ZBIGNIEW
BRZEZINSKI

THE GRAND CHESSBOARD

American Primacy and Its - Geostrategic Imperatives

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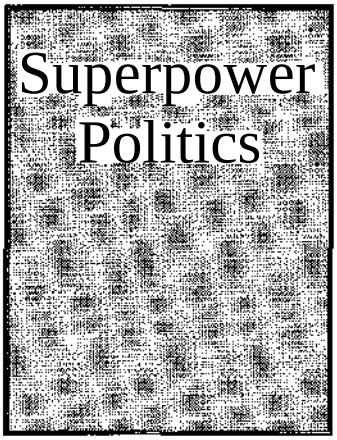
INTRODUCTION



EVER SINCE THE CONTINENTS started interacting politically, some five hundred *years* ago, Eurasia has been the center of world power. In different ways, at different times, the peoples Inhabiting Eurasia—though mostly those from its Western European periphery—penetrated and dominated the world's other regions as individual Eurasian states attained the special status and enjoyed the privileges of being the world's premier powers.

The last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed a tectonic shift in world affairs. For the first time ever, a non-Eurasian power has emerged not only as the key arbiter of Eurasian power relations but also as the world's paramount power. The defeat and collapse of the Soviet Union was the final step in the rapid ascendance of a Western Hemisphere power, the United States, as the sole and, indeed, the first truly global power.

Eurasia, however, retains Its geopolitical importance. Not only is its western periphery—Europe—still the location of much of the world's political and economic power, but its eastern region—Asia—has lately become a vital center of economic growth and rising political influence. Hence, the issue of how a globally engaged

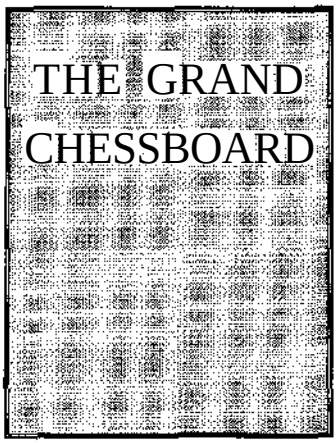
America copes with the complex Eurasian power relationships—and particularly whether it prevents the emergence of a dominant and antagonistic Eurasian power—remains central to America's capacity to exercise global primacy.

It follows that—in addition to cultivating the various novel dimensions of power (technology, communications, information, as well as trade and finance)—American foreign policy must remain concerned with the geopolitical dimension and must employ its influence in Eurasia in a manner that creates a stable continental equilibrium, with the United States as the political arbiter.

Eurasia is thus the chessboard on which the struggle for global primacy continues to be played, and that struggle involves geostrategy—the strategic management of geopolitical interests. It is noteworthy that as recently as 1940 two aspirants to global power, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, agreed explicitly (in the secret negotiations of November of that year) that America should be excluded from Eurasia. Each realized that the injection of American power into Eurasia would preclude his ambitions regarding global domination. Each shared the assumption that Eurasia is the center of the world and that he who controls Eurasia controls the world. A half century later, the issue has been redefined: will America's primacy in Eurasia endure, and to what ends might it be applied?

The ultimate objective of American policy should be benign and visionary: to shape a truly cooperative global community, in keeping with long-range trends and with the fundamental interests of humankind. But in the meantime, it is imperative that no Eurasian challenger emerges, capable of dominating Eurasia and thus also of challenging America. *The formulation of a comprehensive and integrated Eurasian geostrategy is therefore the purpose of this book.*

Zbigniew Brzezinski
Washington, DC.
April 1997


THE GRAND
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CHAPTER 1

Hegemony of a New Type

HEGEMONY IS AS OLD AS MANKIND. But America's current global supremacy is distinctive in the rapidity of its emergence, in its global scope, and in the manner of its exercise. In the course of a single century, America has transformed itself—and has also been transformed by international dynamics—from a country relatively isolated in the Western Hemisphere into a power of unprecedented worldwide reach and grasp.

THE SHORT ROAD TO GLOBAL SUPREMACY

The Spanish-American War in 1898 was America's first overseas war of conquest. It thrust American power far into the Pacific, beyond Hawaii to the Philippines. By the turn of the century, American strategists were already busy developing doctrines for a two-ocean naval supremacy, and the American navy had begun to challenge the notion that Britain "rules the waves." American claims of a special status as the sole guardian of the Western Hemisphere's security—proclaimed earlier in the century by the Monroe Doctrine

and subsequently justified by America's alleged "manifest destiny"—were even further enhanced by the construction of the Panama Canal, which facilitated naval domination over both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The basis for America's expanding geopolitical ambitions was provided by the rapid industrialization of the country's economy. By the outbreak of World War I, America's growing economic might already accounted for about 33 percent of global GNP, which displaced Great Britain as the world's leading industrial power. This remarkable economic dynamism was fostered by a culture that favored experimentation and innovation. America's political institutions and free market economy created unprecedented opportunities for ambitious and iconoclastic inventors, who were not inhibited from pursuing their personal dreams by archaic privileges or rigid social hierarchies. In brief, national culture was uniquely congenial to economic growth, and by attracting and quickly assimilating the most talented individuals from abroad, the culture also facilitated the expansion of national power.

World War I provided the first occasion for the massive projection of American military force into Europe. A heretofore relatively isolated power promptly transported several hundred thousand of its troops across the Atlantic—a transoceanic military expedition unprecedented in its size and scope, which signaled the emergence of a new major player in the international arena. Just as important, the war also prompted the first major American diplomatic effort to apply American principles in seeking a solution to Europe's international problems. Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen Points represented the injection into European geopolitics of American idealism, reinforced by American might. (A decade and a half earlier, the United States had played a leading role in settling a Far Eastern conflict between Russia and Japan, thereby also asserting its growing international stature.) The fusion of American idealism and American power thus made itself fully felt on the world scene.

Strictly speaking, however, World War I was still predominantly a European war, not a global one. But its self-destructive character marked the beginning of the end of Europe's political, economic, and cultural preponderance over the rest of the world. In the course of the war, no single European power was able to prevail

decisively—and the war's outcome was heavily influenced by the entrance into the conflict of the rising non-European power, America. Thereafter, Europe would become increasingly the object, rather than the subject, of global power politics.

However, this brief burst of American global leadership did not produce a continuing American engagement in world affairs. Instead, America quickly retreated into a self-gratifying combination of isolationism and idealism. Although by the mid-twenties and early thirties totalitarianism was gathering strength on the European continent, American power—by then including a powerful two-ocean fleet that clearly outmatched the British navy—remained disengaged. Americans preferred to be bystanders to global politics.

Consistent with that predisposition was the American concept of security, based on a view of America as a continental island. American strategy focused on sheltering its shores and was thus narrowly national in scope, with little thought given to international or global considerations. The critical international players were still the European powers and, increasingly, Japan.

The European era in world politics came to a final end in the course of World War II, the first truly global war. Fought on three continents simultaneously, with the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans also heavily contested, its global dimension was symbolically demonstrated when British and Japanese soldiers—representing, respectively, a remote Western European island and a similarly remote East Asian island—collided thousands of miles from their homes on the Indian-Burmese frontier. Europe and Asia had become a single battlefield.

Had the war's outcome been a clear-cut victory for Nazi Germany, a single European power might then have emerged as globally preponderant. (Japan's victory in the Pacific would have gained for that nation the dominant Far Eastern role, but in all probability, Japan would still have remained only a regional hegemon.) Instead, Germany's defeat was sealed largely by the two extra-European victors, the United States and the Soviet Union, which became the successors to Europe's unfulfilled quest for global supremacy.

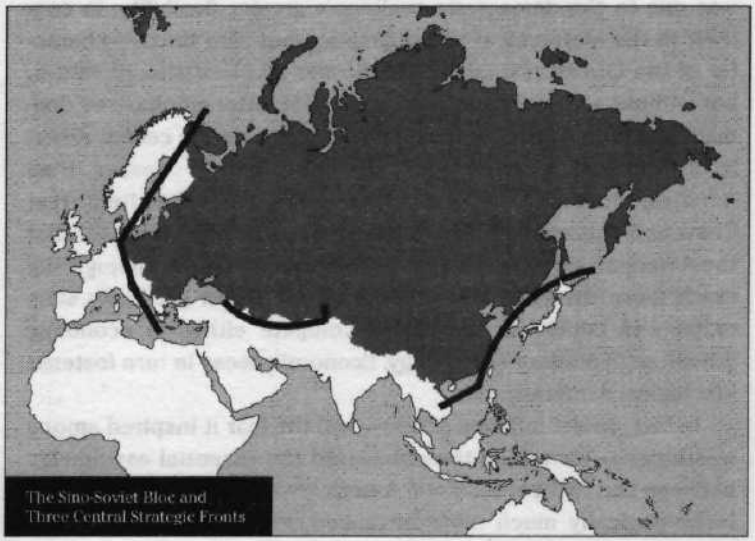
The next fifty years were dominated by the bipolar American-Soviet contest for global supremacy. In some respects, the contest

between the United States and the Soviet Union represented the fulfillment of the geopoliticians' fondest theories: it pitted the world's leading maritime power, dominant over both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, against the world's leading land power, paramount on the Eurasian heartland (with the Sino-Soviet bloc encompassing a space remarkably reminiscent of the scope of the Mongol Empire). The geopolitical dimension could not have been clearer: North America versus Eurasia, with the world at stake. The winner would truly dominate the globe. There was no one else to stand in the way, once victory was finally grasped.

Each rival projected worldwide an ideological appeal that was infused with historical optimism, that justified for each the necessary exertions while reinforcing its conviction in inevitable victory. Each rival was clearly dominant within its own space—unlike the imperial European aspirants to global hegemony, none of which ever quite succeeded in asserting decisive preponderance within Europe itself. And each used its ideology to reinforce its hold over its respective vassals and tributaries, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the age of religious warfare.

The combination of global geopolitical scope and the proclaimed universality of the competing dogmas gave the contest unprecedented intensity. But an additional factor—also imbued with global implications—made the contest truly unique. The advent of nuclear weapons meant that a head-on war, of a classical type, between the two principal contestants would not only spell their mutual destruction but could unleash lethal consequences for a significant portion of humanity. The intensity of the conflict was thus simultaneously subjected to extraordinary self-restraint on the part of both rivals.

In the geopolitical realm, the conflict was waged largely on the peripheries of Eurasia itself. The Sino-Soviet bloc dominated most of Eurasia but did not control its peripheries. North America succeeded in entrenching itself on both the extreme western and extreme eastern shores of the great Eurasian continent. The defense of these continental bridgeheads (epitomized on the western "front" by the Berlin blockade and on the eastern by the Korean War) was thus the first strategic test of what came to be known as the Cold War.



In the Cold War's final phase, a third defensive "front"—the southern—appeared on Eurasia's map (see map above). The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan precipitated a two-pronged American response: direct U.S. assistance to the native resistance in Afghanistan in order to bog down the Soviet army; and a large-scale buildup of the U.S. military presence In the Persian Gulf as a deterrent to any further southward projection of Soviet political or military power. The United States committed itself to the defense of the Persian Gulf region, on a par with its western and eastern Eurasian security interests.

The successful containment by North America of the Eurasian bloc's efforts to gain effective sway over all of Eurasia—with both sides deterred until the very end from a direct military collision for fear of a nuclear war—meant that the outcome of the contest was eventually decided by nonmilitary means. Political vitality, ideological flexibility, economic dynamism, and cultural appeal became the decisive dimensions.

The American-led coalition retained its unity, whereas the Sino-Soviet bloc split within less than two decades. In part, this

was due to the democratic coalition's greater flexibility, in contrast to the hierarchical and dogmatic—but also brittle—character of the Communist camp. The former involved shared values, but without a formal doctrinal format. The latter emphasized dogmatic orthodoxy, with only one valid interpretative center. America's principal vassals were also significantly weaker than America, whereas the Soviet Union could not indefinitely treat China as a subordinate. The outcome was also due to the fact that the American side proved to be economically and technologically much more dynamic, whereas the Soviet Union gradually stagnated and could not effectively compete either in economic growth or in military technology. Economic decay in turn fostered ideological demoralization.

In fact, Soviet military power—and the fear it inspired among westerners—for a long time obscured the essential asymmetry between the two contestants. America was simply much richer, technologically much more advanced, militarily more resilient and innovative, socially more creative and appealing. Ideological constraints also sapped the creative potential of the Soviet Union, making its system increasingly rigid and its economy increasingly wasteful and technologically less competitive. As long as a mutually destructive war did not break out, in a protracted competition the scales had to tip eventually in America's favor.

The final outcome was also significantly influenced by cultural considerations. The American-led coalition, by and large, accepted as positive many attributes of America's political and social culture. America's two most important allies on the western and eastem peripheries of the Eurasian continent, Germany and Japan, both recovered their economic health in the context of almost unbridled admiration for all things American. America was widely perceived as representing the future, as a society worthy of admiration and deserving of emulation.

In contrast, Russia was held in cultural contempt by most of its Central European vassals and even more so by its principal and increasingly assertive eastern ally, China. For the Central Europeans, Russian domination meant isolation from what the Central Europeans considered their philosophical and cultural home: Western

Europe and its Christian religious traditions. Worse than that, it meant domination by a people whom the Central Europeans, often unjustly, considered their cultural inferior.

The Chinese, for whom the word "Russia" means "the hungry land," were even more openly contemptuous. Although initially the Chinese had only quietly contested Moscow's claims of universality for the Soviet model, within a decade following the Chinese Communist revolution they mounted an assertive challenge to Moscow's ideological primacy and even began to express openly their traditional contempt for the neighboring northern barbarians.

Finally, within the Soviet Union itself, the 50 percent of the population that was non-Russian eventually also rejected Moscow's domination. The gradual political awakening of the non-Russians meant that the Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, and Azeris began to view Soviet power as a form of alien imperial domination by a people to whom they did not feel culturally inferior. In Central Asia, national aspirations may have been weaker, but here these peoples were fueled in addition by a gradually rising sense of Islamic identity, intensified by the knowledge of the ongoing decolonization elsewhere.

Like so many empires before it, the Soviet Union eventually imploded and fragmented, falling victim not so much to a direct military defeat as to disintegration accelerated by economic and social strains. Its fate confirmed a scholar's apt observation that

> [e]mpires are inherently politically unstable because subordinate units almost always prefer greater autonomy, and counter-elites in such units almost always act, upon opportunity, to obtain greater autonomy. In this sense, empires do not *fall;* rather, they *fall apart,* usually very slowly, though sometimes remarkably quickly.'

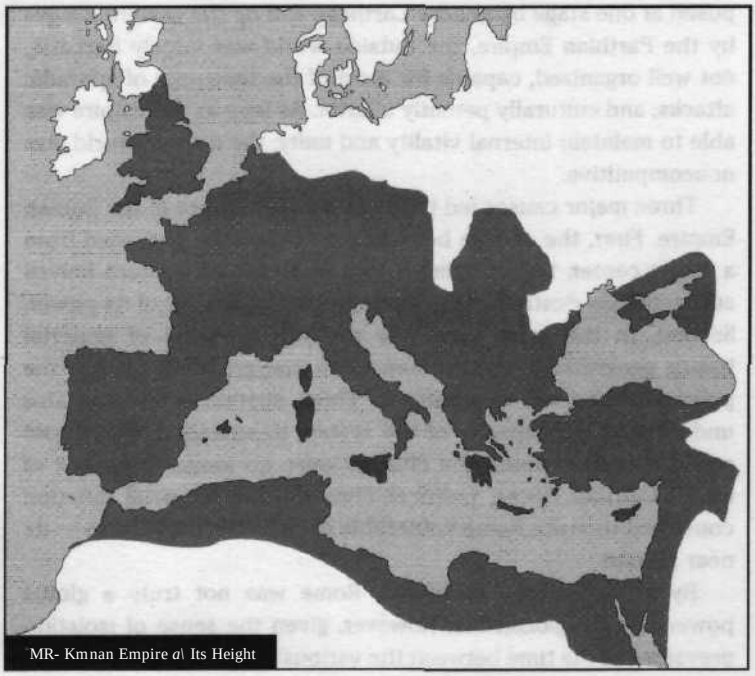
'Donald Puchala. "The History of the Future of International Relations," *Ethics and International Affairs* 8 (1994):183.

THE FIRST GLOBAL POWER

The collapse of its rival left the United States in a unique position. It became simultaneously the first and the only truly global power. And yet America's global supremacy is reminiscent in some ways of earlier empires, notwithstanding their more confined regional scope. These empires based their power on a hierarchy of vassals, tributaries, protectorates, and colonies, with those on the outside generally viewed as barbarians. To some degree, that anachronistic terminoJogy is not altogether inappropriate for some of the states currently within the American orbit. As in the past, the exercise of American "imperial" power is derived in large measure from superior organization, from the ability to mobilize vast economic and technological resources promptly for military purposes, from the vague but significant cultural appeal of the American way of life, and from the sheer dynamism and inherent competitiveness of the American social and political elites.

Earlier empires, too, partook of these attributes. Rome comes first to mind. Its empire was established over roughly two and a half centuries through sustained territorial expansion northward and then both westward and southeastward, as well as through the assertion of effective maritime control over the entire shoreline of the Mediterranean Sea. In geographic scope, it reached its high point around the year A.D. 211 (see map on page 11). Rome's was a centralized polity and a single self-sufficient economy. Its imperial power was exercised deliberately and purposefully through a complex system of political and economic organization. A strategically designed system of roads and naval routes, originating from the capital city, permitted the rapid redeployment and concentration—in the event of a major security threat—of the Roman legions stationed in the various vassal states and tributary provinces.

At the empire's apex, the Roman legions deployed abroad numbered nu less than three hundred thousand men—a remarkable force, made all the more lethal by the Roman superiority in tactics and armaments as well as by the center's ability to direct relatively rapid redeployment. *Qt* is striking to note that in 1996, the vastly more populous supreme power, America, was protecting the outer



'MR- Kmnan Empire a\ Its Height

reaches of its dominion by stationing 296,000 professional soldiers overseas.)

Rome's imperial power, however, was also derived from an important psychological reality. *Civis Romanus sum*—"I am a Roman citizen"—was the highest possible self-definition, a source of pride, and an aspiration for many. Eventually granted even to those not of Roman birth, the exalted status of the Roman citizen was an expression of cultural superiority that justified the imperial power's sense of mission. It not only legitimated Rome's rule, but it also inclined those subject to it to desire assimilation and inclusion in the imperial structure. Cultural superiority, taken for granted by the rulers and conceded by the subjugated, thus reinforced imperial power.

That supreme, and largely uncontested, imperial power lasted about three hundred years. With the exception of the challenge

posed at one stage by nearby Carthage and on the eastern fringes by the Parthian Empire, the outside world was largely barbaric, not well organized, capable for most of the time only of sporadic attacks, and culturally patently inferior. As long as the empire was able to maintain internal vitality and unity, the outside world was noncompetitive.

Three major causes led to the eventual collapse of the Roman Empire. First, the empire became too large to be governed from a single center, but splitting it into western and eastern halves automatically destroyed the monopolistic character of its power. Second, at the same time, the prolonged period of imperial hubris generated a cultural hedonism that gradually sapped the political elite's will to greatness. Third, sustained inflation also undermined the capacity of the system to sustain itself without social sacrifice, which the citizens were no longer prepared to make. Cultural decay, political division, and financial inflation conspired to make Rome vulnerable even to the barbarians in its near abroad.

By contemporary standards, Rome was not truly a global power but a regional one. However, given the sense of isolation prevailing at the time between the various continents of the globe, its regional power was self-contained and isolated, with no immediate or even distant rival. The Roman Empire was thus a world unto itself, with its superior political organization and cultural superiority making it a precursor of later imperial systems of even greater geographic scope.

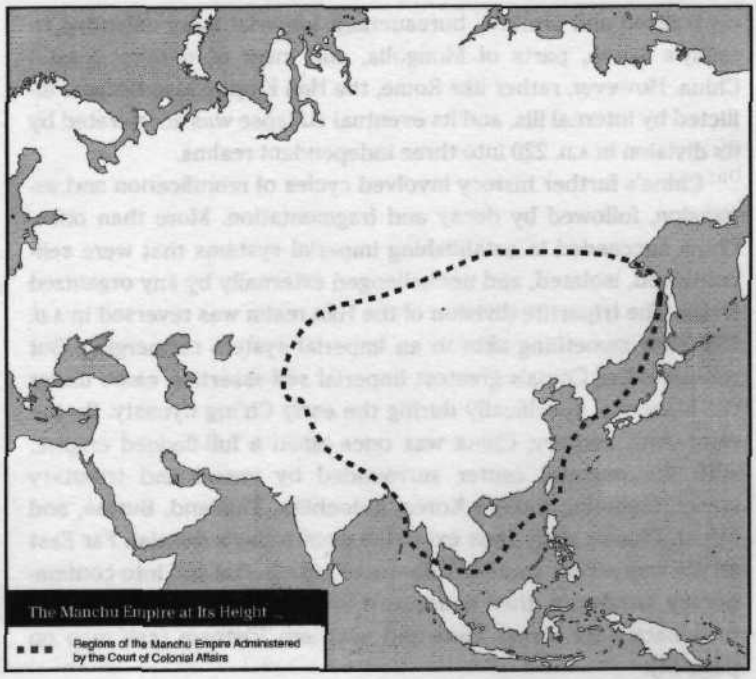
Even so, the Roman Empire was not unique. The Roman and the Chinese empires emerged almost contemporaneously, though neither was aware of the other. By the year 221 B.C. (the time of the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage), the unification by Chin' of the existing seven states Into the first Chinese empire had prompted the construction of the Great Wall in northern China, to seal off the inner kingdom from the barbarian world beyond. The subsequent Han Empire, which had started to emerge by 140 B.C., was even more impressive in scope and organization. By the onset of the Christian era, no fewer than 57 million people were subject to its authority. That huge number, itself unprecedented, testified to extraordinarily effective central control, exercised through a

centralized and punitive bureaucracy. Imperial sway extended to today's Korea, parts of Mongolia, and most of today's coastal China. However, rather like Rome, the Han Empire also became afflicted by internal ills, and its eventual collapse was accelerated by its division in A.D. 220 into three independent realms.

China's further history involved cycles of reunification and expansion, followed by decay and fragmentation. More than once, China succeeded in establishing imperial systems that were self-contained, isolated, and unchallenged externally by any organized rivals. The tripartite division of the Han realm was reversed in A.D. 589, with something akin to an imperial system reemerging. But the period of China's greatest imperial self-assertion came under the Manchus, specifically during the early Ch'ing dynasty. By the eighteenth century, China was once again a full-fledged empire, with the imperial center surrounded by vassal and tributary states, including today's Korea, Indochina, Thailand, Burma, and Nepal. China's sway thus extended from today's Russian Far East all the way across southern Siberia to Lake Baikal and into contemporary Kazakstan, then southward toward the Indian Ocean, and then back east across Laos and northern Vietnam (see map on page 14).

As in the Roman case, the empire was a complex financial, economic, educational, and security organization. Control over the large territory and the more than 300 million people living within it was exercised through all these means, with a strong emphasis on centralized political authority, supported by a remarkably effective courier service. The entire empire was demarcated into four zones, radiating from Peking and delimiting areas that could be reached by courier within one week, two weeks, three weeks, and four weeks, respectively. A centralized bureaucracy, professionally trained and competitively selected, provided the sinews of unity.

That unity was reinforced, legitimated, and sustained—again, as in the case of Rome—by a strongly felt and deeply ingrained sense of cultural superiority that was augmented by Confucianism, an imperially expedient philosophy, with its stress on harmony, hierarchy, and discipline. China—the Celestial Empire—was seen as the center of the universe, with only barbarians on its peripheries



and beyond. To be Chinese meant to be cultured, and for that reason, the rest of the world owed China its due deference. That special sense of superiority permeated the response given by the Chinese emperor—even in the phase of China's growing decline, in the late eighteenth century—to King George III of Great Britain, whose emissaries had attempted to inveigle China into a trading relationship by offering some British industrial products as goodwill gifts:

> We, by the Grace of Heaven, Emperor, instruct the King of England to take note of our charge:
>
> The Celestial Empire, ruling all within the four seas . .. does not value rare and precious things . . . nor do we have the slightest need of your country's manufactures___
>
> Hence we … have commanded your tribute envoys to return safely home. You, 0 King, should simply act in conformity

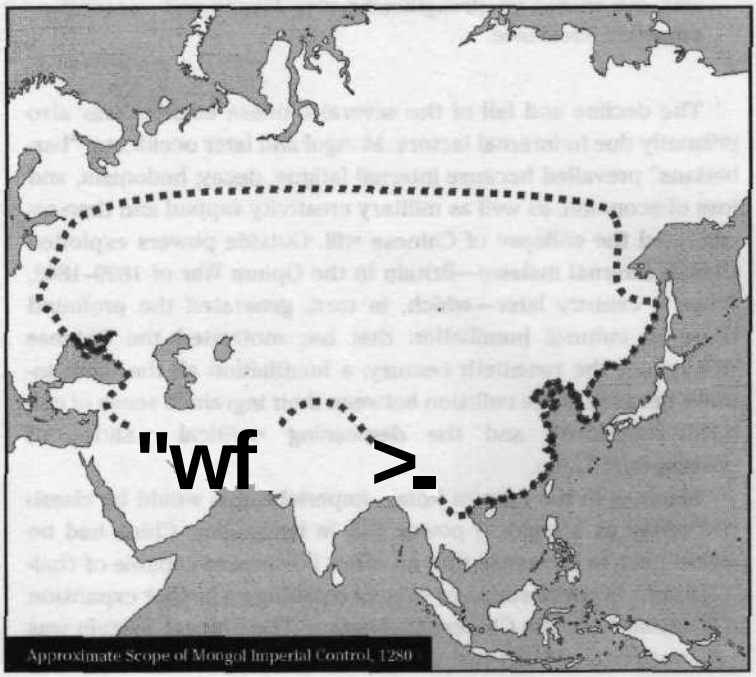
with our wishes by strengthening your loyalty and swearing perpetual obedience.

The decline and fall of the several Chinese empires was also primarily due to internal factors. Mongol and later occidental "barbarians" prevailed because internal fatigue, decay, hedonism, and loss of economic as well as military creativity sapped and then accelerated the collapse of Chinese will. Outside powers exploited China's internal malaise—Britain in the Opium War of 1839-1842, Japan a century later—which, in turn, generated the profound sense of cultural humiliation that has motivated the Chinese throughout the twentieth century, a humiliation all the more intense because of the collision between their ingrained sense of cultural superiority and the demeaning political realities of postimperial China.

Much as in the case of Rome, imperial China would be classified today as a regional power. But in its heyday, China had no global peer, in the sense that no other power was capable of challenging its imperial status or even of resisting its further expansion if that had been the Chinese inclination. The Chinese system was self-contained and self-sustaining, based primarily on a shared ethnic identity, with relatively limited projection of central power over ethnically alien and geographically peripheral tributaries.

The large and dominant ethnic core made it possible for China to achieve periodic imperial restoration. In that respect, China was quite unlike other empires, in which numerically small but hegemonically motivated peoples were able for a time to impose and maintain domination over much larger ethnically alien populations. However, once the domination of such small-core empires was undermined, imperial restoration was out of the question.

To find a somewhat closer analogy to today's definition of a global power, we must turn to the remarkable phenomenon of the Mongol Empire. Its emergence was achieved through an intense struggle with major and well-organized opponents. Among those defeated were the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary, the forces of the Holy Roman Empire, several Russian and Rus' principalities, the Caliphate of Baghdad, and later, even the Sung dynasty of China.



Genghis Khan and his successors, by defeating their regional rivals, established centralized control over the territory that latter-day scholars of geopolitics have identified as the global heartland, or the pivot for world power. Their Eurasian continental empire ranged from the shores of the China Sea to Anatolia in Asia Minor and to Centra] Europe (see map). It was not until the heyday of the Stalinist Sino-Soviet bloc that the Mongol Empire on the Eurasian continent was finally matched, insofar as the scope of centralized control over contiguous territory is concerned.

The Roman, Chinese, and Mongol empires were regional precursors of subsequent aspirants to global power. In the case of Rome and China, as already noted, their imperial structures were highly developed, both politically and economically, while the widespread acceptance of the cultural superiority of the center exercised an important cementing role. In contrast, the Mongol Empire sustained political control by relying more directly on military

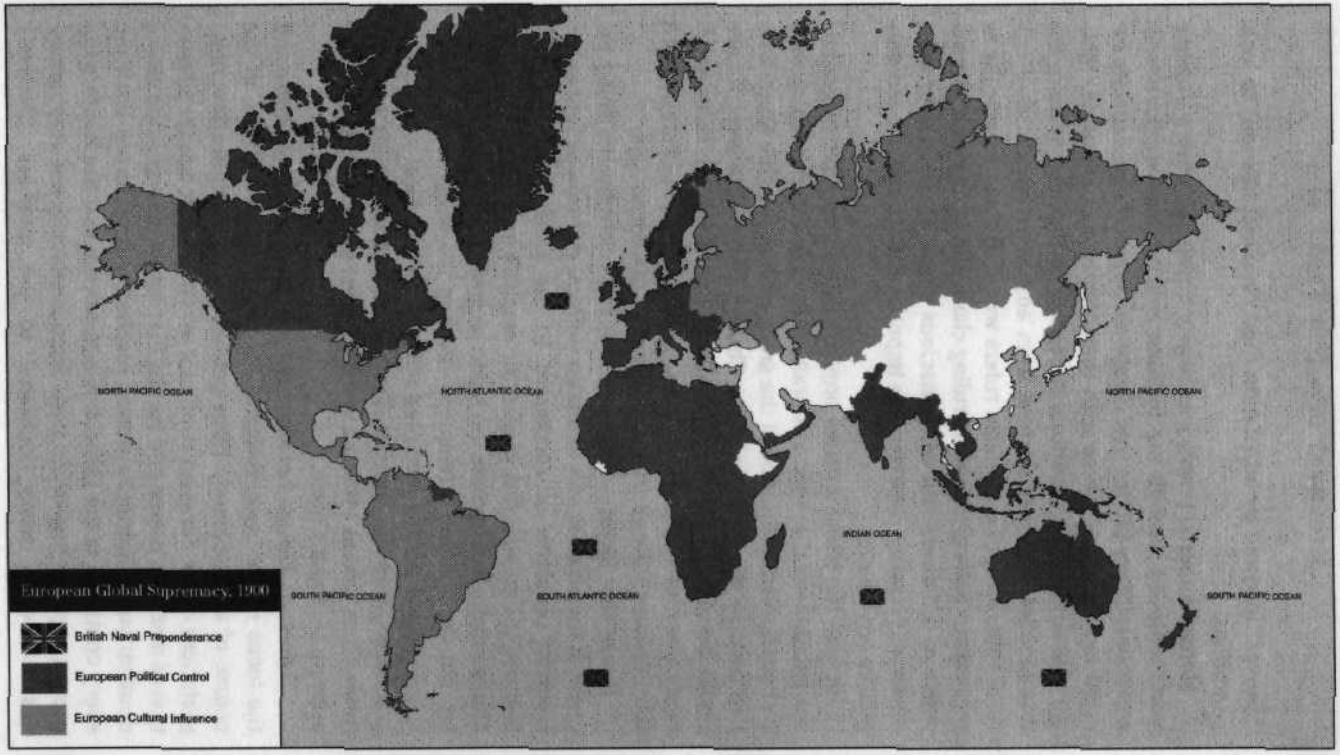
conquest followed by adaptation (and even assimilation) to local conditions.

Mongol imperial power was largely based on military domination. Achieved through the brilliant and ruthless application of superior military tactics that combined a remarkable capacity for rapid movement of forces with their timely concentration, Mongol rule entailed no organized economic or financial system, nor was Mongol authority derived from any assertive sense of cultural superiority. The Mongol rulers were too thin numerically to represent a self-regenerating ruling class, and in any case, the absence of a defined and self-conscious sense of cultural or even ethnic superiority deprived the imperial elite of the needed subjective confidence.

In fact, the Mongol rulers proved quite susceptible to gradual assimilation by the often culturally more advanced peoples they had conquered. Thus, one of the grandsons of Genghis Khan, who had become the emperor of the Chinese part of the great Khan's realm, became a fervent propagator of Confucianism; another became a devout Muslim in his capacity as the sultan of Persia; and a third became the culturally Persian ruler of Central Asia.

It was that factor—assimilation of the rulers by the ruled because of the absence of a dominant political culture—as well as unresolved problems of succession to the great Khan who had founded the empire, that caused the empire's eventual demise. The Mongol realm had become too big to be governed from a single center, but the solution attempted—dividing the empire into several self-contained parts—prompted still more rapid local assimilation and accelerated the imperial disintegration. After lasting two centuries, from 1206 to 1405, the world's largest land-based empire disappeared without a trace.

Thereafter, Europe became both the locus of global power and the focus of the main struggles for global power. Indeed, in the course of approximately three centuries, the small northwestern periphery of the Eurasian continent attained—through the projection of maritime power and for the first time ever—genuine global domination as European power reached, and asserted itself on, every continent of the globe. It is noteworthy that the Western European imperial hegemons were demographically not very numerous, especially when compared to the numbers effectively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European Global Supremacy, 1900
British Naval Preponderance
European Political Control
European Cultural Influence

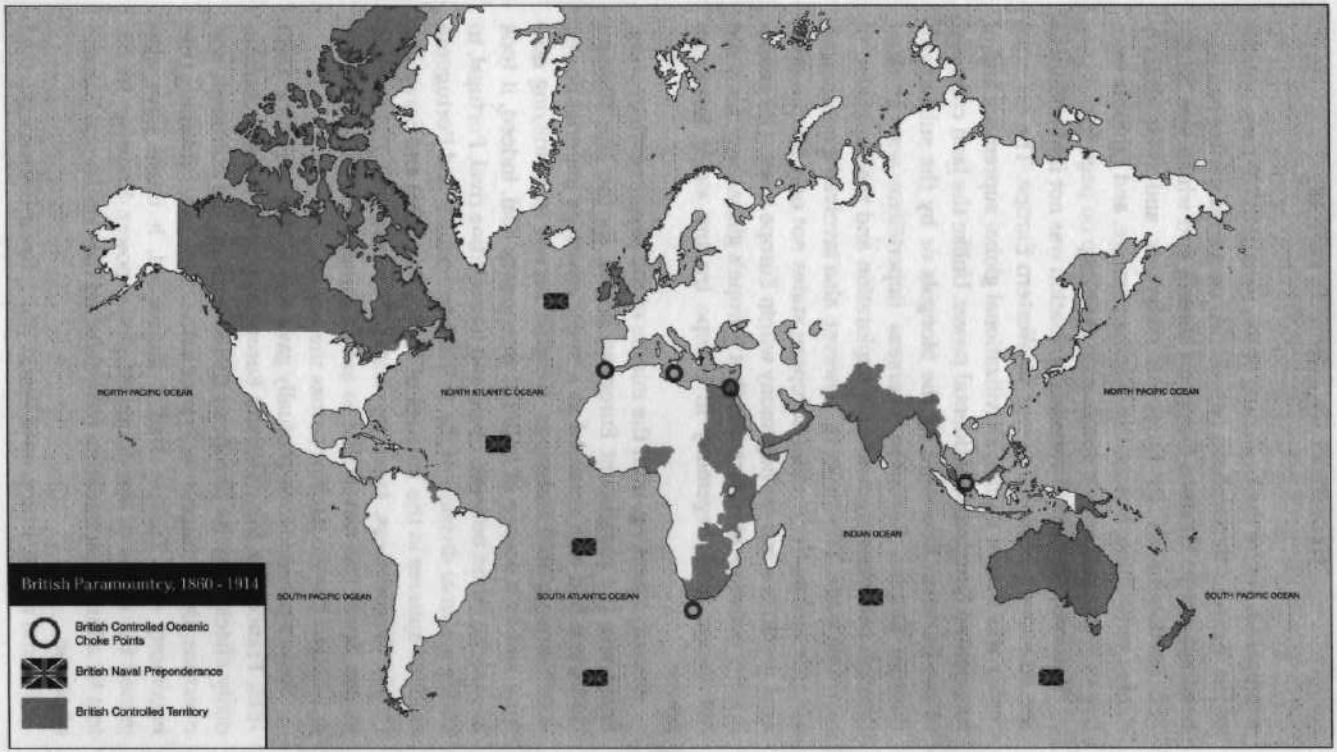
subjugated. Yet by the beginning of the twentieth century, outside of the Western Hemisphere (which two centuries earlier had also been subject to Western European control and which was inhabited predominantly by European emigrants and their descendants), only China, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Ethiopia were free of Western Europe's domination (see map on page 18).

However, Western European domination was not tantamount to the attainment of global power by Western Europe. The essential reality was that of Europe's civilizational global supremacy and of fragmented European continental power. Unlike the land conquest of the Eurasian heartland by the Mongols or by the subsequent Russian Empire, European overseas imperialism was attained through ceaseless transoceanic exploration and the expansion of maritime trade. This process, however, also involved a continuous struggle among the leading European states not only for the overseas dominions but for hegemony within Europe itself. The geopolitically consequential fact was that Europe's global hegemony did not derive from hegemony in Europe by any single European power.

Broadly speaking, until the middle of the seventeenth century, Spain was the paramount European power. By the late fifteenth century, it had also emerged as a major overseas imperial power, entertaining global ambitions. Religion served as a unifying doctrine and as a source of imperial missionary zeal. Indeed, it took papal arbitration between Spain and its maritime rival, Portugal, to codify a formal division of the world into Spanish and Portuguese colonial spheres in the Treaties of Tordesilla (1494) and Saragossa (1529). Nonetheless, faced by English, French, and Dutch challenges, Spain was never able to assert genuine supremacy, either in Western Europe itself or across the oceans.

Spain's preeminence gradually gave way to that of France. Until 1815, France was the dominant European power, though continuously checked by its European rivals, both on the continent and overseas. Under Napoleon, France came close to establishing true hegemony over Europe. Had it succeeded, it might have also gained the status of the dominant global power. However, its defeat by a European coalition reestablished the continental balance of power.

For the next century, until World War I, Great Britain exercised


British Paramountcy, 1860 - 1914
British Controlled Oceanic Choke Points
British Naval Preponderance
British Controlled Territory
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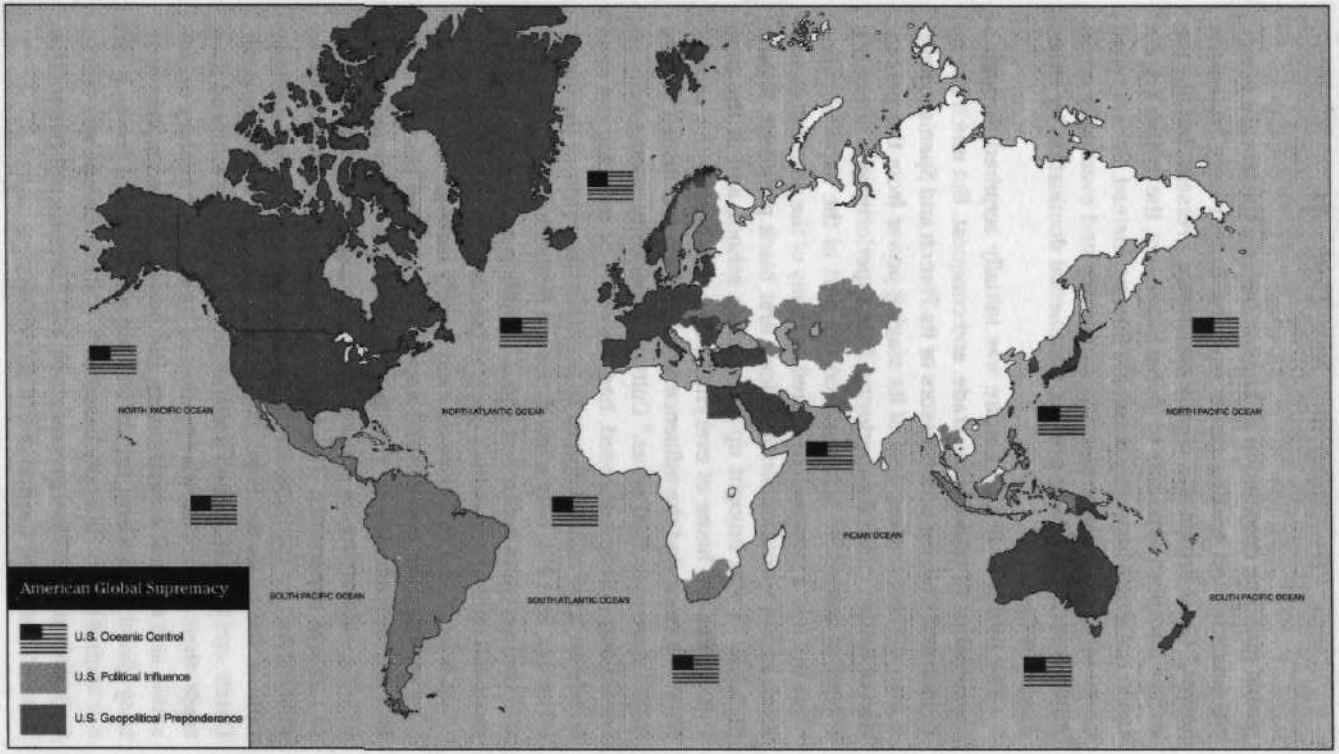
global maritime domination as London became the world's principal financial and trading center and the British navy "ruled the waves." Great Britain was clearly paramount overseas, but like the earlier European aspirants to global hegemony, the British Empire could not single-handedly dominate Europe. Instead, Britain relied on an intricate balance-of-power diplomacy and eventually on an Anglo-French entente to prevent continental domination by either Russia or Germany.

The overseas British Empire was initially acquired through a combination of exploration, trade, and conquest. But much like its Roman and Chinese predecessors or its French and Spanish rivals, it also derived a great deal of its staying power from the perception of British cultural superiority. That superiority was not only a matter of subjective arrogance on the part of the imperial ruling class but was a perspective shared by many of the non-British subjects. In the words of South Africa's first black president, Nelson Mandela: "I was brought up in a British school, and at the time Britain was the home of everything that was best in the world. I have not discarded the influence which Britain and British history and culture exercised on us." Cultural superiority, successfully asserted and quietly conceded, had the effect of reducing the need to rely on large military forces to maintain the power of the imperial center. By 1914, only a few thousand British military personnel and civil servants controlled about 11 million square miles and almost 400 million non-British peoples (see map on page 20).

In brief, Rome exercised its sway largely through superior military organization and cultural appeal. China relied heavily on an efficient bureaucracy to rule an empire based on shared ethnic identity, reinforcing its control through a highly developed sense of cultural superiority. The Mongol Empire combined advanced military tactics for conquest with an inclination toward assimilation as the basis for rule. The British (as well as the Spanish, Dutch, and French) gained preeminence as their flag followed their trade, their control likewise reinforced by superior military organization and cultural assertiveness. But none of these empires were truly global. Even Great Britain was not a truly global power. It did not control Europe but only balanced it. A stable Europe was crucial to British international preeminence, and Europe's self-destruction Inevitably marked the end of British primacy.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American Global Supremacy
U.S. Oceanic Control
U.S. Political Influence
U.S. Geopolitical Preponderance

In contrast, the scope and pervasiveness of American global power today are unique. Not only does the United States control all of the world's oceans and seas, but it has developed an assertive military capability for amphibious shore control that enables it to project its power inland in politically significant ways. Its military legions are firmly perched on the western and eastern extremities of Eurasia, and they also control the Persian Gulf. American vassals and tributaries, some yearning to be embraced by even more formal ties to Washington, dot the entire Eurasian continent, as the map on page 22 shows-

America's economic dynamism provides the necessary precondition tor the exercise of global primacy. Initially, immediately after World War II, America's economy stood apart from all others, accounting alone for more than 50 percent of the world's GNP. The economic recovery of Western Europe and Japan, followed by the wider phenomenon of Asia's economic dynamism, meant that the American share of global GNP eventually had to shrink from the disproportionately high levels of the immediate postwar era. Nonetheless, by the time the subsequent Cold War had ended, America's share of global GNP, and more specifically its share of the world's manufacturing output, had stabilized at about 30 percent, a level that had been the norm for most of this century, apart from those exceptional years immediately after World War II.

More important, America has maintained and has even widened its lead in exploiting the latest scientific breakthroughs for military purposes, thereby creating a technologically peerless military establishment, the only one with effective global reach. All the while, it has maintained its strong competitive advantage in the economically decisive information technologies. American mastery in the cutting-edge sectors of tomorrow's economy suggests that American technological domination is not likely to be undone soon, especially given that in the economically decisive fields, Americans are maintaining or even widening their advantage in productivity over their Western European and Japanese rivals.

To be sure, Russia and China are powers that resent this American hegemony. In early 1996, they jointly stated as much in the course of a visit to Beijing by Russia's President Boris Yeltsin. Moreover, they possess nuclear arsenals that could threaten vital U.S. interests. But the brutal fact is that for the time being, and for

some time to come, although they can initiate a suicidal nuclear war, neither one of them can win it. Lacking the ability to project forces over long distances in order to impose their political will and being technologically much more backward than America, they do not have the means to exercise—nor soon attain—sustained political clout worldwide.

In brief, *America stands supreme in the four decisive domains of global power,* militarily, it has an unmatched global reach; economically, it remains the main locomotive of global growth, even if challenged in some aspects by Japan" and Germany (neither of which enjoys the other attributes of global might); technologically, it retains the overall lead in the cutting-edge areas of innovation; and culturally, despite some crassness, it enjoys an appeal that is unrivaled, especially among the world's youth—all of which gives the United States a political clout that no other state comes close to matching. *It is the combination of all four that makes America the only comprehensive global superpower.*

THE AMERICAN GLOBAL SYSTEM

Although America's international preeminence unavoidably evokes similarities to earlier imperial systems, the differences are more essential. They go beyond the question of territorial scope. American global power is exercised through a global system of distinctively American design that mirrors the domestic American experience. Central to that domestic experience is the pluralistic character of both the American society and its political system.

The earlier empires were built by aristocratic political elites and were in most cases ruled by essentially authoritarian or absolutist regimes. The bulk of the populations of the imperial states were either politically indifferent or, in more recent times, infected by imperialist emotions and symbols. The quest for national glory, "the white man's burden," "la mission civilisatrlce," not to speak of the opportunities for personal profit—all served to mobilize support for imperial adventures and to sustain essentially hierarchical imperial power pyramids.

The attitude of the American public toward the external projection of American power has been much more ambivalent. The pub-

lie supported America's engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The engagement of the United States in the Cold War was initially endorsed more reluctantly, until the Berlin blockade and the subsequent Korean War. After the Cold War had ended, the emergence of the United States as the single global power did not evoke much public gloating but rather elicited an inclination toward a more limited definition of American responsibilities abroad. Public opinion polls conducted in 1995 and 1996 indicated a general public preference for "sharing" global power with others, rather than for its monopolistic exercise.

Because of these domestic factors, the American global system emphasizes the technique of co-optation (as in the case of defeated rivals—Germany, Japan, and lately even Russia) to a much greater extent than the earlier imperial systems did. It likewise relies heavily on the indirect exercise of influence on dependent foreign elites, while drawing much benefit from the appeal of its democratic principles and institutions. All of the foregoing are reinforced by the massive but intangible impact of the American domination of global communications, popular entertainment, and mass culture and by the potentially very tangible clout of America's technological edge and global military reach.

Cultural domination has been an underappreciated facet of American global power. Whatever one may think of its aesthetic values, America's mass culture exercises a magnetic appeal, especially on the world's youth. Its attraction may be derived from the hedonistic quality of the lifestyle it projects, but its global appeal is undeniable. American television programs and films account for about three-fourths of the global market. American popular music is equally dominant, while American fads, eating habits, and even clothing are increasingly imitated worldwide. The language of the Internet is English, and an overwhelming proportion of the global computer chatter also originates from America, influencing the content of global conversation. Lastly, America has become a Mecca for those seeking advanced education, with approximately half a million foreign students flocking to the United States, with many of the ablest never returning home. Graduates from American universities are to be found in almost every Cabinet on every continent.

The style of many foreign democratic politicians also increasingly emulates the American. Not only did John F. Kennedy find eager imitators abroad, but even more recent (and less glorified) American political leaders have become the object of careful study and political imitation. Politicians from cultures as disparate as the Japanese and the British (for example, the Japanese prime minister of the mid-1990s, Ryutaro Hashimoto, and the British prime minister, Tony Blair—and note the "Tony," imitative of "Jimmy" Carter, "Bill" Clinton, or "Bob" Dole) find it perfectly appropriate to copy Bill Clinton's homey mannerisms, populist common touch, and public relations techniques.

Democratic ideals, associated with the American political tradition, further reinforce what some perceive as America's "cultural imperialism." In the age of the most massive spread of the democratic form of government, the American political experience tends to serve as a standard for emulation. The spreading emphasis worldwide on the centrality of a written constitution and on the supremacy of law over political expediency, no matter how short-changed in practice, has drawn upon the strength of American constitutionalism. In recent times, the adoption by the former Communist countries of civilian supremacy over the military (especially as a precondition for NATO membership) has also been very heavily influenced by the U.S. system of civil-military relations.

The appeal and impact of the democratic American political system has also been accompanied by the growing attraction of the American entrepreneurial economic model, which stresses global free trade and uninhibited competition. As the Western welfare state, including its German emphasis on "codetermination" between entrepreneurs and trade unions, begins to lose its economic momentum, more Europeans are voicing the opinion that the more competitive and even ruthless American economic culture has to be emulated if Europe is not to fall further behind. Even in Japan, greater individualism in economic behavior is becoming recognized as a necessary concomitant of economic success.

The American emphasis on political democracy and economic development thus combines to convey a simple ideological message that appeals to many: the quest for individual success enhances freedom while generating wealth. The resulting blend of

idealism and egoism is a potent combination. Individual self-fulfillment is said to be a God-given right that at the same time can benefit others by setting an example and by generating wealth. It is a doctrine that attracts the energetic, the ambitious, and the highly competitive.

As the imitation of American ways gradually pervades the world, it creates a more congenial setting for the exercise of the indirect and seemingly consensual American hegemony. And as in the case of the domestic American system, that hegemony involves a complex structure of interlocking institutions and procedures, designed to generate consensus and obscure asymmetries in power and influence. American global supremacy is thus buttressed by an elaborate system of alliances and coalitions that literally span the globe.

The Atlantic alliance, epitomized institutionally by NATO, links the most productive and influential states of Europe to America, making the United States a key participant even in intra-European affairs. The bilateral political and military ties with Japan bind the most powerful Asian economy to the United States, with Japan remaining (at least for the time being) essentially an American protectorate. America also participates in such nascent trans-Pacific multilateral organizations as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), making itself a key participant in that region's affairs. The Western Hemisphere is generally shielded from outside influences, enabling America to play the central role in existing hemispheric multilateral organizations. Special security arrangements in the Persian Gulf, especially after the brief punitive mission in 1991 against Iraq, have made that economically vital region into an American military preserve. Even the former Soviet space is permeated by various American-sponsored arrangements for closer cooperation with NATO, such as the Partnership for Peace.

In addition, one must consider as part of the American system the global web of specialized organizations, especially the "international" financial institutions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank can be said to represent "global" interests, and their constituency may be construed as the world. In reality, however, they are heavily American dominated and their origins are traceable to American initiative, particularly the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944.

Unlike earlier empires, this vast and complex global system is not a hierarchical pyramid. Rather, America stands at the center of an interlocking universe, one in which power is exercised through continuous bargaining, dialogue, diffusion, and quest for formal consensus, even though that power originates ultimately from a single source, namely, Washington, D.C. And that is where the power game has to be played, and played according to America's domestic rules. Perhaps the highest compliment that the world pays to the centrality of the democratic process in American global hegemony is the degree to which foreign countries are themselves drawn into the domestic American political bargaining. To the extent that they can, foreign governments strive to mobilize those Americans with whom they share a special ethnic or religious identity. Most foreign governments also employ American lobbyists to advance their case, especially in Congress, in addition to approximately one thousand special foreign interest groups registered as active in America's capital. American ethnic communities also strive to influence U.S. foreign policy, with the Jewish, Greek, and Armenian lobbies standing out as the most effectively organized.

American supremacy has thus produced a new international order that not only replicates but institutionalizes abroad many of the features of the American system itself. Its basic features include

- a collective security system, including integrated command and forces (NATO, the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, and so forth);
- regional economic cooperation (APEC, NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]) and specialized global cooperative institutions (the World Bank, IMF, WTO [World Trade Organization]);
- procedures that emphasize consensual decision making, even if dominated by the United States;
- a preference for democratic membership within key alliances;

- a rudimentary global constitutional and judicial structure (ranging from the World Court to a special tribunal to try Bosnian war crimes).

Most of that system emerged during the Cold War, as part of America's effort to contain its global rival, the Soviet Union. It was thus ready-made for global application, once that rival faltered and America emerged as the first and only global power. Its essence has been well encapsulated by the political scientist G. John Ikenberry:

> It was hegemonic in the sense that it was centered around the United States and reflected American-styled political mechanisms and organizing principles. It was a liberal order in that it was legitimate and marked by reciprocal interactions. Europeans [one may also add, the Japanese] were able to reconstruct and integrate their societies and economies in ways that were congenial with American hegemony but also with room to experiment with their own autonomous and semi-independent political systems ... The evolution of this complex system served to "domesticate" relations among the major Western states. There have been tense conflicts between these states from time to time, but the important point is that conflict has been contained within a deeply embedded, stable, and increasingly articulated political order.... The threat of war is off the table.[2]

Currently, this unprecedented American global hegemony has no rival. But will it remain unchallenged in the years to come?

[2]From his paper "Creating Liberal Order: The Origins and Persistence of the Postwar Western Settlement," University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, November 1995.

CHAPTER 2

The Eurasian Chessboard

FOR AMERICA, THE CHIEF geopolitical prize is Eurasia. For half a millennium, world affairs were dominated by Eurasian powers and peoples who fought with one another for regional domination and reached out for global power. Now a non-Eurasian power is preeminent in Eurasia—and America's global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained.

Obviously, that condition is temporary. But its duration, and what follows it, is of critical importance not only to America's well-being but more generally to international peace. The sudden emergence of the first and only global power has created a situation in which an equally quick end to its supremacy—either because of America's withdrawal from the world or because of the sudden emergence of a successful rival—would produce massive international instability. In effect, it would prompt global anarchy. The Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington is right in boldly asserting:

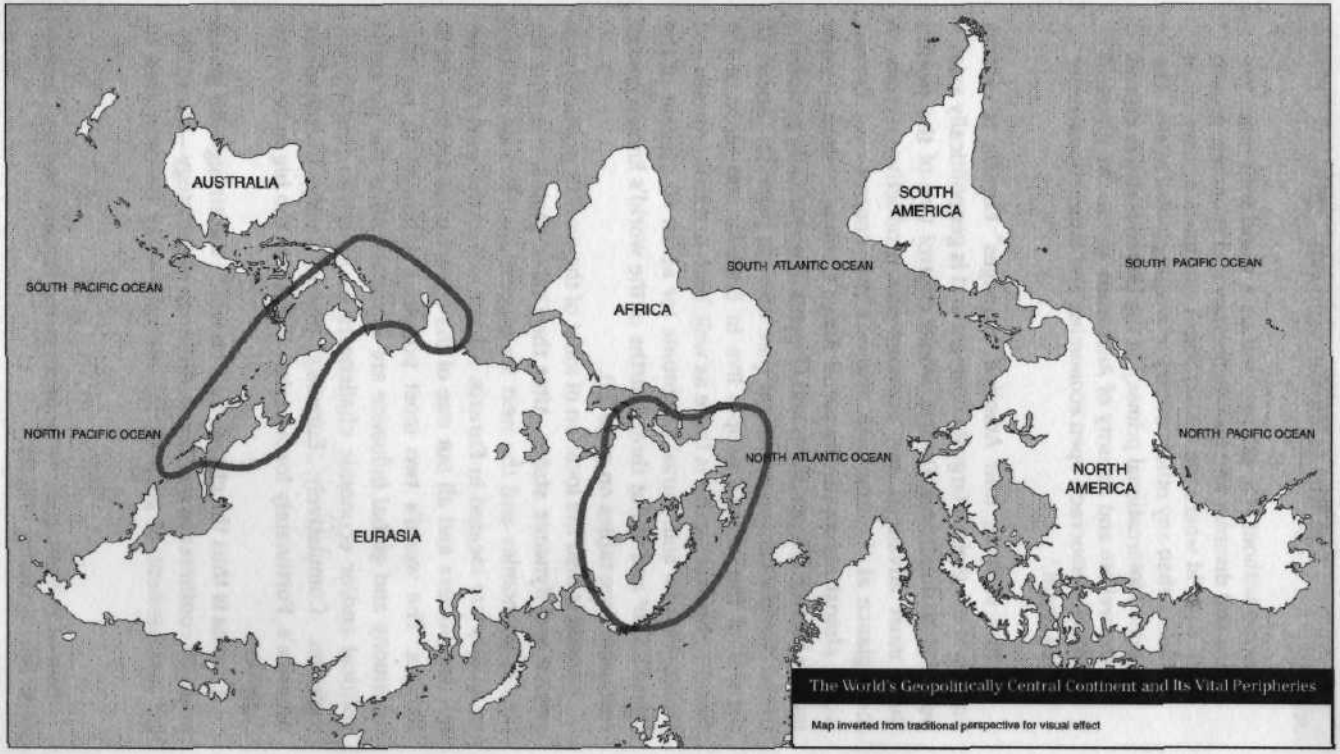
> A world without U.S. primacy will be a world with more violence and disorder and less democracy and economic growth than a world where the United States continues to have more influence than any other country in shaping global affairs. The sustained international primacy of the United States is central to the welfare and security of Americans and to the future of freedom, democracy, open economies, and international order in the world.[1]

In that context, how America "manages" Eurasia is critical. Eurasia is the globe's largest continent and is geopolitically axial. A power that dominates Eurasia would control two of the world's three most advanced and economically productive regions. A mere glance at the map also suggests that control over Eurasia would almost automatically entail Africa's subordination, rendering the Western Hemisphere and Oceania geopolitically peripheral to the world's central continent (see map on page 32). About 75 percent of the world's people live in Eurasia, and most of the world's physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. Eurasia accounts for about 60 percent of the world's GNP and about three-fourths of the world's known energy resources (see tables on page 33).

Eurasia is also the location of most of the world's politically assertive and dynamic states. After the United States, the next six largest economies and the next six biggest spenders on military weaponry are located in Eurasia. All but one of the world's overt nuclear powers and all but one of the covert ones are located in Eurasia. The world's two most populous aspirants to regional hegemony and global influence are Eurasian. All of the potential political and/or economic challengers to American primacy are Eurasian. Cumulatively, Eurasia's power vastly overshadows America's. Fortunately for America, Eurasia is too big to be politically one.

Eurasia is thus the chessboard on which the struggle for global primacy continues to be played. Although geostrategy—the strategic management of geopolitical interests—may be compared to

[1]Samuel P. Huntington. "Why International Primacy Matters," *International Security* (Spring 1993):83.


AUSTRALIA
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
EURASIA
AFRICA
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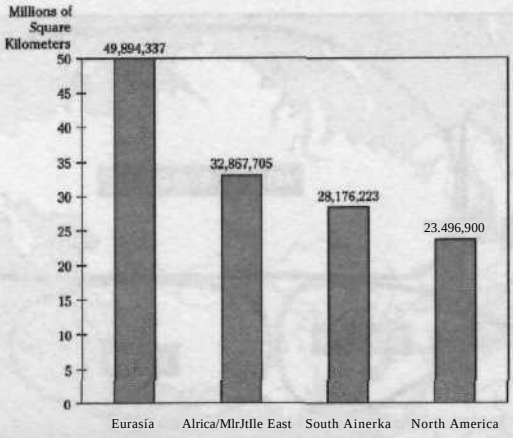
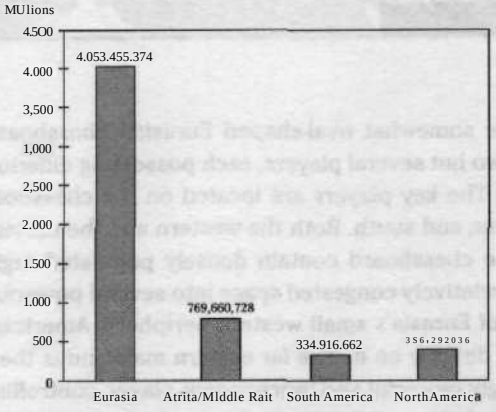
NORTH AMERICA
The World's Geopolitically Central Continent and Its Vital Peripheries
Map inverted from traditional perspective for visual effect

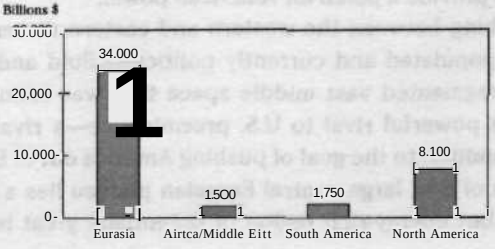
Tlie Continents: Area

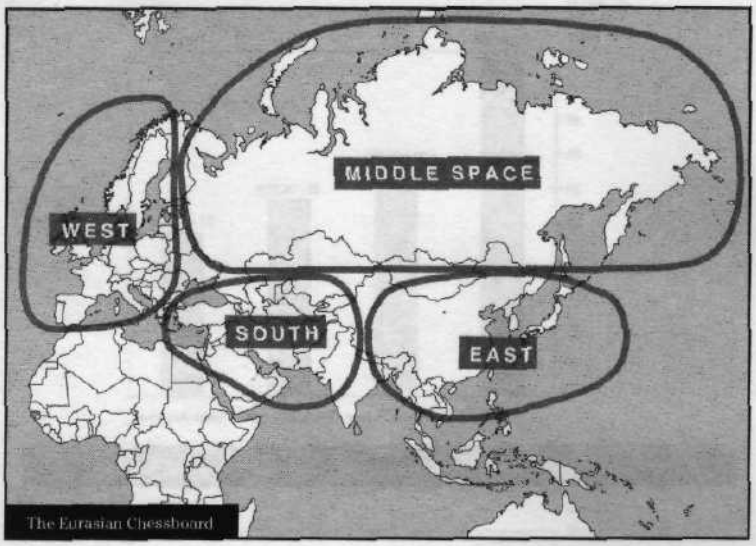


The Continents: **Population**



The Continents: GNP





chess, the somewhat oval-shaped Eurasian chessboard engages not just two but several players, each possessing differing amounts of power. The key players are located on the chessboard's west, east, center, and south. Both the western and the eastern extremities of the chessboard contain densely populated regions, organized on relatively congested space into several powerful states. In the case of Eurasia's small western periphery, American power is deployed directly on it. The far eastern mainland is the seat of an increasingly powerful and independent player, controlling an enormous population, while the territory of its energetic rival—confined on several nearby islands—and half of a small far-eastern peninsula provide a perch for American power.

Stretching between the western and eastern extremities is a sparsely populated and currently politically fluid and organizationally fragmented vast middle space that was formerly occupied by a powerful rival to U.S. preeminence—a rival that was once committed to the goal of pushing America out of Eurasia. To the south of that large central Eurasian plateau lies a politically anarchic but energy-rich region of potentially great importance

to both the western and the eastern Eurasian states, including in the southernmost area a highly populated aspirant to regional hegemony.

This huge, oddly shaped Eurasian chessboard—extending from Lisbon to Vladivostok—provides the setting for "the game." If the middle space can be drawn increasingly into the expanding orbit of the West (where America preponderates), if the southern region is not subjected to domination by a single player, and if the East is not unified in a manner that prompts the expulsion of America from its offshore bases, America can then be said to prevail. But if the middle space rebuffs the West, becomes an assertive single entity, and either gains control over the South or forms an alliance with the major Eastern actor, then America's primacy in Eurasia shrinks dramatically. The same would be the case if the two major Eastern players were somehow to unite. Finally, any ejection of America by its Western partners from its perch on the western periphery would automatically spell the end of America's participation in the game on the Eurasian chessboard, even though that would probably also mean the eventual subordination of the western extremity to a revived player occupying the middle space.

The scope of America's global hegemony is admittedly great, but its depth is shallow, limited by both domestic and external restraints. American hegemony involves the exercise of decisive influence but, unlike the empires of the past, not of direct control. The very scale and diversity of Eurasia, as well as the power of some of its states, limits the depth of American influence and the scope of control over the course of events. That megacontinent is just too large, too populous, culturally too varied, and composed of too many historically ambitious and politically energetic states to be compliant toward even the most economically successful and politically preeminent global power. This condition places a premium on geostrategic skill, on the careful, selective, and very deliberate deployment of America's resources on the huge Eurasian chessboard.

It is also a fact that America is too democratic at home to be autocratic abroad. This limits the use of America's power, especially its capacity for military intimidation. Never before has a pop-

ulist democracy attained international supremacy. But the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion, except in conditions of a sudden threat or challenge to the public's sense of domestic well-being. The economic self-denial (that is, defense spending) and the human sacrifice (casualties even among professional soldiers) required in the effort are uncongenial to democratic instincts. Democracy is inimical to imperial mobilization.

Moreover, most Americans by and large do not derive any special gratification from their country's new status as the sole global superpower. Political "triumphalism" connected with America's victory in the Cold War has generally tended to receive a cold reception and has been the object of some derision on the part of the more liberal-minded commentators. If anything, two rather varying views of the implications for America of its historic success in the competition with the former Soviet Union have been politically more appealing: on the one hand, there is the view that the end of the Cold War justifies a significant reduction in America's global engagement, irrespective of the consequences for America's global standing; and on the other hand, there is the perspective that the time has come for genuine international multilateralism, to which America should even yield some of its sovereignty. Both schools of thought have commanded the loyalty of committed constituencies.

Compounding the dilemmas facing the American leadership are the changes in the character of the global situation itself: the direct use of power now tends to be more constrained than was the case in the past. Nuclear weapons have dramatically reduced the utility of war as a tool of policy or even as a threat. The growing economic interdependence among nations is making the political exploitation of economic blackmail less compelling. Thus maneuver, diplomacy, coalition building, co-optation, and the very deliberate deployment of one's political assets have become the key ingredients of the successful exercise of geostrategic power on the Eurasian chessboard.

GEOPOLITICS AND GEOSTRATEGY

The exercise of American global primacy must be sensitive to the fact that political geography remains a critical consideration in international affairs. Napoleon reportedly once said that to know a nation's geography was to know its foreign policy. Our understanding of the importance of political geography, however, must adapt to the new realities of power.

For most of the history of international affairs, territorial control was the focus of political conflict. Either national self-gratification over the acquisition of larger territory or the sense of national deprivation over the loss of "sacred" land has been the cause of most of the bloody wars fought since the rise of nationalism. It is no exaggeration to say that the territorial imperative has been the main impulse driving the aggressive behavior of nation-states. Empires were also built through the careful seizure and retention of vital geographic assets, such as Gibraltar or the Suez Canal or Singapore, which served as key choke points or linchpins in a system of imperial control.

The most extreme manifestation of the linkage between nationalism and territorial possession was provided by Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. The effort to build the "one-thousand-year Reich" went far beyond the goal of reuniting all German-speaking peoples under one political roof and focused also on the desire to control "the granaries" of Ukraine as well as other Slavic lands, whose populations were to provide cheap slave labor for the imperial domain. The Japanese were similarly fixated on the notion that direct territorial possession of Manchuria, and later of the important oil-producing Dutch East Indies, was essential to the fulfillment of the Japanese quest for national power and global status. In a similar vein, for centuries the definition of Russian national greatness was equated with the acquisition of territory, and even at the end of the twentieth century, the Russian insistence on retaining control over such non-Russian people as the Chechens, who live around a vital oil pipeline, has been justified by the claim that such control is essential to Russia's status as a great power.

Nation-states continue to be the basic units of the world system. Although the decline in big-power nationalism and the fading of ideology has reduced the emotional content of global politics—

while nuclear weapons have introduced major restraints on the use of force—competition based on territory still dominates world affairs, even if its forms currently tend to be more civil. In that competition, geographic location is still the point of departure for the definition of a nation-state's external priorities, and the size of national territory also remains one of the major criteria of status and power.

However, for most nation-states, the issue of territorial possession has lately been waning in salience. To the extent that territorial disputes are still important in shaping the foreign policy of some states, they are more a matter of resentment over the denial of self-determination to ethnic brethren said to be deprived of the right to join the "motherland" or a grievance over alleged mistreatment by a neighbor of ethnic minorities than they are a quest for enhanced national status through territorial enlargement.

Increasingly, the ruling national elites have come to recognize that factors other than territory are more crucial in determining the international status of a state or the degree of its international influence. Economic prowess, and its translation into technological innovation, can also be a key criterion of power. Japan provides the supreme example. Nonetheless, geographic location still tends to determine the immediate priorities of a state—and the greater its military, economic, and political power, the greater the radius, beyond its immediate neighbors, of that state's vital geopolitical interests, influence, and involvement.

Until recently, the leading analysts of geopolitics have debated whether land power was more significant than sea power and what specific region of Eurasia is vital to gain control over the entire continent. One of the most prominent, Harold Mackinder, pioneered the discussion early in this century with his successive concepts of the Eurasian "pivot area" (which was said to include all of Siberia and much of Central Asia) and, later, of the Central-East European "heartland" as the vital springboards for the attainment of continental domination. He popularized his heartland concept by the famous dictum:

> Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
> Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
> Who rules the World-Island commands the world.

Geopolitics was also invoked by some leading German political geographers to justify their country's "Drang nach Osten," notabiy with Karl Haushofer adapting Mackinder's concept to Germany's strategic needs. Its much-vulgarized echo could also be heard in Adolf Hitler's emphasis on the German people's need for "Lebensraum." Other European thinkers of the first half of this century anticipated an eastward shift in the geopolitical center of gravity, with the Pacific region—and specifically America and Japan—becoming the likely inheritors of Europe's fading domination. To forestall such a shift, the French political geographer Paul Demangeon, as well as other French geopoliticians, advocated greater unity among the European states even before World War II.

Today, the geopolitical issue is no longer what geographic part of Eurasia Is the point of departure for continental domination, nor whether land power is more significant than sea power. Geopolitics has moved from the regional to the global dimension, with preponderance over the entire Eurasian continent serving as the central basis for global primacy. The United States, a non-Eurasian power, now enjoys international primacy, with its power directly deployed on three peripheries of the Eurasian continent, from which it exercises a powerful influence on the states occupying the Eurasian hinterland. But it is on the globe's most important playing field—Eurasia—that a potential rival to America might at some point arise. Thus, focusing on the key players and properly assessing the terrain has to be the point of departure for the formulation of American geostrategy for the long-term management of America's Eurasian geopolitical interests.

Two basic steps are thus required:

- first, to identify the geostrategically dynamic Eurasian states that have the power to cause a potentially important shift in the international distribution of power and to decipher the central external goals of their respective political elites and the likely consequences of their seeking to attain them; and to pinpoint the geopolitically critical Eurasian states whose location and/or existence have catalytic effects either on the more active geostrategic players or on regional conditions;

- second, to formulate specific U.S. policies to offset, co-opt, and/or control the above, so as to preserve and promote vital U.S. interests, and to conceptualize a more comprehensive geostrategy that establishes on a global scale the interconnection between the more specific U.S. policies.

In brief, for the United States, Eurasian geostrategy involves the purposeful management of geostrategically dynamic states and the careful handling of geopolitically catalytic states, in keeping with the twin interests of America in the short-term preservation of its unique global power and in the long-run transformation of it into increasingly institutionalized global cooperation. To put it in a terminology that hearkens back to the more brutal age of ancient empires, the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together.

GEOSTRATEGIC PLAYERS AND GEOPOLITICAL PIVOTS

Active geostrategic players are the states that have the capacity and the national will to exercise power or influence beyond their borders in order to alter—to a degree that affects America's interests—the existing geopolitical state of affairs. They have the potential and/or the predisposition to be geopolitically volatile. For whatever reason—the quest for national grandeur, ideological fulfillment, religious messianism, or economic aggrandizement—some states do seek to attain regional domination or global standing. They are driven by deeply rooted and complex motivations, best explained by Robert Browning's phrase:"... a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" They thus take careful stock of America's power, determine the extent to which their interests overlap or collide with America, and shape their own more limited Eurasian objectives, sometimes in collusion but sometimes in

conflict with America's policies. To the Eurasian states so driven, the United States must pay special attention.

Geopolitical pivots are the states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behavior of geostrategic players. Most often, geopolitical pivots are determined by their geography, which in some cases gives them a special role either in denning access to important areas or in denying resources to a significant player. In some cases, a geopolitical pivot may act as a defensive shield for a vital state or even a region. Sometimes, the very existence of a geopolitical pivot can be said to have very significant political and cultural consequences for a more active neighboring geostrategic player. The identification of the post-Cold War key Eurasian geopolitical pivots, and protecting them, is thus also a crucial aspect of America's global geostrategy.

It should also be noted at the outset that although all geostrategic players tend to be important and powerful countries, not all important and powerful countries are automatically geostrategic players. Thus, while the identification of the geostrategic players is thus relatively easy, the omission from the list that follows of some obviously important countries may require more justification.

In the current global circumstances, at least five key geostrategic players and five geopolitical pivots (with two of the latter perhaps also partially qualifying as players) can be identified on Eurasia's new political map. France, Germany, Russia, China, and India are major and active players, whereas Great Britain, Japan, and Indonesia, while admittedly very important countries, do not so qualify. Ukraine, Azerbaijan, South Korea, Turkey, and Iran play the role of critically important geopolitical pivots, though both Turkey and Iran are to some extent—within their more limited capabilities—also geostrategically active. More will be said about each in subsequent chapters.

At this stage, suffice it to say that in the western extremity of Eurasia the key and dynamic geostrategic players are France and Germany. Both of them are motivated by a vision of a united Eu-

rope, though they differ on how much and in what fashion such a Europe should remain linked to America. But both want to shape something ambitiously new in Europe, thus altering the status quo. France in particular has its own geostrategic concept of Europe, one that differs in some significant respects from that of the United States, and is inclined to engage in tactical maneuvers designed to play off Russia against America and Great Britain against Germany, even while relying on the Franco-German alliance to offset its own relative weakness.

Moreover, both France and Germany are powerful enough and assertive enough to exercise influence within a wider regional radius. France not only seeks a central political role in a unifying Europe but also sees itself as the nucleus of a Mediterranean-North African cluster of states that share common concerns. Germany is increasingly conscious of its special status as Europe's most important states—as the area's economic locomotive and the emerging leader of the European Union (EU). Germany feels it has a special responsibility for the newly emancipated Central Europe, in a manner vaguely reminiscent of earlier notions of a German-led Mitteleuropa. Moreover, both France and Germany consider themselves entitled to represent European interests in dealings with Russia, and Germany even retains, because of its geographic location, at least theoretically, the grand option of a special bilateral accommodation with Russia.

In contrast, Great Britain is not a geostrategic player. It has fewer major options, it entertains no ambitious vision of Europe's future, and its relative decline has also reduced its capacity to play the traditional role of the European balancer. Its ambivalence regarding European unification and its attachment to a waning special relationship with America have made Great Britain increasingly irrelevant insofar as the major choices confronting Europe's future are concerned. London has largely dealt itself out of the European game.

Sir Roy Denman, a former British senior official in the European Commission, recalls in his memoirs that as early as the 1955 conference in Messina, which previewed the formation of a European Union, the official spokesman for Britain flatly asserted to the assembled would-be architects of Europe:

> The future treaty which you are discussing has no chance of being agreed; if it was agreed, it would have no chance of being applied. And if it was applied, it would be totally unacceptable to Britain.... au revoir et bonne chance.[2]

More than forty years later, the above dictum remains essentially the definition of the basic British attitude toward the construction of a genuinely united Europe. Britain's reluctance to participate in the Economic and Monetary Union, targeted for January 1999, reflects the country's unwillingness to identify British destiny with that of Europe. The substance of that attitude was well summarized in the early 1990s as follows:

- Britain rejects the goal of political unification.
- Britain favors a model of economic integration based on free trade.
- Britain prefers foreign policy, security, and defense coordination outside the EC [European Community] framework.
- Britain has rarely maximized its influence with the EC.[3]

Great Britain, to be sure, still remains important to America. It continues to wield some degree of global influence through the Commonwealth, but it is neither a restless major power nor is it motivated by an ambitious vision. It is America's key supporter, a very loyal ally, a vital military base, and a close partner in critically important intelligence activities. Its friendship needs to be nourished, but its policies do not call for sustained attention. It is a retired geostrategic player, resting on its splendid laurels, largely disengaged from the great European adventure in which France and Germany are the principal actors.

The other medium-sized European states, with most being

[2]Roy Denman, *Missed Chances* (London: Cassell, 1996).

[3]In Robert Skidelsky's contribution on "Great Britain and the New Europe," in *From the Atlantic to the Urals*, ed. David P. Calleo and Philip H. Gordon (Arlington, Va.: 1992), p. 145.

members of NATO and/or the European Union, either follow America's lead or quietly line up behind Germany or France, Their policies do not have a wider regional impact, and they are not in a position to alter their basic alignments. At this stage, they are neither geostrategic players nor geopolitical pivots. The same is true of the most important potential Central European member of NATO and the EU, namely, Poland. Poland is too weak to be a geostrategic player, and it has only one option: to become integrated into the West. Moreover, the disappearance of the old Russian Empire and Poland's deepening ties with both the Atlantic alliance and the emerging Europe increasingly give Poland historically unprecedented security, while confining its strategic choices.

Russia, it hardly needs saying, remains a major geostrategic player, in spite of its weakened state and probably prolonged malaise. Its very presence impacts massively on the newly independent states within the vast Eurasian space of the former Soviet Union. It entertains ambitious geopolitical objectives, which it increasingly proclaims openly. Once it has recovered its strength, it will also impact significantly on its western and eastern neighbors. Moreover, Russia has still to make its fundamental geostrategic choice regarding its relationship with America: is it a friend or foe? It may well feel that it has major options on the Eurasian continent in that regard. Much depends on how its internal politics evolve and especially on whether Russia becomes a European democracy or a Eurasian empire again. In any case, it clearly remains a player, even though it has lost some of its "pieces," as well as some key spaces on the Eurasian chessboard.

Similarly, it hardly needs arguing that China is a major player. China is already a significant regional power and is likely to entertain wider aspirations, given its history as a major power and its view of the Chinese state as the global center. The choices China makes are already beginning to affect the geopolitical distribution of power in Asia, while its economic momentum is bound to give it both greater physical power and increasing ambitions. The rise of a "Greater China" will not leave the Taiwan issue dormant, and that will inevitably impact on the American position in the Far East. The dismantling of the Soviet Union has also created on the western edge of China a series of states, regarding which the Chinese

leaders cannot be indifferent. Thus, Russia will also be much affected by China's more active emergence on the world scene.

The eastern periphery of Eurasia poses a paradox. Japan is clearly a major power in world affairs, and the American-Japanese alliance has often—and correctly—been defined as America's most important bilateral relationship. As one of the very top economic powers in the world, Japan clearly possesses the potential for the exercise of first-class political power. Yet it does not act on this, eschewing any aspirations for regional domination and preferring instead to operate under American protection. Like Great Britain in the case of Europe, Japan prefers not to become engaged in the politics of the Asian mainland, though at least a partial reason for this is the continued hostility of many fellow Asians to any Japanese quest for a regionally preeminent political role.

This self-restrained Japanese political profile in turn permits the United States to play a central security role in the Far East. Japan is thus not a geostrategic player, though its obvious potential for quickly becoming one—especially if either China or America were suddenly to alter its current policies—imposes on the United States a special obligation to carefully nurture the American-Japanese relationship. It is not Japanese foreign policy that America must watch, but it is Japan's self-restraint that America must very subtly cultivate. Any significant reduction in American-Japanese political ties would impact directly on the region's stability.

The case for not listing Indonesia as a dynamic geostrategic player is easier to make. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia is the most important country, but even in the region itself, its capacity for projecting significant influence is limited by the relatively underdeveloped state of the Indonesian economy, its continued internal political uncertainties, its dispersed archipelago, and its susceptibility to ethnic conflicts that are exacerbated by the central role exercised in its internal financial affairs by the Chinese minority. At some point, Indonesia could become an important obstacle to Chinese southward aspirations. That eventuality has already been recognized by Australia, which once feared Indonesian expansionism but lately has begun to favor closer Australian-Indonesian security cooperation. But a period of political consolidation and

continued economic success is needed before Indonesia can be viewed as the regionally dominant actor.

In contrast, India is in the process of establishing itself as a regional power and views itself as potentially a major global player as well. It also sees itself as a rival to China. That may be a matter of overestimating its own long-term capabilities, but India is unquestionably the most powerful South Asian state, a regional hegemon of sorts. It is also a semisecret nuclear power, and it became one not only in order to intimidate Pakistan but especially to balance China's possession of a nuclear arsenal. India has a geostrategic vision of its regional role, both vis-à-vis its neighbors and in the Indian Ocean. However, its ambitions at this stage only peripherally intrude on America's Eurasian interests, and thus, as a geostrategic player, India is not—at least, not to the same degree as either Russia or China—a source of geopolitical concern.

Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. Russia without Ukraine can still strive for imperial status, but it would then become a predominantly Asian imperial state, more likely to be drawn into debilitating conflicts with aroused Central Asians, who would then be resentful of the loss of their recent independence and would be supported by their fellow Islamic states to the south. China would also be likely to oppose any restoration of Russian domination over Central Asia, given its increasing interest in the newly independent states there. However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia. Ukraine's loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central Europe, transforming Poland into the geopolitical pivot on the eastern frontier of a united Europe.

Despite its limited size and small population, Azerbaijan, with its vast energy resources, is also geopolitically critical. It is the cork in the bottle containing the riches of the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia. The independence of the Central Asian states can be rendered nearly meaningless if Azerbaijan becomes fully

subordinated to Moscow's control. Azerbaijan's own and very significant oil resources can also be subjected to Russian control, once Azerbaijan's independence has been nullified. An independent Azerbaijan, linked to Western markets by pipelines that do not pass through Russian-controlled territory, also becomes a major avenue of access from the advanced and energy-consuming economies to the energy rich Central Asian republics. Almost as much as in the case of Ukraine, the future of Azerbaijan and Central Asia is also crucial in defining what Russia might or might not become.

Turkey and Iran are engaged in establishing some degree of influence in the Caspian Sea-Central Asia region, exploiting the retraction of Russian power. For that reason, they might be considered as geostrategic players. However, both states confront serious domestic problems, and their capacity for effecting major regional shifts in the distribution of power is limited. They are also rivals and thus tend to negate each other's influence. For example, in Azerbaijan, where Turkey has gained an influential role, the Iranian posture (arising out of concern over possible Azeri national stirrings within Iran itself) has been more helpful to the Russians.

Both Turkey and Iran, however, are primarily important geopolitical pivots. Turkey stabilizes the Black Sea region, controls access from it to the Mediterranean Sea, balances Russia in the Caucasus, still offers an antidote to Muslim fundamentalism, and serves as the southern anchor for NATO. A destabilized Turkey would be likely to unleash more violence in the southern Balkans, while facilitating the reimposition of Russian control over the newly independent states of the Caucasus. Iran, despite the ambiguity of its attitude toward Azerbaijan, similarly provides stabilizing support for the new political diversity of Central Asia. It dominates the eastern shoreline of the Persian Gulf, while its independence, irrespective of current Iranian hostility toward the United States, acts as a barrier to any long-term Russian threat to American interests in the Persian Gulf region.

Finally, South Korea is a Far Eastern geopolitical pivot. Its close links to the United States enable America to shield Japan and thereby to keep Japan from becoming an independent and major military power, without an overbearing American presence within

Japan itself. Any significant change in South Korea's status, either through unification and/or through a shift into an expanding Chinese sphere of influence, would necessarily alter dramatically America's role in the Far East, thus altering Japan's as well. In addition, South Korea's growing economic power also makes it a more important "space" in its own right, control over which becomes increasingly valuable.

The above list of geostrategic players and geopolitical pivots is neither permanent nor fixed. At times, some states might have to be added or subtracted. Certainly, in some respects, the case could be made that Taiwan, or Thailand, or Pakistan, or perhaps Kazakstan or Uzbekistan should also be included in the latter category. However, at this stage, the case for none of the above seems compelling. Changes in the status of any of them would represent major events and involve some shifts in the distribution of power, but it is doubtful that the catalytic consequences would be far-reaching. The only exception might involve the issue of Taiwan, if one chooses to view it apart from China. Even then, that issue would only arise if China were to use major force to conquer the island, in successful defiance of the United States, thereby threatening more generally America's political credibility in the Far East. The probability of such a course of events seems low, but that consideration still has to be kept in mind when framing U.S. policy toward China.

CRITICAL CHOICES AND POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

The Identification of the central players and key pivots helps to define America's grand policy dilemmas and to anticipate the potential major challenges on the Eurasian supercontinent. These can be summarized, before more comprehensive discussion in subsequent chapters, as involving five broad issues:

- What kind of Europe should America prefer and hence promote?
- What kind of Russia is in America's interest, and what and how much can America do about it?

- What are the prospects for the emergence in Central Eurasia of a new "Balkans," and what should America do to minimize the resulting risks?

- What role should China be encouraged to assume in the Far East, and what are the implications of the foregoing not only for the United States but also for Japan?

- What new Eurasian coalitions are possible, which might be most dangerous to U.S. interests, and what needs to be done to preclude them?

The United States has always professed its fidelity to the cause of a united Europe. Ever since the days of the Kennedy administration, the standard invocation has been that of "equal partnership." Official Washington has consistently proclaimed its desire to see Europe emerge as a single entity, powerful enough to share with America both the responsibilities and the burdens of global leadership.

That has been the established rhetoric on the subject. But in practice, the United States has been less clear and less consistent. Does Washington truly desire a Europe that is a genuinely equal partner in world affairs, or does it prefer an unequal alliance? For example, is the United States prepared to share leadership with Europe in the Middle East, a region not only much closer geographically to Europe than to America but also one in which several European states have long-standing interests? The issue of Israel instantly comes to mind. U.S.-European differences over Iran and Iraq have also been treated by the United States not as an issue between equals but as a matter of insubordination.

Ambiguity regarding the degree of American support for European unity also extends to the issue of how European unity is to be defined, especially concerning which country, if any, should lead a united Europe. Washington has not discouraged London's divisive posture regarding Europe's integration, though Washington has also shown a clear preference for German—rather than French—leadership in Europe. That is understandable, given the traditional thrust of French policy, but the preference has also had the effect

of encouraging the occasional appearance of a tactical Franco-British entente in order to thwart Germany, as well as periodic French flirtation with Moscow in order to offset the American-German coalition.

The emergence of a truly united Europe—especially if that should occur with constructive American support—will require significant changes in the structure and processes of the NATO alliance, the principal link between America and Europe. NATO provides not only the main mechanism for the exercise of U.S. influence regarding European matters but the basis for the politically critical American military presence in Western Europe. However, European unity will require that structure to adjust to the new reality of an alliance based on two more or less equal partners, instead of an alliance that, to use traditional terminology, involves essentially a hegemon and its vassals. That issue has so far been largely skirted, despite the modest steps taken in 1996 to enhance within NATO the role of the Western European Union (WEU), the military coalition of the Western European states. A real choice in favor of a united Europe will thus compel a far-reaching reordering of NATO, inevitably reducing the American primacy within the alliance.

In brief, a long-range American geostrategy for Europe will have to address explicitly the issues of European unity and real partnership with Europe. An America that truly desires a united and hence also a more independent Europe will have to throw its weight behind those European forces that are genuinely committed to Europe's political and economic integration. Such a strategy will also mean junking the last vestiges of the once-hallowed U.S.-U.K. special relationship.

A policy for a united Europe will also have to address—though jointly with the Europeans—the highly sensitive issue of Europe's geographic scope. How far eastward should the European Union extend? And should the eastern limits of the EU be synonymous with the eastern front line of NATO? The former is more a matter for a European decision, but a European decision on that issue will have direct implications for a NATO decision. The latter, however, engages the United States, and the U.S. voice in NATO is still decisive. Given the growing consensus regarding the desirability of admitting the nations of Central Europe into both the EU and NATO,

the practical meaning of this question focuses attention on the future status of the Baltic republics and perhaps also that of Ukraine.

There is thus an important overlap between the European dilemma discussed above and the second one pertaining to Russia. It is easy to respond to the question regarding Russia's future by professing a preference for a democratic Russia, closely linked to Europe. Presumably, a democratic Russia would be more sympathetic to the values shared by America and Europe and hence also more likely to become a junior partner in shaping a more stable and cooperative Eurasia. But Russia's ambitions may go beyond the attainment of recognition and respect as a democracy. Within the Russian foreign policy establishment (composed largely of former Soviet officials), there still thrives a deeply ingrained desire for a special Eurasian role, one that would consequently entail the subordination to Moscow of the newly independent post-Soviet states.

In that context, even friendly western policy is seen by some influential members of the Russian policy-making community as designed to deny Russia its rightful claim to a global status. As two Russian geopoliticians put it:

> [T]he United States and the NATO countries—while sparing Russia's self-esteem to the extent possible, but nevertheless firmly and consistently—are destroying the geopolitical foundations which could, at least in theory, allow Russia to hope to acquire the status as the number two power in world politics that belonged to the Soviet Union.

Moreover, America is seen as pursuing a policy in which

> the new organization of the European space that is being engineered by the West is, in essence, built on the idea of supporting, in this part of the world, new, relatively small and weak national states through their more or less close rapprochement with NATO, the EC, and so forth.[4]

[H]A. Bogaturov and V. Kremenyuk (both senior scholars in the Institute of the United States and Canada), in "Current Relations and Prospects for Interaction Between Russia and the United States," *Nezauisimaya Gazeta,* June 28,1996.

The above quotations define well—even though with some animus—the dilemma that the United States faces. To what extent should Russia be helped economically—which inevitably strengthens Russia politically and militarily—and to what extent should the newly independent states be simultaneously assisted in the defense and consolidation of their independence? Can Russia be both powerful and a democracy at the same time? If it becomes powerful again, will it not seek to regain its lost imperial domain, and can it then be both an empire and a democracy?

U.S. policy toward the vital geopolitical pivots of Ukraine and Azerbaijan cannot skirt that issue, and America thus faces a difficult dilemma regarding tactical balance and strategic purpose. Internal Russian recovery is essential to Russia's democratization and eventual Europeanization. But any recovery of its imperial potential would be inimical to both of these objectives. Moreover, it is over this issue that differences could develop between America and some European states, especially as the EU and NATO expand. Should Russia be considered a candidate for eventual membership in either structure? And what then about Ukraine? The costs of the exclusion of Russia could be high—creating a self-fulfilling prophecy in the Russian mindset—but the results of dilution of either the EU or NATO could also be quite destabilizing.

Another major uncertainty looms in the large and geopolitically fluid space of Central Eurasia, maximized by the potential vulnerability of the Turkish-Iranian pivots. In the area demarcated on the following map from Crimea in the Black Sea directly eastward along the new southern frontiers of Russia, all the way to the Chinese province of Xinjiang, then down to the Indian Ocean and thence westward to the Red Sea, then northward to the eastern Mediterranean Sea and back to Crimea, live about 400 million people, located in some twenty-five states, almost all of them ethnically as well as religiously heterogeneous and practically none of them politically stable. Some of these states may be in the process of acquiring nuclear weapons.

This huge region, torn by volatile hatreds and surrounded by competing powerful neighbors, is likely to be a major battlefield, both for wars among nation-states and, more likely, for protracted ethnic and religious violence. Whether India acts as a restraint or whether it takes advantage of some opportunity to impose its will

on Pakistan will greatly affect the regional scope of the likely conflicts. The internal strains within Turkey and Iran are likely not only to get worse but to greatly reduce the stabilizing role these states are capable of playing within this volcanic region. Such developments will in turn make it more difficult to assimilate the new Central Asian states into the international community, while also adversely affecting the American-dominated security of the Persian Gulf region. In any case, both America and the international community may be faced here with a challenge that will dwarf the recent crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

A possible challenge to American primacy from Islamic fundamentalism could be part of the problem in this unstable region. By exploiting religious hostility to the American way of life and taking advantage of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Islamic fundamentalism could undermine several pro-Western Middle Eastern governments and eventually jeopardize American regional interests,