THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

PREVENTING ANOTHER GREAT WAR: LESSONS FROM 1914

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, November 7, 2013

Introduction:

TED PICCONE
Acting Vice President and Director, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

MARGARET MacMILLAN
Author, *The War that Ended Peace*
Warden, St. Antony's College, Oxford University

Discussant:

ROBERT KAGAN
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PICCONE: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to Brookings. I'm Ted Piccone. I'm the acting vice president and director of the Foreign Policy Program here, and we are delighted to welcome Margaret MacMillan to the podium, and I will spend just a couple minutes introducing here before we get to the meat of what she has to say.

We are about to embark on the 100th anniversary of World War I, so this is a particularly timely topic to be stepping back and reflecting on the remarkable and devastating consequences of that war. Our speaker today is really digging deep into this issue, and in a way, on top of the thousands of articles and books that have already been written on the subject, but in very talented hands taking another historian's view on the consequences of the war but also what led to the war.

Why did the war begin? Why did the long period of peace fail, and why should we be worried about it today, and what are the parallels between 1914 and 2014? There are, of course, some remarkably interesting parallels: one would be globalization, a phenomenon then and an intense phenomenon now; issues of nationalism, sectarian conflict, deterrence, client states, and in Margaret's words, the complacencies of peace, are all present in our current

discourse around the world and global security, and it's worth taking a step back to reflect on those things.

Margaret's newest book is *The War That Ended Peace: The Road to 1914*, and it creates a portrait of the personalities, factors, and events that pushed Europe over the brink into a world-changing conflagration. In illuminating the years before 1914, she also shows the many parallels, as I said, between then and now.

I want to just mention briefly, you have her bio in front of you. Margaret is a very well-known historian, received her Ph.D. from Oxford University where she is currently a professor of international history and warden of St. Anthony's College. She's written a number of books from wide-ranging topics including Nixon and Mao, the British Empire in India, and the very highly-praised *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* which won a number of awards, and was subject of one of my wife's book-group books, so it's gotten some very popular reading as well.

Margaret is also the author of a new Brookings essay which will be featured next month on the Brookings website on this subject. It will be titled *The Rhyme of History: Lessons of the Great War* and will be published around December 12th. So, both the book and the essay will explore these questions, and we'll hear more about it this afternoon.

Miss MacMillan is being joined by Bob Kagan who is a Brookings senior fellow in our Center for the United States and Europe and the Foreign Policy Program. His most recent book is *New York Times* bestseller, *The World America Made*, and we're very lucky to have him because he knows this subject very well. Bob also serves as a member of the secretary of state's Foreign Affairs Policy Board, and is co-chair of a bipartisan working group on Egypt. You may know him from his monthly column on world affairs for the *Washington Post* and his writings in *The New Republic*.

So, the conversation today between Margaret and Bob will revolve around modern conflict points and how today's world leaders must learn the lessons of 1914 as they work together to build a more stable international order. Welcome again to what I know will be a very interesting discussion. Margaret, please.

MS. MacMILLAN: Thank you so much for that very nice introduction, and it's a great pleasure to be here at the Brookings Institute and also a great pleasure to have finished my essay for them. It was something that I enjoy doing, but I'm glad that it's more or less now finished. I've got 20 minutes in which I'm going to talk to you about the First World War which is probably a good thing because if it's not 20 minutes, I'm afraid I could go on for days. It is such an enormous subject,

and it is something that I think we still puzzle over partly because the war itself was so far reaching and catastrophic in its consequences and partly, I think, because there's no agreement among historians about why it started.

My book is one of a number of books which has come out this year and last year and probably there are more coming out as the anniversary gets closer and closer, and none of us agree on what started the war. In fact, we've all been criticized for not coming up with clear answers to the question, and all I can tell you is I'm not going to have an answer for you because I don't think there is a clear answer. I think it's a puzzle. I think it's a combination of timing, of circumstances, of human beings of the world of 1914 and the preceding years, and in the end, perhaps a result of human miscalculation and mistakes, which is very worrying for us as we look at the rather complicated world of our own which in too many ways, I think, unsettling ways, resembles that lost world of the years before 1914.

I won't rehearse for you all the consequences of that war because I'm sure you're familiar with them, but I think it's important to remember just how much it was a watershed in both Europe's history and in modern history. Before 1914 certainly there were problems within Europe, but Europe had enjoyed a century of almost unprecedented

peace. It has also enjoyed a century of enormous prosperity, enormous progress.

Europe had been transformed in that century since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Since 1815 it had been transformed from a primarily agricultural society into a very powerful industrial society, increased urbanization, tremendous spread in communications, and tremendous spread in things such as literacy and life expectancy.

What had also happened in that long century was that Europe had come to dominate the rest of the world. Europe was by far the most important part of the world in terms of power, in terms of economic strength, military strength, and Europe was also seen as the leader in science and technology and in an ill-defined or undefined way, a leader in civilization. That is how the Europeans themselves saw it, and that is how many other peoples around the world saw it. Europe, of course, by 1914 had divided up much of the world. The great European empires were based in part on European military and technological superiority, but also based on an acquiescence by those who had been ruled over, but in some ways the Europeans were fitted to rule them.

And 1914, 1918 was going to put an end to much of that. Europe emerged from the war weakened, its manpower depleted. We would never know how many people died in the war, but certainly it is

probably somewhere around 10 million. A great many more badly wounded, left damaged the rest of their lives, and then, of course, at the end of the war there was the huge flu epidemic which carried off even more people, and Europe was left impoverished. It had spent down much of its wealth. It had destroyed much of its human capital, and it was no longer in a position to dominate the rest of the world, and a number of consequences flowed from that war.

In Europe itself, the war - and this is one of its many tragedies, didn't actually settle anything very much, and so 20 years later there's going to be another war, and historians have now taken to talking of Europe's 30-years war between 1914 and 1942, and I think there's something in that. For all its waste and all its loss, the First World War did not produce a lasting peace, unlike the Second World War, unlike the Napoleonic Wars.

The war also left political and economic and social chaos in Europe. It fostered the birth of new political ideologies, both fascism and Bolshevism as communism was known in those days. I think would not have achieve the traction and the wide-spread popular support that they achieved without the First World War, and I think it's certainly fair to say that Russia would not have had the Bolshevik Revolution, we'd not have

had the Bolshevik's, a tiny splinter group seizing power and a coup d'état in 1917 without the First World War and its consequences for Russia.

Huge empires were destroyed. The Austria-Hungarian empire, which had for so long kept a sort of peace and stability at the center of Europe vanished as the war came to an end, and in its place were a series of independently-based, independent nations based largely on ethnicities which rapidly fell to quarrelling with each other. The Ottoman Empire was not long to survive the First World War and it, of course, disappeared again with long-term consequences for those who lived in it and also for those who lived around it. Germany had a revolution. Hungary had a revolution, and there were fears that Britain and France and Italy would go the same way.

I think a large part of the intolerance and indeed the brutality of European politics after the First World War is a result directly of that war, and so the war cast its shadows. I think it still does cast its shadows, and it remains, as I say, a puzzle for us all.

Some of us in this room will have memories of that war. Not memories ourselves. We will have memories that we have acquired from talking to people who fought in the war. I myself had two grandfathers who fought in the war; one with the British forces. He was part of the Indian army, and one with the Canadian forces, and so, as children we

had a sense of that war. It was something very much that was part of our understanding of the world. That is now disappearing, but I think the war remains fascinating because of its consequences and because of its puzzle.

The questions are asked about the war, and I would like to also ask another question. The question that is often asked is why did the war break out. I think we should also ask why did the peace fail because Europe had enjoyed this period of peace. It had been through previous crises. It had managed to deal with them, and there was much evidence after 1815 that Europeans and others in the world were beginning to think of alternative ways to settling disputes among nations because of war.

Arbitration between nations to settle particular disputes was becoming increasingly popular. Of the 300 arbitrations that were done between nations after 1815, more than half were done after 1890, and so you can see a real speeding up in the willingness of nations to have recourse to arbitration. It became increasingly a way of settling disputes.

There was also a very large middle-class peace movement, partly supported by the churches but also supported by large sections of the middle class and indeed some of the upper class who felt that Europe and Western civilization had moved beyond the point where war was a reasonable option; that war should no longer be an instrument which

governments saw as something that they could safely use, that Europe had simply become too civilized, and that war was something that Europe no longer should or needed to do.

And I think this was as important as the forces that were pushing towards war, and certainly there were those forces. You've got increasing numbers of middle-class movements, middle-class organizations, international organizations of liberal politicians, for example, that still exist today, international organizations of lawyers, international church organizations, international peace congresses. All of this was something that was very much part of the world before 1914.

There was also a very large working-class movement for Second International which was a very strong force for peace. Second International, which was becoming increasingly powerful as socialist parties grew in numbers and as their voters grew in numbers by 1912, for example, the largest-single party in the German Reichstag was the German Social Democratic Party, and more people in Germany voted for that party than for any other party, and so you had a growing working-class movement which met in the Second International which had International Congress's every two or three years. And at every congress the leaders of the world socialist movement talked about how they would

not fight in the capitalist war, how they would somehow prevent it from happening.

And they certainly had it within their means to prevent it from happening because all of Europe's armies with the exception of Britain relied on conscription. These were mass armies, and so they relied on conscripting the young men of military age, training them for a certain period, and then sending them into the reserves, and so what you had in Europe were standing armies with huge, much bigger armies, potential armies out there in society which could be summoned up when governments decided to mobilize them.

And what the working-class movement and its leaders talked about was simply not coming when called, which would have made it very difficult for Europe to fight, going on strike so that the railways which were necessary to transport the soldiers and their equipment to the front would not run, going on strike in the ports, going on strike in the factories. In other words, making it impossible for their nations to wage war, and so you got before 1914, very strong forces in favor of peace, which we tend to forget about largely because they didn't work. And we tend to see them now as ineffectual much as we see the League of Nations as being ineffectual, but at the time they were seen as very significant forces which could help Europe to avoid the old scourge of war.

Unfortunately, on the other side there were forces that were pushing for war, whether it was the military who felt it the only way in which to promote national power was through military endeavor. Their leaders who felt that if they did not fight, they were going to be submerged by their neighbors. There was a great deal of fear around in the period before 1914. It was one of the paradoxes of a world that in many ways was very prosperous and very secure, but at the same time people felt very apprehensive about the world and about their own societies.

There were also strong nationalist feelings. This was a period of heightened nationalism, which I'll talk about in a moment, which tended to push governments into positions of confronting the other, and intended to fuel an attitude toward others that they were not like us; that they were our enemies, that we have to be very wary of them.

There are many questions about the forces that led to the First World War. We ask who or what. Was it the great forces in society, or was it the individuals? We also ask whether it was a systemic failure. Was there something in the balance of power which had kept peace in Europe in its own perhaps imperfect way that in the end was going to lead to wars? Is there something fundamentally flawed about the notion of a balance of power? Will it sooner or later tip into war? If you get two alliance systems which are very equally balanced, is the danger then that

they may see a temporary advantage and be tempted to go to war, or they may see a temporary threat on the other side?

Or is there another systemic problem, and is it a problem which faces us today too? Was there an inability in the world system before 1914 to deal with shifting-power relations among nations? And I think there is something in this.

This was a time at which what had been dominant powers were beginning to lose their dominance. They remained powerful, but they were no longer as dominant as they had been. Particularly take the case of Britain. Britain with its empire and with its navy and with its dominance of trade and manufacturing for much of the 19th century had really been the hegemonic power in the world in the 19th century and was to remain so with, I think, decreasing capabilities up until 1914. The British were aware that their relative power was beginning to decrease, and they were dealing with a number of nations which were beginning to challenge them.

And I think it's fair to say that nations which are in comfortable positions, as the British were, not necessarily going to be very understanding of those who were on the way up or who feel they haven't yet got their place in the sun. Winston Churchill said this about Britain. He said there was a complacency about Britain and the British Empire, an

unwillingness to understand that other people might want as big an empire, a tendency to say you don't need an empire. We have ours, but really you don't need to have one. And I think he put his finger on something. I think the British were unimaginative when it came to powers like the United States and Germany and Russia, all of them powers which were beginning to grow enormously in economic terms, and which in the case of Germany had already translated that economic power into military terms, and in the case of Russia and the United States were in the process of doing so. And I think the British showed a lack of willingness to understand that other powers might want their own part in world affairs; a lack of empathy, I think, which did help to contribute to unease on the part of the powers that were rising.

I think it's also fair to say that powers on their way up are not always very tactful or not always very competent how they deal with the international situation. They're brash. The challenging the established powers. They haven't yet worked out quite how they fit in. This was very true of the United States in the new world which was beginning to extend its influence beyond its borders and beginning to see a role for itself in the world, and you get very belligerent statements being made by people like Secretary of State Hay, unnecessarily belligerent, but I think they reflect a

sense that the United States has not been taken seriously enough in the 1890's for example.

And you get the same sort of thing from Germany. I mean, German foreign policy after Bismarck was removed from office was catastrophic. It was simultaneously or alternatively belligerent and then pacifist which left people wondering what Germany really wanted, with deep suspicions of Germany, and German foreign policy was not well managed, and I think you can say the same thing today of China in its relationship with the United States. It seems to me there's an illusion which is fed, of course, by the Chinese themselves that Chinese foreign policy is immensely wise, immensely ancient, draws on the whole tradition of immense subtlety and I think rather when I look at Chinese foreign policy that it's often inept and awkward and without clearly defined goals and often reflecting internal divisions.

And I think these changes in power can be very difficult to manage. In the case of Britain and German, they were not managed well partly because Germany chose, and this was very much a moment of choice, to challenge British naval supremacy, in my own view, was a mad decision on the part of the Kaiser and the very small circle around him. And one of the great problems with Germany was that it fell into the hands

of man who was manifestly not suited to rule it, and yet he had great influence over German foreign and military policy.

One of Germany's real problems was the defect in its own constitution and the hereditary principle which popped up onto the thrown someone who really wasn't qualified to be the leader of such a powerful country. In my book I rather unfairly compare him -- but I think it's a good comparison -- to Toad of Toad Hall in *The Wind in the Willows*. He knew what he wanted. He was always a creature of impulse, and the trouble is what he wanted shifted from day to day, but when he wanted it he wanted it passionately.

Germany and Britain, which were natural allies in so many ways, they should have been friends. They were each other's biggest trading partners. They shared values. The majority of people in Germany and Britain, for example, were Protestant, and this was important in those days. They had great admiration for each other's learning, great admiration for each other's way of life. Four cabinet ministers in the British cabinet in 1914 had been education in German universities, and bright young German students came as Rhodes Scholars, for example, to study in British universities, and so you had a tremendous number of links between the two countries and it would have made sense. Germany was the biggest military power on the continent of Europe. Britain was the

biggest naval power in the world. It would have made a very sensible partnership.

Because of decisions made by the German government, I would argue the British were pushed in a different direction and found themselves in the most extraordinary position of making close friendships with their two long-standing rivals around the world; the French and the Russians. Anyone who predicted this in 1899, they would have been seen as absolutely mad. I think it's a very direct consequence of German policy. And so, the changing power relationship between Germany and Britain was not well managed, and I think led very much toward the First World War.

Having said that, there was another change-in-power relationship which actually was managed, and that was the relationship between Britain and the United States. The two countries came close. There was certainly bellicose talk on both sides to war in the 1890's and they pulled back, and they settled their differences. The British essentially pulled out of the Caribbean and out of Central America and out of Latin America as a political force, and the Americans came to an understanding with them. And so, not all such shifts in international power are going to lead to war. They can be managed, but we need to think now about how

the changing relationship between China and the United States can be managed.

So, to go back to the outbreak of the first World War, if I had to pick out certain factors I would look at the heightened nationalism which made it more difficult for governments to act calmly and rationally, and this is tied to the growth in public opinion. This is not something that statesmen had had to worry about in the Napoleonic Wars or earlier and for much of the earlier part of the 19th century, but they had to worry about it by the end of the 19th century. Governments increasingly were elected by a broader franchise. Even in Russia there was the growth of something called the public opinion, and you began to get elections for the Duma, and governments found it inconvenient but necessary to deal with it. Lord Salisbury, the conservative British prime minister, said it was like having a lunatic asylum at his back. He was always being pushed by his own public opinion whether it was a colonial lobby, naval lobby, and to show that Britain would stand up to Germany, to show that Britain would not back down. And, of course, other countries were very much the same situation.

And nationalism itself was, in my view, a very, very dangerous and destabilizing force which led to a fear of the other, a tendency to assume that every time your neighbor did something it was for

the worst of motives, and stereotyping of others. In one of my favorite books I discovered when I was researching this was a book by a German professor, (inaudible), who said that the French have always been a useless people; idle, frivolous, degenerate. "If you want," he said to his readers, "to see examples of this today, I can show you exactly where to go in Paris." (Laughter) Unfortunately, university professors do not always play positive roles in furthering international understanding.

There were other factors too, I think, that came into creating a sort of series of tensions in Europe and creating expectations there might be a war, and I would ascribe a certain amount of responsibility to social Darwinism, this misapplication of Darwinian theories of evolution to human societies which argue that human nations were individual species as much as species in the animal world. I mean, this is manifestly absurd when you think of the ways in which we're all mixed up genetically, but this was very much believed at this period, and further to that, tied in with that was the notion that struggle -- survival of the fittest is something you must do. Nations that don't survive, nations that get defeated, deserve somehow not to survive and to be defeated.

It was also an assumption that nations, like species in the natural world, had natural enemies or natural predators, and so for the French, Germans were the natural enemy; for Germans, the French or the

Slavs over to their east were the natural enemy. This was dangerous thinking, and it was particularly widespread among the military, I think, because in a sense it appealed to them and this is what they did. So, struggle for them was something that was good, and the more it could be justified by what were apparently internal laws of human nature, the more reasonable it seemed.

You also got an increasing willingness among European statesmen to accept that war could be used, and I think this is very much tied in to the deeply misplaced assumption that any future war would be like any previous war. It would be short. There would be some attacks. There would be a decisive battle. Someone would surrender, and the room would sit down and make a peace. They failed to take into account the evidence that war was tending very dangerously toward stalemate; that it was becoming much more difficult to attack than it was to defend. Attackers were going to take hideous losses, and defenders were going to be able to withstand, in most cases, all but the most determined attacks. And the danger, as few people pointed out, was that Europe would find itself in a very, very long stalemate, which, of course, is exactly what happened. But if you're assuming that war is going to be short, then you're assuming you can use it, and that you'll get some decisive result out of it.

I think in the final crisis, what also played in was that also by this point Europe had gone through a series of crises which had a done a number of things. It had served to tighten up what were, in fact, rather loose alliance systems, and so every time there was a crisis if people stuck together they tended to assume they'd stick together again. So, the British and the French, grew closer together as a result of a series of crises, but tied in with that -- and these things are often paradoxical -- was a fear that if they didn't stick close to their allies they might lose them. And one of the dangerous things -- and you could see it clearly in 1914 -- was that the Germans decided in part to back Austria-Hungary in its determination to destroy Serbia because they were afraid of losing it, and if Germany lost Austria-Hungary, who else did it have? It had managed to alienate both France and Russia and Britain, and Italy was not a reliable ally and no match for Austria-Hungary.

The British and the French feared rather the same thing about Russia. Russia was becoming very, very powerful. It was expanding very quickly. Russian growth rates were huge. It was really becoming a formidable power, much more formidable than it already was, and what the British and the French both feared is that Russia would reach the point where it didn't need them anymore, and if that happened where would they be? And so there was a tendency for alliance partners

to support each other because they were afraid of losing each other, so the alliances grew closer out of the mix of shared experience but also fears that they might not survive.

What also had happened by 1914 is there had been a series of crises, and if you look at when they're happening; they're getting closer and closer together. In the Balkans, from 1911, 1912, 1913, there were crises, and each time threatened to draw in the outside powers, which is what made the Balkans such a dangerous part of the world. What those series of crises did is leave a number of consequences. They left, in a number of countries, the determination not to back down again. In Russia, for example, where Russia had backed down in 1908 and was going to back down again in the Balkan Wars, the Czar wrote to his mother saying, "I am not going to let it happen again. Germany has humiliated us." He wrote after the Bosnian Crisis of 1908, "I will never forget it. I will never forgive it, and it will not happen again." And so, you get countries determined that this time -- or their leaders determined that they will not be forced to back down. They will not be marginalized again.

The other lesson that people learned unfortunately was that bluff can work. What they did in each crisis -- what tended to happen was countries would bluff each other. They'd start military measures. They'd start mobilization, for example, or they'd start ordering more horses for the

cavalry; all of these signs that could be read by the other side. And again, you got a sense that you could get away with it; that bluff works. In fact, the word bluff begins to enter non-English languages at this point, and the dangerous thing, of course, is you can go too far, and in many ways I think what happened in 1914 is they were at least in part bluffing, and they went over the edge without intending too.

I think what also was happening by 1914 because of an intensified arms race was a fear on all sides that you had to make war at the right time. If war was going to come, then you had to make sure the time was right, and you see it very clearly -- although there are other examples -- but you see if very clearly in Berlin in 1914 with the high commander saying, “If a war’s coming, we’re going to have to fight Russia. If we have to fight Russia, we should do it now because in 1917 we won’t be able to do it.” It’s very much the same reasoning the Japanese military were using in 1941 as they decided or tried to decide whether or not to fight the United States.

And so, what you get by 1914, you have forces for peace, but you also have these pressures building up, and you have a very dangerous assumption that war is probably going to come because there have been a series of crises, and you have also a very dangerous complacency that we’ve been through this before. He’s another crisis in

the Balkans. The archduke has been assassinated. It's going to be a bit tense for a while, but sooner or later they'll be a conference of ambassadors. People will sit down and talk about it, and we'll muddle through.

And in 1914 they didn't muddle through, and in the end what you come down to is something that I think political scientists wouldn't approve of but I think historians would. You come down to that handful of people who in July and the beginning of August 1914 actually had to say yes or no, and sadly, I think, those who had to say yes or no were not up to the job. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. KAGAN: Well, thank you so much, Margaret, for that wonderful talk, and I have to say I'm a great admirer of all your history. I loved *Paris 1919* as I'm sure many of you did. It was a great best seller in America as well as, I'm sure, in Britain and many other places.

And I just dived in in an early way into your newest book, but I really do admire the way you do history, and I'm sure we're delighted to hear your thoughts today. What is really fascinating and I guess at a certain point I was worried that nobody was going to be paying attention to it so many years later, but I'm glad to see that that's not true. There are a lot of books, and the most interesting -- one of the interesting things about World War I is that we've gone through so many phases of understanding

what it meant and why it happened and what it meant for the future. It's been a subject that Henry Kissinger has talked about, in thinking about the Cold War. You're thinking about it as I think rightly so in relation to what's going on now.

I've studied a lot on the American attitudes toward World War I, and the one thing that I was struck by, in 1914 when the war broke out Americans had absolutely no doubt in their mind who was to blame and what the war was about. And you start your book with the burning of the great library at Louvre and the destruction that the German army meted out in Belgium in that first wave of attacks, and boy did that strike Americans as telling them everything they needed to know, and so the initial consensus was (a) that Germany was undoubtedly to blame for starting the war, and (b) that Germany was not the civilized nation they thought it was; that it was actually a militaristic, autocratic -- the word was thrown around a lot, "barbaric" society compared to what they had assumed was the civilization of Europe.

And then, of course, immediately after World War I with all the disillusionment in America, there's an immediate wave of revisionist history. It was called revisionist history that no, it wasn't Germany's fault. Maybe it was Britain's fault. Maybe it was everybody's fault, et cetera, et

cetera, until we get to Barbara Tuchman and "stumbling into war" which I think was Henry Kissinger's view ultimately.

But then we had a phase, as you know, and as I think you mention in your introduction, after the writings of Fritz Fischer when he discovered all these documents, talking about Germany's war aims in the war where it went back to, "Yes, it was Germany's fault." And now I don't know where we are, quite honestly, and you're obviously not venturing -- and I think perhaps wisely -- to come up with The Answer.

But there's a book out now, a new history called *The Sleepwalkers*, which I don't know if the title indicates what he actually is saying, but you would get the idea that people sleepwalked themselves into this war.

I'll have to say that my prejudice remains, and I think even your book suggests that if you had to pin primary responsibility on one nation, that it really was Germany. A lot of the things that you said in your opening talk, you spoke in generalities about nationalism, about feeling that war had to be made quickly, otherwise you would fall behind and not be able to accomplish your objectives, this desperation to hold onto an ally, but in most of those cases you really were talking about Germany.

And when we talk about the alliance system of that period, the stunning revolution that occurred in that period was Britain turning to

two historical adversaries. France, my God, the notion of a Franco-British Anglo-French alliance was unthinkable for many years. They had squabbles and almost went to war, what, in 1898, at Fashoda, and then the great bogey of British foreign policy was Russia, which threatened the route to India. That alliance was even perhaps an even bigger shock, and what drove Britain to that alliance? What drove Britain to depart from so-called splendid isolation to link up in alliance with two countries that had been very much at odds with, and the answer is fear of Germany?

And you've mentioned the tremendous shift that occurred when Kaiser Wilhelm II took power and how he was unfit. I mean, Bismarck, I think to his credit, had a very clear sense of how he had to be careful with this massively powerful nation that he'd created and not frightening everybody into allying against him, and that's exactly what Kaiser Wilhelm managed to do. And I do think Germany was ambitious.

Now, why is any of this important? I mean, I do think it's important because there is a tendency today, as there was prior to World War I, and as you point out to think about all the ways in which war is irrational. It really can't happen. It was Norman Angell in those days. It's Stephen Pinker and Frank Fukuyama these days. You know, we have all the arguments why this couldn't possibly happen, and yet it did. Those arguments -- you speak positively about those forces that were saying that

war shouldn't be possible. I wonder whether they -- in my view -- had a deleterious effect because, in fact, they took attention away from what I think is the reality, which is that when you have an ambitious power like that, it is going to behave in the ways that you describe invariably; somewhat belligerent, somewhat pushing, somewhat desiring its place in the sun however that's going to be defined. And, of course, combinations of swords do have to be made, but it also seems to me that there also have to be clear lines drawn, and Britain's great failure, in my opinion, was that it didn't really draw a clear line.

I believe -- this is my, you know -- I'll venture this judgment about history on such a difficult topic, that if the Kaiser had known for sure that Britain would come into the war, land a force on the continent in aid of France, that he might not have, in fact, gone to war. He was uncertain about that very late in the day, and then Grey sort of hastily tried to organize some conference and sort of, as you say, then things were out of control at that point. I think British ambivalence and sort of almost deliberate ambivalence about the nature of their commitment to France, in particular, was a source of confusion which may have contributed to that.

Why is that important? Because today we do face, as you say, a very similar situation. I'm not as confident as you may be that America's declining, but I am confident that Chinese power is rising, and

that the world is going to have to accommodate that some way. And the question is how to accommodate it in such a way as to steer it in the most productive possible emergence and away from a potentially dangerous and belligerent type of emergence.

And again, my feeling is that the lesson learned from World War I is the United States, which is sort of the Britain -- plays the British role in East Asia needs to be very clear about what it will do and what it won't do. It needs to be clear both to allies, the France of their day whether it's Japan or Korea or other countries in the region, and it needs to be clear of China which is the Germany of the time. That it will, in fact, respond if China behaves in a way that seems unacceptable.

What gives me somewhat optimism about this is that I think your criticisms of Chinese foreign policy may actually be too strong. I think they're pretty -- they're pretty much aware. They've got to be the most self-aware rising power in history. I can say that America as it arose was completely unself-aware. It didn't even know that there was a world out there other than what it wanted to do. I would say Germany under the Kaiser was -- well, we don't even have to talk about that. I think Japan -- China knows all about those examples, watched what happened, and is aware of its effect. Now, that doesn't mean it can control nationalism. It doesn't mean it can control the internal problems it's going to face, but I do

give them some credit for being aware of the potential dangers. And so, that's why I feel like if the U.S. can play its appropriate role, be a better Britain in this situation, and China is aware of what the dangers are, that's the way were going to escape, but that's my -- I just thought I should take the opportunity to throw that out there and see what you think, and then we do want to open it up to the audience who I'm sure has many questions for you.

MS. MacMILLAN: Well, you've thrown out so many wonderful ideas, I'm not sure I can deal with them all.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I had to try to respond to this whole (inaudible).

MS. MacMILLAN: You upped the ante here, I think, by lot. Just on the United States, I don't think the United States is declining as much as it's no longer as powerful in comparison to other -- it's really the rise of the other nations, it seems to me, is important.

And I'm glad you have confidence in Chinese foreign policy because there are times when it seems to me sort of rather incoherent, and I think it reflects, probably, the power -- lack of clear control within China. I mean, you have the military occasionally doing things on their own, which the central government doesn't seem to know about.

The other danger, it seems to me, in China is what you mentioned: nationalism, because the Communist Party really no longer stands for anything very much except economic progress, and this is really, I think, getting complicated partly because of pollution, partly because of corruption, and it doesn't stand for socialism any more. It's long since given up any pretense of that, and so the danger, it seems to me, is it's going to use nationalism, and as we all know that when you use nationalism it's like the sorcerer's apprentice. You're calling something up which you can't then then control, and that's what worries me a bit about China.

And I do find that their actions at the moment in the South China Sea where they've been very belligerent with their neighbors, staking out claims and sort of shadowing ships from other countries. I'm not quite clear what the purpose is, and I do think it's a real challenge to the United States to know how to respond because, of course, making clear what you will do, you don't want to make it too clear because you want to leave an element of uncertainty. It's a very difficult proposition for the United States.

The other problem, I think, that can happen with countries who feel they're no longer quite in the position they were is their own public opinions can begin to play a role. And in Britain you certainly got a

public opinion which became rather jittery, and I don't know if that's happening within the United States as much, but it can be a factor.

I mean, I think just to go back to Germany, I think it shows us how important control of foreign policy is. I mean, one of German's real problems, I think, and there's this huge debate over whether Germany was unique. Did Germany follow its own path, and I would argue not. I mean, I think there are a number of things such as nationalism, which really cross boundaries, and there are certain things that were happening in Europe generally, but what was the problem in Germany, I'm more and more thinking, is its imperfectly developed constitution and civic institutions. They had come together very recently, and it was this odd mix of popular suffrage, universal suffrage for the Reichstag, very restrictive suffrage for the Prussian parliament which was the dominant purge in Germany, and Kaiser, who had complete control -- not complete, but had control over the military and foreign policy and there was no cabinet government. And that, it seemed to me, was a very dangerous situation, so I think institutions matter. I mean, I think leadership matters, but I think the institutions matter as well.

And I think we can't learn clear lessons from history. What we can learn is to watch out for dangerous possibilities or alarming possibilities, and the German -- there is an element of choice. I mean,

countries can choose which policies to follow, and I thought the German decision to start building a big blue-water navy to challenge the British navy was absolute madness, and they didn't need such a navy. And you could argue that they would be much better off putting all that money into their military, their army, in which case they might have won the war very quickly. As it was, they kept the --

MR. KAGAN: Well, let me jump in there because here we do have an analogy. China is also trying to build a blue-water navy, and we can say in the United States or in other parts of the world, well, what do you need? You don't need that navy. Now, of course, I understand entirely why China wants to have its own navy. It doesn't want to be dependent on American naval protection for its sea lines of communication, for its trade routes, for its access to energy. It wants to -- as, by the way, the United States also didn't want, ultimately, to depend on the British navy, so why shouldn't they have a navy? And yet, once you have said that, you're off to the races.

MS. MacMILLAN: And China needs a navy because it has a big seacoast. I mean, Germany had a very small North Sea coast --

MR. KAGAN: Well, they wanted to do something about that.

MS. MacMILLAN: They want to do something about that. Yes. And it made the Belgians and the Dutch very, very nervous indeed,

but it was the type of navy it was building. If it had decided to build first cruisers to protect its trade, I think the British would have understood that, but when they build great big battleships and geography means that those great big battleships is going to come sailing out right by the British Isles, it made the British nervous. And the Germans had this mad idea that building a navy -- it wasn't going to be the equivalent of the British navy. It was going to be big enough to give the British pause -- would force the British to be friends with them.

MR. KAGAN: The risk fleet.

MS. MacMILLAN: The risk fleet, and if every was a stupid policy -- I think that's the thing. I think if there is a lesson, that people making policy should be aware of the alternatives, and there was always an alternative before the British -- when the Germans started challenging them, they didn't have to become friends with Germany. What they could do was build a bigger navy and make friends with someone else. And so, I think it's real statesmanship to keep those possibilities in your mind because you can't assume that the other person who's the object of your policy is going to behave exactly as you want them to.

MR. KAGAN: Well, there were people who've said that there was a particularly German quality that made you think that if you became scarier to someone, they'd want to be your friend.

MS. MacMILLAN: Yeah.

MR. KAGAN: Now, I don't know whether you think that's true or whether that's a human attitude or what, but --

MS. MacMILLAN: I think Russia's doing the same thing today, although recently Russian statesmanship actually seems to me to be rather effective, but for a long time the Russians were trying to win back the republics which had left the Soviet Union by bullying them.

MR. KAGAN: Being mean to them.

MS. MacMILLAN: Cutting off their gas and their oil.

MR. KAGAN: Yeah, well. Well, which gets to another question which I think is important, but we don't have to talk about this right now which is do nations have particular characters? And, well, maybe I will ask this. Does regime matter?

MS. MacMILLAN: I think regime matters, and I think history matters, and I think culture matters. And I think for Russia -- I think we all have to remember that Russia has always -- well, for a long time, since Peter the Great, has always had this uneasy relationship with Europe. Is it a civilized nation? Isn't it? Where does it belong? It's always been this tug in Russia between looking east and looking west, and also there's a deep-seated fear, and I think you saw it in Stalin. You saw it earlier in the 19th century, and I think you see it today that Russia's not being taken

seriously. And I think one of the big mistakes we all collectively made in the West at the end of the Cold War was to treat Russia as if it no longer mattered, and it was marginalized, and the Russians haven't forgotten it. I mean, I think a lot of Russian policy today can be explained by that, so I do think there're collective memories and there're collective ways of behaving.

Having said that, I mean, you look at Sweden, which was one of the real belligerent nations, really belligerent nations in the 18th Century, and I mean, it's the most peace-loving, granola-eating place you could imagine, and the same thing with Germany. I mean, there is a very different Germany now, so nations can change, but I think it is fair to talk of characteristics as long as you don't assume that they're eternal and immutable.

MR. KAGAN: That they're deterministic.

MS. MacMILLAN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. KAGAN: Well, wonderful. We have, unfortunately, only 10 minutes. I'd like to limit all questions to historical questions from the late 19th century or the early 20th century. When you ask your question, please state your name and please ask an actual question. So, I've got the usual suspects up in front, but I'm going to go back here. Yes, sir? And then I'll come back up in the front.

QUESTIONER: Yes, thank you very much. And history, whether they're tragedies or crimes, this all is very fascinating to step back and go back into the steps of history. You mentioned about China as well. I think China can be directed to the right side and constructive role it can play if USA chooses to do so because of enhancing relationship in defense pact, security pact with India that creates a little track to China so if --

MR. KAGAN: It worked with Germany.

QUESTIONER: Yes, exactly. That's what you said. If USA wants to be a good facilitator, then USA has to be more magnanimous. The difference between China and Russia is that USA's China keeps a very low profile and America keeps a very high profile. I think that's another difference between them, and I'm grateful. But how can you really even out the Second World War and millions and millions of people are engaging more all across the world? How can you diffuse -- how can you help these people to bring to an understanding so that people stop killing people like they used to?

MS. MacMILLAN: Oh.

MR. KAGAN: Let me -- let's take a couple and then we'll come back to that. And you already violated the first principle. Did you identify yourself or did I not hear it?

QUESTIONER: No.

MR. KAGAN: So, let's identify ourselves. Go ahead. No, right here in the front because we don't know who you are.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much. I'm Gary Mitchell and I write the Mitchell Report, and I want to thank you, among other things, for the wonderful conversation that didn't talk about health care websites or Benghazi.

MS. MacMILLAN: I'm Canadian. I can do that.

MR. MITCHELL: In your conversation with Dr. Kagan, you talked a lot about the sort of parallels that might exist between Britain and Germany and the U.S. and China of the modern models. And I want to talk to you about the Balkans of the 21st century, given that that's where it all started at least, and put the question very simply which is do you see the Middle East and South Asia, India, Pakistan, or the Middle East as having the potential for being the Balkans of the 21st century inexorably drawing in nations that would not have otherwise had reason to get kinetic with each other? So, let me just leave it at that.

MR. KAGAN: Well, let's take one more. Yes, sir, right here.

MR. HERRIOT: Judd Herriot, documentary filmmaker. The wars of German unification against Denmark, Austria, and France, they were short. They didn't bring in other partners, and they highlighted the

offensive over defensive. Were these what you were talking about that gave the Europeans a false sense of security in this regard?

MS. MacMILLAN: Well, where do I start?

MR. KAGAN: Jump in. Take whatever you want.

MS. MacMILLAN: There were so many good questions. I mean, the danger with forming defensive alliances, I think the first question was suggesting the United States might want to form a closer alliance with India as a way of containing China. Of course, defensive alliances come up very different from the other side, and so I think you have to be very careful how you use them.

On the flash points in the world today, I mean, I think what made the Balkans dangerous was geography and outside interests and great power interests, plus you had all sorts of internal conflicts; conflicts among the nations of the Balkans which because of the outside power interests always ran the danger of drawing people in, and it seems to me the Middle East is a bit the same. Syria was getting very scary for a while because you had a number of outside interests, from Iran to Saudi Arabia to Russia to the United States or Turkey getting involved, and that is always, I think, dangerous.

I mean, one of the dangerous things, it seems to me, is that great powers can have smaller client states. Those smaller client states

are not always easy to control partly because they have the great powers as their big brother, but they're also a problem to the great power because they have to support them. I mean, if you cut loose your client states, it makes you look weaker and prestige, we all know, matters. Credibility matters for great powers, so I think the Middle East has that potential. I think the South China Sea is very dangerous, partly because it's heating up. There's potential for resources there. You're getting nationalist fervors. I mean, people are getting hysterical about tiny specks of rock which nobody can actually live on, and suddenly it's becoming a great matter of national importance to the Japanese or the Malaysians or the Philippines, the people of the Philippines or whatever. And so, I think this is dangerous when you get great power interests converging. This is always potentially dangerous, and what worries me is when people begin sort of staking out positions and you get bluff and counter-bluff. You know, the game is always in danger of going over the edge.

Your questions, the wars they were thinking of were partly those wars of unification, but what they also thinking of was more recent wars: the American Civil War, the Russo-Japanese war, the Russo-Turkish war, the South African war, and then, of course, the Balkan Wars, and those wars were actually showing that the technology was giving

greater advantage to the defensive and attackers were taking huge losses.

But I think it's a great human capacity to take the evidence and then somehow explain it away, and so what they were saying -- what they said with the American Civil War, the European military actually sent a lot of observers and there were a lot of European journalists covering the American Civil War, and what the military -- the lesson they took away from it was the Americans were not Europeans. They didn't know how to fight, and it was a civil war. You know, this is ridiculous. One European general actually said, "I discourage my officers from studying the American Civil War because there's nothing in it to interest them."

And so, in spite of the evidence that was mounting up, they simply explained away or they said, "We just need to inspire our soldiers with greater enthusiasm. They need to be prepared to take greater losses." So, it's rather like Mao, all power, it's the man who controls the gun, not the gun itself that matters. The man is more important than the weapon itself. There was this mad sort of psychological idea that what you -- I mean, we all know that it's important to have motivated soldiers, but the idea that this can make up for machine-gun fire and a killing zone which extends for a hundred yards is absolutely absurd, but there was just a tendency to explain away.

And the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese attackers is actually carried the day, and so what European observers have said, "Look at the Japanese. They've got the right martial spirit, and that's what we need to instill in our people." So, it's what we're doing with climate change today, I think. We're very good if we don't want to accept it, explaining away the evidence even though the evidence mounts up. I think it's a deep-seated human characteristic.

MR. KAGAN: Then, of course, after World War I, the next great lesson was any war in Europe would be trench war and a war of -- and you'd just be stuck there, and the Germans just went (indicating) --

MS. MacMILLAN: And you build the Maginot line.

MR. KAGAN: Right, you build the Maginot line - you just go around it. But anyway, we have time for two more questions, and then I want to give Margaret a chance to sum up, so yes, sir, with the camera.

QUESTIONER: Hi, my name is Ivica Puljic from Al Jazeera, but originally I'm from Bosnia, from Sarajevo. I'm very interested to know how you see the role of Serbia, Serbian people, from Balkans, in 1914 and, you know, of course, Sarajevo was (inaudible). Thank you.

MR. KAGAN: Okay, and one last one. Yes, ma'am, right here.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. My name is Genie Nguyen with the Voice of Vietnamese Americans and very thankful for you being here as a Canadian and as expert in our wars. So, from your point of view, has the U.S. been clear enough about its position to help avoid another war coming? And if it has not, what should the U.S. do? What do you expect to see the U.S. gesture and posture and clarity from the President and from other high-level leadership? Thank you.

MS. MacMILLAN: Thank you. Well, two very tricky questions to end up with. In the case of Serbia, I mean, Serbia strikes me a bit like, and I'm trying to think of states today. Possibly a bit like Iran, which sponsors -- elements within the Iranian government sponsor terrorist activities. The Iranian government itself might not know the full picture and perhaps chooses not to know. I think in the case of Serbia there were people within Serbian intelligence -- of course, the head of Serbian military intelligence, Colonel Apis, as he was known, was, I think, very well aware of what the conspirators were planning in Bosnia, and they carried out the assassination with weapons from the Serbian armory which had been smuggled across the border. They and their weapons had been smuggled across the border with the help of Serbian border guards, so there were certainly complicity within certain circles, whether or not the government of Nikoli Passage actually knew what was going on.

He may have had suspicions but again he may have chosen not to know. So, Serbia, I think there was some grounds for Austria saying that Serbia had, in fact, been behind the assassination because they'd been behind a lot of other ones or people in Serbia had been. The Serbs are rather sensitive about this as you can imagine. I mean, they don't like Christopher Clark's book at all. They say he's deeply anti-Serbian, stereotyping them.

As far as making policies clear, I mean, this is, I think, often difficult for democracies, and it was one of the problems Britain had. I mean, Sir Edward Grey, I think, was -- I mean, I don't like Sir Edward Grey, I've come to decide. I think he was --

MR. KAGAN: He liked you a lot.

MS. MacMILLAN: He stood over my cradle, yes. Sir Edward Gray was one of these English people who didn't like foreigners. He didn't speak any foreign languages. He was foreign secretary for 16 years. He went to the continent once as foreign secretary, and he had to go because the King was going to Paris, and he went very reluctantly grumbling the whole time. And so, this was the man in charge of British foreign policy. He was sort of, in my view, a priggish public-school boy who thought everyone else was being devious but failed to see just how

devious he was being, and he could, I think, have made it clearer -- you raised this point.

Should he have made it clear to the Germans Britain would have come in, he perhaps should have done, but he would have had to have a showdown with his cabinet, and he didn't want to do it because what you did have was democratic control of policy.

And I think the same difficulty would face in the United States today. If the United States wants to say very clearly what it's going to do, it would have to be something that would have the approval, not just of the Executive office. It would have to have the approval of Congress, and in the end the approval of the American people.

And the Americans wisely don't like to make commitments ahead of time. I mean, this is -- you would know much better than me, but it's something that seems to go deeply into American history. They don't like entangling alliances. They don't want to have to say what they're going to do. They don't want to make commitments before the circumstances demand it. And so, I think it would be very difficult for the United States to say very clearly, and again, it's an earlier point. I mean, how clear do you want to be? I think you can say, you know, in the South China Sea we do not want to see China dominant. But if you say if China

puts one foot on a tiny piece of rock, we're going to blast them off, I mean, those are the sort of -- that's the sort of clarity it seems you don't want.

You don't want to get yourself into a situation where you have to act or not act. If you fail to act having said you were going to do it, you're weakened. If you make it too clear, and I think it's how you respond. I mean, I guess it's the old canon thing of pushing back where appropriate, or Eisenhower as well proportional response.

MR. KAGAN: I think ideally you should not have to say it, but they should believe it.

MS. MacMILLAN: Yes.

MR. KAGAN: Well, okay, do you want to sum up, or do you feel like you've got it all out? I mean, is there some -- give us two minutes more of wisdom before we leave?

MS. MacMILLAN: Well, I don't any wisdom, but I suppose I would put in a plea for history. I mean, you and I were talking about this beforehand; that history really matters. It helps in our understanding of those we're dealing with and also of ourselves. We tend to tell ourselves stories about our opponents, and we tend to tell ourselves stories about ourselves, and I think what history can do is bring a certain clarity, and I think encourages to ask good questions. I mean, I don't think there are clear repetitions of history, and when people say what are the neat

lessons of history, I get very nervous because I don't think -- well, you can find any lesson you want, can't you?

But what I think is important is to be able to formulate questions and be able to say what if. I mean, what really struck me the more I read about the lead up to the invasion and occupation of Iraq was how little the leaders on both sides wanted to know about Iraq. I talked to an English expert on Iraq who went to the meeting in Downing Street with Tony Blair, and he said that it was clear that Blair didn't want to have the meeting. He'd been forced to do it by the foreign office, and the leading Iraqi experts in Britain tried to say that you may not find it easy to set up a functioning democracy and civil society in Iraq because of what Saddam Hussein has done to it. He said Blair just didn't want to listen, and I think what history can help you to do is be aware of the alternatives and formulate good questions and have some sense of who it is you're dealing with. If you don't do history, I mean, and this is not an attack on political science, but I think -- because I think the best political science is informed by history, but I think if you don't understand the history, you're actually depriving yourselves or we're depriving ourselves of an opportunity for greater understanding.

MR. KAGAN: I couldn't agree more, and so that's a wonderful place to end. Please join me in thanking Margaret MacMillan for a wonderful talk. (Applause)

MS. MacMILLAN: Thank you very much. You've been so nice. I couldn't answer all your comments.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2016