

**Summary**

**Chapter 2: The Emergence of a Global System of States, 1500–today**

*EQ: How did a fragmented world become a global, integrated system of states for which order is an ongoing problem?*

* In 1500, a world of empires competed for power and resources in a less globally connected world.
* In 1648, the Thirty Years War ended with the Peace of Westphalia and a modern state system emerged in Europe.
* In the centuries that followed, European powers attempted to subjugate the world. Mercantilism rose and imperialism followed, as much of the world (with a few notable exceptions) fell under European control.
* In the early 20th century, European competition led to World War I. Europe was devastated, and in the years that follow many attempts at lasting peace were made. In the 1930s several dictators rose to power and peace failed.
* World War II engulfed the globe, and, after years of terrible fighting, the war ended and Europe was again devastated.
* The US and the Soviet Union emerged as the two primary powers in a bipolar international system. The hostility and tension between those two powers was manifest in the Cold War, a nuclear standoff characterized by aggressive posturing and proxy wars that lasts until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
* Since 1991, the world has been unipolar with the United States at the helm. However, since the end of World War II, developing countries have emerged and cooperated in an attempt to increase their influence in international politics.
* The world today is full of both conflict and cooperation. The United States may be the world’s primary power but it is far from omnipotent. Some regions, such as Europe, have achieved unprecedented international cooperation. Others, such as East Asia, are full of tension. Overall, globalization has made the world a far more interconnected place than it has been in the past, but the lasting questions of international relations still remain.