

THE AFTERMATH OF THE COLD WAR FROM SHORT-TERM INSTABILITY TO LONG-TERM EQUILIBRIUM

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ABSTRACT: The Cold War Balance of Terror has been replaced by the balance of unpredictability. Protracted conflicts have wound down with the withdrawal of U.S. and/or Soviet support, and peace negotiations have begun in the Middle East. On the other hand, the Soviet Center's collapse and devolution elsewhere in the world keeps the conflict pot boiling. The geopolitical changes that we are witnessing are the inevitable consequences of a world system that is following the development process an entering a high stage of specialized integration. Three characteristics of the system are: entropic lines of imbalance among the parts, the potential network of emerging gateway stateways, and a new balance in U.S.-European-Russian/Soviet relations. These all have spatial dimensions. As entropic imbalances are redressed, as gateways become world mini-hubs, and as the U.S. finds a world strategy for NATO that strengthens the European partnership and invites Soviet cooperation in addressing regional inequities and conflict, the world system will achieve a new equilibrium of accommodation.

The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the beginning of a major new period of dynamic global equilibrium. The Cold War Balance of Terror has been replaced by the imbalance of unpredictability. Only last spring the world's attention was riveted upon the Persian/Arabian Gulf and its aftershocks. Now it has turned to war in Yugoslavia, the dismemberment of the Soviet Center, upheavals in Haiti and Zaire, and Middle East Peace Negotiations. While there is indeed the danger that the tides of national state devolution may be plunging the international system into deep chaos, other world events give promise of long-term stability. War is over in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Cambodia; Soviet and American tactical disarmament has become a reality; the market economy is ascendant throughout the world system; and the rise in Maritime European political and economic consciousness is bringing new, stabilizing energies to Central and Eastern Europe, as well as portending greater sharing of strategic responsibilities with the United States.

With the collapse of the U.S.S.R., long-held Western political strategies are being precipitously abandoned. After 45 years of unremitting hostility towards the Soviet state, the West now wants the survival of some sort of a Center in the Soviet Union to keep responsible stewardship over its nuclear arsenal. It advocates a common Soviet currency and a uniform monetary policy so that international aid, and both foreign and inter-republic market forces and trade, can be orderly directed.

In another surprising turn of events, Israel's fears that Washington is determined to play an even-hand mediating role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, have influenced it to accept the U.S.S.R. as a full external participant in the peace negotiations. Indeed its full-hearted acceptance of a European role, and even ultimately that of the United Nations is also a near-

term likelihood.

Among other unanticipated results of the Cold War's end is that the peace dividend to the United States may not be as large as has been anticipated. The Pentagon argues that while the Soviet threat has been eliminated, regional and local war prospects require large new investments in rapid deployment forces to respond to international emergencies. Also, the costs of dismantling the American nuclear arsenal are likely to be immense. The Reagan policy of forcing the USSR to try to keep up with the American armaments build-up, succeeded in bankrupting the Soviet economy. Ironically, however, it also made a huge debtor nation of the United States, and now we are likely to spend billions of dollars to eliminate or warehouse our overblown arsenal, as well as to provide aid to the Soviet military to help dismantle its arsenal.

What can we make of the various contradictions - the elements of short-term instability and the seeds of long-term stability that characterize this post-Cold War period? How can geopolitical assessment help us to anticipate the future? Obviously we have to start with the shattered balance between the Soviet Heartland and the Maritime World.

The failed Soviet Communist coup d'etat of August 21-23, 1991, spelled an end to the strong centralized Soviet state. It led to collapse of the central government and the crumbling of the Union. The final outlines of the struggle to forge a new flexible and multi-functional Soviet National Union that will provide an umbrella for those republics that opt for confederation, federation, associate membership or an economic union, are unclear. But if the unity of Heartland is to be maintained, it will be through a "bottom up" rather than "top down" approach to governance. Collective military security, economic exchange, international foreign policy commitments and control of the nuclear arsenal are functions which republics are most likely to delegate to a new federal center. Especially if Russia, The Ukraine, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan can agree to some form of confederalism, the long-term prospects for the Heartland's revival are favorable. Even if not, Russia remains a formidable world power and can be expected to pursue its foreign policy interests vigorously once its political-economic structure is stabilized.

Political systems that unravel so quickly are indeed cause for concern. However, the basis for this unravelling—the popular urge and will for democratic and human rights, also offers the hope that novel, more responsive systems are in process of being forged that will speedily contribute to a new, more stable and peaceful map of the world.

In the midst of change and instability, this world remains organized around five major power centers. Some have gained momentum, others have lost it. In addition, certain regionally-influential states have become more important, as other regional power aspirants have grown weaker. And against this backdrop of national state activity, transnational forces operate both competitively and cooperatively with national forces to accelerate the system's development.

Instability in part reflects the geopolitical reality that the world is still in its early stages of specialization and hierarchical integration. The two geostrategic realms - the Maritime and Heartland, are reordering relationships among and between their major power centers. Neither the U.S.S.R. or China has regained the national focus that permits full repair of the ideological schism that has separated the two for three decades, although economic relations between the two are rapidly expanding. Also, the United States, the European Community and Japan have

yet to agree upon a reallocation of global responsibilities in which America's specialized military capacities will be tempered by its economic parity with the other two - a parity that is undermined by the erosion of the U.S. manufacturing base and its capacity to generate investment capital from internal savings.

Geopolitical regions, the subsets of the realms, are also at different stages of development. Their power and influence cannot be comparatively measured by the same criteria. They have varied attributes depending on their particular settings, including the locational presence or absence of major powers. The roles of regional (second-order) powers depend on their particular qualities and on their spatial and political-economic interactions with major powers and neighboring states. What helps to link the system is the drive of the less mature parts to rise to levels already achieved by the more mature sectors.

As with every evolving system, the structure is hierarchical. However, nature's rigid hierarchy of the natural world is not an appropriate analogy. Rather, the world's sociopolitical organization can be likened to electronic or air travel networks whose multiple nodes have alternative pathways which shape patterns of interaction.

Diversion of major economic and political energies from one part of the world to another can both accelerate and slow down the development process. Thus, the flow of capital and technology from Western to Eastern Europe and of immigrants from East to West is likely to have a negative impact on much of the Third World, sinking it more deeply into debt and despair. This has the danger of reinforcing the character of South America and Subsahara Africa as the Quarter-Sphere of Marginality. On the other hand, the turmoil of upheaval in Eastern Europe and the USSR and the war in the Gulf, has produced pressure for greater accommodation, resource exchange and system integration - in other words, for system development.

The question of how quickly world equilibrium can be restored, and the nature of that equilibrium has a number of spatial dimensions. I want to touch briefly on three that contribute to the geopolitical understanding of the pace and direction of the world system's developmental ordering: 1) the entropic imbalances between and among different parts of the world's system; 2) the global unifying networks that emerging gateway states are poised to help construct; and 3) the challenge of finding a new balance in U.S.-European/German-Russian/Soviet relations.

The concept of entropy has considerable utility for measuring a region's or a state's inherent capacities. It can also be applied to assess the balanced relationships between geopolitical units. Defined, in physical systems, as the availability of energy to do work, entropy is always on the increase as energy becomes exhausted.

However, only hermetically-sealed natural systems behave according to this law of inevitability. Geopolitical entities which attempt to close themselves off from outside forces do suffer from exhaustion of human and natural resources and sink to high levels of entropy; ultimately, human needs and strivings pry open the system, for person-environment systems are inherently open. They become recharged through a form of energy transport that introduces peoples, goods and ideas as high free energy.

Criteria that can be used to measure entropy are those which renew the system: savings

rates; increased agricultural yields; manufacturing productivity; debt repayment; percentage of R&D exports; numbers of patents, scientists and engineers and foreign scientific exchange; and reduction of fuel energy intensity requirements. In general, based upon the criteria that have been enumerated, regions fall into four categories: (1) Low entropy: Anglo-America and the Caribbean, Maritime Europe and the Maghreb, Offshore Asia; (2) Medium entropy: Heartland, Eastern Europe, Middle East; (3) High entropy: East Asia, South Asia; (4) Very high entropy: Subsahara Africa, South America.

In effect, a state or region's reach, or extent of influence beyond its borders, is a function of the combination of its level of entropy and its military-strategic strength. Reach can be measured by external trade, capital flow, diplomatic ties, immigration and transport links, and overseas military bases. While the United States has a strong reach within the Maritime World, its negative capital accounts, chronic budget deficits and trade imbalance are indicative of an increase in entropic level. Entropically, America is in balance with Europe and Offshore Asia and is in overbalance with South America, Subsahara Africa, Subsahara Africa and the Middle East.

The European Community has substantial geopolitical reach to Anglo-America, the Middle East, Subsahara Africa, South America, Offshore Asia and Eastern Europe. Its entropic level is low and it is fully capable of transporting surplus energy to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Entropically, Europe is in balance with Anglo-America and Offshore Asia and in overbalance with its other contact regions.

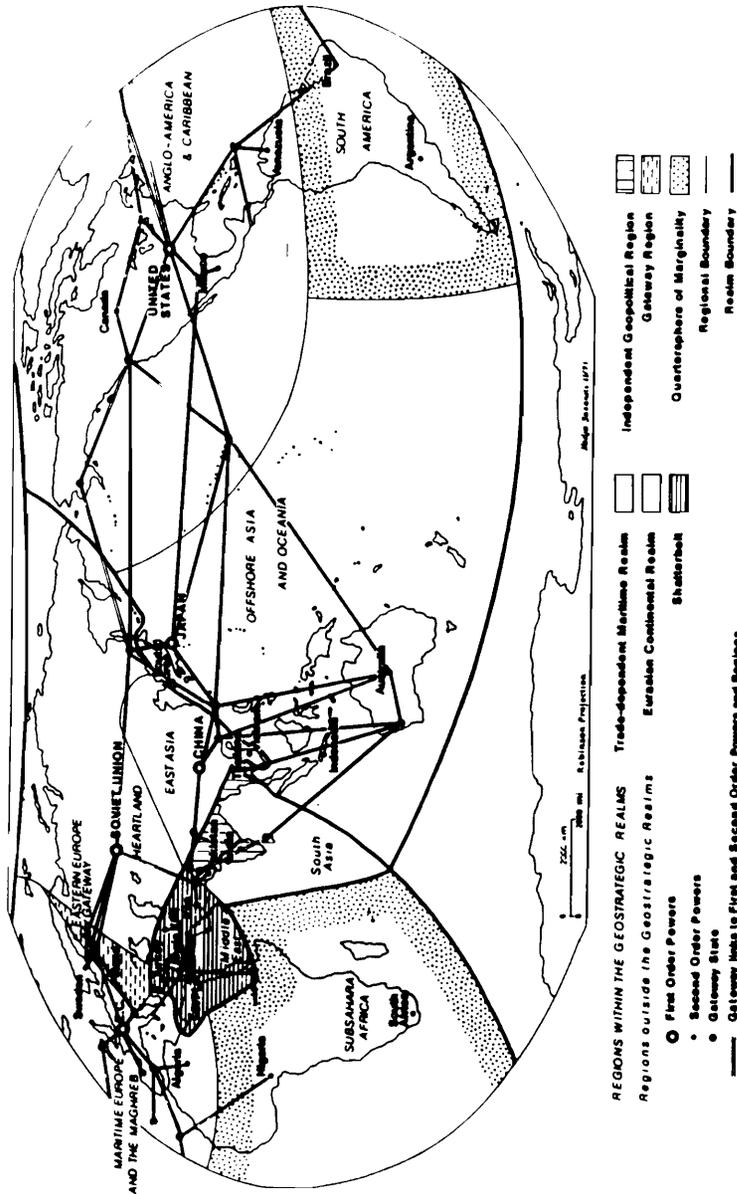
Offshore Asia, spearheaded by Japan and its successfully industrializing neighbors, reaches to Anglo-America, the Middle East, Europe, south Asia and East Asia. With its very low level of entropy it is also in a position to project substantial reach to the Heartland. The region is in balance with Anglo-America and Europe, and overbalanced with the rest of its contact area.

The Heartland is at a medium entropic level that is rising rapidly in the light of its economic stagnation and the collapse of the centralized Soviet political system. Its reach is to East Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and it is in balance with all of these regions. China, dominant in East Asia, extends its reach to the Heartland, South Asia and to Offshore Asia. It is in balance with the Heartland, but underbalanced with Offshore Asia.

In other writings, I've pointed to an emerging category of state, gateway states, and to their role in enhancing world peace.¹ The Baltic states have achieved gateway status. Slovenia and Eritrea are on the brink of so doing, as may be Quebec. National independence for these gateways was considered as far-fetched when the gateway concept was proposed by the author in January, 1989, as is the reaction of many of today's future independence for Alaska, Kashmir or Northern Mexico.² To add to the previous discussion, I've prepared a map of the global linking potential of these gateway states (fig. 1). It shows gateways as mini-hubs in the world system. These states can reach out to various first and second order powers, reinforcing the unique character of geopolitical regions and yet bridging them.

Finally, let us turn to the Eurasian Heartland and the West. Eastern and Central Europe has reemerged as the key to global stability. The greatest threat to world peace is that Eastern Europe once again become a global shatterbelt, caught between German and Russian power and ambition, and playing out Halford Mackinder's dictum - "who rules East Europe, commands the Heartland".³ Geostrategically, an Eastern Europe that benefits from Maritime

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Europe and especially German economic investment and trade, but lies within Russia's security orbit, offers the best prospects for balance. Should the USSR or Russia perceive East Europe as a base for Military threat from the West, it is not likely to remain passive.

Dealing with the spatial interface between the two geostrategic realms is complex, especially with respect to the future of NATO. There is strong sentiment, especially in France and Germany, for the European Community to handle its own military affairs through a European army, and many American argue that we neither need nor can afford NATO. Moreover, there is increasing American pressure on Bonn to take a more active military role, not simply in NATO whose mission is confined to Europe, but globally - witness recent calls for a German military contribution to the Persian Gulf War, rather than simply financial support.

I believe that the American presence in Europe through NATO is insurance, not against the Soviet threat, but against the resurrection of a united Germany as a military power commensurate with its economic might. With rapprochement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., the preservation of NATO reassures the Russian Heartland that Germany will not threaten its security via Eastern Europe. Whether the ultimate cost to the U.S. of keeping troops in Europe drops from the current 100 to 75 or even 50 billion dollars, the 1.5 to 1% expenditure of our GNP is justifiable as an investment in global stability. Moreover, if Western actions are required to keep the peace - or at least to separate combatants in Eastern and Central Europe, or in the Middle East, Soviet participation in such missions would be highly desirable. Clearly this can't happen until matters within the Union are sorted out, and the residue of Communism disappears.

What I have posited is a series of linking and balancing mechanisms - the decrease of entropy levels for some regions, the use of gateways to strengthen the global network, the attainment of a new strategic balance in Western Eurasia based upon offsetting economic and military inputs. All of this adds up, not to a new world order - for order is a static, regulated and precarious condition subject to violent swings and upheavals, but to a new stage of dynamic equilibrium. Within such a condition, change is continuing, and the system is maintained through higher degrees of self-regulation and self-fulfillment of the parts. If the aftermath of the Cold War does not mean a world free from tension and conflict, it does mean a world in which the conflict is likely to be low level and of short duration, and in which the geography of accommodation is much more likely to attract geographers' attentions, than the geography of war.

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