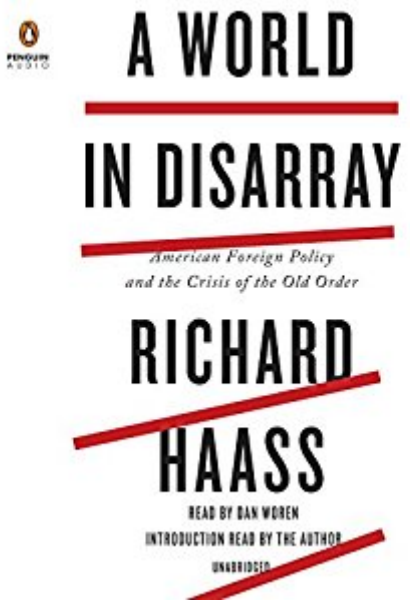
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A World In Disarray: American Foreign Policy And The Crisis Of The Old Order



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Synopsis

An examination of a world increasingly defined by disorder and a United States unable to shape the world in its image, from the president of the Council on Foreign Relations. Things fall apart; the center cannot hold. The rules, policies, and institutions that have guided the world since World War II have largely run their course. Respect for sovereignty alone cannot uphold order in an age defined by global challenges from terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons to climate change and cyberspace. Meanwhile, great power rivalry is returning. Weak states pose problems just as confounding as strong ones. The United States remains the world’s strongest country, but American foreign policy has at times made matters worse, both by what the US has done and by what it has failed to do. The Middle East is in chaos; Asia is threatened by China’s rise and a reckless North Korea; and Europe, for decades the world’s most stable region, is now anything but. The unexpected vote for "Brexit" signals that many in modern democracies reject important aspects of globalization, including borders open to trade and immigrants. In A World in Disarray, Richard Haass argues for an updated global operating system - call it world order 2.0 - that reflects the reality that power is widely distributed and that borders count for less. One critical element of this adjustment will be adopting a new approach to sovereignty, one that embraces its obligations and responsibilities as well as its rights and protections. Haass also details how the US should act toward China and Russia as well as in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. He suggests, too, what the country should do to address its dysfunctional politics, mounting debt, and lack of agreement on the nature of its relationship with the world. A World in Disarray is a wise examination, one rich in history, of the current world along with how we got here and what needs doing. Haass shows that the world cannot have stability or prosperity without the United States, but the United States cannot be a force for global stability and prosperity without its politicians and citizens reaching a new understanding.

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Customer Reviews

It would be difficult to identify anyone other than Henry Kissinger who represents the tradition of AmericaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s bipartisan foreign policy more fully than Richard A. Haass. Haass is the longtime president of the Council on Foreign Relations, which comes as close as any institution to sitting at the center of gravity for the internationalist wing of the Eastern establishment. For decades before he began at the Council, he cycled in and out of senior policy planning and diplomatic posts in government and a series of positions in academia and other establishment thinktanks. If you want to get a handle on the conventional wisdom that emanates from that elite group of scholars and officials, read HaassÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ latest book, A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order.The three phases of international relationsHaassÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s abbreviated survey of international relations in the modern world divides history into three phases. The first began with the Treaty of Westphalia in the mid-17th century that ended EuropeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Thirty Years War and established the primacy of the sovereign state. That phase lasted through the end of World War II, which upended world affairs in profound ways. The second phase lasted from 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1989. This was a period of superpower supremacy, the absence of large-scale conflict, and unsurpassed economic growth. We now live in the third phase, a troubled ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“world in which centrifugal forces are gaining the upper hand.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Haass argues that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“the past twenty-five years since the end of the Cold War constitute a break with the past . . . [S]omething very different is afoot in the world.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• He characterizes the current state of affairs as ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“disarray.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• In his view, the word ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“captures both where we are and where we are heading.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• This is not the multipolar world so many observers write about. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a nonpolar world. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Power is more distributed in more hands than at any time in history,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Haass notes. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The same holds for technology.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• In HaassÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ view, the multiple uncertainties and dangers of todayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s world require that the United

States be more assertive on the world stage. He ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“argues for the stationing of military forces in and around areas that either China or Russia might claim or move against, something that translates into maintaining increased U.S. ground and air forces in Europe and increased air and naval forces in the Asia-Pacific.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Other observers might see greater reliance of this sort on the U.S. military as a prescription for bankruptcy at home and dangerous conflict abroad.A new approach to foreign policyThe essence of HaassÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ thesis is that the concept of state sovereignty established by the Treaty of Westphalia is no longer adequate in a nonpolar world. TodayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s international landscape is no longer dominated either by the major powers or exclusively by nation states. Nonstate actors, including international and regional organizations, corporations, terrorist groups, some major cities, and numerous other entities all play roles in setting the direction of civilization today. Haass contends that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“the post-World War II orderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •effectively World Order 1.0ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •provided only a degree of structure for the international system once the overlay and discipline of the Cold War order disappeared. Just as important, the world was not well positioned to deal with the diffusion of power that was to come.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•In this much more complex environment, U.S. foreign policy must be directed toward establishing a new concept in world affairs: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“sovereign obligation.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Haass views this as the ideal operating principle in contemporary international affairs. Under sovereign obligation, every state would be expected not merely to tend to its domestic affairs but also to play a role in addressing the multiple global challenges that bedevil us today: nuclear proliferation, climate change, terrorism, restrictions on trade, threats to global health, the vulnerable state of international finance, and the abuse of cyberspace. (The authorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s laundry list does not include drug trafficking.)ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s difficult not to see this prescription as wishful thinking. Another failing in HaassÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ analysis is his failure to distinguish between global threats that are existential and those that arenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t. Any dispassionate observer of climate change, nuclear proliferation, and the growing potential for pandemics would surely agree that any of these three challenges could be fateful for civilization if not for the human race. The other challenges in HaassÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ list, while serious, do not rise to the same level. Global trade could constrict, terrorism increase, the international financial system seize up, and cybercrime and cyberwarfare proliferate, but itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s highly unlikely that any of these events would end human civilization, much less lead the human race to extinction.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“What is to be done?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Haass makes clear his belief that yesterdayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s foreign policy is not adequate for ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“a world in which not all foes are always foes and not all friends are always

friendly.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• He advances a detailed set of recommendations, not just for U.S. foreign policy but for changes in domestic policy as well. His advice about foreign affairs is, as anyone might expect, highly nuanced. On domestic affairs, his approach is less so. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s hard to distinguish from traditional moderate Republican policies. For example, he advocates both decisive action to reduce the nationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s debt and increasing the PentagonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s budget. To enable all this, he favors raising the retirement age, reducing Medicare and Medicaid, and eliminating tax deductions for home mortgage payments and charitable deductions. Wishful thinking again, given any reasonable expectation for Congressional action.A nonpartisan analysis?At the outset of A World in Disarray, Haass claims that his analysis will favor neither Republicans nor Democrats. It doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t come across that way. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s true that he is pointed in his criticism of the decision to invade Iraq and of the conduct of the war that followed. But his discussion of President Barack ObamaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s foreign policy is savage. Haass reserves his most hard-edged criticism for ObamaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s decision to accelerate the drawdown of troops from Iraq, the conduct of the war in Afghanistan, the outspoken support for the Arab Spring, the intervention in Libya, and the decision not to attack Syria after Hafez el-Asaad crossed the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“red lineÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• by using chemical warfare on his citizens. This is not a nonpartisan analysis.About the authorPresident of the Council on Foreign Relations since 2003, Richard A. Haas has also served as a senior advisor to President George H. W. Bush and to his son, President George W. Bush, as well as in a number of other diplomatic and scholarly posts. A World in Disarray is his 12th book.

In a "World In Disarray" Dr. Haass gives a comprehensive and thoughtful overview of the old international world order and how we got where we are today. Additionally he offers an objective analysis, covering all the hot spot areas from Russia, the Middle East, China and nuclear nonproliferation. Haass also prescribes substantive solutions for steps both governments and civil societies can take at coming up with better and more feasible foreign policy decisions for a more complex as he refers to it "world order 2.0." A badly needed breath of fresh air for a new American foreign policy and a must read for global citizen.Andy Laub- Young Professionals in Foreign Policy, Director.

In the first part of the book Dr. Haass gives an informed and insightful overview of the geo-political forces that shaped the world from the rise of the modern state system in the mid-seventeenth

century to the end of the Cold War. The second part chronicles the collapse of order, or the emergence of geo-political disarray, following the Cold War. As he puts it, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“What exists [today] in many parts of the world as well as in various venues of international relations resembles more a new world disorder.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• In the third and final section of the book he goes on to offer prescriptions for moving forward, all under a conceptual umbrella of what Dr. Haass calls ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“sovereign obligation.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•It is a worthy read, to be sure. Haas is clearly a player and has a scholarÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ability to read between the lines and draw broad lessons and conclusions. In that respect we need more like him.He is, however, an establishment player. ThatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not meant to be a criticism, but the narrative has a familiar feel to it. His interpretations are often new, but the lens generally isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t. And while he claims in the beginning that he wonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t be partisan, heÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not completely successful in that effort. ThatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s okay, too, however. Non-partisan is an oxymoron when it comes to anyone with ties to Washington.He makes a strong case that the 2003 Iraq War was a misguided but watershed moment in foreign policy that recklessly introduced ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“preventiveÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• intervention to the foreign policy debate. The doctrine of regime change flowed from there, built, he argues, on the decidedly false assumption that the Middle East was ripe for democracy and Iraq would set the dominoes in motion.While reading the book, one of my over-arching impressions was that Dr. Haass puts great emphasis on traditional statesmanship (gender neutral) and statesmen. ThatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s no surprise given that he is the president of the Council on Foreign Relations and served as an adviser to President George H. W. Bush and Under Secretary of State to Colin Powell. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m not sure the simplicity of great statespeople fits any more, however. It seems to me that the forces driving our current history, as such, are much more complex and nuanced. The statesmanship model gives insufficient weight, I think, to the role of basic economics and human psychology. (And perhaps the impact of technology.)In addition to remaining statesmen-centric, the obligation model also remains largely US-centric. I have particular reservations about his general support of a modified variation of President ObamaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“pivot to Asia.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (It was later reclassified as a rebalancing.) Having lived in China for nine years I continue to believe that American politicians and strategistsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •Americans in general, in factÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •fail to appreciate the very fundamental difference in the Chinese world view. We simply cannot interpret ChinaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s behavior through a Western lens.The only other limitation of the book is one of timing. Dr. Haass notes that he completed the book before the 2016 US presidential election and while his personal choice for president is not revealed, it would be

interesting to get his take now, given the continued march into global disarray.Which makes me wonder if the prescription he outlines (i.e. sovereign obligation), even if warranted, is remotely achievable in the current political climate. There seems to be an underlying need for social and political consensus for it to work and that just doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t seem possible any time soon.In the end, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a thoughtful read and I eagerly await the sequel, should there be one. A World in Disarray may not quite qualify as transformative, but it is a thoughtful and insightful move in that direction.

A timely read for a better understanding of our current geopolitical landscape, delivered by an author of great knowledge about the subject.

thoughtfull review

excellent book

Excellent .

Set in the past history, this helps anyone understand the importance of consistency and patience in foreign policy and how dangerous domestic regionalism is to world order.

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