

April 26, 2021

Assessment of Geopolitics in the Twenty-First Century: Territories, Identities, and Foreign Policies

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to assess this work. It's overall geographic coverage scope is good though it could have been strengthened further by adding an additional chapter on geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific region covering the strategic and economic interests of this region and how countries as varied as the U.S, Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, and China are impacted by developments in this area which is part of the U.S. military's Indo-Pacific Command.

Phil Kelly's opening essay on U.S. geopolitics ably analyzes historical, contemporary, and emerging factors influencing U.S. geopolitical trends and developments. This assessment stresses the important role played by Halford Mackinder in influencing American geopolitical thinking. Unfortunately, the chapter endnotes contain no references to the 2016 Goldberg work referred to on p. 19 at the beginning of the entry on the Obama presidency. It is also incorrect to say on p. 22 that the Trump Administration returned to an isolationist stance by promoting a United States First (actually, America First) mindset in its withdrawal from selected international agreements. U.S. withdrawal from grievously flawed agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iranian Nuclear Agreement came about because these agreements do not meet U.S. strategic and economic interests and actually provided greater benefit to the interests of powers antagonistic to the U.S. This section of the author's analysis should have noted that the Trump Administration achieved some success in increasing the financial contributions of U.S. allies such as NATO partners to augment their defense spending in order to provide more equitable burden sharing at less cost to U.S. taxpayers. Comments on p. 27 concerning the stability of North American borders should also be augmented by placing emphasis on U.S.-Mexican border region national security problems by stressing how porous foreign national entry policies in Latin American countries can produce the immigration into these regions and the U.S. from other global regions such as Yemen and elsewhere as demonstrated by apprehensions of Yemeni's on the FBI's terrorist watch list on April 5, 2021.

The Russian geopolitics chapter was particularly insightful providing details on the role of Eurasianism and other strands of Russian geopolitical thinking. Unfortunately, there are no references in the endnotes to the Dugin and Panarin works cited on p. 35. Tighter editing would have prevented this. The work could also have been strengthened by discussing how Russia might deal with potential Chinese encroachments into its sparsely populated Far East.

The China chapter places appropriate emphasis on the Belt and Road Initiative. Solid coverage is provided of Beijing's geoeconomic strategy but greater emphasis should be placed on its "Wolf Warrior" coercive diplomatic efforts to gain international influence and on its continuing efforts to militarily dominate the Indo-Pacific region.

Chauprade's chapter on France also contained substantive analysis on the importance of non-European migration to France and how it is changing French demographics and policymaking. It is wise that the author stresses that its historic colonial influence gives France geopolitical influence and power projection in regions as far-flung as South America, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and Pacific Ocean. This chapter's emphasis on French hard and soft power is also appreciated.

Blouet's chapter on British geopolitics stresses the author's long-standing documentation of Halford Mackinder's influence on British foreign and national security policy. It provides a solid overview of how British foreign and national security policies which have been pursued from World War I to the Boris Johnson premiership as the UK begins the complicated challenges of Brexit. The conclusion could also have addressed how a potential Scottish withdrawal from the UK could affect Britain's geopolitical posture and the feasibility of Britain taking a more assertive role in the Indo-Pacific region as a result of Brexit and the building of the *HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales* aircraft carriers may facilitate renewed British power projection outside of Europe.

Hosoda's chapter on Japanese and Chinese geopolitical relations does a good job of examining the factors affecting the interactions between these two countries. I like the use of the term "ocean-space" to describe the critical importance of maritime matters in relations between these two countries and how they affect other major maritime countries like the U.S. and Russia. The emphasis placed on the role of maritime law enforcement vessels (p. 175) is particularly important as China seeks to use these ships as instruments of its power projection and coercion while lessening the possibility of bringing People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) warships into play as power projection assets. The author should also have discussed how China may use artificial intelligence in its power projection efforts and attempts to deter the U.S. and its maritime allies from thwarting Beijing's hegemonic aspirations.

Morgado's concluding chapter on Brazilian geopolitics and South American integration emphasizes that any assessment of global geopolitics must cover South American trends and developments. The reference to Everado Backheuser on p. 188 should clarify what is meant by Beckhauser having a "German mind." Does this mean his analysis was heavily influenced by German geopolitical thinking or does it refer to something else? More clarity would be appreciated. I am familiar with some of the South American geopolitical scholars referenced in this chapter including Golbery do Couto de Silva and Carlos de Meira Mattos but had not heard of Mario Travassos or Therezinha de Castro which helps enhance our awareness of these thinkers. I am also indebted to Morgado's comment on p. 197 that German Nazism was a socialist instead of capitalist ideology which is often conveniently forgotten by analyses of this evil ideology. The maps of various South American regions and how they relate to area geopolitical trends and developments are also very helpful as is analysis of whether Brazil should be viewed as a continental or maritime power.

The cumulative result of these essays are insightful assessments of how classical geopolitics remains a vital means for understanding historic, contemporary, and emerging geopolitical trends and developments as we chronologically progress through the 2020s. They provide detailed background on a geopolitical trends and developments in a wide variety of global regions and can be used as a compass to forecast potentially emerging geopolitical factors such as national and international responses to aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, emerging technological developments such as autonomous weapons and precision guided munitions, the acute financial and human costs of adapting to a post-Covid-19 global environment, and the increasing reluctance of many countries and public opinion in these countries to accept the levels of global integration producing the pandemic.

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