



THIRD EDITION

GEOPOLITICS

THE GEOGRAPHY OF
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

SAUL BERNARD COHEN

Geopolitics

*The Geography of
International Relations*

Third Edition

SAUL BERNARD COHEN

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Rowman & Littlefield

A wholly owned subsidiary of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706

www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB, United Kingdom

Copyright © 2015 by Rowman & Littlefield

First edition 2003. Second edition 2009.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cohen, Saul Bernard.

Geopolitics : the geography of international relations / Saul Bernard Cohen. — Third edition.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4422-2349-3 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-4422-2350-9 (pbk. : alk. paper) —

ISBN 978-1-4422-2351-6 (electronic) 1. Geopolitics. 2. World politics. 3. Ethnic relations.

4. Security, International. 5. International relations. 6. Low-intensity conflicts (Military science)

I. Title.

JC319.C62 2015

320.1'2—dc23

2014029230



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

Geopolitics

Figures

2.1	Mackinder's World: 1904	18
2.2	Mackinder's World: 1919	20
2.3	Mackinder's World: 1943	21
2.4	Changing Heartland Boundaries	22
3.1	The Geopolitical World: Beginning of the Twenty-First Century	45
3.2	The World's Major and Regional Powers	52
4.1	Realm and Regional Changes from the End of World War II to the Present	67
5.1	North and Middle America: Major Geopolitical Features	97
5.2	Keystone XL Pipeline/Bakken Formation	102
6.1	South America: Major Geopolitical Features	166
7.1	Maritime Europe and the Maghreb: Major Geopolitical Features	184
8.1	Heartlandic Russia and Periphery: Major Geopolitical Features	235
8.2	Eurasian Convergence Zone	246
8.3	Ukraine Ethnic Divide	252
9.1	China Air Defense Identification Zone	281
9.2	East Asia: Major Geopolitical Features	286
10.1	Asia-Pacific Rim: Major Geopolitical Features	334
11.1	South Asia: Major Geopolitical Features	361
12.1	Middle East Shatterbelt: Major Geopolitical Features	391
12.2	Sudan/South Sudan Boundary Dispute	414
13.1	Sub-Saharan African Shatterbelt: Major Geopolitical Features	427
14.1	World Geopolitical Map by the First Quarter of the Twenty-First Century	451

Tables

3.1	Second-Order Power Rankings	53
3.2	Gateways and Separatist Areas	57
3.3	Potential Confederations	59
4.1	State Targets of Major Terrorist Actions since World War II	92
5.1	Four Stages of US Geopolitical Development	106
7.1	Maritime Europe Population and Trade in European Union Key States	196
7.2	Potential European States and Quasi States	205
8.1	Post-World War II Soviet Land Annexations	227
10.1	The Asia-Pacific Rim: A Region of Trading States	321
10.2	Asia-Pacific Rim Population and GDP	322
11.1	South Asia Population and Trade	351
12.1	Current Middle East Boundary Disputes	396
12.2	Recent Middle East Dispute Territorial Resolutions	396
12.3	Middle East Irredentism	397
13.1	Sub-Saharan Africa: Current Boundary and Territorial Disputes	429
13.2	Sub-Saharan Africa: Latent Boundary and Territorial Disputes	430

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABM	Antiballistic Missile (Treaty)
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum
ARAMCO	Arab-American Oil Company
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAFTA-DR	Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CASAREM	Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DEW	Distant Early Warning Line
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone (especially Korea)
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (People's Liberation Army)
ENT	Effective National Territory
ERT	Effective Regional Territory
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union

FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan
Frelimo	Mozambique Liberation Front
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GAP	Guneydogu Anadolu Project
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova
GUUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ISI	Interservice Intelligence
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
KIZ	Kaesong Free Trade Industrial Zone
LNG	liquefied natural gas
MAD	mutually assured destruction
MED	mutual economic dependence
Mercosur	Mercado Común del Sur
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
MSD	mutual strategic dependence
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
*NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMD	National Missile Defense (system)
NMS	new member states of the European Union
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OMS	old member states of the European Union
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAN	National Action Party (Mexico)
PEMEX	Petróleos Mexicanos
PJAK	Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê (Party for Freedom and Life in Kurdistan)
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Turkish Workers Party)
R&D	research and development
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	South African Development Community
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitations Talks
SDF	(Japanese) Self-Defense Force
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic

START II	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UGV	unmanned ground vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (Union of South American Nations)
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for Total Independence of Angola)
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT	value-added tax
WTO	World Trade Organization

Contents

List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	x
1 Overview	1
Geopolitical Analysis	1
Four Pillars of Power	2
Hierarchical Order of Power	3
Impact of Geography	4
Geopolitical Map of the Future	6
Geopolitics and Geographical Change	7
Developmental Stages	9
Globalization	11
Notes	13
2 Survey of Geopolitics	15
Definitions	15
Stages of Modern Geopolitics	16
Conclusion	33
Notes	33
3 Geopolitical Structure and Theory	37
Structure	38
Proliferation of National States	55
Geopolitics and General Systems	59
Equilibrium, Turbulence, and World Order	60
Notes	63
4 The Cold War and Its Aftermath	65
Geopolitical Restructuring	65
Phase I: 1945–56	65
Phase II: 1957–79	72
Phase III: 1980–89	83

	The Collapse of the Soviet Superpower	87
	Transition into the Twenty-First Century	88
	Notes	93
5	North and Middle America	95
	The United States	95
	Canada	124
	Economic Exchange	132
	Mexico	136
	Middle America	148
	Notes	159
6	South America	161
	United States–South American Relations	161
	The Geographical Setting	163
	Geopolitical Features	165
	Geopolitical Forces of Separation and Attraction	168
	Prospects for South America’s Geopolitical Independence	172
	Conclusion	177
	Notes	178
7	Maritime Europe and the Maghreb	179
	Geopolitical Features	183
	European Integration	191
	Immigration Patterns	200
	Merging of Eastern and Western Europe within the European Union	203
	State Proliferation	204
	The Maghreb: Maritime Europe’s Strategic Annex	209
	Conclusion	214
	Notes	216
8	Russia and the Eurasian Convergence Zone	217
	The Changing National Territory	220
	Geopolitical Features	234
	The Eurasian Convergence Zone	245
	Eastern Europe	249
	The Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia	257
	Mongolia	264
	Conclusion	265
	Notes	269
9	The East Asia Geostrategic Realm	271
	China	271
	The East Asia Rim Periphery	298
	Conclusion	309
	Notes	312
10	The Asia-Pacific Rim	315
	Evolution of the Region	317
	Linking Australia to Asia Pacifica	319

A Region of Trading States	320
Political Stability and Instability	323
Geopolitical Features	333
Conclusion	342
Notes	347
11 South Asia	349
Historical Background	350
Regional Geopolitical Overview	352
Geopolitical Features	359
Challenges to National and Regional Unity	369
Conclusion	372
Notes	374
12 The Middle East Shatterbelt	375
Modern Colonial Penetration	376
Great Power Rivalry: Cold War Period	378
The Geographical Setting	382
Geopolitical Features	390
Major Conflicts	398
Selected Countries	402
Oil, Pipeline Routes, and Politics	410
Conclusion	411
Notes	416
13 The Sub-Saharan African Shatterbelt	417
Colonial/Imperial Background	418
Postcolonial Political Frameworks	419
Geographical Background	423
Geopolitical Features	426
Regional Subdivisions	433
Southern Africa	434
West Africa	437
Central Africa	440
East Africa and the Horn of Africa	441
Conclusion	443
Notes	445
14 Epilogue	447
Mapping the Future	450
Notes	457
Bibliography	459
Index	467
About the Author	491

CHAPTER 1

Overview

On September 11, 2001, nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked two airliners, crashing them into the New York City World Trade Center and claiming 2,977 victims. A third hijacked plane crashed into the Pentagon building a few minutes later, killing 125 people. Washington's immediate reaction to the bombings was to declare war against the Afghan-based terrorists who were sheltered by the Taliban regime. This war began on October 7, 2001, with air bombing and special strike-force actions.

These attacks exposed the vulnerability of the country that had become the world's sole superpower following the breakup of the Soviet empire in 1989. The bombings triggered a series of developments that have led to geopolitical shifts that have affected the relationships among states and the balance of power in the world.

Geopolitical Analysis

Geopolitical analysis does not predict the timing of events, crises, and flash points that force radical changes in the geopolitical map. Such events have been the sudden invasion of South Korea by North Korea and the popular uprisings that overthrew the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, initiating the Arab Spring. What such analysis can do is focus the attention of policy makers on conditions that are likely to bring about geopolitical change. For example, the attempted rebellion in Bahrain, quashed by Saudi Arabia, was energized by the Arab Spring. The underlying condition was repression of the Shia majority by the Sunni monarchy, aggravated by the large immigrant worker underclass. This set of circumstances is common to the Gulf states. Saudi Arabia's reaction was predictable because its easternmost province is largely Shiite, and Shiite Iran has historic claims to Bahrain. This kind of geopolitical analysis should alert the United States to the fragility of its naval base in Manama, Bahrain, and the advisability of relocating it to the eastern Mediterranean.

Changes in the balance within the international system can also be anticipated by geopolitical analysis. The United States, along with its NATO allies, had early military successes in ousting the Taliban from Afghanistan and two years later launched a war against Iraq, toppling the Saddam Hussein regime. However, the United States soon became bogged down in costly guerrilla warfare that extended into the next decade. Meanwhile, China experienced a meteoric rise as an economic giant.

Four Pillars of Power

A nation's claim to power rests on four pillars: (1) overwhelming military strength and the willingness to use it; (2) surplus economic energy to enable it to provide aid and invest in other states; (3) ideological leadership that serves as a model for other nations; and (4) a cohesive system of governance.

The first pillar is the military. This period of transition from a world dominated by superpowers to a polycentric power system is marked by significant changes in the nature of warfare. The United States, by far the world's strongest traditional military power, has overwhelming strength in tanks, aircraft, naval fleets, and superbly equipped armed forces. Nevertheless, it failed to attain its political goals in Iraq and Afghanistan as guerrilla warfare and terrorism has torn those two countries apart. In Iraq, the American occupation has been unable to impose a peace upon this regionally and ethnically fragmented land. In Afghanistan, US and NATO troops and weaponry, which so easily dislodged the Taliban, were unable to overcome the guerrilla forces in this tribally and ethnically torn country. The Afghan Taliban are poised to regain a powerful foothold within Afghanistan with the withdrawal of US and NATO combat troops from the country in 2014.

US success in killing key al-Qaeda leadership, including Osama bin Laden, who was killed in 2011 by US special strike forces in Abbottabad, western Pakistan, neutralized the centralized al-Qaeda organization in Afghanistan and western Pakistan. Nevertheless, the movement lives on. It has morphed into a decentralized network extending throughout the Middle East, the Maghreb, East Africa, and the African Sahel and has now been superseded by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).

The lessons learned from America's military experience in Afghanistan and Iraq are two-fold. First, soft power may yield greater success than warfare, and second, weapons of warfare are radically changing. In wars against guerrillas and terrorists, drones—unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with surveillance and missile capacities and robots—and unmanned ground vehicle (UGVs), combined with special strike forces and cyberwarfare, have proven more effective than traditional weapons and massed armed forces.

The second pillar, economic capacity, is even more important than the military. The United States, Europe, and Japan have yet to recover fully from the deep recession of 2008. This is reflected in the caution which Washington has recently displayed in responding to political and military crises throughout the world. Its foreign policy has been strongly influenced by high domestic unemployment and huge indebtedness that have preoccupied the country while turmoil rages in the Middle East. The fear that countries like China and Japan will withdraw their bond holdings also tempers Washington's geopolitical actions.

The third pillar is ideological leadership. Americans have taken pride in their ideals, which are a blend of the principles of freedom of expression and religion, concern for human rights, the rewards of free enterprise, and the practice of democracy in governance. Since the founding of the republic, these principles have been widely embraced throughout the world. However, much of US foreign policy has often not been true to them. While preaching democracy, Washington has long supported dictatorships and overthrown governments not to its liking. It has tolerated widespread corruption in supporting allies. The Arab Spring was only the last of the upheavals that laid bare the contradiction between the myth of American exceptionalism and its practice of *realpolitik*.

The fourth pillar is political cohesiveness. In the United States the recent stalemate between the two major parties has been a factor in undermining America's ability to provide

international leadership. A government that can suddenly be shut down, budgets that cannot be agreed upon, and a proposed health system that has divided the nation are poor models for international friends and foes alike.

With respect to these pillars, China, for its part, lacks the capacity to apply military power beyond its contiguous Asian borders. Instead, it relies on economic trade and investment to extend its influence. In doing so, the Chinese have used their sovereign funds to purchase or invest in natural resources throughout the world. While such economic initiatives have been welcomed, the political fallout from these actions has often been rising suspicion and opposition on nationalistic and environmental grounds. Moreover, the need for China to focus on building its own national infrastructure and realign its populace from rural agricultural to urban industrial and service pursuits sets a limit on China's foreign aid capacities. Although the mixture of state and private capitalism as practiced in China has been adopted in many other countries, the repressive nature of the Chinese Communist regime has been widely rejected as an ideological model by people who yearn for individual freedom as well as economic advancement.

Hierarchical Order of Power

Pundits have debated whether the new century is destined to become the Chinese era or whether the United States will retain its global dominance. Recently, this debate faded from the public agenda as it became plain that both countries have exhibited substantial weaknesses along with their inherent strength. The United States is beset by war weariness, economic problems, and political dysfunction. China has failed to match its economic power with commensurate military strength, and its economic growth, overly dependent upon exports, has slowed down. Its repressive Communist regime also has failed to be embraced as a model by other nations of the world.

Instead of a world ordered by superpowers, an international geopolitical system that is emerging is polycentric and polyarchic. It is built on a hierarchical combination of great and regional powers. The major powers are first-order states with the capacities and ambitions to expand their influence beyond the regions within which they are located. Competing with major powers are the regional powers, or second-order states. Their geopolitical reach is regionally confined. The United States, China, the European Union, Russia, and Japan are major powers. Iran, Turkey, Australia, and South Africa are representative examples of regional powers. India and Brazil are at an intermediate stage. While their reach currently is regional, they have the potential to become major powers. In time, they gain enough strength and ambition to try to influence affairs throughout their regions by the application of military and/or economic muscle. Examples are Iran's actions within Iraq and Ethiopia's in Somalia.

A third order of states has also arisen—those with unique ideological or cultural capacities to influence their neighbors. Examples include Cuba and North Korea, whose military power is maintained by ideological rigor. Ukraine derives its third-order status from playing off its two adjoining major powers, Russia and the EU. Fourth-order states are generally incapable of applying pressure upon their neighbors, and those of the fifth order depend upon outside sustenance for survival.

This hierarchical system is dynamic, not static. States such as Nigeria and Venezuela, once regional powers, have lost these positions. Nigeria is torn apart by the conflict between its Christian south and Muslim north so that it possesses little geopolitical energy to influence its neighbors. The government of Venezuela, having lost much of its popular appeal with the

death of its charismatic leader, Hugo Chávez, is mired in debt and plagued by shortages of basic commodities and by inflation.

Without the dominant American superpower to play the role of global peacemaker, prepared to intervene militarily in conflict situations and to invest financial and diplomatic energies aimed at stabilizing the international system, the world is now like a ship without a rudder. Such disequilibrium is inevitable in this period of geopolitical transition. Great and regional powers are focused on redefining their own national security interests, economic strategies, and ideological goals.

Impact of Geography

Geography is the study of the features and patterns formed by the interaction of the natural and human-made environments. An example of a simple feature/pattern relationship is a gorge straddled by a bridge which forms of a transit way. At a more complex level, the features of a coastal embayment located at the edge of a broad basin which is rimmed by the escarpment of a plateau provides the setting for an urban metropolis. Its features, consisting of a port, a dense central city, and suburbs within the basin, extend onto the plateau as exurbia. Collectively these features form a pattern.

The importance of geographic proximity in waging war and conducting trade is reflected in many ways. US launching pads for drones are placed in Djibouti to strike al-Qaeda in Yemen, and France has developed a similar cite in Niger for its operations against terrorists in northern Mali. Empty desert landscapes serve as the locale for space exploration bases, as is the case for Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome in northern Kazakhstan. The US southwest desert is a prime site for military pilot exercises.

Population density is another important geographic consideration in international relations. High densities inhibit drone strikes for fear of causing many civilian casualties. Consequently, such densities provide safe havens for Afghan Taliban leadership in Pakistan's Karachi, with a population of twenty million. Narrow seas, such as the Gulf of Aden, offer targets for pirates based in Somalian fishing ports. The vast deposits of North Sea oil and gas that adjoin the east coast of Scotland encourage Scottish separatists to seek independence from Britain.

Seoul's location so close to the North Korean border influences the cautious diplomatic policies of South Korea toward its erratic northern neighbor. There are countless examples of how geography affects international relations, but none more striking than the geographical fact that the United States is the only great power in the world with access to the two world oceans.

Changes in the natural environment have profound geopolitical implications. Global warming has made possible navigation of Russia's Arctic Northern Sea Route during the summer. With continued global warming, this is likely to evolve into a full-year transit way, strengthening the economic ties between Europe and China. The physiographic features and patterns of ethnic and religious distribution in both Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated the impact of geography upon war and politics. The Afghan war continued to rage because the Taliban and al-Qaeda were able to regroup in the sheltering and welcoming mountainous areas of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of fellow Pashtuns when the focus of US attention shifted to Iraq.

Driven by dreams spun by neoconservative theorists of a US twenty-first century and propelled by the shock of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration embraced with evangelical fervor policies of unilateralism and preemptive war. The action in Afghanistan, undertaken under the umbrella of NATO and with the support of China, Russia, and neighboring Muslim states, conformed to geopolitical reality. This was not the case with Iraq, where the hastily planned and poorly executed war launched in 2003 did not have widespread external support or internal logic. Saudi Arabian opposition forced the United States to abandon all of its strategically important bases early in the action. Turkey refused to join the coalition. It did allow overflights and transshipments of supplies but did not permit land forces to traverse its territory. With the exception of Britain, the input of other coalition forces was trivial. The speedy defeat of Saddam Hussein's army, rather than ending the conflict, unleashed fierce sectarian warfare and widespread hostility toward US occupation. Rationalized as a war against terrorism, the invasion provided a breeding ground for terrorism in a geographic area more accessible than Afghanistan. The Sunni western desert of Iraq hosts "al-Qaeda of Iraq" and other militant Islamic groups which, along with the Shia-Sunni sectarian violence, dragged the United States into a military and political quagmire. By removing the Iraqi Sunni from power, the United States eliminated the region's major bulwark against the spread of Iranian influence in the Arab Middle East.

Whereas the United States may see little strategic value in some parts of the world, it must be sensitive to the concerns of other powers. Australia is an important strategic ally. Yet Washington paid little attention to its vital interest in the conflict in East Timor. The United States sought to appease Indonesia rather than help stop the massacres that took place after the East Timorese voted for independence. This ignored Australia's strategic stake in East Timor because of its proximity to the Australian north and prospective joint development of oil and gas resources within the Timor Sea. While the United States stood back, it was Canberra that pressed for UN intervention and has since assumed the military burden of peacekeeping. Even though Washington may not be moved to act out of humanitarian considerations it considers to be strategically unimportant, it may have to involve itself in deference to the interests of allied regional states that are important to global geopolitical equilibrium.

The geopolitical perspective is dynamic. It evolves as the international system and its operational environment changes. The dynamic nature of geographical settings accounts, to a considerable extent, for changes in geopolitical patterns and features. These settings change in response to such phenomena as the discovery or depletion of natural resources, the movement of people and capital flows, and long-term alterations in climate. Thus, the shift from rural to urban landscapes or from manufacturing to service economies represents geographical change that becomes reflected in changing national ideals and objectives. So does the impact of large-scale immigration. The decline of manufacturing in the United States, its greater reliance on imported goods, its enormous national debt—all have increased the dependency on international trade to the point where "going it alone" as a superpower is not a practical, or even possible, foreign policy. This is a reality that the US administration has confronted in Iraq, Afghanistan, and counterterrorist actions throughout the world as well as in its efforts to contain the spread of nuclear weapons. With respect to the negotiations over Iran's nuclear threats, the participation of the European Union in the imposition of sanctions has been critical.

Geographical dynamism has also influenced changing national and regional outlooks in Maritime Europe as well as in South Korea and Taiwan. In the latter case, the massive outsourcing of manufacturing to mainland China's southern and central coasts has pressed Taipei