginning of the modern world; the second marks its end (Barraclough 1976).

Boundaries in Time
In Barraclough’s opinion, the Italian Wars signals the beginning of modern history, whereas World War I signals its end.

The Renaissance, the Reformation and the Italian Wars are signposts which mark the entrance to the modern world. Before the Italian Wars, long-term, large-scale economic and political dynamics were
dominated by 'world empires'. Afterwards, economic and political
dynamics involved territorial states and capitalist interaction on a global
scale.

Together with the new imperialism, and the commercial revolution,
World War I marks the closure of the modern world.\textsuperscript{5} The first warnings of
this closure emerged towards the close of the nineteenth century. It was
then 'little more than an intermittent stirring in the womb of the old world'
(Barraclough 1974, p. 24). After 1918 changes rapidly accumulate and
produces a new, contemporary world which 'acquires a separate identity
and an existence of its own; it advances towards maturity with
unexpected speed after 1945' (idem).

These two ruptures in the past -- the Italian Wars and World War I --
constitute the temporal encasement of the First Part of this study.
Together, they frame the discussion of the hegemonies of the modern
ages: the sixteenth-century Iberias, the seventeenth-century United
Provinces, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Great Britain.

\textbf{Boundaries in Space}

Between the Italian Wars and World War I lies the checkered history of the
modern world; the Age of the Great Powers. It has been convincingly
shown that world orders existed before the Italian Wars -- thus, Macedon,
Rome and Han China can be said to enjoy all the hallmarks of world
orders. However, the world orders which have existed after the Italian
Wars -- i.e. the modern world orders -- have been peculiar in that they
have been global in scope. Macedon, Rome and Han China were regional
orders; they covered only parts of the globe. The Spanish, the Dutch and
the British orders were all global in scope. Modern world orders are based
on a global, oceanic system. Their global nature was ensured by the
advent of new technologies which revolutionized the nature of seapower in
the long sixteenth century and created global webs of transport and
communication. This rise of seapower was ensured by the design of new
types of ships and new methods of navigation that were made in the
Mediterranean world.\textsuperscript{6}

Second, this advent of seapower was the chief propellant of the rapid rise of Europe. The rise and expansion of the European world created a gap between the West and other regions in terms of economic wealth, military force and socio-economic modes of knowledge and thought. Simply put, the modern world was rapidly divided into three successive zones: The core zone, that is the region about the center, which is marked by affluence and splendour. Next come the intermediate zones about this central pivot. And finally, there are the wide peripheral areas, which, in the division of labour characteristic of the increasingly interdependent modern world economy, are subordinates rather than participants (Braudel 1977, p. 82).\textsuperscript{7}

Third, the history of the modern world politics has largely been an account of the interactions of territorial states. The state has been the key institution through which Western societies have regulated their populations, their relations with each other and their interaction with non-European peoples. The territorial state -- along with the will to make rapid technological and economic progress and the capacity to translate this progress into political power on global scale -- is a characteristic feature of the Modern Era. The institutions of the state and their unrivalled organizational efficiency have distinguished the Christian West from the rest of the world since about the long sixteenth century. Since then, these institutions have been partly imposed upon and partly emulated by the rest of the world.

Finally, the history of modern world orders can be seen as 'the expansion of the international society of European states across the rest of the globe, and its transformation from a society fashioned in Europe and dominated by Europeans into the global international society of today' (Bull and Watson, 1984, p. 1). This expansion of European economic processes and political institutions has also meant the world-wide diffusion of European culture. Extra-European regions have become the recipients of Western norms and values (denoted by terms like rationality,
individualism, equality and liberty) and by rules for social behaviour (as specified by European legal codes or, more subtly, by the Christian ethic).

This diffusion of Western values has increasingly come to define the notion of 'modernity'. The epochal sense of the term 'modern' is associated with the nineteenth century. However, the threshold marking its beginning is often put around 1500 (Koselleck 1985, p. 243). The 'modern age', then, can be seen as a long process. A variety of specifications exist as to its characteristic properties. Most of them involve the notion of a formalization of human rationality. It is generally agreed that 'modernity' is marked by an effort to demystify, secularize and subject natural forces to rational explanation and to human control -- to develop 'objective science, universal morality and law' in the words of Habermas (1981, p. 9). 'Modernity' began at the time of the Renaissance, the Italian Wars and the Reformation; it evolved with great rapidity during the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century; it reached its confident apogee at eve of World War I.

The result of these developments was a unique international system. European in origin, composed on an interstate system (dominated by military interaction) and a world-economy (dominated by economic interaction) and informed by Christian, Western values. This modern system is the main focus of the First Part of this study. The Second Part discusses the advent of a contemporary or 'post-modern' world order.

**CYCLES OF WORLD ORDER**

Mowat identifies four 'waves of great wars' in modern history -- an observation which has been empirically substantiated and elaborated by several subsequent authors (Wright 1965; Toynbee 1954; Farrar 1977; Gilpin 1981; Modelski 1984; Goldstein 1988). These are the Italian Wars (1494-1525), the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the Wars of Louis XIV (1672-1713) and the Napoleonic Wars (1791-1815). Contemporary history offer an additional fifth wave in the two world wars of the twentieth century (1914-1945).
The beginning of each of these Waves of Great Wars marks the destruction of a definite world order. The conclusion of the each such Wave marks the beginning of a new world order -- an order which pertains to the wider world political system of which the states system is a part (Bull 1977, p. 21). A world order, then, are fixed in time by Waves of Great Wars. And five distinct world orders can be identified during the course of modern history -- (1) a sixteenth-century Iberian world order (an order dominated by the Iberian Great Powers) which existed between the Italian Wars and the Thirty Years’ War; (2) a seventeenth-century Dutch world order which existed between the Thirty Years’ War and the Wars of Louis XIV; (3) an eighteenth-century British world order which existed between the Wars of Louis XIV and the Napoleonic Wars; (4) a nineteenth-century British world order which existed between the Napoleonic War and World War I; and (5) a contemporary, American world order which emerged from World War II.

Each world order is here conceived of as a pattern of periodicity or a cycle, and seen in terms of the three simple phases of growth, stagnation and decline. This is not so different from propositions presented by several other authors -- such as Quincy Wright (1965), Arnold Toynbee (1954), Robert Gilpin (1981), Immanuel Wallerstein (1984) George Modelski (1987, 1989) and others. The first phase of a world order emerges after a Wave of Great Wars. In this phase the distribution of power is such that interstate conflict does not readily trigger large and drawn-out wars. The world order is therefore relatively stable. It is important to note that this stability is not explained in balance-of-power terms. Rather than being the outcome of an even distribution of capabilities among the Great Powers, this post-war stability is the result of an uneven concentration of power. During this first phase, the world order is stable because the hierarchy of power is fairly obvious. The international system is dominated by a single Great Power. The members of the state system agree on who is preeminent among them; they understand that to challenge this preeminent Great Power to a contest of force would mean rapid defeat. Very simplified, one
could say that during this first phase, the world order is 'managed' by a leading state or a 'hegemon'. Thus, there is an intimate connection between the rise (and fall) of the world order and the rise (and fall) of Great Powers.

This first, relatively stable phase of the world order is called the **Phase of Hegemony**. The 'concert system' which emerged from the peace conference in Vienna in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, is often cited as an appropriate example of hegemony. It involved an international system grounded in principles which were espoused by a preeminent Great Power (Britain), institutionalized in the political and economic practices of that Power and subsequently emulated by others (Cox 1987, pp. 111, 129ff). The constellations which followed the peace treaties of Utrecht (1713), Westphalia (1648) and, to a certain degree, Cambrai (1529), it is argued in this study, also approximated the hegemonic constellation.

In its second phase, the world order is marked by greater instability and an increase in interstate violence and war. This phase is called the **Phase of Challenge** because the preeminent core Power is increasingly challenged -- it is displaying slower rates of economic and military growth than some of the other Great Powers; it is criticized for its self-serving foreign policies. As a result its preeminence is flagging. The gap in wealth, force and authority which exists between it and other Great Powers is narrowing.

The third phase of the world order is marked by a more equal distribution of capabilities among the Great Powers. This is the **Phase of Decline**. It is so denoted because the preeminent state is declining relative to other Powers. During this final phase, the interstate system is characterized by greater equality among core states. And as a consequence of greater equality comes greater uncertainty about the ranking order of the Great Powers. Since the rules of international behaviour is ultimately enforced by the Great Powers, it becomes increasingly unclear which of them it is that defines and enforces the rules of interstate behaviour. Thus, conflicts arise more frequently. These
can no longer be solved by the preeminent state alone, they must be tackled through cooperation or balance of power -- or not at all. War does not necessarily occur among the Great Powers with greater frequency in this phase, but diplomacy becomes more conflictual, more intense and its stakes grow higher.

The 'thirty or forty years of peace' which follow every Wave of Great Wars, corresponds to a new world order's relatively peaceful, hegemonic phase. This phase is undermined by an increase in conflict and wars which mark the Phase of Challenge. This is, in turn, followed by a reduction of interstate violence as a balance-of-power principle establishes itself among the Great Powers. Finally, a new, Wave of Great Wars destroys the declining world order altogether.

WARS, GREAT POWERS AND HEGEMONY

The sketch above provides a quick presentation of a few key definitions of the argument and a brief synopsis of the conceptual scheme which guides it. But some of its implications should already be evident: That the rise and fall of world orders is tightly related to waves of global warfare and to the rise and fall of Great Powers. That world orders may be described as a global process consisting of three successive phases -- Hegemony, Challenge and Decline. That these phases represent an evolution from a hegemonic constellation to a balance of power. That these phases describe an evolution from hierarchy to anarchy -- or, perhaps, better: from relative order based on hierarchy in the initial Phase of Hegemony, to relative anarchy based on greater equality of power in the concluding Phase of Decline.

The sketch also shows that Waves of Great Wars is seen as having a formative impact on world order. On the one hand they destroy established world orders; on the other, they provide the conditions for new ones. The major reason is that all wars create coalitions. Great Wars create great coalitions. Great Wars force Great Powers to become military
allies; they make independent and sovereign Great Powers into coalition partners. By virtue of long-lasting struggles against a common enemy, the Great Powers draw a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’; the states assume a common identity as ‘friends’ against a mighty common ‘foe’. Their understanding of world politics is shaped by this common experience.

From each winning coalition emerges a powerful, leading state. This state, as Mowat suggests, emerges preeminent and wields a particular influence on the final phases of the war and on the new world order which emerges in its wake. Spain emerged preeminent from the Italian Wars; the United Provinces emerged preeminent from the Thirty Years War; Great Britain emerged preeminent from both the Wars of Louis XIV and from the Napoleonic Wars. The preeminent state dominates international conduct in the wake of the Wave of Great Wars. It becomes the leading Power of a new post-war world order.

It is argued here, that this state -- Spain, the United Provinces, Britain I and Britain II, respectively -- was so preeminent in the aftermath of the great waves that it constituted a hegemon. And that the immediate post-war period is best described as a hegemonic condition.

Hegemony means preeminence in power. However, before exploring the hegemonic condition further, it is important to recall that power is here defined in terms of three components: military force, economic wealth and command over public opinion. The debate about the rise and fall of Great Powers have tended to emphasize two of these: i.e., the military and the economic aspects of power. Paul Kennedy’s famous book on The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, for example, focuses entirely on the interaction of military force and economic wealth; it excludes the normative aspects of power altogether. Kennedy discusses 500 years of international relations without ever considering the importance of the normative aspect of power. In this neglect lies the main shortcoming of an otherwise outstanding analysis.

This shortcoming is most obvious in Kennedy’s analysis of late-Cold
War politics. He portrays the United States and the Soviet Union as two Great Powers. This portrayal is not untrue. But it is incomplete enough to be misleading -- so misleading, in fact, that Kennedy forecasted the demise of the United States at a time when it in fact was the Soviet Union which was on the cusp of collapse.

This point is so central to this study that it is worth elaborating upon -- even at the peril of elaborating excessively on a point will be introduced later in the story and thus losing the focus of first few chapters of the study. Kennedy did not stress clearly enough that the two superpowers were, in fact, quite incompatible actors in important respects. He did not recognize sufficiently that the Soviet Union was the inferior actor in the Cold-War world order because he routinely excluded the normative aspects of power from his analysis. The USA was always strong in terms of normative power, whereas the USSR was weak.

At the risk of overstating the point, it can be claimed that this crucial difference between the two superpowers may be traced back to a difference in capital. The Soviet Union developed its physical and its human capital in impressive ways during the first half of the twentieth century -- the development of machines, tools and other productive equipment was especially rapid during the early Stalinist era.\textsuperscript{12} The United States, too, developed its physical and human capital by leaps and bounds during the first half of the twentieth century. However, the United States also developed its 'social capital'.

Both the USSR and the USA conspicuously developed their physical and human capital during the first half of the twentieth century -- i.e., they made changes in resources and material so as to perform tools that facilitate production, and they educated their workers in ways which gave them knowledge, skills and capabilities to act in new, more productive ways. But of the two Powers, only the USA developed its social capital in ways which sustained a dynamic and trustworthy order. This difference in capital development shines some important light on the different fates of the two superpowers in the second half of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{13} The
long and short of it is, then, that the American society has been marked by trustworthiness, trust and orderly and continued socio-economic development, whereas the Soviet society has not.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States made itself the confident, credible and trustworthy advocate of liberal, democratic values; and it enjoyed the support of America’s own citizens as well as US allies and trading partners. The Soviet Union advocated Marxist-Leninist doctrines and met with less enthusiasm. Under Stalin’s dictatorship, Marxism-Leninism was sustained by fear-induced passivity. The Stalinist practice replaced consensus with force, dialogue with terror and trust with fear. The Soviet ideology grew rigid and formulaic; it lost the active support both at home and among the USSR’s primary allies and trading partners. The difference between the USA and the USSR in power over opinion was notably stark and consequential in the divided Europe of the Cold War. For whereas liberal, democratic ideas were embraced and emulated by the American allies in Western Europe; Marxist-Leninist ideas were resented by the Soviet allies in Eastern Europe and had, on occasion, to be reinforced by troops and tanks. Most West-Europeans saw the USA as a legitimate Great Power; most East-Europeans saw the USSR as a conqueror and an oppressor. When the Soviet Union suffered economic decline in addition, it was thrown into a grave crisis and, finally, to collapse.

There is an essential difference between great power based on force and great power rooted in consent. And only the latter qualifies as ‘hegemony’. This recognition provides the key to the Great Power status of the United States in the twentieth century -- and also to Great Britain in the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries, to the United Provinces in the seventeenth century and, to some degree, even to Spain during the sixteenth century.

One reason why these Great Powers could dominate, in turn, the world without triggering a balance-of-power reaction, was that each case of dominance occurred in the aftermath of Waves of Great Wars. The other
Great Powers were exhausted by warfare, and the preeminent Power was so superior as to be unbeatable. But another reason for this anomaly is, that the dominant Power temporarily possessed a substantial social capital and enjoyed a high degree of trust in international society. More concretely, the preeminent Power expressed common values and norms developed among coalition partners during the Wave of Great Wars. In this sense, the preeminent Powers were 'hegemonic'. This second reason for post-war dominance is so compelling -- and the importance of the consensual aspect of political power is so neglected in international-relations analysis -- that it deserves to be more closely explored.

'Hegemony' has been a much-used word in International-Relations analysis in recent years. However, many authors who apply it have overlooked the consensual connotation which informs the term. 'Hegemony' has in much recent international-relations scholarship too-often been used as synonymous with 'great power'. According to the ancient usage, however, 'hegemony' means something more than greatness. And a hegemon is more than a Great Power. To be 'hegemonic' means to possess the authority of command. It includes a notion of primacy based on a component of just and legitimate leadership. Preeminence in wealth and force are necessary preconditions for hegemony, but not sufficient. Hegemony involves preeminence which is sustained by a shared understanding among social actors about the values, norms rules and laws of political interaction; about the patterns of authority and the allocation of status and prestige, responsibilities and privileges.

In this conception of hegemony lies a key to the rise of world orders and to the unopposed preeminence of one distinct Great Power. This Power is military strong -- stronger than the others -- materially wealthy, and it is normatively influential: it expresses a code of values, norms and rules for social conduct that other Great Powers embrace. Why does one power have such normative influence? Why does it set the tone for the political discourse of its age? Why does it articulate the political sentiment
of the times? Partly because it is strong and wealthy. By being Number One. By being the best, the strongest, the wealthiest. It is seen by others as possessing a keen knowledge about the creation of wealth and power. Its military techniques, its economic processes, its political structures are emulated by others who see in its institutions a blueprint for development of their own power and prestige. But also -- and this is a simple answer which has been much neglected in recent debates -- a Power exerts a unique normative influence because it stresses the universal application of its values. It represents good values and norms -- virtues like freedom, decency, honesty, equality. It articulates these values with great sincerity. And it grows more sincere, the more it is admired, flattered and wooed by others.

In this conception of hegemony lies also a key to the demise of world orders and the decline of Great Powers. A preeminent Power declines when its military strength and economic wealth becomes more equal to that of other core states. But its loss of authority and command of public opinion -- at home and abroad -- is also a decisively important component of decline. Hegemony, as defined above, has a moral component. A hegemon owes its commanding position to its effective articulation of globally relevant values, norms and rules of social interaction. If it loses this normative authority, it will also forfeit its commanding position.

CONCLUDING REMARKS
The reason for probing past hegemons and for comparing past world orders is, of course, to obtain a greater perspective on and more knowledge about international politics in general. But the study is also guided by the hope that this probing of past orders will also shed some light on the Cold War and the recent transition to a post-Cold War world. It agrees with John Gaddis’ claim, that

... if we are to grasp the nature of the post-World War II
international system, then we will need an analytical framework capable of accounting for the rise and fall of great powers; but also one that incorporates variations in the nature of power and the influence it produces, as well as the limitations on power that permit peripheries to make a difference, even when things are being run from very powerful centres (Gaddis, 1997, p. 27).

The four Waves of Great Wars identified by Mowat -- the Italian Wars, the Thirty Years War, the Wars of Louis XIV and the Napoleonic Wars -- can easily be completed by the two World Wars of our own century (1914-1945). This fifth Wave of Great Wars is not discussed in the first part of this study for reasons which are elaborated below: the decades which followed 1914 brought a transition from Modern to Contemporary History. They suggest a transition from an epoch marked by elitist control of power resources to an age marked by mass-access to them -- to an age of mass-democracy in which political power was vastly disseminated into the hands of those who control air-power, nuclear weapons, micro-electronics, cathode-ray-tube means of instant communications and global webs of finance and systems of information, intelligence and military command. Although the evolution of a pax americana after World War II displayed the central features of previous world orders, international relations are today so different from previous ages, that it would be foolhardy to expect an exact repetition of Great-Power dynamics. The American world order is included in this project; but it is discussed in Part Two as a case sui generis.

Nevertheless, the key to the rise of Great Powers -- and to the establishment of world order -- still lies in the moral influence which the preeminent state exert on other Great Powers. The problems are (and here lies the key to decline) first, that the preeminent Power must be second to none in wealth and in military force; and second that its moral authority must beyond reproach. Once its military arsenal lags, and once its material wealth declines, it will also lose moral power. And if the
preeminent Power disintegrates at home, it will lose the domestic consensus which gives it authority and power over the public opinion abroad. The disintegration of political consensus at home has always augured a reduction of moral authority abroad.

In 1989, on the heels of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War, an exuberant US President announced the birth of a New World Order. This was a premature and vastly misleading statement. Although the old world order was quickly fading, no new world order was then ready to be put in its place. Nearly a century ago Antonio Gramsci, seeking to understand the great changes that swept his world, sighed that he was living in an age where the old order was waning but the new was yet to be born. In 1989, Bush would have been better off had he paraphrased the old Italian communist.
NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. The classic discussion of this conception of 'power' is still Russell (1938). A more detailed discussion of 'power' is found in Chapter 3 below.

2. This study uses the same (limited) concept of 'Great Powers' as Paul Kennedy (1987, p. xvi) -- i.e. Western European states such as Spain, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Russia and, currently, the United States. This usage of the term originates with Leopold von Ranke who, in his essay die grossen Mächte, argued that European states invented a novel, multi-polar international order an sought to survey the fluctuations of this order. His purpose was to show the 'evolution of the modern ages' (Ranke 1872, p. 4), which he did by explaining why certain countries rose to a preeminence which they subsequently lost.

3. This narrow focus does not imply a total neglect of the other zones. First, because systematic relationships between the core and the peripheral zones constitute an important aspect of modern international interaction -- a substantial part of the Great Powers' wealth were, for example, extracted from colonies in the periphery. Second, because the line which divides the haves from the have-nots is not fixed. Individual states may cross it given time and appropriate circumstances. States move in and out of the world's zones -- as when England moved into the core zone towards the end of the seventeenth century, and relegated Holland to semi-peripheral status; or when the United States evolved from being a peripheral colony in the eighteenth century to becoming the world core in the twentieth.

4. The Italian Wars (1494-1529) mark a natural point of origin for the modern world system. The wars marked a towering rupture with medieval political practices in several respects. It marked the first occasion on which gunpowder was used on a substantial scale. The use of artillery caused catastrophic losses for cavalry troops -- and meant, in turn, that the old warrior-aristocracy lost its leading role in warfare and its high position in civil society. Instead, kings and princes were encouraged to build their armies from the cheaper (and less powerful) infantrymen, whom they equipped with the new, deadly handguns (Knutsen 1987).

This military revolution encouraged the growth of several New Monarchies in Europe. It marked the advent of a plurality of independent territorial states and the rise of a European interstate system. It also marked the growth of more permanent military establishments and the strategic co-ordination of the three key components of the modern army (cavalry, infantry and artillery) financed by a central exchequer (Howard 1984).

Such political-military changes were attended by economic transformations. As war grew in scale and cost, the monarchs of
Europe needed more income. Taxes was the traditional source of royal income. But as the aristocracy declined in wealth and status, the kings were driven towards new, wealthy urban groups. In order to tax these groups more heavily, the monarch granted them more influence in domestic affairs. He increasingly included them in deliberations over matters of national expenditures as advisors in his royal councils, a function they assumed at the expense of the old aristocracy (Poggi 1978). Thus, changes in the fiscal apparatus of Europe's New Monarchies encouraged the growth of new, semi-representative political institutions (Schumpeter 1976, p. 141).

Long-distance trade emerged as a second, new and promising source of royal income in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The monarchs of Western Europe noticed soon-enough that their fiscal income increased in proportion with mercantile profits. Thus, they found it in their interest to encourage trade and colonialism by royal privileges, subsidies and new commercial laws. The stellar example of royal encouragement of private enterprise was the chartered company, a venture which forcefully encouraged Western exploration overseas and which greatly fueled the Western surge of discoveries and colonialism.

On the basis of their new-found wealth, the monarchs of Europe began to rival the princes and emperors of other regions in splendour and power. By the early sixteenth century, Europe was as wealthy and as strong as the Turkish empire. The extent of European power stretched past the East African coast to the Indian Ocean and to South East Asia in the east and the Americas in the west. The modern weapons, wealth and culture of Western Europe were beginning to dominate the politics of the globe (Wolf 1982).

This domination was greatly enhanced by the spread of a new technology of interchangeable typeface in the second half of the fifteenth century (Febvre and Martin 1976; Mandrou 1978, pp. 27ff). It revolutionized the storage and dissemination of thought and ideas, and played a central role in the diffusion of secular Renaissance values and in the making of the Reformation. Bibles were among the first books that obtained a vast dissemination by the new technology. This was not always a good thing: for as churchmen and kings in different regions og Europe found differences in each others's Bible-translations and -commentaries, they realized that there existed great disagreements about basic interpretations of doctrine. A German monk named Luther played a particularly important role in spreading this realization. He was courageous enough to argue in print against the pope. In the severe controversy which ensued, Luther first presented his arguments in Latin, but presently took to German. His claims were immediately disseminated and had an entire Continent in ferment.

All kinds of additional texts very soon rolled off the presses in the new print-vernacular (Anderson 1983). Fables, romance novels, sundry handbooks, maps and navigation tables. And, last but not least: translations of Greek and Latin classics. All these texts were spread during the time of the
Italian Wars -- indeed, since soldiers were hired from far away to participate in the fighting, books were among the valuable objects they brought with them as loot.

Although the Italian Wars finally destroyed Renaissance Italy, they also helped disseminate its the secular culture to the rest of Europe, thus helping to change the Continent and the world forever.

5. The second rupture of Western history began in the years that led up to World War I. The military, economic and intellectual upheavals which occurred in the later years of the nineteenth century ignited historical processes and cast up the social institutions of a new, contemporary international order. Improvements in economic and military capabilities gave rise to new modes of production and destruction. The rise of mass society integrated the populations of the world into new economic and political processes; new ideologies and normative codes disseminated by new means of communications and guided by modes of political mobilization and mass control, provided the precondition for 'mass society' -- of liberal-pluralist types on the one hand, and of totalitarian varieties (communism and fascism) on the other.

Closely associated with these tendencies was an unprecedented expansion of international interaction. One of the characteristic features of contemporary world politics is that many of its most formative events had their origins far away from Europe; that the old, Continental cockpit of international relations was superceded by a wider world stage.

Two decisive chains of events foreshadowed the characteristic features of the new, contemporary world. The first was the the rise of the East-West conflict. It began in the last years of the nineteenth century, when the United States expanded beyond its western borders and developed its own sphere of influence in South America and the Pacific; simultaneously, Russia expanded south-eastwards and created a vast empire which, at the turn of the century, infringed upon the ambitions of the Pacific powers. When Europe exhausted itself during the two world wars of this century, America and Russia came to loom as newly arrived giants on either side of the Old World. After World War I, this development was reenforced by an ideological division between Wilsonian and Leninist visions of a new world order. After World War II, this ideological contest was accentuated and consolidated by an inflexible, world-scale military and economic rivalry.

The second decisive chain of events was the emergence of the north-south conflict. In the final years of the nineteenth century, European power in Asia and Africa stood at its zenith; but half a century, two world wars and a contested process of de-colonization later, only the vestiges of European domination remained. Between 1945 and 1960, no less than forty countries with a population of 800,000,000 revolted against European colonialism and won independence. It was an unprecedented reversal in human history in both size and rapidity. This change
in the position of the nations of Asia and Africa and their relations with Europe on the one hand and with the USA and the USSR on the other amounts to a decisive rupture in the history of the world (Barraclough 1974, pp. 153-99).

6. The most basic innovations occurred on the Iberia -- in Portugal and Spain -- which is, in many ways, a gateway into the Modern World. Fifteenth-century Spain is still medieval in many ways; the seventeenth century is modern. From the vantage point of the 1990s, the towering figure of Christopher Columbus shades almost all others from our view of this century. It is most fitting that it is an Italian who cuts such a dominant figure, since he thus can be made to represents the continuity with the dominant power of the Renaissance: Italian city-states (Braudel 1979). Furthermore, Columbus traversed the distance between the old and the new world in more than one sense. Not only did he cross the Atlantic to discover an (for his contemporary Europeans) entirely new world; he also crossed the invisible line of demarcation between the Middle Age and the Modern Ages. In this sense he was a traveller in time as well as in space.

Buzan et al. (1993) have explored the significance of innovations and new technologies under the concept of 'interaction capacity'.

7. An elaboration of this sketch is found in Braudel (1979:3). A formal application is found in Wallerstein (1974; 1979; 1989). It should be noted already here, that whereas Braudel and Wallerstein focuses on the dynamics of the world-economy, I also include an interstate system and an epistemological system -- a 'system of knowledge and thought' (Foucault 1973). The 'long sixteenth century' did not only see the advent of the capitalist world-economy; it also saw the evolution of the modern territorial state and their systematic interaction, and it witnessed the advent of a new, 'modern' mentality.

8. This point is further discussed in Chapter 2, below. It could be argued that a study such as this ought to have included a presentation of the literature on war-cycles. Such a presentation would cover much of the same ground as Goldstein (1988, pp. 99-123) and would be most unlikely to improve upon his excellent discussion. Consequently, such a discussion is not even attempted here.

9. It is argued below that just like the Italian Wars can be 'taken to begin modern history' (Mowat 1928, p. 1), so World Wars I and II can be seen as its end. This argument is convincingly presented in Barraclough (1976) and elaborated in Knutsen (1992, pp. 161ff). It will also be repeated in the second part of the study.

10. Quincy Wright (1942) argues that 'major wars' have occurred with great regularity throughout modern history, and been followed, first, by a period of general peace, then by a
cluster of 'minor wars' and, finally, by another period of peace. Arnold Toynbee (1954) claims that a phase of 'general war' is followed by a 'breathing space' which deteriorates into a conflictual era of 'supplementary wars' until a more lengthy 'general peace' is established. Robert Gilpin (1981) maintains that great 'crises' have recurred with great regularity through modern international history and that each crisis is resolved through 'hegemonic war' which reestablishes an equilibrium in the international system -- for a while. Immanuel Wallerstein (1984) explains that 'world wars' have regularly broken out during the course of the modern world-system, and that they have been followed by phases of 'hegemonic maturity', 'declining hegemony' and the ascent of rival hegemonies. George Modelski (1987, 1989) claims that phases of 'global war' are regularly followed by phases of 'world power', 'global problems' and 'coalitioning' respectively. Different authors, then, present their arguments in widely different discourses. Wright and Toynbee may be said to represent a traditional realist paradigm; Robert Gilpin a neo-realist approach and Immanuel Wallerstein a 'revolutionist' world-systems approach (Knutsen 1997). Yet, their arguments show a remarkable similarity in content -- as the table below suggests.

The Periodicity of War as Proposed by 5 Influential Authors and Related to The Present Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quincy Wright</th>
<th>Arnold Toynbee</th>
<th>Robert Gilpin</th>
<th>Immanuel Wallerstein</th>
<th>George Modelski</th>
<th>This study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>major war</td>
<td>general war</td>
<td>resolution of systemic crisis</td>
<td>world war (macrodecision)</td>
<td>global war</td>
<td>wave of great wars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace of</td>
<td>breathing space</td>
<td>systems equilibrium</td>
<td>hegemonic maturity (implementation)</td>
<td>world power</td>
<td>the phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minor war</td>
<td>supplementary redistribution</td>
<td>declining hegemony (agenda setting)</td>
<td>global problems</td>
<td>the phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace of</td>
<td>general peace</td>
<td>systems ascending coalitioning</td>
<td>hegemony (core alliance)</td>
<td>competitive disruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. As the subtitle of Kennedy's book indicates: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000.

12. Paul Kennedy (1987, p. 323) is not alone in seeing the industrialization of the Soviet Union as 'something unprecedented in history'. For example, during the period covered by Stalin's two first Five-Year Plans (1928 to 1937), the coal output of the USSR more than trebled (from 35.4 to 128 million tons) and steel production more than quadrupled (from 4 to 17.7 million tons). 'Electricity output rose sevenfold, machine-tool figures over twentyfold, and tractors nearly fortyfold. By the late 1930s, indeed, Russia's
industrial output had not only soared well past that of France, Japan and Italy but had probably overtaken Britain's as well' (idem; see also Kennedy's Table 28 on his p. 299).

13. James Coleman help explain the difference in capital development:

Physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form; human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual; social capital is even less tangible, for it is embodied in relations among persons. Physical capital and human capital facilitate productive activity, and social capital does so as well. For example, a group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparative group lacking that trustworthiness and trust (Coleman 1990, p. 304).