3. Diplomatic origins of the Great War and Versailles
Joseph M. Siracusa

‘Diplomatic origins of the Great War and Versailles’ describes the triggers for the start of World War I. Within days of Austria-Hungary's declaration of war against Serbia, Imperial Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan, and Italy became immersed in the great struggle. The origins of the Great War lay principally in the diplomacy that had developed over many years between Germany, Austria, and Italy, on the one hand, and France and Russia, on the other. The historic Franco–German enmity and the diplomacy of Otto von Bismarck and the Prussian-German empire are discussed, as well as the key events of the Great War and the protracted negotiations required for the Treaty of Versailles.

1. Evolution of diplomacy
Joseph M. Siracusa

Traditional diplomacy is dealing with the interface of conflict and peace-making. ‘Evolution of diplomacy’ describes the history of diplomacy and shows that it has become much more than the diplomacy of states and governments. Modern diplomacy began with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which ended hostilities in the Thirty Years War. The creation of diplomatic relations between states, foreign ministries, legations, embassies, and the Havana Convention are described. The difference between official and public diplomacy is defined and the making of treaties and conventions discussed. International law, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, and the United Nations Charter are all considered.

4. The United Nations
Christopher S. Browning

‘The United Nations’ describes the history of the United Nations and the challenges it faces in maintaining peace and security in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. The UN Charter, the General Assembly, the Security Council, and other organs of the UN are discussed, along with the role of the UN in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance.
'The United Nations’ discusses the world's primary organization of collective security. The United Nations is often seen as an entrepreneur promoting norms of good governance, upholding commitments to human rights, and establishing standards around trade, environmental, and health issues. Peacekeeping is the activity the UN is most renowned for. The UN Charter has traditionally been understood as prioritizing principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention. Such principles have a moral foundation premised on upholding respect for different cultures, religions, and political and economic systems and are intended to thwart any imperial ambitions of territorial aggrandizement particular states might be harbouring.

4. Governing the Antarctic
Klaus Dodds

The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 was a notable achievement given that the world was in the throes of a Cold War. The treaty set out a framework for the demilitarization of the Antarctic and the promotion of international scientific cooperation. Today the parties involved continue to respect the spirit and content of the treaty. ‘Governing the Antarctic’ considers the last 50 years and reflects on how the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties worked to create an evolving international institutional and regime-based structure. However, the potential for future discord and conflict does exist. The sovereignty of the region remains undecided. It seems that the attitude of the United States is going to be key.

6. Exploiting and protecting the Antarctic
Klaus Dodds

At the time of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959 not much attention was given to resource management and environmental protection of the region. ‘Exploiting and protecting the Antarctic’ looks at the use of the resources of the Antarctic since the Treaty and focuses on sealing, whaling, fishing, and the taking of mineral resources. What future resources challenges will the region have to face? How should we protect Antarctica? Although challenges from climate change and pollution are vitally important, we also should think about the cumulative impact of resource exploitation. Balancing initiatives to encourage environmental protection with resource interests is going to be a key challenge of the future.

2. A contested nature
Christopher S. Browning
‘A contested nature’ suggests that one way of picking apart the elusive nature of security is to ask some questions of it, the most obvious being, ‘what is security?’ The UN distinguishes between two aspects of security: ‘freedom from fear’ emphasizes threats of physical violence and repression, whereas ‘freedom from want’ emphasizes the provision of basic human needs. However, whether particular threat claims garner attention will depend on how well they resonate with the security concerns of others, the persuasiveness of the argument, and not least on the power and position of the person or group making the claim.

Introduction
Paul Wilkinson

The ‘Introduction’ summarizes the various approaches to international relations. International relations is about more than the relationships between states and is a multidisciplinary subject. Although scepticism should be applied to any grand theory of international relations, there are three major approaches. Realist theory views international politics as a constant struggle for power. Liberal institutionalism takes a more optimistic view, suggesting that growing interdependence will strengthen international institutions and military power is becoming less relevant, and deconstructionism denies that objective truth can be found, merely distortions and subtexts. The 2006 war in Lebanon illustrates both the weakness of international law and institutions, and the limits of military force.

Conclusion
Paul Wilkinson

The ‘Conclusion’ stresses the importance of skilled diplomacy and cooperation. The unfeasibility of unilateralism means that nations do still rely on the international system and need to manage tensions and disputes. Failure to do so could lead to disaster, as the system is all too capable of destroying itself. Statesmen must be committed to international peace and security. Although democracy may not be the modal form of government worldwide, foreign policy should nonetheless be conducted with reference to certain underlying principles, principles that should be promoted globally.

5. The century of the child and beyond
James Marten

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The 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child, issued by the United Nations, provided a far more detailed and supposedly binding set of conditions and rights than the 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which would define childhood globally. And yet the dying and injustice and exploitation continue. “The century of the child and beyond” considers the impact of war and conflict on children; the creation of global agencies and organizations designed to provide aid to and advocate for children; health, poverty, and quality of life; child labor and slavery; changes and challenges in education; modern forms of families; and the globalization of children’s culture.

6. Development, numbers, and politics

Alan Whiteside

‘Development, numbers, and politics’ first considers the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations in 2000 and explains how achieving some of them was difficult due to high HIV prevalence in some countries. It goes on to discuss the changing viewpoints of the links between AIDS, conflict, and security, and why accurate data on HIV/AIDS are important for its management. There is limited potential political impact from AIDS, but what is important is ensuring treatment is available and affordable. Political and economic failure has widespread implications for the health system and is harder to manage.

6. BRICS as the recognition of states, not societies

Andrew F. Cooper

The BRICS, at its core, is a state-centric project. The emphasis is on the assertion—and granting—of a heightened degree of recognition within the global system. The motivations combine the symbolic elements, such as the aspirations for an enhanced status, and the instrumental, with respect to gaining additional policy leverage in global affairs. ‘BRICS as the recognition of states, not societies’ explains how societal issues are now being discussed at BRICS summits, but despite the formation of think tanks and trade unions, clear tensions persist between official BRICS cooperation at the governmental level and non-state actors.

4. Creating a worldview of childhood

James Marten
The League of Nations made history on September 26, 1924, when it adopted a resolution declaring that children enjoyed certain rights. The Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child reflected a consensus among policymakers and reformers about what childhood meant. Despite its brevity, its idealism, and its lack of specifics—or perhaps because of them—the declaration encouraged a new worldview of children and childhood. “Creating a worldview of childhood” explains how its five clauses provide useful categories for assessing the status of childhood in the twentieth century and help to organize the many threads of reform and policymaking that appeared during the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries.

Terrorism: A Very Short Introduction
Charles Townshend

Terrorism: A Very Short Introduction examines the historical, ideological, and local roots of terrorist violence and explores terrorism in relation to revolutionary power, nationalism, and religious extremism. Is one person’s terrorist another’s freedom fighter? Is terrorism crime or war? What can we do to stop it? For many, the terrorist attacks of September 2001 changed the face of the world, pushing terrorism to the top of many political agendas. This VSI considers recent changes in terrorism, such as the emergence of ISIS and upsurge in individual suicide action, looking at the impact and consequences of several recent terrorist attacks, and outlining the complex issues related to antiterrorist and counterterrorist measures.

7. Countering terrorism
Charles Townshend

What can be done about terrorism? The multiplicity of possible responses range from mild regulation to full-blooded military repression, but what are the possible benefits and what are the likely costs? ‘Countering terrorism’ considers the differences between antiterrorist and counterterrorist measures, looking at the pros and cons in impulsive, appropriate, and long-term responses to terrorist acts, especially in light of recent terrorist attacks in European cities; and discusses democracy against terrorism and the balance between freedom and security. It is unlikely that terrorism will ever end, but the belief is that it is no more likely to bring about the destruction of Western civilization than it was a century ago.
Military Justice: A Very Short Introduction

Eugene R. Fidell

Military Justice: A Very Short Introduction presents an accessible and honest assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of military justice in both common law countries and those with other legal traditions, with particular emphasis on the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. It integrates a description of the US military justice system with a comparative view of civilian and foreign models for the administration of justice, including the increasingly important focus on human rights. The military is the rare part of contemporary society that enjoys the privilege of policing the behavior of its own members, with special courts and a separate body of rules.

9. Military justice in the field

Eugene R. Fidell

Military justice has to be portable because armies deploy. Field operations in unfamiliar environments generate their fair share of military justice controversies. Some of these are a function of the imposition of special rules intended to prevent friction with the local populace. Other deployment-related prohibitions may reflect requirements of the law of war, including the Geneva Conventions. ‘Military justice in the field’ explains that battlefield crimes have proven to be both difficult and controversial to prosecute. At times there have been questions about which rules of engagement governed. Bringing cases to court also requires a series of obstacles to be overcome. Where should trials be conducted when crimes are committed on deployment?

10. What about Guantánamo?

Eugene R. Fidell

‘What about Guantánamo?’ considers military commissions, which are a category of military tribunal. They are not courts-martial because they are not used to prosecute offenses committed by US military personnel. Traditionally, they have been used in three situations: where martial law has been declared, in occupied areas, and where permitted by the law of war. Hundreds of military commissions were conducted during and after the Civil War, and again after World War II to prosecute war criminals. They were revived after 9/11 by President George W. Bush to prosecute unlawful enemy combatants, with hundreds of
captives transported from Afghanistan and other places to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where the vast majority were interrogated and simply imprisoned.

1. Military command and military discipline
Eugene R. Fidell

To be effective, and something more than a collection of individuals with weapons, a military unit must be commanded. Commanders are responsible for achieving the unit’s objective, a function that requires them to ensure that subordinates will do as they are told. With this power comes responsibility. In some circumstances commanders can be penalized for the misconduct of subordinates. In the classical model of military justice, commanders played (and in some countries, such as the United States, still play) a powerful role. ‘Military command and military discipline’ considers the powers exercised by commanders in these commander-centric systems—in particular the disposition, or charging, power—and looks at efforts to reform these systems.

Introduction
Dane Kennedy

Decolonization is described as the “withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies.” However, war, revolution, and terror are integral elements of decolonization and by recognizing this, it permits us to place the story of the postwar disintegration of empires in a broader historical context. This Very Short Introduction focuses on the decolonization of the Third World after World War II, but also directs our attention both to the crises of former empires and their continuities. It also highlights the promises of nation-states and their limitations and acknowledges the costs incurred by the transition from colonial subjugation to national independence.

4. The primacy of patronage politics
Ian Taylor

A great number of post-colonial African countries, bounded by formal frontiers and with an international presence at various international institutions such as the United Nations, function quite differently from conventional understandings of what a formal state is and
should do. ‘The primacy of patronage politics’ explains that to understand African politics, the concept of neo-patrimonialism must be considered. Neo-patrimonialism is where patronage, clientelism, and rent-seeking exist, but where the structures of a modern state are also in place. In general, post-colonial African leaders have relied on coercive control and patronage through capturing power over the state, rather than through constructing a functioning impartial administration.