

# Chapter 1

## It's smart to be geopolitical!

While the title of this opening chapter may appear to be a little self-serving and owes its origins to Robert Strausz-Hupe, the founder of the right-wing Foreign Policy Research Institute in the United States, I aim to convince you that it is not only smart but also essential to be geopolitical. Amid the ongoing bloodshed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, and less well reported places such as the Congo, the continued relevance of geopolitics is overwhelming. Despite the claims made in favour of ever more intense forms of globalization, the relevance of territory, international boundaries, and claims to sovereignty remain as pressing as ever. A few feet here or there can mean the matter of life and/or death. The labelling of a particular place as 'dangerous' and/or 'threatening' can invite military assaults from land, sea, and air, as civilians found to their cost in southern Lebanon in the summer of 2006. Even America's allies in the midst of a Global War on Terror such as Pakistan, according to President Pervez Musharraf, have occasionally faced the unpleasant prospect of being 'bombed back to the stone age' if their commitment to root out terrorists and their networks ever wavered.

For those of us living in Europe and North America, geopolitics might at first appear to have less relevance – something to be applied to more turbulent areas of the world. This is a mistaken view. Geopolitics is also part of our everyday lives and by 'our' I



**1. Beirut suburbs slowly come back to life after weeks of bombing in 2006**

mean those readers who might be better able to insulate themselves to the sometimes daily struggles to cross borders, assert ownership over land, and prevent flows of unwanted armed personnel and/or suicide bombers. While some British and North American citizens might worry at the new biometric security checks at airports and seaports, the impact of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States was wide reaching. The subsequent suicide bomb attacks in Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, Jerusalem, London, and Madrid, in combination with the deeply controversial Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, have highlighted how places and people are interconnected with one another. Cities in particular have borne the brunt of this collective assault and none more than Iraqi cities such as Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul whose citizens endure near daily assaults by suicide bombers, death squads, and coalition forces. Since March 2003, over 650,000 Iraqis have been killed, 2 million displaced and 10 million remain without access to clean water, according to some estimates by non-governmental organizations.

Every week, I receive leaflets in the mail, urging me to support vulnerable communities such as those in southern Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, or Afghanistan. Some places can, quite literally, be demanding of our attention, while others such as Mogadishu (the capital of Somalia) are more likely to be encountered electronically – watch the movie, *Black Hawk Down* (2001) and now play the video game. If we are entering a new age of ‘blood and iron’ then it is important that we better understand those real and virtual connections between places and communities and the consequences that follow therein. Geopolitics, precisely because it is preoccupied with borders, resources, flows, territories, and identities, can provide a pathway for critical analysis and understanding – albeit a controversial one.

But what exactly is geopolitics? If you were to Google the term ‘geopolitics’ at any one time, you might receive approximately six

to seven million hits. Anyone brave or perhaps foolish enough to wade through even a fraction of those potential references would not necessarily emerge any the wiser with regards to a definition of geopolitics. To paraphrase the social theorist Michael Mann, geopolitics, like most terms that have attracted academic attention, is slippery. More often than not, it is used by journalists and pundits such as Thomas Barnett of the *Esquire* magazine, Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*, or the former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as a shorthand term, intended to convey a robust attitude towards political action using taken-for-granted geographical templates such as the 'axis of evil' and 'outposts of tyranny'. Rather than take those terms for granted (or simply mock them), it is vital that we explore the sorts of consequences that follow from dividing the world into particular zones.

## Towards an understanding of geopolitics

Geopolitics provides ways of looking at the world and is highly visual as a consequence, readily embracing maps, tables, and photographs. While there is really little point in trying to establish a definition of the term that would be able to hold a consensus of opinion amongst pundits, two distinct understandings of geopolitics will suffice for the purpose of this very short introduction. First, geopolitics offers for many a reliable guide of the global landscape using geographical descriptions, metaphors, and templates such as 'iron curtain', 'Third World', and/or 'rogue state'. Each of these terms is inherently geographical because places are identified and labelled as such. It then helps to generate a simple model of the world, which can then be used to advise and inform foreign and security policy making. This idea of geopolitics is by far the most important in terms of everyday usage in newspapers, radio, magazines, and television news, which also tends to reduce governments and countries to simple descriptors such as 'London', 'Washington', or 'Moscow'.

Second, we could focus our attention on how geopolitics actually works as an academic and popular practice. So rather than simply assume that labels such as 'iron curtain' and 'axis of evil' have a certain heuristic value, we proceed to question how they generate particular understandings of places, communities, and accompanying identities. The term 'Third World', for example, not only served as a geographical description of many places in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, it also helped to triangulate the political geographies of the cold war involving the United States and the 'First World' and the Soviet Union and the 'Second World' in a global competition. While some have criticized the term for assuming that the 'Third World' was the open space for further expressions of superpower rivalry, others including leaders and intellectuals located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America embraced the term as a means of registering their political and geographical difference from the Global North.

This book inherently favours the second approach over the first and thus does not seek to provide a geopolitical guide to Western foreign policy making. It makes no pretence to being allied to the ongoing endeavours of the Cambridge-based Henry Jackson Society, which has recently proposed a new form of 'democratic geopolitics' for British foreign policy. While they have used the term geopolitics, they show no interest in exploring the nature of the term. Rather, the aim here is to show how geopolitics gets used and with what consequences especially in everyday life. In the main, geopolitical writers take the global stage as their starting point. The appeal of a 'god's eye view of world' can often prove irresistible to leaders and pundits of all political persuasions and backgrounds. At times of global crises and war, it is understandable that such a global view of the world might need to prevail. Consider, for instance, some of the speeches made by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Harry Truman in the mid to late 1940s. Political and geographical context was critical as both sought to interpret a world that had been ravaged by conflict. Allied victory had not brought global stability. Within

three years of the ending of the Second World War, the victorious powers were embroiled in a crisis over access to the divided city of Berlin. By the time five years had elapsed, those same wartime allies alongside China were confronting one another in the Korean Peninsula. Over two million people died as a consequence and most of the victims were civilian. The Peninsula remains divided to this day along the 38th Parallel.

In March 1946, before the crises in Berlin and Korea, Churchill addressed an audience in Fulton in the state of Missouri. Taking stock of the world, and Europe in particular, Churchill evoked (but did not coin) one of the most memorable expressions of the 20th century:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic *an iron curtain* has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia; all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow.

Twice the United States has had to send several millions of its young men across the Atlantic to fight the wars. But now we all can find any nation, wherever it may dwell, between dusk and dawn. Surely we should work with conscious purpose for a grand pacification of Europe within the structure of the United Nations and in accordance with our Charter.

The term 'iron curtain' attracted much public attention in the immediate aftermath. As an analogy, the phrase conveyed a very real sense of a geographical barrier cutting across a vast swathe of continental Europe. Critically, a curtain made of iron not only prevents light from filtering through it but also foils any other flows such as people and/or goods. Churchill often made reference

to light and darkness in his wartime and cold war speeches in order to convey a further sense of how Europe was divided between liberal democracies in the West and fascism and later communist regimes in the East. The 'iron curtain' stuck in the geographical imaginations of people both sides of the Atlantic and was later to be supplemented by President Reagan's description of the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' in 1982. By way of contrast, the Soviet media never published Churchill's speech and the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin later used 'the speech' to persuade his fellow citizens that the country was being threatened by an aggressive grouping comprised of the United States and its Western European allies including Britain.

President Truman, a contemporary of Churchill and Stalin, also used his speeches to represent and interpret a world that was changing in the late 1940s. In an address on 12 March 1947 to a joint session of Congress, Truman presented a stark view of the world:

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative *ways of life*. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, [and] guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid, which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

As with Churchill's address, the speech was instrumental in shaping the post-1945 geographical imagination of the United States and the wider world. After examining the fragile situation in Greece and Turkey, the President offered a simple but politically effective division ('ways of life') between those countries that supported liberty, freedom, and democracy and those who did not. While it was clear that he intended the division to favour the United States and its allies at the expense of the Soviet Union, it also committed the country to upholding the new geopolitical architecture of the post-1945 era. American support in the 1940s and 1950s was critical even if more contemporary administrations have been prone to displays of ambivalence and even thinly disguised malfeasance towards the United Nations.

Terms such as 'iron curtain' and later geographical manifestations such as 'evil empire' under President Reagan in the 1980s or 'axis



of evil' under President George W. Bush in 2002 matter greatly because they frequently help to legitimate (and justify) subsequent expressions of statesmanship and foreign policy decision making. Geographical descriptions continue to provide an essential element in the implementation of foreign and security policies. Those descriptions of places and regions can also be dramatically overturned by events. The destruction of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 led to a radical re-evaluation of Eastern and Central Europe by American and Russian governments alike. The term 'iron curtain' no longer made political and/or geographical sense as democratic movements brushed former communist regimes aside. Two years later, the so-called 'evil empire' of the Soviet Union disintegrated and the cold war security organization, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, created in 1949), expanded to include former Eastern Bloc states such as Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary. The Russian government has looked on with mounting concern at this geopolitical encroachment.

Geopolitics, as I noted earlier, can also concern itself with the implicit geographical understandings of world politics mobilized every day by political leaders, journalists, and learned experts. Terms such as 'Third World' not only served to identify particular regions of the world but also aided and abetted the production and circulation of cold war identities. Recently independent countries in Africa and Asia used expressions such as 'non-alignment' to depict a desire for different sets of geographical and ideological relationships – ones which were not tied to the two superpowers. While it may be perfectly reasonable to focus on the speeches and subsequent behaviour of powerful political leaders, geopolitical activities are not the sole preserve of states and governments. Individuals, non-governmental organizations, private companies, international and regional institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union engage in geopolitics. New media technologies such as the internet have also enabled non-state organizations, such as anti-globalization groups and terror networks amongst others, to use it to campaign and

mobilize public support for different political geographical representations of the world.

This notion of geographical imagination is significant and owes much to the writings of the late Palestinian-American scholar, Edward Said. In his many works including *Orientalism* (1978), Said articulated an interest in how places were and continue to be imagined and represented in art, literature, music, and western foreign policy making. As a committed advocate of a Palestinian state, he was deeply sensitive to how communities such as the Palestinians or the wider Arabic world were understood, often in unflattering terms, as unstable, threatening, and/or exotic. This meant, he suggested, that particular cultural understandings of place and communities, could rally policy makers and public opinion in ways that might be antithetical to the project of achieving an autonomous Palestinian community. Writing for much of his life in the United States, Said was deeply concerned that the mainstream media in that country was unsympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians and more likely to regard them as harbourers of terrorists than part of a dispossessed people confined to refugee camps or, like himself, part of a wider diaspora. If Palestinians are understood in unflattering terms then it becomes all the easier for others such as pro-Israeli supporters to marginalize attempts to draw attention to the continued occupation of the West Bank or the consequences of the Israeli-built security wall. Who would wish to support a people labelled as harbourers of terrorists?

### Video games and virtual Afghanistan and Iraq

Interested readers might like to consult the following website ([www.kumawar.org](http://www.kumawar.org)) and see the range of video games on offer to participants eager to recreate American military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the assault on Fallujah in 2004. Users are encouraged to use satellite

imagery and mapping so that they can plan their own military campaigns, and the company responsible for product development encourages real-life soldiers to volunteer their stories about combat experiences. Iraqi civilians and/or suspected militants appear to be either obstacles and/or adversaries that need to be killed, usually in large numbers.

Geographical representations help to inform people's understandings of the world and in that sense we are all geopolitical theorists. Critically, however, our geographical understandings of the world may differ radically and for a host of reasons – religious, ethnic, political, and so on. Muslims might remind us that one of the most important elements of their collective geographical imaginations is the notion of the umma, a community of fellow believers that stretches across North Africa, Europe, and Asia in particular. Some Muslims might also have pictures of Mecca and Medina in their living rooms. International bodies such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), created in 1969 (or 1390 according to the Muslim calendar), exist specifically to provide a forum for an alternative response to a world that is usually defined by powerful Christian countries such as the United States and their visions of global order. Incidentally, if you were to access the home page of the OIC, you will notice that the motif of the OIC is juxtaposed on the global symbol of the United Nations ([www.oic-oic.org](http://www.oic-oic.org)).

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## Linking geopolitics to popular culture

Geopolitics is neither something that simply occurs in the State Department nor that which is reproduced in the opinion pieces of newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*. Take the State of the Union address as an example. The American President always gives this address to a Joint Session of the House of Congress in January of each year. It is a high-profile opportunity

for a President to convey his vision for the country and the wider world. As part of that *tour d'horizon*, the State of the Union address frequently utilizes a whole series of geopolitical codes in order to rank countries and regions in order of their geographical significance, ranging from major allies to those considered to be clear and present dangers. The speech is televised and subject to extensive analysis in newspapers and magazines. Moreover, coming from the leader of the most powerful state in the world, presidential speeches also enjoy extensive contemplation from international media organizations. As such, the State of the Union address becomes part of everyday life and hence the subject of conversations in the home, the office, and the café.

Speaking in January 2002, only a few months after the 11 September attacks on the United States, the President's State of the Union address was a momentous event as many citizens looked to their Commander-in-Chief to make sense of events. American citizens were still in a state of shock. How was the President going to both reassure the populace and reassert America's sense of self-importance? As the speech unfolded, Bush deployed the following explicit geopolitical evaluation:

Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th. But we know their true nature. North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens.

Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom.

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens – leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead

children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections – then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

... I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.  
(Applause)

This section of the address caused much interest amongst media and political commentators not least because of the phrase 'axis of evil' to describe the trio of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. When the President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief of the US Armed Forces describes three countries as part of an 'axis of evil', people all over the world tend to notice. Unsurprisingly, the governments of those three countries strongly criticized the address and denounced the United States in public addresses designed in the main to reassure domestic audiences. From the President's point of view, the phrase 'axis of evil' was not only intended to act as a proverbial 'shot across the bows' of states that the United States disapproved of but also provided a simple geographical template of the world. By the time the President returned to this theme in the 2003 State of the Union address, Saddam Hussein in particular had been identified as a 'brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression ... with ties to terrorism ... [he] will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States'.

While few would seriously contend that Saddam Hussein was not brutal, this description, alongside many others, was important in preparing the 'ground' for the invasion in March 2003. The link to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proved enticing to many Americans, who initially supported President Bush's decision to take military action. While many experts in North America and elsewhere were doubtful of such connections, public opinion was not sufficiently critical of those assertions to prevent

the sceptics within the United States from overturning this element of the Global War on Terror. Why? In part it may well be that many Americans were simply not willing to call into question the judgement of the President and his colleagues such as Dick Cheney. To do so, one might have been labelled 'unpatriotic' and, with a reminder from the days of the cold war, 'un-American' – a charge levelled at musicians, actors, and intellectuals such as the Dixie Chicks, Martin Sheen, and Noam Chomsky respectively.

A factor that might also have had some relevance was the mainstream print and television media, which overwhelmingly supported the Bush administration. A large proportion of Americans rely on television for their news and most of those viewers are neither well travelled nor do they access alternative media sources such as online newspapers in other parts of the English-speaking world. It is sometimes difficult for non-American observers to believe that over 80 per cent of American citizens do not possess a passport, as many European and other global cities seem to have their fill of US visitors. As a consequence, American presidents have often used simple geographical descriptions and terms to convey a sense of geopolitical difference between their country and others, such as contemporary Iran or the Soviet Union in the recent past.

The 2002 State of the Union address mattered greatly because it helped to cement in the minds of many that the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq was connected to the 11 September 2001 attacks. Despite there being no clear evidence to link that regime to Islamic militancy and terror networks, many Americans were content to accept the geographical linkage and this in turn helped the administration to persuade their citizens that an invasion of Iraq, after the earlier military action in Afghanistan, was a vital next step in winning the Global War on Terror. While it is perfectly clear that not all Americans were duped into accepting this vision of the world, as the broadcasts aired on National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting Service would testify, sufficient numbers were



**2. President George W. Bush on the USS *Abraham Lincoln*, 1 May 2003**

prepared to accept the words and behaviour of their President and Commander-in-Chief.

In November 2004, much to the disappointment of many American voters, presidential candidate John Kerry was not able to deny the George W. Bush administration a second term. Sufficient numbers of voters were persuaded that the Republican Party was better able to secure America from the threat of terrorism. Perhaps popular culture did not help the Democrats in the sense that some of the biggest Hollywood hits such as *Die Another Day* (2002), *Collateral Damage* (2002), and *Sum of All Fears* (2001) depicted the United States as gravely imperilled by a host of terrorists and governments scattered across the globe, including North Korea and the Middle East. Even the British super-spy, James Bond, was working with his American colleagues to prevent a crazed North Korean colonel from eradicating South Korea and Japan with a powerful and destructive satellite. In the aftermath of the release of *Die Another Day* (2002), representatives of the North Korean regime remonstrated with the

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### 3. James Bond and *Die Another Day* (2002)

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United States because of the film's depiction of North Korean personnel threatening to destroy large parts of East Asia. The film coincided with the American President's description of their country as part of an 'axis of evil'. Combined with the ongoing efforts of the Department of Homeland Security and its security briefings and colour-coded representations of threat, many Americans were unwilling to change the presidential leadership in the midst of great uncertainty – real and/or perceived.

American presidents are not unique in terms of using simple geographical templates. When President Ahmadinejad of Iran told 4,000 student listeners in October 2005 that Israel must be 'wiped off the map', he was not just talking to them about the geopolitical ambitions of Iran. His public denunciation of Israel and his oft-stated desire to rewrite the political map of the Middle East provoked an angry reaction in Israel and its allies such as the United States. For international observers, especially those sympathetic to the state of Israel, this speech nourished a geographical imagination based on the notion that Israel faces a genuine threat and is surrounded by neighbours determined to end its existence. For others less sympathetic to Israel, including elements within Iran, the speech was interpreted as a sign of

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geopolitical bravado – here was a political leader determined to stand up for the Palestinians and confront the geopolitical ambitions of Israel in the West Bank and southern Lebanon as well as American hegemonic ambitions in the region.

The link between the pronouncements of political leaders and their audiences (intended or otherwise) is an important component of our examination of geopolitics. I will use the term *popular geopolitics* in order to convey a sense of how images and representations of global political geographies circulate within and beyond national political cultures. There are two aspects to be considered – first, the manner in which political life is fused with the mass media and, second, the different kind of media involved in producing and circulating images of global politics whether it be television, radio, and/or the internet.

## Structure of this book

The second chapter investigates the intellectual history associated with geopolitics. Despite the fact that most people using the term in newspaper, television reports, and/or the internet have no appreciation of its history, the ideas associated with geopolitics have changed over time. Engagement with this intellectual field differs markedly in the United States compared to Latin America, Germany, and Japan. The alleged connections between German geopolitics and Nazism were absolutely pivotal in shaping subsequent engagements. For example, very few scholars in either the United States or for that matter in the Soviet Union used the term geopolitics for nearly 40 years following the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. Why? They feared that they would in turn be accused of harbouring Nazi sympathies and ambitions.

Chapter 3 engages with the intersection between territory, resources, and flows. The dominant geopolitical architecture is an international system based on territorial states, exclusive jurisdictions, and national boundaries. However, geographical

scale also matters because people and places are linked to one another from the local, to the national and regional, and finally to the global. While territory and resources such as oil deposits and water sources matter, so do flows – of people, ideas, goods, fuel, and money. Flows of the aforementioned can be welcomed, ignored and/or feared. In January 2006, the populace of Ukraine discovered what it is like when gas flows stop and thus houses are no longer heated. As the main supplier of gas to European customers, Russia holds considerable potential to wield influence, cajole, and bully. Sometimes governments and citizens do not appreciate the scale and significance of particular patterns of movement. In 2006, the British government admitted that it had no real idea quite how large the flow of illegal immigrants was to the United Kingdom. Alternatively, governments can struggle to manage the mobility of others. In the summer of 2006, Israel's superior military forces failed to root out and destroy the highly mobile and well-hidden combatants attached to Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

Chapter 4 considers the relationship between geopolitics and identity. One persistent element embedded in the images and visions associated with the geographies of global politics is reference to self and others. When President Reagan described the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire', he was clear in his own mind that the United States was a force for good. As a former Hollywood actor, he might not have used the term 'a good empire' but anyone familiar with the Star Wars films would have appreciated the notion that the Soviet Union was part of 'the dark side'. The Soviet leader was the proverbial Darth Vader. The role of the other (in this case the Soviet Union) was a vitally important element in American self-understandings. It not only helped to identify a prevalent danger but also reinforced the self-identity of the United States as a force for good. As Michael Savage, a conservative talkshow host, told his listeners on 'The Savage Nation' in 2003 – "We are the good ones and they, the Arabs, are the evil

ones'. His show enjoys a listening audience of 8 million and is syndicated to over 370 radio stations in the United States.

In practice these kinds of moral geographies were not always so clear cut – the Soviet Union was seen by many as a liberating force and communist utopia and the United States was considered to be an 'evil empire' by others. As I was reliably informed by a Lebanese man while sitting in a café in the centre of Beirut, America remains the 'Great Satan'. He made that observation to me in July 2003 at the same time as we shared views on Hollywood and American music, which my companion greatly enjoyed. I would be surprised if his view had changed of America's geopolitical presence given events in the summer of 2006, which witnessed the destruction of the city by Israeli bombers and missiles (paid for by American foreign aid).

The final two chapters consider various elements of what I have already labelled popular geopolitics. Chapter 5 investigates the role and significance of maps and mapping. Since its formal inception as a term in the 1890s, geopolitical writers have presented their maps of the world as definitive and/or enlightening, while often being oblivious to their own political and cultural prejudices. Maps can overemphasize some places over others and they can deliberately mislead and/or distort via omission or colour coding. German maps in the 1920s and 1930s frequently depicted 'international Jewry' as an Octopus-like creature in an attempt to further besmirch the reputation of that particular community. Moreover, by exaggerating the power of international Jewry, the Nazis prepared the cultural and geographical ground for their subsequent murderous policies, which culminated in the Holocaust. While maps were clearly only one element, they helped to shape the geographical imaginations of ordinary Germans even if many were perfectly capable of resisting such cartographic and ideological propaganda. Tragically, it was insufficient to prevent genocide.

The final chapter expands upon our examination of maps with a wider consideration of films, magazines, television, the internet, and radio and the way in which they contribute to the circulation of geopolitical images and representations of territory, resources, and identity. Consider a film such as *Wag the Dog* (1997), a Hollywood comedy which features an American president engulfed in a sexual crisis on the eve of his re-election campaign. His advisers are desperate to find a foreign policy diversion and decide that a 'crisis' has emerged that threatens the security of the United States. The country imperilling the United States is said to be Albania. The advisers then hire a top Hollywood producer who manufactures a short film clip of a girl running away from a village desperate to escape her Albanian attackers. Within this farrago, US forces are apparently dispatched to tackle the threat posed by Albanian terrorists. Throughout the whole White House-inspired diversionary campaign, the US media and public opinion is depicted as gullible and easily manipulated by the alleged footage. The incumbent President's approval ratings soar as a consequence of his firm action regarding the Albanian threat.

While many film critics were swift to point to the real-world connections between President Clinton and his sexual peccadilloes and the subsequent 1999 airborne assault on Serbia by US/NATO forces, the effectiveness of the film also depends on the audience's response and credulity that Albania might harbour terrorists armed with a nuclear bomb. As a Muslim country located in a corner of Europe, other Europeans have frequently labelled Albania as claustrophobic, criminalized, and confusing. Interestingly, the Serbian authorities broadcast the film to domestic viewers in an attempt to discredit President Clinton's decision to attack Serbian forces and infrastructure in Kosovo and Serbia itself. Ironically, US-NATO forces were dispatched in order to prevent Serbian forces from implementing further attacks on the Kosovo community, which is predominantly Muslim. As President Clinton explained to American television viewers in March 1999:

Take a look at this map. Kosovo is a small place, but it sits on a major fault line between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, at the meeting place of Islam and both the Western and orthodox branches of Christianity. To the south are our allies, Greece and Turkey; to the north, our new democratic allies in Central Europe. And all around Kosovo there are other small countries, struggling with their own economic and political challenges – countries that could be overwhelmed by a large, new wave of refugees from Kosovo. All the ingredients for a major war are there: ancient grievances, struggling democracies, and in the center of it all a dictator in Serbia who has done nothing since the Cold War ended but start new wars and pour gasoline on the flames of ethnic and religious division.

As with President Roosevelt in 1942, he urged viewers to look to their maps and try to understand the complex geopolitics of South-East Europe. Unfortunately for Clinton, more Americans were probably preoccupied with the Monica Lewinsky affair. Geopolitics, as this very short introduction shows, is not merely an academic pursuit but an activity that deserves further reflection precisely because it is an essential part of everyday life in the United States and elsewhere. It is indeed smart to think geopolitically.

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