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ABSTRACT

Based on students' generally shallow knowledge of geographic concepts on the one hand and a new and almost universal awareness of man in his milieu on the other, the author seeks to draw attention to the discipline of geography, and more specifically, political geography as an essential, fundamental component of international studies. The application of geography to international studies is interpreted through a summary of the major outlines of the discipline of geography, and an examination of the essential role of regional analysis, both to geographers, and other social scientists. The author points out that geography, by providing a spatial awareness, gives a dimension to education without which the study of man on earth is incomplete. There are a number of social/world issues facing us (population, economic development, increasing involvement between nations) which demand understandings from the field of geography. Without this foundation of geographic-spatial concern there is grave danger that policy judgments might too often be made without important evidence. A short bibliography is appended. (Author/JLB)

GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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To place things in context... The perception of time, of a year, can very greatly. Prior to my assignment to GSIS, I had just completed a tour of duty in Southeast Asia, in Vietnam. That was a very long year. This year at GSIS, however, has been a very short one indeed but one of the most enriching of my life.

I was grateful for the opportunity to teach. But it became painfully clear very quickly that the separation from the academic environment carried with it certain penalties. Keeping up with my students alone required a considerable effort and a great deal of time. But these were penalties I was happy to pay. The classroom experience permitted entering into the full life and spirit of the graduate school and facilitated a return, as it were, to the concerns of academia in general and my own discipline of geography in particular.

As some of you know, I prepared two courses, one, "The Geographic Aspects of Economic Development and Foreign Economic Assistance," the other, "Geographic Aspects of Military Operations." In either course, the essential purpose was to provide an overview of the field of geography, relate it to the field of international relations, then exemplify its use in application.

Having prepared the two courses, I selected the former as the most appropriate. The course set out to examine the significant components of political geography and to employ those understandings in discussion related to economic development. To accomplish these ends I divided the course into three parts. Part I sought to provide the overview, emphasizing

political, economic and military aspects; special attention was directed to the nature, scope, methods and techniques of geographic research. Part II focused on some significant current problems in international studies, viewing them in a geographical/geopolitical context. Part III was organized to study causal relationships between foreign economic assistance to the underdeveloped world and physical/cultural geographic changes resulting from that assistance. In order to demonstrate the students' perception of the method, context and materials presented during the course, I required a short paper which was to treat geographical aspects and implications of a foreign economic assistance project in a region or country of the student's choice. In this, I was somewhat disappointed.

During my year at GSIS I have spoken with many students in addition to those in my seminar, asking about their background in geography. Of those, incredibly few have had any formal work in geography at any level and those who had, had pitifully little. Foreign students, on the other hand, had a considerable background in the discipline at all levels. (In France and in Europe generally, a geography course is required in virtually every grade-- primary through secondary schooling and in some cases beyond that level.) This admittedly small cross-section seemed to sustain the often repeated statement among professional geographers that "Americans are among the most geographically illiterate people in the world." Dr. Boulding, in his visit with us, stressed this same point. I suspect not too many would disagree with that idea, at least in its broader meaning.

The classroom experience proved to be an extremely stimulating, interesting and challenging one. Under ordinary circumstances, the substance of the course as I offered it would have put graduate students in geography to the test. The readings were many and diverse - of necessity to provide the intended overview. But here was frustration as well as a challenge. The graduate IR students, unqcquainted with the scope and jargon of the field of geography at any level, could only react to a definition - such as might be found in a dictionary. Erich Zimmerman in his World Resources and Industries[1] spoke of man constantly probing deeper and deeper into the "neutral stuff," that physical and abstract "stuff" of the unknown to make it known. I mention this to create a setting for my own metaphoric descriptive of the classroom experience, that is, dragging the students like a cork deeper into the substance of the geographic discipline only to see the cork bob back to the surface. The papers required of the students were proof of this, good papers all but not reflecting the essence of the discipline.

Geographic study is inherently of and about the land and man's relationship to it. It observes everything in the landscape and produces a cohesive picture from it. The limitations of the human mind, however, do not permit specialization in "everything." Consequently, modern geography starts with the understandings provided by the systematic

sciences in order to provide a synthesis of all the observed phenomena of a given place in a space-time context. In this sense, the geographer becomes what may be termed a "synthographer."[2] Being, by nature, trained to make such correlations, the geographer is in an excellent position to organize his knowledge of the world into interconnected systems, in order that any particular fragment of knowledge may be related to all others that bear upon it. Thus, by analysis and synthesis, the geographer first seeks to express the integration of all interrelated features at individual unit places.[3]

In the classroom I used to often playfully relate the study of geography to that of philosophy, defining the latter as the study of science of the truths or principles underlying all knowledge and being (or reality). In the examination of the physical and cultural attributes of man's habitat, the search for causal relationship among phenomena and between "man" and "nature" is fundamental. Comparisons and contrasts, likenesses and differences, intra- and interrelationships are all essential concerns of the geographer - as they are to the philosopher who constantly seeks to explain the "first cause." An excellent example of one point I wish to make here is appended to this paper, it deals with contrast

characteristics only between north and south China. The example cannot be examined without providing, by itself, enormous insight into the physical and cultural environment of China Proper. At the same time however, it begs many questions and presupposes broad specialized technical, historical and scientific knowledge. What is illustrated here is a method, a technique of thinking employed by geographers. What was done with contrasts can be done with comparisons. And always, cause and effect relationships are sought.

In summarizing concepts and methods used in the field of geography, a special committee report prepared for the Division of Earth Series of the National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council outlined geography's "overriding problem"; it is a problem which it shares with other branches of sciences, namely, that of a complete understanding of the vast system of the earth's surface comprising man and the natural environment. Of the three great parameters of concern to scientists, space, time and composition of matter, geography is concerned mainly with two. Geography treats the man - habitat systems primarily from the point of view of space in time. "It seeks to explain how the subsystems of the physical environment are organized on the earth's surface, and how man distributes himself over the earth in his space relation to physical features and to other men." The organizing concept of geography is essentially a tri-scaler space, the scales comprising extent, density, and succession; this basic concept provides the theoretical framework upon which geographic study is developed.[5]

"Geographers have long believed that correlations of spatial distributions are among the most ready ways to understanding existing or

developing life systems, social systems, or environmental change."[6] Admittedly, the concept of geography has changed greatly in the past thirty years but methods have changed little. Today, geographic analysis probably provides the best method of describing the countries of the world and their inhabitants. It does this in a fashion that the country's individual character, in relation to the mutual interplay of historical, territorial and psychological factors, may stand out as clear and vivid as possible. In the study of regional geography, (which many hold to be the highest expression of geographic endeavor), everything a region contains - the shape and structure of the ground, the sky and atmosphere, vegetation and crops, buildings and means of communication - coalesce in the land to form a complete picture. All the rest - race and nationality, historical past and economic activity, cultural achievement and psychological structure - solidifies in the people to form an intelligible character, a homogeneity.

Before moving to some considerations on geopolitics and the role of the geography discipline in international studies, I want to comment briefly on the geographer's notion of region and regional analysis. As I have just indicated, a geographic region is "seen" as a physical and/or cultural unit with limits and boundaries implicit. The key here is the word "seen" - by whom? Whenever we look at something, our environment for example, we do so from <u>our</u> point of view. It is a question of subjective perspective; thus a so-called national region is not natural in itself, but considered such only in man's interpretation of it. Even so, natural regions and their limits (boundaries), like climate and

vegetation zones, may be defined without too much controversy. A map of mosquitoe type distribution in the world would differ vastly from one mapping the world's deserts. Perhaps, needless to say, "all such divisions by geographers have been made with reference to man's point of view - nature as man is concerned with it."[7] But political boundaries may or may not coincide with natural regional boundaries. Though they are neither more nor less natural than "natural" boundaries, they are usually subject to strong differing human perceptions and intrinsically controversial. Nonetheless, the point here is that nation-states may be, and are considered by most geographers as appropriate regional entities, useful for some analytical purposes but not for others.

Regional analysis is a fundamental research tool often used by social scientists to approach an understanding in such diverse fields as education, forestry, nutrition, land reform, taxation, transport, etc.

> ...when this approach is used, geographical areas are delineated in such a way that the space included within a given region is homogeneous with respect to certain variables and heterogeneous in comparison to other regions with respect to the same variables. The regions chosen can be useful or not in leading insights into the nature of the problem studied, but they cannot be termed "right" or "wrong". Although a given regional classification may often be useful for several purposes, it will not be useful for all purposes.[8]

In the book Transport and the Economic Integration of South America, which was prepared for the Brookings Institution, Robert T. Brown used a regional approach based on natural boundaries rather than political boundaries. His development or definition of nine regions were based on topography, population densities, level of economic development,

and his own conception of the structure of a developed South America should economic integration be successful. Brown modified his preceived natural boundaries to align with the various political boundaries (national, state, provincial or local) in order to make use of available data.[9] Brown's perception of the transport and economic integration problems required a careful environmental analysis of both the physical and cultural components of South America's geography and he built his entire book on this perception.

There is little disagreement among geographers that regional study is an essential part of their craft. It underlies and its applicable to all aspects of geography, and is by no means standardized. But I want to go further than that, and state that it is essential to other academic crafts as well. Sociological, anthropological, historical and political studies and research, in disregarding the physical and cultural environment, the contrasts in the land forms, the climate, the cover of vegetation, the density of population, the types of economy, or other cultural features, fail to represent a complete picture of reality - like a map showing only political boundaries.

The work of Harold and Margaret Sprout is known to all of you. Though not geographers per se, the Sprouts have repeatedly called attention to the geographic component in social science research as a factor too often and too long neglected. They have noted that "too many books and lectures make a sort of token bow to land and people, and a 'glance at the map' (any old map handy), and then proceed to play fast and loose with the geographic dimensions of the subject under discussion."[10]

In many articles and books over the past two decades, the Sprouts have underlined the geographic (environmental) ecological, element in studies of international or world politics, international relations and political science. In an article in The Journal of Conflict Resolution, the Sprouts trace and define certain "environmental factors in the study of international politics" and discuss various hypotheses regarding relationships between man and his "milieu." The hypotheses are known to all of you but are worth mentioning here because they draw attention to man's best speculations on the impact of the environment on his conduct, activities and form of civilization. The five more or less distinct relationship theories are:

- Environmental determinism
- Free will environmentalism
- Environmental possibilism
- Cognitive behavorism
- Environmental probabilism

What is important in these speculations is that environment does have some kind of a bearing on man's activities, particularly his political actions. And it is in this area where geography and political science meet. The obvious link is in the sharing of interest in the setting or environment in which political man operates. Political science and international relations, as social sciences, are focused ultimately on man in society, organized for the pruposes of promoting and carrying on political activities, of establishing a government, of creating a state. Political geography, as a branch of geography with its roots in the natural sciences as well, has its focus essentially on the territorial aspect - what territory, how organized - and why.[12]

It is not my purpose in this paper to provide a discourse on political geography - rather I seek only to draw attention to the discipline as an

essential/fundamental component of international studies. Ladis K. D. Kristof, in defining geopolitics, demonstrates the scope and nature of this component:[13]

> Geopolitics is the study of political phenomena (1) in their spatial relationship and (2) in their relationship with, dependence upon, and influence on, earth as well as on all those cultural factors, which constitute the subject matter of human geography (anthropogeography) broadly defined.

Kristof continues by pointing out that geopolitics is precisely what the word itself suggests etymologically, namely - "geographical politics, that is, politics and not geography - politics analyzed for its geographical content."

I am not unaware that should I press on much further, there is danger of the "methinks thou doth protest too much" syndrome. I know I will find here little disagreement that geography has a place in the study of international relations - and IR has a place in the study of geopolitics... There is always the question of priorities. But I want to make the case and the point that there is a new and almost universal awareness of man in his milieu. It is difficult to conceive economic development planning or foreign aid projects that do not start with understandings provided in geography. Robert Heilbroner in his Great Ascent presented a geographically oriented "Tableau of under-development" as a necessary foundation for his economic speculations.[14] Benjamin Higgins took careful cognizance of geographical factors and theories of geographic determinism as they pertain to the tropics.[15]

Guerilla warfare cannot be examined without intimate and extensive physical and cultural geographic factors. Note the environmental tie (politics/geographic mix) in the guiding set of principles evolved by

Mao and his military advisors for the effective location and application of guerilla base operations:[16]

- Revolutionary activity should be concentrated in areas with previous political or revolutionary activity.
- Political stability at both the local and national level should be weak or lacking.
- The location must have access to major political targets.
- Zones of weak or confused political control provide ideal havens.
- Terrain must be favorable for military operations.
- Insofar as possible, the area must be economically self-sufficient
- Once established the base should not be abandoned except under the most critical of circumstances.

The enormously difficult problem of space utilization for tomorrow's population and its attending pressure on physical resources, particularly land, has claimed world wide attention. The population question is studied on at least four levels - the global, national, regional, and local. In each, the prime objective is to secure the maximum advantages from the intelligent use of resources, physical and cultural.[17]

The interests of geography, like many of the social sciences and humanities, have been and are inter-disciplinary. Political geographers find it increasingly necessary to draw upon research findings in other fields. As in other fields, in this third quarter of the 20th century, it is increasingly apparent that the raw material with which the geographer deals is becoming progressively more of a quantitive nature and less merely qualitative. The 40th yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies provided a Focus on Geography in 1970 placing

special emphasis on key concepts and teaching strategies. On the conceptual side, the quantitative flavor is evident: [18]

- Location Theory
- Cultural Ecology
- Environmental Perception
- Changing Urban Spatial Patterns
- Regional Development
- Spatial Interaction
- Systems, Model Building and Quantative Methods
- Trends in Cartography

Geography, by providing a "spacial awareness", gives a dimension to education without which the study of man on earth is incomplete. In recent years, something resembling a quiet revolution has been occurring in geography. Problems once thought to be intractable are now being solved. Observing this, Kenneth Boulding was prompted to say:[19]

> Geography is, in a state of great intellectual ferment, busy absorbing new methods, especially quantitative methods, on all sides, and quite self-consciously aware of its role as an integrator of many social sciences and natural sciences besides. Of all the disciplines, geography is the one that has caught the vision of the study of the earth as a total system...

There is much left to say - but what of that ought to be said here. The point I sought here has been merely to fix attention on this very essential ingredient of international studies. Without this foundation of geographic/spatial concern there is grave danger that policy judgments might too often be built upon onageristic evidence.

Writing in the November 1970 issue of Social Education, James A. Michener provided this essay's capstone:

> "The more I work in the social-studies field, the more convinced I become that geography is the foundation of all. When I call it the queenly science I do not visualize a bright-eyed young woman recently, a princess

but rather an elderly, somewhat beatup dowager, knowing in the ways of power...When I begin work on a new area....I invariably start with the best geography I can find. This takes precedence over everything else, even history, because I need to ground myself in the fundamentals which have governed and in a sense limited human development ....The virtue of the geographical approach is that it forces the reader to relate man to his environment. It forestalls loose generalization founded mainly on good intentions or hope. It gives a solid footing to speculation and it reminds the reader that he is dealing with human beings who are just as circumscribed as he...With the growing emphasis on ecology and related problems of the environment, geography will undoubtedly grow in importance and relevance."

"I wish that the teaching of (geography) were going to improve commensurately;....I could make the same wish about geographical writing. It really ought to be much better than it is, with more emphasis upon generalization and philosophical meaning...What is required is the perceptive analysis of the land and man's relation to it."

CHINA PROPER: CONTRAST BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

The North	The South
Large areas of level land, with hills	Extensive mountains, with scattered plains
Polar Continental air masses	Tropical Marine air masses
Limited and variable rainfall, 15 to 25 inches	Abundant and dependable rainfall, 40 to 80 inches
Disastrous droughts and floods, frequent famine	Water available for irrigation, relative prosperity
Cold winters, hot summers, a little snow	Cool winters, hot humid summers, frost uncommon
Semiarid climate, influenced by Mongolia	Subtropical monsoon climate
Brown and dust-blown in winter	Green landscape at all seasons
Forests rare	Abundant vegetation, bamboo
Unleached calcareous soils	Leached noncalcareous soils
Four to six months' growing season, one or two crops	Nine to twelve months frost free, two or three crops
Precarious agriculture, small margin if rain is abnormal	Intensive agriculture, crop failure rare, large yields
Dry fields	Irrigated terraces
Wheat, millet, kaoliang, dry agriculture	Rice, tea, silk, wet farming
Oxen, mules, and donkeys	Water Buffalo and yellow cows
Roads for two-wheeled carts and draft animals	Flagstone trails for coolie carriers; sedan chairs
Mud-walled houses, heated-brick beds or kangs	Houses of brick or woven bamboo walls, unheated
Cities with wide streets	Crowded cities, narrow streets
Smooth coast line, poor harbors, fishing unimportant	Irregular coast line, good harbors, fishing important
Foreign intercourse by land, migration to Manchuria	Foreign intercourse by water, migration to the South
Racial uniformity, with Mongolian intermixture	Racial variations, with many tribal groups
National dialect throughout	Diverse dialects
Cradle of early culture, 15 centuries B.C.	Not settled until Tang dynasty, 7-9 centuries A.D.
Classical and conservative, scholars and artists	Radical and restless, merchants and adventurers

*Source unknown

[1]Zimmerman, Erich W., World Resources and Industries. N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1951, p. 18.

[2]Kott, Richard F., Brasilia dans sa Region, unpublished dissertation, University of Portiers, 1966, p. 6.

[3]Hartshorne, Richard, "The Nature of Geography," Outside Readings in Geography. Ed., Dohrs, Fred E. et al., N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1958, pp. 21 and 23.

[4]"The Science of Geography," Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Geography, Earth Science Division, National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council, Washington, D.C., 1965, p. 1.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Hartshorne, Richard, "The Nature of Geography," AAG, 1949 as quoted in Kristof, Ladis K.D., "The Origins and Evolution of Geopolitics," Journal of Conflict Resolution. Vol. IV, No. 1, March 1960, p. 28.

[8]Brown, Robert T. Transport and Economic Integration of South America. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1966, p. 9.

[9]Ibid., p. 11.

[10]Sprout, Harold, "Geopolitical Hypothesis in Technological Perspective'" World Politics. Vol. XV, No. 2, Jan., 1963, p. 191.

[11]Sprout, Harold and Margaret, "Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1957, pp. 311-316.

[12]Jackson, Douglas A. "Whither Political Geography," unpublished paper, University of Washington, not dated, p. 4.

[13]Kristof, Ladis K. D. "The Origins and Evolution of Geopolitics," The Journal of Conflict Resolution. Vol. IV, No. 1, March 1960, p. 34.

[14]Heilbroner, Robert L., The Great Ascent. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963, pp. 23-27.

[15]Higgins, Benjamin, Economic Development. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1959, pp. 265-273.

[16]McColl, Robert W. "Political Geography of Revolution". The Journal of Conflict Revolution. Vol. XI, No. 2., June 67, p. 155-156.

[17]Stamp, L. Dudley, Land for Tomorrow. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969, p. 13-14.

[18]Focus on Geography. Philip Bacon, ed., Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1970, p. xvi.

[19]"Geography in the Two-Year Colleges," prepared by the Commision on College Geography, Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1970, p. 12.