



THE INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY ON NATIONAL STRENGTH

Dr. Preston E. James

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Reviewed by Col E. J. Ingmire, USA on 30 December 1963.

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION--Colonel Vernon M. Buehler, USA, Member of the Faculty, ICAF.....	1
SPEAKER--Dr. Preston E. James, Professor of Geography and Chairman of the Department of Geography, Syracuse University...	1
GENERAL DISCUSSION.....	25

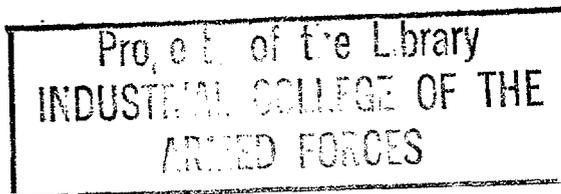
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Reviewed by: Col E. J. Ingmire, USA Date: 30 December 1963.
Reporter--Grace R. O'Toole



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COLONEL BUEHLER: General Stoughton, Gentlemen, Visitors:

Geography has been called the mother of science and the pivot of history. It has also been said that, just as history provides the unifying element of time, so geography provides the unifying element of space.

To speak to us on this subject of geography and its relevance to national strength, we have an eminent geographer, Professor Preston Everett James of Syracuse University.

Professor James.

DR. JAMES: This talk on physical resources would have been a little easier if I had given it in 1936 instead of 1963, because in 1936 people could list the physical resources of a country, including the installed capacity to manufacture things, and on the basis of this weigh and predict the military capabilities of that country. Military strength was equated really with industrial capacity.

Now this situation, for better or for worse, is entirely changed. You have to keep up with some of the fundamental concepts involved in the interpretation of the meaning of resources. I would suggest the following concept as guiding your thinking about the significance of resources and of the physical habitat in which countries are imbedded.



This principle is as follows: That the significance of basic, physical, geographic elements as conditioners of political, economic, social, and cultural groups is a function of the attitudes, objectives, and technical skills of people. That means that you cannot talk about physical features as having any permanent influence on what people do.

Take for example the case of a barrier. It says in the Correspondence Course, which I have just looked at briefly, that mountains constitute barriers, that steep slopes constitute barriers, and therefore you identify the steep slopes and you know you have a barrier. This is not true.

In the history of Latin America, for example, the major barriers to movement up until the middle of the 19th century were dense forests, not slopes. The Portuguese and Spaniards made no bones whatsoever about riding their mules up the steepest slopes. Slopes meant nothing, but forests were barriers. They stayed away from broad areas of dense forests. They didn't like forests or know how to operate in them.

When the railroad came in this changed the picture. Forests meant nothing to railroad engineers but slopes took on a new meaning.

Or take the case of agricultural capacity of a country. In Brazil it has been estimated that something like 90 percent of Brazil is arable, meaning it can be cultivated. Now, this is true, as long as you cultivate Brazil with a hoe. They cultivate slopes up to 35 degrees with a hoe. But, when you change from the hoe to the plow, you can no longer cultivate a slope that is more than about 10 or 11 degrees. Consequently, the

arability of Brazil changes from 90 percent to about 15 percent. It is the same terrain with the same surface configuration, but it has new meaning because of changes in technology.

The same thing can be applied, of course, to military matters. In World War I the natural defenses of Paris were of the utmost importance. The Germans had to advance toward Paris against a series of outfacing quaestors. These steep slopes pointing away from Paris were, each one of them, the scene of major combats, like the Battle of Verdun, which was the efforts of the Germans to climb onto those slopes. In World War II those slopes didn't mean anything at all. The strong points were not the high ground but the little villages in which all the paved roads came together. When you are running an army on foot and with horses, terrain means one thing. When you are running an army with mechanized vehicles it means something else.

For Heaven's sake, when World War III comes along, don't interpret terrain in World War II terms. In the intelligence business, in which I have been associated for as long as I have been a professor, the intelligence people--I hope I don't step on any toes at this point; I'll step on my own toes--have been interpreting the wrong war. They were interpreting World War I when they let the Battle of the Bulge take place. The Ardennes was supposed to be difficult for anybody to pass through. On paved roads you can pass through the Ardennes without even knowing it is there. That had to be demonstrated.

This is the result of the kind of thinking that says that I am supposed to talk to you about the influence of physical features on war and on national power. I can't do this, you see, without talking about the attitudes, objectives, and technical skills of people. The attitudes, objectives, and technical skills cover the subject matter of all the lectures in this course. Now, I am not stepping on the toes of all these other lecturers. My contribution to this thing would be to put the subject matter of those other lectures into a regional setting, and to tell you how all of the insights you gain from the study of demography and of economic development and of cultural attitudes fit together in Western Europe, how they fit together in the Soviet Union, and what is the significance of the particular combination of all these insights that characterize the different regions of the world.

Now, you have read, I believe, that little paper I did in the Military Review, in which the arguments for these major culture regions are set forth. This regional scheme which I talked about in there and which I'll have on the screen in a minute, is a division of the world into major groups of countries, and these areas are defined in terms of a particular thing, namely, that we are in a period of major change in technology. This we call the industrial revolution and also the democratic revolution. These are two revolutionary movements that began about the middle of the 18th century and are continuing. These revolutions are not over. Some historians will give you an end date on the

industrial revolution. This is because they are looking at Europe. If you look at the geography of this, you find that both of these revolutions started about the middle of the 18th century around the North Sea in Europe, and they have been spreading unevenly from this central area or origin. This last 200 years of world history is unique--well, not unique, because there were two other periods in human history when technical change was equally rapid and fundamental, namely, when agriculture was first developed as opposed to hunting and fishing, and, second, when people began to live in cities and learn how to govern communities with armies to keep the peace, as in Babylon and Egypt--ancient civilizations. Those were periods of enormous, sudden, cultural change in between long periods of little change.

Now let's face it. We are at the beginning of one of the third major areas, major periods of cultural change. I mean by this technology affecting the way people live, how they group in cities, affecting the thing that Professor Hauser talked to you about, and the population explosion. This is a result of the industrial revolution and it is part of it--the concentration of people in factories, and urban pursuits as opposed to farming. This is economic development, which is a part of the whole process of industrial change.

When I say "industrial revolution," I refer to all of these changes--the change from the belief in magic to the belief in science and engineering. These things can be put on maps. You can take the world map

decade by decade since 1769 and you can show the spread of these ideas which, listed together, constitute the industrial revolution. Similarly, the democratic revolution, the demand for the dignity of the individual, the right to equal treatment before the^{law,} and all the rest of these things which constitute the democratic revolution originated in France, the Netherlands, and England, and were carried forward in our Constitution, and were carried forward more rapidly even in Australia and New Zealand.

This democratic revolution also can be put on a map. You can define it and you can draw a line around those areas where it has made an impact. The result is that the world today is differentiated into 11 areas in each of which there is a series of more or less related problems and conditions which are homogeneous, which result from the impact of these new revolutions on the pre-existing way of living in these areas.

Now let's look and see what these areas are. (Slide) These are the 11 cultural regions that appeared in the article in the Military Review. Let's talk about each one of them and see how the principles and conditions that were described to you in the various lectures in this course before this one combine and characterize each one of these regions. Or, putting it in more specific terms for your own practical needs, how do you as officers dealing with economic development and logistics have to face problems that are different in these 11 regions of the world?

Well, we can leave out one of them, because the Pacific culture region is unimportant--small islands that might have special importance if you had to fight a war over there again. But this is a relatively

unimportant one. Let us begin over here with Europe. Here is the European culture region. Around the North Sea is where these revolutionary movements first took place. The interesting thing is that in Europe you had a strongly developed, pre-industrial, pre-democratic set of institutions. Here you had countries in which the monarchies were well established. You had countries in which all of the ideas that characterized the pre-industrial period were firmly implanted, including the idea of national self-sufficiency. There was a strong development of nationalism. This is where nationalism was invented.

Portugal was the world's first nation state. France was the second one. Very quickly, in the period of the 18th and 19th centuries, a series of states were built up, each one of which had a particular national ideal and national tradition. Nationalism became the important idea of Europe.

Now, the industrial revolution and the democratic revolution bumped head on into strong resistance in Europe. This is a characteristic of the European region, namely, that these ideas and needs of the industrial revolution and the democratic revolution were resisted. The democratic revolution was resisted in the movements which we describe as fascism and communism, both of which originated in the European culture region. These are reactions against the ideas of democracy.

In the industrial world, industrialization and the industrial revolution require that a country must reach out to the whole world for the lowest-cost sources of industrial raw materials. It is not possible to operate the industrial society and pay high costs for raw materials simply

because you want to get them from your own national territory. This is the surest way to undermine the economy. If the economy is to function to bring a higher level of living to all the people involved, this requires a reduction in the cost of raw materials.

As long as these 18 countries of Western, Northern, and Southern Europe tried to maintain self-sufficiency in an economic sphere, then the result of the industrial revolution in bringing a better level of living to people could not be realized. Europe was poor; people were restless; and the countries of Europe had economies which were anything but sound.

Of course Hitler made this thing worse in the period before the war, because he actually set up national self-sufficiency as a goal and forced many of the other countries to follow suit. It all started with Napoleon. Napoleon subsidized sugar beets and thereby put the cane sugar business in the tropics out of business because of the government-subsidy sugar beets, because he wanted sugar available without having to transport it overseas. He made it available and he made the sugar-beet business into one that was competitive with the sugarcane, but it would not have been without the subsidy which was based on the idea that France should be independent of imports from other countries.

If you went back to the days of Babylon you would say that no country should be strong militarily unless it had command of most of its necessary resources. So that strength and self-sufficiency went together.

You can't talk this way any more. You can't put those words

together. A self-sufficient country cannot be strong because even the largest countries depend upon raw materials from other sources if they are interested in producing goods at low cost and permitting their use by the citizens widely--in other words, developing an affluent society.

The Soviet Union can become strong militarily, but, if you want to see poverty in action, go and see the way they pay labor in the Soviet Union. They put 30 percent of their gross national product back into capital formation by depriving the workers of a reasonable share of the economic reward, which they do even more effectively than the British capitalists did in the early part of the 19th century. The level of living of people in the Soviet Union is miserable. This is how they get the savings necessary to put money into new capital formation. This is not a market economy functioning properly. It is one that doesn't function.

In Europe the market could not function until 1957. In 1957, amazingly--how it happened I don't know--the Chamber of Deputies ratified the Common Market, the economic community, and six nations set up an economic community. I am sure that many of you saw Europe before 1957 and have seen it since 1957. It is simply incredible, the change in the way people live that has taken place as a result of the Common Market. It has resulted in a tremendous rise in the level of living and the level of consumption and the rate of production. Just as soon as these people recognized that they could not be self-sufficient and strong, immediately

the economy took a bound up.

Now, this is a characteristic of the European region. It has plenty of resources, except oil, all the resources it needs, and it has a tremendous concentration of skill and scientific and engineering ability. If you pool all of this and forget about national boundaries, you can produce in Europe a third world power, which would be the best way to keep the peace that I know of.

The Soviet Union, of course, has adopted the policy of advancing the industrial revolution as rapidly as it possibly can be done, by putting in such an incredible amount as 30 percent of the gross national product into capital formation. That's a larger proportion than the British did in the early days of the British industrial revolution. The result is a tremendous growth of industries, a tremendous percentage of productive increase, but not consumer goods. These are capital goods, armaments, and things of this sort. The production of housing lags behind. The production of vacuum cleaners lags a long way behind. But the Soviet Union is also categorically denied all elements of the democratic revolution.

How come that such a tremendous area exists? Look at its size. Maybe you are accustomed to look at it on a Mercator map, which greatly exaggerates the size. If you want to have nightmares, just sit and look at a Mercator map and you will find one in back of every general officer's desk in the Pentagon. One thing I'd like to do is have permission to go in there and remove every one of those Mercator maps,

because it gives such a wrong impression of what the world is really like. But here is a map that shows where the Soviet Union lies with respect to Anglo-America, and also it shows it in its proper size. It's still big, the biggest area in the world. How come it's that big? It's not composed of one nation, it is not one people. It's no more one-people than Europe, and yet Europe is divided into all these little political divisions, scrapping with each other. Charlemagne tried to put Europe together and failed. The Holy Roman Empire tried to put it together. Nobody has ever succeeded in putting Europe together in one piece.

How come the Russians could do it? The Russians did it under the Czars. And this was a notably weak and inefficient government. They extended the control of the Russians all the way over there, and of course over as far as California. How could a weak, imperfect government like this put together so large an extent of territory into one political union and keep it this way?

Well, now, here is a case where some barriers come in. If there is any one word that characterizes the Soviet culture region it is isolation from the rest of the world. You don't see this on the map unless you know something more about the map than just what shows here. It looks as if the Soviet Union and China were very close together. They are not. They are very far apart.

What is it that determines whether there is a barrier between one country and another? Believe me, it's not mountains. It's not deserts.

These things exist all along this border, from over in here, all the way around the edge of this country, from over here near the Caspian Sea. All the way over here in this nation there are some of the world's most rugged mountains, and in back of these mountains are some of the great dry, extended deserts of the world. That is true.

But this wouldn't constitute a barrier. A barrier means that you can't go as a human being from one place to the other easily. There are not many people going from one place to the other. If you had roads, railroads, and airlines, then mountains wouldn't constitute barriers. There was a time when our Rocky Mountains constituted a barrier, but not today. You can go through them without even knowing it. As far as motor trucks are concerned, they go across mountain areas in the United States, and they hardly slow down except in some of the major passes.

There are only five railroads that cross the border of the Soviet Union and China. From the corner over here where Afghanistan and China come together with the Soviet Union, all the way across to Vladivostok, there are only five railroad lines that cross that boundary line. One of them, the one over here, that goes from Tashkent through the Perdana depression and on into China isn't built all the way across China. It only goes into China. There are some 2,000 or 2,000 miles of railroad that need to be built to hook this up.

We find a railroad that crosses into Mongolia and goes to Peking. Another railroad crosses into Mongolia and stops. There is another railroad that goes across this part of China--Manchuria--and goes back

to the Soviet Union again, giving it two crossings--two crossings with one railroad.

Well, that's why these countries are far apart, because there are no railroads, no roads. Not a single, all-weather, paved highway crosses this zone. If there were dense populations of people on both sides of the mountains demanding transportation, the mountains wouldn't stop it. It isn't the mountains. It is what people are doing--their attitudes, objectives, and technical skills--that determines that this is a barrier zone. It happens to be associated with mountains and deserts.

The Soviet Union, then, of course, is isolated on the north by ice and snow and fog. It has the longest coastline in the world, and no ice-free ports. That's the old story. The Soviet Union, under the Czars and before the Communists, was put together in sort of a vacuum in the absence of pressures from outside. If this had not been true and if the Chinese had moved north instead of south in their expansion from their culture hearth, then the Czars could not possibly have stood up against the invaders. But there were no invaders. Ever since the Tartars came out of Mongolia there has been no major invasion into this area. The only invasion came from the West.

Therefore, the Soviet Union is deeply concerned about Eastern Europe, which was set up originally by the Western Powers for the purpose of guarding against the Communists. After World War II these same countries were taken over for purposes of guarding against the Western nations.

It's a sort of barrier zone, a marked zone of intermediate countries to keep separate people who might attack each other.

What about Anglo-America? Anglo-America is the United States and Canada. Well, one of the outstanding features of Anglo-America, which is simply amazing when you study this in detail, is the way in which our resources have been located in exactly the right places as they became demanded and needed by changing technology.

Take for example the manufacture of steel or iron. In the first early days of the iron business they needed iron in New England to build ships. They needed nails, anchors, chains, and bells. The resources were right at hand in New England to supply this type of industry, namely, bog iron ore, hauled out of the bottom of glacial lakes with grappling hooks. This bog iron ore is a low-grade laminate which, placed in a retort with charcoal from the forest, and limestone, which they got from clam shells--they dug up the clam shells and the oyster shells and this is how they got the limestone--over fire, gave them iron.

Now this is absolutely no good. From the time of the Revolutionary War it was necessary to get iron much more rapidly and much better resources. By this time settlement had moved westward, and Pennsylvania had many iron deposits and had also coal. In the period before and during the Civil War when iron and steel were needed, they had to be produced in accordance with the technology of those days, with anthracite coal, because bituminous wouldn't stand up under the load of iron ore piled up on top. There was the anthracite in Eastern Pennsylvania, just where the settlements

were, just where the railroads were, just where the industry needed coal. There was anthracite. These small iron forges, iron deposits, which were too small to supply a modern industry were excellent for that period.

Then, after the Civil War, with the expansion of railroads westward, it became necessary to get high-grade steel in vastly increased quantities. In 1858 they invented the method whereby bituminous coal was made into coke and could then be used to manufacture steel. This had never been possible. It's just 100 years that this has been possible. This is the period when the Ruhr came into being as an industrial area, after 1860. This is the time when we were at Pittsburgh and Cleveland and there was a vast resource of bituminous coal. It would not have been available before that. We would find the anthracite away off from where we needed it. But now, as we moved westward there was the bituminous coal when it was needed. Furthermore, there was the Mesabi Range on the other side of the Great Lakes, where iron ore could be cheaply and quickly bought for the coal, because in those days it took twice as much coal as iron ore to make steel. Iron ore came across the Lakes to the coal fields and there were the industrial cities, there were the railroads being built, and there was the demand for steel and the production of steel at the lowest-cost arrangements.

What is going to happen today? Coal has been a major resource for 100 years. Now they are going to make steel with an oxygen process--no coal. Is coal going to be listed as a natural resource? Well, yes,

for making nylon stockings. It's very important for chemicals and for pharmaceuticals and as a raw material in industry, but not as a fuel, unless it is used locally. All economic geography based on coal resource has now to be reanalyzed in terms of this new technology which is just coming in, in the ^{oxygen} process of steel-making.

Well, I could go on with this at length. The prairies are another beautiful example of this, the great, black soil that lies west of Chicago. These things were of no use until the invention of barbed wire in 1873. After the invention of barbed wire, all of a sudden this vast agricultural area became a first-class land instead of a third-class land. There we were on the edge of it at that moment, ready to move settlers in. This is just the right place geographically for the lowest-cost development.

This has been the history of the United States. I could go on at great length about this, because the same thing applies in the South and other parts of the United States and Canada. We of course have had a built-in problem with respect to the democratic revolution in the United States, but no opposition in the Anglo-American region to the development of democracy. The opposition came as the result of the legacy of slavery. We have race problems in the United States which were added to this culture region and not inherent in it and which have to be solved. But, nevertheless, let's not overlook the fact that, in spite of the race problem, which we all recognize is serious, and in spite of the fact in swearing to uphold the Constitution we sometimes, in some

places, some people, cross our fingers with respect to the demands of the Constitution, never before in human history and in no other part of the world have so many people at one time subscribed to the principles of the democratic revolution as in the United States.

If we heralded the accomplishments instead of the shortcomings, it would create a very different image around the world of the United States.

Well, what about Latin America? Latin America is almost in every respect the opposite. Latin American resources are superlative but poorly placed. Where they have iron ore there is no coal. Where they have magnificent, potential water power, it is too far away from any place that wants to use it. When they have a river which is the world's longest navigable river, there aren't any people along it. Where you have the world's finest, natural harbor in Rio de Janeiro, right back of it of it is the greatest continent, which makes transportation into the hinterland costly and difficult.

I could go on like this. Latin America--it is amazing how in this area the resources made necessary by the changing skills are almost always in the wrong places, so that it makes high-cost development. But Latin America is today just feeling the impact of both the industrial revolution and the democratic revolution. Pre-existing, pre-democratic, pre-industrial societies are crumbling before the impact of the new ways of living. Latin America is in the throes of fundamental

rapid change. But most of this change is not communism. Don't make the mistake of identifying every, single rebel in Latin America as a Communist.

Before World War II, if you could just be back there in the intelligence offices of this Government, every rebel was a Nazi. And now every rebel is a Communist. It wasn't true either time. Many of these rebels are people in favor of our revolution, exactly the principles set down in our own Constitution.

But let's not minimize the fact that the other boys, the organized, Communist saboteurs, are in there and raising the devil as they are in Venezuela. But look at what the people in Venezuela and the rest of the countries in Latin America do when they have the chance to express themselves. Latin America is overwhelmingly anti-Communist. Don't let anybody tell you that every liberal leader in Latin America is a pinko. It just isn't so. The most dangerous thing in this conflict in which we are engaged with the forces of autocracy, in connection with the Soviet Union, is not to distinguish between liberals and Communists. Don't just say every liberal is a pink. All this does is cloud the issue and make uncertain what is going on. It makes it difficult for us to fight the ideological war in which we are today engaged as the champion of the democratic revolution.

Well, what about Southern, Southeastern, and East Asia? By the way, before I leave Latin America, I want to say that one of the results of the impact of revolutionary changes is to create greater differences

between wealth and poverty, democracy and autocracy, than existed before. This is a result of the impact of revolution. The result isn't that everybody can become wealthy but that there is a greater difference between the rich people and the poor people, between the well-to-do nations and the nations that are poor.

Look at Venezuela today and compare it with Argentina, which has gone way, way down. Compare it with Bolivia. There are greater differences today in the level of living than there were even in 1930, and there are greater differences between the autocracies and the democracies in Latin America than ever existed before.

This is the result of the impact of these revolutions.

South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia are three culture regions. Two of them are dominated by the great culture groups, the great nations, of Asia, namely India and China. These represent absolutely contrasting ways of living and thinking, attitudes, objectives, and technical skills, between India and China. They couldn't be more different. The Indians are ritualistic, conservative, resistant to change. Look at the agriculture in India. It's miserable. They have the lowest yields of rice per acre of any part of the world where people raise rice, because the methods have not been perfected or changed, and because of the tremendous hold of rituals on the Hindus. The result is a society which is so rigid that it is difficult to bring about economic development in the face of a vastly increasing population. India may very well succumb to the overwhelming tide of population.

But India has one important characteristic, namely, the legacy of the British. British colonialism wasn't all bad nor all good, but one thing it did do was provide India with a civil service of trained and relatively honest civil servants. This is a remarkable thing and is one of the major legacies of Britain.

China on the other hand is in almost every respect different. The people who preserved Chinese culture and a civilized way of living associated with cultured Chinese were the landlords. These fellows have been eliminated. They are gone. Liquidated means shot. The land was taken away from them. The Chinese were mostly farmers on the land. These were tenants working on the land. The hold of the land is described in Pearl Buck's famous book, The Good Earth. The hold of the land on those people was absolutely unbreakable, people said.

Then it was broken, first by the impact of Western society through the British and other people who did trading and set up trading cities, then by the Japanese invasion, and then by the Communists. But the Chinese, unlike the Hindus, are flexible, pragmatists. They never stand on principle. They are in a sense so unprincipled that there are many people who don't appreciate the Chinese sufficiently who say, "These people are dishonest in business deals." They are not dishonest. In the Chinese society what you do is flow around an issue. You don't go through it. You don't stand on principle but you adjust yourself to the situation as demanded.

The result is that today in Singapore, who can say which side the

Chinese majority is on? If you had an Indian majority you wouldn't have any question about whose side they were on. They'd be on the side of India, on the side of the Hindus. There would be no change in what they were. But with the Chinese you don't know which way they are going to go. What they are today is not what they are going to be tomorrow, because in the Chinese character you adjust quickly to whatever situation gives you the greatest advantage.

The Chinese are struggling with economic development under a Communist system, and the Indians are struggling toward economic development under a capitalist system. It's a major tug of war between these two giants.

Southeast Asia is the shatter zone in between. It has always been a struggle zone between India and China. The little cultures that exist in Southeast Asia are submerged by Indian ideas. The Indians were the first people in there. Many of the states of Indo-China were set up first by Indian or Hindu princes. The Moslem Indians were the ones who brought the Moslem religion to the whole of Indonesia and on into the Philippines.

Then came a flood of Chinese, pushing the Thai people ahead of them, first, and then moving in themselves as a minority, in all of these countries. This is a shatter zone between these two great places.

In East Asia you have Japan, the most amazing country of all, because here is a country which for hundreds of years was isolated from the world, and all of a sudden came out of isolation. All of a sudden Japan took on 19th century, imperialist ideas of how nations should

exist and tried to conquer the world on the pattern of nations in Europe. They took the wrong model. But look at Japan today and the most amazing thing that has happened to Japan. People said that the Japanese farms could not be mechanized. Today they have mechanized these little farms in Japan, with little, small machines that you guide, like a lawn mower that you use to cut your lawn. They've got tractors, they've got machines to take care of these miniature farms.

This is going to revolutionize agriculture which in Japan is already highly productive. It now increases production and decreases the number of farms, and increases the level of living. Think what this can mean if the Japanese can export farm machinery to the countries of Southeast Asia and South Asia, where they need these machines and the technology to go with them.

Has Japan got the resources to back this? Well, certainly not. They started out trying to conquer resources because they thought they had to be self-sufficient and strong. Now they are adopting the opposite method and accepting the industrial revolution. Japan is on the way to becoming a major power in the new sense.

What about Africa south of the Sahara? This has only just emerged. For Heaven's sake, do you realize that a century ago it wasn't even known? Do you realize that it wasn't until the decade between 1880 and 1890 that the territory was partitioned among the European countries. Then, all of a sudden, after World War II, there was a collapse of the colonial empires. Each country that held one of the colonies in Africa

had prepared its people differently for the future.

The map which tells the story about Africa is the most important map. No map of resources begins to be as important as the map of Africa which shows the tribal areas superimposed on these boundaries of the modern states--all 40 of them. Think of it. These states are drawn without any reference whatsoever to the tribal areas, yet most of the people in Africa are loyal to their tribes. This is the only place they have security. They are tribal-minded, and yet they are trying to form states in which there are numerous tribes--40 of them. Many tribal areas cut across the middle of the state boundary between two countries. This is the trouble in Africa.

Of course Africa still believes in mythology and believes in mysticism. It exhorts the gods to provide them with economic development rather than the scientists and engineers. They haven't yet developed the capacity for science and engineering. It isn't that they can't, but they haven't. Furthermore, they believe in cattlé rather than capital. They put their money into cattle. You won't have economic development in this large area, this place, until, (1) the tribal loyalties are broken down, (2) the people put money into capital rather than into cattle, and, (3), they give up mythology and mysticism for science and engineering. This is a major problem area for this reason.

Australia and New Zealand have the world's most perfect democracy, in some ways, although the Swiss would disagree with this, and the Costa Ricans would disagree with it, but it certainly is a large area in which

democracy is unchallenged. Furthermore, unchallenged today is the idea of industrial development and interdependence. It wasn't always this way. Even in Australia, where people bought only British goods, nevertheless each one of the states in Australia was so independent that they had different gages on the railroad lines. To this day you can't go across Australia from Sydney to Perth without changing the gage three times on the way. This was the legacy of the period when each state wanted to be self-sufficient.

But they have got over this and now they are working together on a national policy. Here, therefore, is a democracy and an industry developing almost without resistance, but at the other end of the world, in isolation, removed from the rest of the world, in the center of the water hemisphere.

Today the impact of one country on another country depends in part on its gross national product per capita, divided by the distance that separates the country from the center of the land hemisphere, and that is Western Europe. All the various countries of the world are closer on the average to Western Europe than to any other single place on the globe, as you can see when you look at the land hemisphere map and the concepts. This means that what happens to Western Europe is more important to the rest of the world than what happens anywhere else. What happens in Argentina is important to the Argentines but to nobody else.

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Then, what/we say about all this? How can we summarize this in

terms of the prediction of national strength? Well, you will find if you read and study what I have been saying about these culture regions that the characterization in each region will have a good deal of impact on national strength in that region.

I forgot to say anything about this one, and that's of course, where the oil is and where the crossroads have developed. It's a very amazing and unique region.

The important thing today is to remember that no longer, as you did in the 1930's, can you predict national military strength in terms of installed capacity to manufacture. Today this is out, because technological change is too rapid. The stuff that is in production today is already obsolete as a result of the rapidity of changes in technology.

You measure the strength of nations today by the number of trained people and the number of facilities for research and development. It is the stuff on the drawing board that tells you what a nation can do in the next war, and not the stuff already in production.

Thank you.

COLONEL BUEHLER: Dr. James is ready for your questions.

QUESTION: You mentioned that the Indians were first in Southeast Asia. I wonder when this happened, what year or years.

DR. JAMES: I didn't mean that the Indians were first there. There were other cultures there, but the Indians were the people who first established towns. For instance, along the coast of Amman, the original settlements in there were Hindu princes who came in and brought the local

people together in communities.

Now, as to dates, boy, you have me. I'll have to go back and read the book I have just written. I have the date in there. The date is known and you can find it in Joe Spencer's book, Asia, East by South, which is a historical geography of this region. This has all been mapped out. It shows exactly where the Indian settlements were, which were really trading posts. There was a single Hindu prince occupying the position of leader, and the people/^{were} all either Annamese, or Kamur, or any one of the various cultures of Southeast Asia.

I should explain carefully that I am an expert on Latin America, and anything I say about other parts of the world you must take with a certain amount of reservation. As a geographer I have spent my life interpreting and studying Latin America. There is a place about which I might say something and be willing to back it up.

I have, however, just written a book dealing with the world as a whole, because it ~~seemed~~ to me that this point of view needed to be expressed. I have had to dig most of the information on that, of course, out of other people's writings.

QUESTION: I believe that in your article in the Military Review you placed the Eastern European satellites with the Soviet culture region. Do you feel that they more logically, without the force that they are under, might fall into the European region? Do you consider this possibly a factor in eventually pulling them out?

DR. JAMES: There is no question about this. Remember that the characteristics that you describe for each one of the regions are most clearly demonstratedⁱⁿ the core of the region. As you go out toward the periphery it takes on more and more of the characteristics of the neighboring region, so that the boundaries are really less important than the core is.

In this book that I am talking about, which is called One World Divided (which is an advertisement) and which will be out in January, I hope, I describe what I mean by the cores of regions. These can be defined in terms of certain attributes, economic development, and so on. But the peripheries of the regions are mostly overlaps, where countries in the peripheries could go either way. East Europe is a perfect example. In fact I think East Europe did belong to the European culture region before World War II. It became a part of the Soviet culture region as the result of the conquest by the Communist Party after the war.

If they come out from under the Communists and if they go back to the characteristics of Western Europe I'd put them in with Western Europe, fully as much as Southern Europe. I mean, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal are very much like Eastern Europe, except they are in a different geographic position, so their histories have been different.

QUESTION: Dr. James, you mentioned that the Russian empire, when put together, particularly in Siberia, was in a vacuum, and there was no competition. Do you envision that, with the Chinese population

increasing at 15-plus million per annum now, and with that rich, vast heartland in Siberia that the vacuum might disappear and there might be pressures there?

DR. JAMES: China, if it expanded northward, certainly would go through Manchuria. It wouldn't expand northward along this boundary, because it is too far from China. This may be called China on a political map, but here is where China is in terms of people and development and resources. So that the expansion of China would be through Manchuria and this part of the country, the Amur valley.

This is a part of the world which is not particularly good for Chinese or anybody else. They said this also about Manchuria when the Chinese expanded into Manchuria. They had to adopt different crops and methods.

The likelihood of their expanding northward, it seems to me, is not so great as the likelihood of their expanding southward, because here are the resources--the tin and rubber of Malaya, and all kinds of mineral resources, and so on, and people. This would be the direction of their expansion, much more likely than their expansion northward.

On the other hand, if China and Russia get into a war, it might very well be that the Chinese would take over Eastern Siberia as a military measure. I can't see them using this as an outlet for their excess population, though.

QUESTION: Our feelings on Latin America don't jibe, sir. I have

gained the impression that with the competence that is emerging a business philosophy might become apparent in South America. But you told us about the placement of resources, and this factor might change that.

DR. JAMES: Well, I would say that neither the presence or absence of resources or the bad positioning of resources constitutes an impediment that would stop a country from developing and developing a great deal. As, for example, in 1620, if you were a geographer with all the modern knowledge of New England, and the United States, would you have predicted the wealth of New England, the economic development of New England, or the resources of the sort that would support modern development?

The same kinds of handicaps can be overcome anywhere. So that I don't think that the bad positioning of resources does more than make development costly. It will cost more in terms of capital.

By the way, I would generalize, if you please, about Latin America, and not South America. I think one of the unfortunate things is the hangover in terms of continents as units of generalization. I insist that there must be culture regions and not continents. Any generalization which describes North America as including everything as far as Panama and lumps all this together, telling about the rate of population, for instance, obscures the real divisions in the world. That type of division obscures the facts rather than illuminates them. If you go to culture regions then you have something different.

Imagine a situation in which you insist upon taking only Europe

and cutting off the Soviet union. Of course this happened for years. The statistics came out for Europe and Asia separately. Nowadays the United Nations have recognized the justice of this and they put figures together by culture regions, as you know.

You have to be careful about generalizing about South America and leaving out Mexico, the Antilles, and Central America, which are all part, really, of Latin America and not North America--not Anglo-America.

Latin America certainly has the capacities in many ways to become much more developed than it is today. Whether it will ever achieve the level of living of Anglo-America or Europe I would doubt. I think here again we've got to go back to research and development facilities, and the research and development is concentrated in three regions, namely, Europe, the Soviet Union, and Anglo-America.

QUESTION: Sir, referring to the North African-Southwest Asian area there, what is your opinion as to the possibility of Nasser's achieving his dream of getting all that area together?

DR. JAMES: It has been tried from away back in the Babylonian times. People have tried to put it together, and sometimes they did put it together for a period. The Moslems put it together under one empire, loosely held, and largely autonomous, from place to place. There have been repeated conquests back and forth, but certainly not unity, in the sense of putting it together as a place with a state idea, that is, with people loyal to the government. Nasser could put it together only the same way that the Moslems did, or the Babylonians, by conquest. So that

this area remains one in which there are tremendous, deep-seated antagonisms. It's a powder keg of antagonisms which simply can't be glossed over by a conquest. Conquest results in making the thing more dangerous, more explosive.

Of course, for years, this region which I forgot to talk about while I was giving my lecture here has been a crossroads region. At one time the crossroads were those that were based on the technology of the caravan, the overland route. For years the routes developed by the caravans were of major importance in this area. Then, when steam was invented, the steamship made the Red Sea navigable. The Suez Canal became important, and this became the major route, of course. Everybody talks about this lifeline of empire, and so on. Well, the lifeline of empire is simply the water route that goes across that region, which is a crossroads region. In 1907 oil was developed. Then the region became the major source of oil.

You have a very complicated picture of crossroads plus oil. Now, of course, you have tremendous oil resources under the Sahara. This again changes the economic picture of Europe with respect to oil resources. That changes Nasser's position with reference to the control of the oil.

Then, right smack in the middle of this powder keg is Israel. You don't have a more exciting situation in the world than the North African-Southwest Asian region.

QUESTION: I have felt that the world has shrunk to a point where mileage is relatively unimportant, with communications and rapid transportation. Will you amplify your remarks about why Western Europe stands

as the focal point by virtue of being in a position where all the other countries are around it?

DR. JAMES: This is the opening paragraph in this book that I am trying to sell to you fellows. It says that we now have instant communications and the world is closer together than ever before, and yet it never was more divided. This is a fact. It has never been more divided. There have never been greater antagonisms between parts of it, and more misunderstandings. Now, why? And why Western Europe?

The Western Europe business and the land hemisphere concept go back, of course, as a challenge to Mackinder. Mackinder said that the heartland was this part of Europe, and that who controlled Eastern Europe controlled the heartland--this great land mass--and that who controlled the heartland could control the periphery. He said land power could defeat sea power.

Now, this was fine as long as we were talking about an area which was not navigable, in the polar regions, and where there were no missiles. Nowadays you've got missiles and you've got high-flying airplanes which, for the first time, go above the weather, so you don't have to worry about fog and ice in the polar region. Airplanes can go high enough to get out of the way of the weather, and missiles don't pay any attention to the weather.

So for the first time global position really counts. In Mackinder's day it didn't count, because so much of the world was out of the picture, anyway, because of ice, and fog, and snow, and storm. Consequently, today

you have to look at this thing in terms of great circle routes, and when you do that and take the globe, pick it up and turn it around, you find that there is one-half of the world in which 90 percent of the habited land is located, and that's the land hemisphere. The center of the land hemisphere is more accessible to more people in this world than any other spot on the globe.

If what people do is important in terms of accessibility to other people, what they do in Argentina is less important than what they do, let's say, in France, because the French are in the middle of the land hemisphere, and Argentina is away off at a distance.

Sure, communications are instantaneous, but still distance has a different meaning. To be sure, we have missiles, but still it has meaning. It's a whale of a lot different being located in the water hemisphere, for instance, than being located near to the center of things in the land hemisphere.

In other words, distance is still there but has to be measured in different terms. I think that never before has global position been important, until just now, just since 1950.

I think you have to rephrase Mackinder and say that who controls Western Europe, or the center of the land hemisphere, can control the world island, and so on.

QUESTION: Your recent references and your discussion of the culture regions seem to be landlocked. Would you comment on the importance of

the ocean regions?

DR. JAMES: The ocean regions, as I have just suggested, have had a different influence at different periods. The ocean at one time was a barrier. Then, when people learned to navigate, as the Greeks did, and the Phoenecians, the ocean became a highway. This completely changed the importance of oceans. First of all, it was a barrier, because there were no developed routes across it, and then the time came when the ocean became a highway rather than a barrier. Then came the development of the ocean in a period when ice and snow were still important. This area was essentially closed to navigation throughout the year. Oh, you could go around it, but this was a stunt. There was very little communication by sea in the polar regions. The polar regions could be left out.

This is why for years you could really get along quite satisfactorily with the Mercator projection, because it doesn't extend into the polar regions. If it does it is so distorted that you can't use it.

On the other hand, when you look at the globe you get a very different picture of the arrangement of oceans. It was no less a person than General MacArthur who said that the Pacific Ocean was a moat between Asia and North America. If General Mac Arthur had not had one of those Mercator projections he might have realized that Eastern Asia and Western North America form one straight line on one side of the Pacific Ocean. If it's a moat, as I said in another instance, we and the Chinese are sitting on the same bank glaring at each other in the wrong direction.

nor the Atlantic Ocean
The fact is that neither the Pacific Ocean is between us and Europe or between us and Asia. The ocean that separates us from Eurasia is the Arctic Ocean. This requires a view of the world which is global. For the first time the polar regions are just as easily passed over as the tropical regions. We can fly over the Pole with no trouble. Consequently the Pole is no longer a barrier, as it was for a long, long time.

So you see, the changing technology requires a new view of world strategy. This is why Mackinder is out of date.

QUESTION: Doctor, would you care to comment on the success of trying to knock down some of the national barriers in Latin America, the Free Trade Area, and the Common Market?

DR. JAMES: Of course I am in favor of free trade areas because this permits the operation of the principle of interdependence. Now, if a free trade area puts a barrier around itself, this is a little better than having each nation do it, but still this represents an impediment to the exchange of things.

We have to get our raw materials in the United States from the lowest-cost sources, wherever they are--not entirely, of course. We have to compromise. We want to keep Bolivia operating as a tin source. Why? Because of military strategy, because we might be cut off from Malaya and we darn well better have a source of tin. But, in a world in which we weren't worried about that, we would never use the Bolivian ore.

It's a very expensive ore to mine, and a very expensive ore to smelt, whereas tin from Malaya is much, much cheaper. Tin is an essential element in motor bearings. If we had tin from the lowest-cost source we'd have a lower cost of manufacturing, and more people could consume the goods that were manufactured.

The basic problem today is to maintain low-cost sources of raw materials. This is very interesting, because, there has been a tendency for an increased cost of raw materials as we use up the better sources, as we have to go to poorer sources of minerals. And yet today, for instance, in the iron ore business, we have used up Mesabi, and so you might say, "Well, it's going to be more expensive to get ore from Venezuela or from Labrador, or from taconite--low-grade ore." But the research and development boys have stayed ahead of this, so that the production of steel with this new process I was talking to you about is going to reduce the cost of production about 17 percent. This is tremendous, you see. This is how research and development stays ahead of increasing population and increasing costs of raw material.

Latin America is a source of raw material of great importance. A lot of the raw materials there are perhaps more expensive than they would be somewhere else. We have to maintain this because of the possibility of strategic considerations.

QUESTION: Doctor, I was wondering why you put Japan in the same cultural region as China. Isn't the modern difference sufficient so that we might be confusing the issue by thinking this way?

DR. JAMES: I think you've got a very good point there. I might say of these regions that there is nothing sacred about them. They are hypothetical. The only justification for these regions is that they illuminate what is going on in the world. If it is clearer to take China and Japan and separate them, then I think it should be done. It may very well turn out this way.

Of course Japan derived its culture from China, so historically they do belong together. Now just in the last 10 years have they so departed from each other that they now need to be separated. I would certainly entertain the possibility.

I hate to put one country like Japan into a culture region all by itself. I did have in mind the smallest possible number of culture regions for the world as a whole, which is one reason I did this. In the original efforts along this line I had seven culture regions, but my colleague, George Cressy, told me I couldn't possibly have East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia in one culture region and I'd have to separate them. So I did that. I had Australia and New Zealand and the Pacific Islands in one culture region, but I had a little girl graduate student from New Zealand, and she said, "Professor, please don't put New Zealand in with Polynesia." So to please her I have separated them.

These regions are as flexible as this. I mean, the important point is, don't let's talk about continents. Let's not talk about Africa. Let's not talk about Europe, and limit ourselves to the Urals, or anything like that. Let's not talk about North America and include Mexico and Central

America in average figures for North America. This obscures what we are talking about. Any other division that you want to us that is not obscuring is certainly justified.

What I have in mind is this--that, instead of having an African Desk in the State Department, we'll have an Africa, South of the Sahara, Desk. Instead of having an expert on military intelligence who uses Africa as a whole and deals with diverse things, let's let him specialize on that part of Africa which is characterized by Africa south of the Sahara.

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I think you will find that there is ample explanation. If I had more time I'd tell you how Europe, Asia, and Africa came into being as concepts. It goes back to Aristotle and it was a brilliant, regional, generalization of the world. Today it is obscuring to talk about those continents. You would never speak of Europe as a separate continent if you had not been brought up to do it, any more than to speak of India as a separate continent. It's really a part of a larger land mass.

So let's talk about culture regions. I am using "culture" here in the sense of attitudes, objectives, and technical skills, and not just an appreciation of art and literature.

COLONEL BUEHLER: Dr. James, on behalf of the audience, I want to say that our understanding of geography has been greatly enhanced by your modern, integrated explanation of the subject and its relation to national power. Thank you very much.