GEOGRAPHY AND FOREIGN POLICY, I

NICHOLAS J. SPYKMAN
Yale University

"La politique de toutes les puissances est dans leur géographie,"[1] conceded the man whose famous retort, "Circonstances? Moi, je fais les circonstances," indicates his contempt for any agency but the human will as the arbiter of human destiny. But since the Red Sea parted for Moses and the sun obligingly paused for Joshua, the human will has been unable to recapture the control over topography and climate exhibited by those forceful gentlemen, and it is probably safe to say that it was by Russian geography rather than by men that the diminutive Corsican was finally defeated. If he is still living, there is at Waterloo even today a loyal guide who asserts with unshakable conviction that neither genius nor skill but a swampy ditch gave that victory to Wellington.

Unfortunately for the political scientist with a fondness for simplification, but fortunately for the statesman striving to overcome the geographic handicaps of his country, neither does the entire foreign policy of a country lie in geography, nor does any part of that policy lie entirely in geography. The factors that condition the policy of states are many; they are permanent and temporary, obvious and hidden; they include, apart from the geographic factor, population density, the economic structure of the country, the ethnic composition of the people, the form of government, and the complexes and pet prejudices of foreign ministers; and it is their simultaneous action and interaction that create the complex phenomenon known as "foreign policy."

It is the task of the social scientist to try to find in the enormous mass of historical material correlations between conditioning factors and types of foreign policy. This means that the study of diplomatic history must be supplemented by a search for the behavior patterns of states under different stimuli and in various international environments. Scientific method requires that the search operate by means of abstraction, and common sense warns that correlations found by means of such abstraction can by themselves be only partial, not complete, explanations of concrete historical situations.

[1] Napoleon I to the King of Prussia, November 10, 1804, *Correspondance de Napoléon I^er^* (Paris, 1862), X, 60, No. 8170.

Of the various factors that condition the foreign policy of states, there is no question that Napoleon indicated the most significant. War was an instrument of national policy in his time and still is today, and, in a world where groups struggle for power by means of war, policy becomes high strategy.

In such a world, the geographic area of the state is the territorial base from which it operates in time of war and the strategic position which it occupies during the temporary armistice called peace. It is the most fundamentally conditioning factor in the formulation of national policy because it is the most permanent. Ministers come and ministers go, even dictators die, but mountain ranges stand unperturbed. George Washington defending thirteen states with a ragged army has been succeeded by Franklin Roosevelt with the resources of a continent at his command, but the Atlantic continues reassuringly to separate Europe from the United States and the ports of the Saint Lawrence are still blocked by winter ice. Alexander I, Czar of all the Russias, bequeathed to Joseph Stalin, simple member of the Communist party, not only his power but his endless struggle for access to the sea, and Clemenceau shared with Caesar and Louis XIV their anxiety over the open German frontier.

Because the geographic characteristics of states are relatively unchanging and unchangeable, the geographic demands of those states will remain the same for centuries, and because the world has not yet reached that happy state where the wants of no man conflict with those of another, those demands will cause friction. Thus at the door of geography may be laid the blame for many of the age-long struggles which run persistently through history while governments and dynasties rise and fall.

Es gibt Konstellationen, wo die Völker und Staaten gegeneinander stehen, weil die Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten räumlich und wirtschaftlich beschränkt sind und des einen Vorteil des anderen Nachteil sein muss. Es ist dies immer der Fall, wo geographische und raumpolitische Situationen die Entfaltungstendenz verschiedener Staaten in eine Richtung drängen, und ein einziges Ziel, ein Land, die Beherrschung einer See oder eines strategisch und wirtschaftlich wichtigen Punktes verschiedenen Staaten notwendig erscheint . . . solche Verhältnisse raumpolitischer Art sind der Grund, warum einige Fragen aus der politischen Geschichte niemals ausscheiden und unter den verschiedensten Verhältnissen immer wieder auftauchen.[2]

[2] J. J. Rüdorffer (Kurt Riezler); cited in Erich Topf, "England und Russland an den Türkischen Meerengen," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, 1928, II, 665.

It should be emphasized, however, that geography has been described as a conditioning rather than as a determining factor. The word was chosen advisedly. It was not meant to imply that geographic characteristics play a deterministic, causal rôle in foreign policy. The geographical determinism which explains by geography all things from the fourth symphony to the fourth dimension paints as distorted a picture as does an explanation of policy with no reference to geography.[3] The geography of a country is rather the material for, than the cause of, its policy, and to admit that the garment must ultimately be cut to fit the cloth is not to say that the cloth determines either the garment's style or its adequacy. But the geography of a state cannot be ignored by the men who formulate its policy. The nature of the territorial base has influenced them in that formulation in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

The nature of this base exerts a manifold influence on foreign policy. Size affects the relative strength of a state in the struggle

[3] The present German school of "Geopolitik" has abandoned to a certain degree the strict geographic determinism of Ratzel, but only to be tempted by a metaphysics which views geography as a last cause. As the word indicates, the adherents are not only engaged in a study of the geographic conditioning of political phenomena; they are also engaged in advocating policy, which is hardly a scientific endeavor. Probably the best statement of their position was given in 1928 by the four editors of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik:* "Die Geopolitik ist die Lehre von der Erdgebundenheit der politischen Vorgänge. Sie fusst auf der breiten Grundlage der Geographie, insbesondere der Politischen Geographie als der Lehre von den politischen Raumorganismen und ihrer Struktur . . . Die Geopolitik will Rüstzeug zum politischen Handeln liefern und Wegweiser im politischen Leben sein. Damit wird sie zur Kunstlehre, die die praktische Politik bis zur notwendigen Stelle des Absprungs vom festen Boden zu leiten fähig ist. Nur so wird dieser Sprung vom Wissen zum Können und nicht vom Nichtwissen aus erfolgen, woher er sicher weiter und gefährlicher ist. Die Geopolitik will und muss zum *geographischen Gewissen des Staates* werden." [Cited in Richard Hennig, *Geopolitik* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 9.]

To this determinism the French school, founded by Vidal de la Blache and continued by Brunhes and Vallaux and now by Febvre, opposes its "possibilism," taking into account the possible modification of geography by men, and the many other factors which unite with the geographic in determining human destiny: "The true and only geographical problem is that of the utilization of possibilities." [Lucien Febvre, *A Geographical Introduction to History* (New York, 1925), p. 349.] ". . . the most perfect morphological type involves no certain effects." [Henri Berr, "Foreword" to Febvre, *op. cit.*, p. xii.]

It is perhaps somewhere between this last statement and the determinism of Ratzel that we would chart our course. Geography does not determine, but it does condition; it not only offers possibilities for use, it demands that they be used; man's only freedom lies in his capacity to use well or ill or to modify for better or worse those possibilities.

for power. Natural resources influence population density and economic structure, which in themselves are factors in the formulation of policy. Location with reference to the equator and to oceans and land masses determines nearness to centers of power, areas of conflict, and established routes of communication, and location with reference to immediate neighbors defines position in regard to potential enemies, thereby determining the basic problems of territorial security.

The significance of size and location as factors in foreign policy cannot be evaluated, however, without a consideration of the modifying effects of topography and climate. Topography affects strength because of its influence on unity and internal coherence. Climate, affecting transportation and setting limits to the possibility of agricultural production, conditions the economic structure of the state, and thus, indirectly but unmistakably, foreign policy.

I. THE FACTOR OF SIZE

The comparative size of states, provided there is an effective political and economic integration of the area, is a rough indication of comparative strength and, as such, an element in foreign policy. Although in its abstract form as total surface area it does not give rise to specific objectives and gives no content to foreign policy, yet it is an indication of the power to resist pressure from other states and may affect the choice between war and diplomacy as instruments of national policy.

Throughout history, and especially during its earlier periods, an overwhelming majority of the strong states have been large states. Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, and Rome were each in their turn the largest existing organized state, and by that token, the strongest. It is true that in certain periods small states like Athens and Venice and Holland, operating as sea-powers, could for a time, by means of the control of sea-routes, extend their sway over large areas of the world, but in land struggles they usually succumbed to the larger units and in sea struggles to units with broader bases, which meant larger territory. During the modern periods, great powers have again been large powers. Germany looks with anxiety and displeasure on the enlarged Poland on her eastern frontier and on the enormous Russia beyond, and Japan lives in deadly fear of a future in which the China and Russia facing her across the Japanese Sea shall have developed the power potentials inherent in their gigantic size.

The last illustration makes it clear that size is not strength but potential strength. It is strength in so far as size is equivalent to arable land and therefore to man power, and, reasoning from this premise, most land powers have in the past followed a policy of territorial expansion. Since the Industrial Revolution, however, strength has become more and more identified with industrial strength. Raw material resources and industrial organization have therefore become the prerequisites of power whether by land or by sea. But size is still operative in the sense that the larger the area the greater the chances that it contains varying climatic ranges and varying topography, and therefore varied resources and economic possibilities.

Size is of primary importance as an element of defense, particularly if the vital centers of a country are far removed from the border. To reach Moscow, Napoleon forced an exhausted army across a space almost as vast as his own empire, only to find himself confronted by more silent space and his base of supplies hopelessly in the rear. More than a hundred years later, the anti-Communist campaigns of the White Russians and the Allies fruitlessly battered away their strength in the Russian border territories while the Communists, unperturbed, organized the vital centers of the country. A human foe exhibits the weaknesses and strengths common to the human race, and against him man can pit his skill and determination. Space simply is, and defeats by virtue of being. It can fulfill its defense function, however, only when the vital centers of a country are located away from the frontier. In a war between the United States and Canada, the vast reaches of Canada would afford far less protection than do the smaller stretches of United States territory, for the industrial and population centers of the former are concentrated on her southeastern border within easy reach of an invader, while those of the United States lie well behind the frontier.

Size and distance as elements of defense have acquired even greater significance since men have flown through the air instead of walking on the ground. The present effective radius of a bombing squadron is approximately eight hundred miles. Russia is thus the only European country the vital industrial and mining centers of which do not lie within the range of an enemy squadron. Paris is less than two hundred fifty miles from London, and the Ruhr lies less than three hundred miles from Paris. In the event of a Russo-

Japanese conflict, should Japan bomb Vladivostok, Russian industrial and agricultural production would continue undiminished and the general defense organization of the country would remain intact. Should a Russian bombing squadron succeed in destroying Osaka and Kobe, the center of Japanese production, transportation and communication would be gone, and the resulting disorganization might well be a greater factor in defeating Japan than a minor naval victory.

The size of a state at any given time cannot be accounted for in terms of any one conditioning factor. It depends on technical, social, moral, and ideological development, on the dynamic forces within a state, on the political constellation of the past, and on the personality of individuals. But it has undeniably been conditioned by topographical facts. The effect of topography on size is admittedly less since man has learned to tunnel through mountains and throw bridges across great chasms, but until technological conquest is considerably more complete, topography cannot be disregarded.

Greece was divided by nature into small economic units, and she therefore developed small political units. The valleys were self-centered and the most fertile sections of the country were open to the sea but shut off from contact by land with the rest of the peninsula. She therefore exchanged ideas and commodities by sea rather than by land, and the Greek settlements became a string of cities many of which were enemies each of the other.[4] A similar situation prevails in the Balkan peninsula today, where each valley or plain is isolated by a mountain wall, and the various groups preserve their own social, political, and religious characteristics. There is no natural center within the peninsula around which a great state might form, and rivalries between the small states are inevitable. The same influence of lowland and highland distribution can be traced in the disintegration of the Roman Empire in western Europe into comparatively small units, which are small because the low ground and high ground are distributed in small areas.

The factors of topography which create barriers to expansion will, should these barriers be overcome, continue to operate as obstacles to effective defense and successful integration of the new territory with the old domain. The effect of the nature of the border territory on the problems of defense and foreign policy in gen-

[4] Marion Newbigin, *The Mediterranean Lands* (New York, 1924), p. 149.

eral will be discussed later. But at this point must be mentioned the problem of effective control quite apart from the danger of aggression, because only with effective centralized control does large size become an element of strength rather than of weakness. Such control depends primarily on two factors: on the existence of an effective system of communication from the center to the periphery, and on the absence or the successful counterbalancing of centrifugal forces of separatism. On the establishment of a communication system, which is in turn one of the most effective means of counteracting separatist tendencies, the shape and topography of a state have a direct influence.

Obviously, the ideal territorial shape for a state is that of a perfect circle. Given such a configuration, the greatest possible area is enclosed within the shortest possible boundary, facilitating defense, and all parts of the area are equidistant from, and as near as possible to, a government located at the center of the circle. States that are long and narrow in shape—and this is particularly true for land powers—tend inevitably to disintegrate either by losing territory at the periphery where the centralizing influence of the government is least felt, or by splitting to reappear as separate states. Examples of the former tendency are to be found in the Ottoman Empire, which had lost effective control of all northern Africa and most of the Balkans before those areas were taken by other powers, and in the Arabian, Mongol, and Macedonian Empires which preceded it.

A factor even more significant than shape in the establishment of centralized control over a given area is topography. On the height and configuration of mountain ranges, the depth and width of valleys, the direction of rivers, and the modifying effect of climate on all of these features, will depend the ease of communication within a country. Where mountains like the Andes or the Scandinavian or Swiss ranges bar the way or cut the country into disconnected sections as in the Balkan peninsula, communication will be slow to be established and will remain expensive and infrequent; where marshes or deserts divide two parts of a country, road building will be difficult; and where river systems run parallel instead of converging, they offer no convenient means of communication to a centrally located government and tend to separate rather than to unite.

Over those sections of the country with which it has but infre-

quent communication a government will have but slight control. Mountain distribution, the chief cause of the present ethnic distribution, has exercised on Switzerland a definitely decentralizing effect which is intensified by the river system. What is significant about this river system as a disunifying influence is not its direction, however, but the fact that all the rivers flow from the periphery outward, creating no network of communication within the country and tending to connect the peripheral sections more closely with foreign countries than with the central part of the homeland. For various political reasons this has not, in the case of Switzerland, resulted in actual political disunity. It has, however, been the cause of the cultural, linguistic, and economic decentralization that is such an outstanding characteristic of the Republic. The same phenomenon of parallel rivers, with the same disunifying effect, can be noted in Germany, where the Rhine, the Weser, the Elbe, the Oder, and the Weichsel all flow northwest along parallel lines, dividing the country into five valleys and converging near no point from which a central government might extend its unifying influence along the river valleys to the edge of the state. The smallest Chinese river basins have formed the tiny political units which are characteristic of all Chinese history, and the three large river valleys persistently maintained a regional separatism which has been an obstacle to political unification. In Siberia, climate adds its decentralizing influence to that of topography, and the rivers not only flow along parallel courses but flow to the Arctic and are closed by ice. It was no accident that Siberia did not become effectively a part of the Russian Empire until the development of the railroad.

Rivers can be, and often have been, however, the chief unifying influence, especially in early political organizations. The first states were without exception river states, centered around the Tigris and Euphrates and the Nile, and the French colonial empire in North America was established along the St. Lawrence and Mississippi valleys. From just northwest of Moscow, the Dnieper flows south to the Black Sea, the Volga flows east and south to the Caspian, and the Volkhof flows north through Lake Ladoga to reach the Gulf of Finland as the Neva. Because the cataracts on the Dnieper below Kiev formed a barrier to communication, Kiev gave way to Moscow as the seat of the government, which from its position on the Moscova, a tributary of the Oka, which in turn

flows into the Volga, can extend its centralizing influence to all the corners of European Russia. A similar network of rivers converging on Paris makes that city the inevitable center of France and centers France inevitably about Paris.

From the beginning, governments have strengthened their control over territory by supplementing the natural means of communication and attempting to overcome the barriers posed by topography. The Incas unified their empire by roads, the Persians constructed a central highway from Sardes to Susa which interestingly followed practically the same route as the projected Berlin-to-Bagdad railroad about two thousand years later; the Chinese, the French, and the Russians supplemented their great rivers by a honeycomb of canals; and Rome retained contact with her distant empire by roads so well constructed that some of them exist today. Charlemagne built roads, and every forward step of the French kingdom toward centralization coincides with a step toward the perfection of communication within the country. In the period of reorganization after the Hundred Years' War, Louis XI established the first postal service; and at the beginning of the rapid national development that followed the religious wars Sully planned his first great highway system.

It was the railroad, however, that made possible effective integration over wider areas. Before its development, few states located in conflict areas were able to maintain control over territories lying more than three hundred miles from the center of government. For this reason, large states have availed themselves of this instrument and have built lines for strategic and political reasons long before the economic significance of the outlying areas justified such construction. The railroads of France, Germany, and Russia radiate from Paris, Berlin, and Moscow. In the same way, the large continental powers have confirmed their unity by the development of their railroad systems. Transcontinental lines stretch across the United States, Canada, and Australia, and the Trans-Siberian and the Turk-Sib lines have brought Asiatic Russia within reach of the central government. Madrid, which made a feeble attempt in the same direction, is realizing today to her sorrow the dangers of an inadequate railway net.

Indeed, so important have railroads become as the most effective means of establishing control over the territory through which

they run that their ownership has become almost a symbol of sovereignty.

In einem modernen Staat ist jedoch nicht das Strassennetz, sondern das Eisenbahnnetz das Verkehrsrückgrat des Raumorganismus. Auf ihm beruht die Raumbeherrschung eines Staates. Wer das Bahnnetz beherrscht, beherrscht auch den Staat. König WILHELM wollte darum Sachsen die politische Selbständigkeit lassen, aber die Bahnen in die Verwaltung nehmen, was gleichbedeutend mit dem Verlust der Selbständigkeit gewesen wäre. Danzig gilt wohl als freier selbständiger Staat; von einer tatsächlichen Selbständigkeit kann aber keine Rede sein, denn Polen verwaltet seine Bahnen. Der Griff nach den Bahnen ist darum bei jeder politischen Eroberung das erste; und umgekehrt begibt sich ein Staat, der seine Bahnen aus der Hand gibt, eines Teiles seiner politischen Selbständigkeit. Alle Verliehungen von Bahnkonzessionen (China an Russland für die nördliche Mandschurei, Türkei) sind Akte politischer Schwäche und beginnende Selbstentgliederung.[5]

Closely following the development of the railroads and interior waterways have come the airways which now cover every continent and which, although still imperfect for the transportation of commodities, are the most perfect means of retaining constant contact between a central government and distant parts of the country. In this connection, the efficacy of radio as a means of cultural and ideological centralization should not be forgotten.

Conversely, the decline of large empires has often been accompanied by a neglect of the communication system. The European and Asiatic states of the Middle Ages used the existing means without troubling to improve or develop them, and therefore remained small in size. Where large states did exist, such as the Caliphate and the Mongol Empire, they were political units in name only, with no actual control over the peripheral sections of their territory. The new Turkish republic, with its ambitious plans for the development of an elaborate system of communications, has evidently profited by the example of its predecessor.

Although the strategic and political problem of integrating and retaining overseas territories is entirely different from that presented by distant sections of contiguous territory, it is undoubtedly true that here also distance in relation to existing forms of communication played a rôle in the loss of American colonies to the British and Spanish mother countries.

In revolting against England the American colonies followed a recognized law of political geography. They constituted the remote western

[5] Otto Maull, *Politische Geographie* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 498–499.

frontier of Europe; and a tendency toward defection manifests itself in all peripheral holdings . . . mere distance increases greatly the difficulty of governmental control. . . . [6]

Topography, climate, and distance thus determine the ease of communication within a country and thereby greatly lessen or enhance the probability of the development of separatism. Sections cut off by mountains or deserts, or whose location in a river valley predisposes them toward economic identification with a foreign country rather than with other sections of the homeland, tend to develop local interests and a local policy and gradually to shake off the control of the central government. Regionalism will not lead necessarily to the actual severance of political connections unless it occurs on the periphery and in combination with ethnic differences. The regionalism which during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries caused the disintegration of the Turkish and Austrian Empires and resulted in the establishment of independent states throughout central and eastern Europe found its source in the existence of ethnic units rather than of topographically isolated areas, although topography played its part in the prevention of ethnic diffusions. When regionalism takes the virulent form of nationalism, as it did in these instances, it may break even a state like Austria-Hungary, which had an element of natural geographic unity as the basin state of the Danube.

Regionalism which falls short of separatism nevertheless creates difficulties in the formulation of a unified national policy, for the interests of different regions will inevitably conflict, and national policy will then represent a compromise between these conflicts. A paradoxical characteristic of regionalism is that economic regionalism may be one of the strongest elements in the unity of a country because of the interchange of goods which it fosters and still be an element of disunity in foreign policy because of the difficulty of incorporating into the foreign commercial policy the conflicting demands of various regions for protection, markets, raw materials, and capital.

Thus it appears that regionalism is a complex phenomenon, the result of many contributing factors, of which topography and climate are not the least important. The regionalism to be found today in the United States, Brazil, and Australia is primarily that

[6] E. C. Semple, *American History and Its Geographic Conditions* (New York 1903), p. 47.

of economic specialization determined by topography and climate; in Germany, it is both topographically and ideologically conditioned; in France, it is geographic, economic, traditional, and ideological. At the present time, technological progress, as manifested in railroad, steamship, and aëroplane development, has made it possible to overcome almost all the topographical elements in regionalism, and therefore to integrate effectively an area of almost any size. It is probably safe to say, then, that it is economic regionalism that exerts the most apparent influence on foreign policy.

It appears, therefore, that great size, especially if combined with favorable climate and productive soil, is a decided element of strength, but that such strength can become effective only after centralized control has been established over the entire area by the creation of an efficient communication system. If topography and climate lend their aid in the development of communications, the evolution from large state to strong state will be rapid. If topography and climate create barriers, the state must wait until the necessary elements of capital and technological skill are at hand to overcome the natural barriers by artificial means. It thus becomes clear why Turkey before 1914 and Brazil and China today, although among the largest states in the world, are still second-class powers. A large part of the Turkish territory was desert and, as we have already noted, the country had no adequate system of communication and no effective administration. The same lack of systems of communications, coupled in the case of China with a complete absence of industrial technique, has so far kept both Brazil and China from effectively integrating their vast territories. There is little escape from the conclusion that size means potential strength, and that with the diffusion of Western technology great size plus time and a will to power will almost inevitably mean actual strength. Unless the dreams of European Confederation should materialize, it may well be that fifty years from now the quadrumvirate of world powers will be China, India, the United States, and the U.S.S.R.

II. THE FACTOR OF LOCATION

Important as size may be, however, it does not exclusively determine the rank of a state in the hierarchy of world powers and may be less significant than location in determining its importance in international affairs and in defining its problems of foreign

policy. The location of a state may be described from the point of view of world-location, that is, with reference to the land masses and oceans of the world as a whole, or from the point of view of regional location, that is, with reference to the territory of other states and immediate surroundings. The former description will be in terms of latitude, longitude, altitude, and distance from the sea; the latter will be in terms of relations to surrounding areas, distances, lines of communication, and the nature of border territory.

A complete description of the geographic location of a state will include not only both these points of view as facts of location, but an analysis of the meaning of those facts. The facts of location do not change. The significance of such facts changes with every shift in the means of communication, in routes of communication, in the technique of war, and in the centers of world power, and the full meaning of a given location can be obtained only by considering the specific area in relation to two systems of reference: a geographic system of reference from which we derive the facts of location, and a historical system of reference by which we evaluate those facts.

The geographic location of a state expressed, then, in terms of the facts and significance of its world and regional location is the most fundamental factor in its foreign policy. It can modify the significance of size and explain the historical importance of many small states. It conditions and influences all other factors for the reason that world location defines climatic zones and thereby economic structure, and regional location defines potential enemies and thereby the problem of territorial security and potential allies, and perhaps even the limits of a state's rôle as a participant in a system of collective security. If the British were willing to give up Empire, a shift of the Isles a thousand miles to the west might enable them to enjoy the luxury of "isolationism." With the present location, Empire or no Empire, they are inevitably enmeshed in the politics of continental Europe.

Since the French dug a ditch near Suez, and the French and the Americans blasted a trench near Panama, the great land masses of the world consist of two islands, Eurasia and North America, which, because of navigation problems on the North Polar Sea, function as peninsulas, and three true islands, South America, Africa, and Australia. The world location of a state becomes therefore a ques-

tion of its location with reference to these land masses. The fact that the greater land masses lie in the northern hemisphere, and that the largest land masses that do exist in the southern hemisphere lie in the tropics, has certain obvious implications. Politically and industrially, the northern hemisphere will always be more important than the southern, and relations between various parts of the northern hemisphere will have more influence on the history of the world than relations between parts of the southern hemisphere or between the two hemispheres. The location of a state north or south of the equator will therefore play a large part in determining the political significance of that state, the nature of its international relations, and the problems of its foreign policy.

Location with reference to the equator will largely determine climate, and the political activity of the world is for the most part centered in the temperate zones, although where ocean currents or other modifying influences alter the normal climatic conditions, the significance of location will be modified to that extent. On the European coast, which is warmed by the Gulf Stream, states can exist as far north as the polar circle, but the mouth of the Amur and the ports of Kamtchatka and Labrador are closed by ice six months of the year. In general, however, history is made between the latitudes of 25° and 60°, and, because very little of the land mass of the southern hemisphere lies between these limits, history is made between 25° and 60° north latitude.

But the significance of world location does not become clear until it is expressed not only with reference to land masses but also in relation to oceans. The five major bodies of water are the South Polar Sea, the North Polar Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic. The South Polar Sea has no land to drain, and location on the North Polar Sea will remain for a long time to come a tremendous obstacle notwithstanding the heroic efforts of the Soviet government to open up the North Siberian coast.

Of the remaining three oceans, the Atlantic is the most important because, due to the distribution of mountain ranges and the resulting river flow, it has the most favorable ratio of ocean surface to land surface. Thirty-five million square miles in area, it drains nineteen million square miles of land, and, except in Africa, the navigability of most of its rivers permits easy access to inland regions. On the shores of the Atlantic and its inland seas live nine hundred million people, or forty-four per cent of the total popula-

tion of the globe, and it touches most of the areas with a high standard of living.

> To the Atlantic world come at least two-thirds of the world exports, probably more. The traffic across the Atlantic is 75 per cent of the whole sea-going traffic. The production of the most important raw materials and finished goods is equally concentrated on the shores of the Atlantic within the Atlantic world.[7]

The Atlantic area contains the seats of all the large powers and the principal naval bases of all the great sea-powers except Japan.

For the Pacific, the ratio of surface to drainage basin is less favorable. The ocean is sixty-eight million square miles in area and the surface drained only eight million square miles. "About 723,000,000 people, or about 35.4 per cent of the total population of the world, live on the shores of the Pacific."[8] Most of these live in Asia on relatively low standards of living. It will be a very long time before the Pacific can compare with the Atlantic in trade significance, but not only the gold value but also the volume of the foreign trade of the Pacific countries is now definitely increasing, and the relative position of the Atlantic and the Pacific is shifting in favor of the latter.

Geographically, the world of the Indian Ocean lies between the other two, with the Straits of Malacca and the Suez Canal the connecting links. About 400 million people, i.e., 19.8 per cent of the total population, live here, the majority on a very low standard of living. Except for Australia, it is a colonial world which does not originate policy and is still today practically a British sea.

The northern Atlantic is today, therefore, the most desirable body of water on which a state can be located. The southern Atlantic ranks next in importance, followed by the northern and southern Pacific and the Indian Ocean. And our consideration of climate and the distribution of land masses has led to the conclusion that the political activity of the world is, and will continue to be, centered between 25° and 60° north latitude. In so far as world location is an element of strength and importance, those states will be most active politically and industrially, and will therefore rank as world powers, which are located in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere with direct or indirect access to the northern Atlantic. Since men first crossed the Atlantic, Japan is the only great power to develop away from its shores.

[7] Gregory Bienstock, *The Struggle for the Pacific* (London, 1937), p. 93.
[8] *Ibid.*

The most favored state in the world from the point of view of location is the United States. It faces two oceans and has therefore direct access to the two most important trade areas of the world. Before the making of the Panama Canal, this fact had only limited significance, because the height and direction of the Rockies and the Sierras make the United States primarily an Atlantic drainage area. With the piercing of the Isthmus, however, the territory east of the Rockies, which will forever remain the heart and core of the continent, was given an easy route to the Pacific and the whole of the economic structure of the United States obtained access to two oceans.

Location is therefore defined first in terms of the great land and ocean masses. But it should be remembered that this global frame of reference is different for each state because for each state it has a different focus, namely, the capital of that state. Every Foreign Office, whatever may be the atlas it uses, operates mentally with a different map of the world. This means that a given area in the world will have for two states which lie far apart an entirely different strategic and political significance, a fact which is responsible for the failure of our system of world-wide collective security. It is also responsible for the almost insurmountable difficulties which arise in attempts to achieve effective political coöperation between states with very different frames of reference, a fact usually forgotten in the heavy aroma of cigars and goodwill that fills the air after Pilgrim dinners.

The facts of location do not change. Tarquinius Superbus from his peninsular kingdom surveyed the same sea as does Mussolini from his peninsular kingdom; McKinley signed the Platt amendment and Roosevelt abrogated it, but the geographic location of Cuba with reference to the United States remains unaltered. The significance of such facts, however, does change. The frame of reference previously described to serve for evaluating world location has both a geographic and therefore fixed, and a historical and therefore changing, aspect. It should also be remembered that the significance of a given location is both a factor in the foreign policy of a specific state and the result of the past history of that same state. Position on the North Atlantic is a factor in the foreign policy of the United States, and it is the development of the United States that accounts for the present significance of the Atlantic. The latter is a problem for the historians; the former a factual *datum* for the statesman.

Slow but irrevocable in effect are the changes in the significance of location which derive from shifts in the centers of culture diffusion and military power. From the beginning of history, Western civilization has developed around large bodies of water. Hellenic civilization was circumferential to the Aegean Sea, Roman civilization encircled the Mediterranean, and the Western civilization of the present surrounds the Atlantic. Location is important, therefore, in relation to the body of water which at a given historical period contains the source area of cultural diffusion.

The general direction in which civilization has moved through the centuries has been from a sub-tropical latitude northward to a cool temperate zone, and from east to west.

Toute la civilisation antique était comprise entre les 20° et 30° degrés de latitude Nord; c'était en Orient la civilisation chinoise sur les rives du Yangtse-Kiang; au centre la civilisation de l'Inde sur les bords du Gange; à l'Occident enfin la civilisation de la Mésopotamie et de l'Égypte, le long du Nil. Puis à une époque moins reculée, la civilisation se déplaça d'une dizaine de degrés vers le nord et se développa entre le 35° and 45° degrés de latitude Nord; ce fut en Orient la civilisation de la Chine sur les bords du Hoang-tso et en Occident celle de la Grèce et de Rome. Quant à la civilisation moderne, ne s'est-elle pas développée en remontant davantage encore vers le nord, entre les 45° et 55° degrés de latitude, c'est celle de l'Europe du nord-ouest, celle des États-Unis d'Amérique, etc.[9]

It is clear that such shifts in the centers of world power may well seal the fate of a country with a considerable measure of finality. In the first century B.C., the center of power was in the Mediterranean, and that section of Europe now known as the Netherlands lay on the North Sea, unimportant and far removed from the spheres of activity. After 1500, the center of power moved to western Europe, and the Netherlands, in possession of the mouth of one of Europe's most important rivers and situated among those states destined to become world powers, has acquired a position of outstanding political and commercial importance for which it merits no more credit than it merited censure for its earlier isola-

[9] T. Kobayashi, *La Société Japonaise* (Paris, 1914), p. 84, note. In this connection the following table is interesting:

Babylon	lat. 32.5 N	long. 44.5 E.
Athens	lat. 38 N	long. 23.5 E.
Rome	lat. 41.5 N	long. 12.5 E.
Paris	lat. 48.5 N	long. 2 E.
London	lat. 51.5 N	long. 0.5 W.

tion. Conversely, in 2000 B.C., Syria and Palestine lay at the heart of world civilization and activity between the great empires of Babylonia and Egypt, while two thousand years later they lay far to the east of the center of power. As time went on, they acquired, and will probably always retain in varying degrees, great significance as passage lands; for the shortest routes between Europe and Asia, whether caravan, motor, or air, must pass through Asia Minor. But until the cycle of the movement of civilization completes itself and political life is once more concentrated on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, Syria and Palestine must reconcile themselves to the rôle of junction rather than of final destination.

During the Middle Ages, after the power of Rome declined, Europe still looked to the east and southeast, with its most prosperous ports and most cosmopolitan cities on the Mediterranean. With the discovery of America, however, the center of gravity moved northwestward, and from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, the centers of wealth, culture, and political life were in western Europe. Great Britain, taking advantage of her island location and employing consistently her continental balance of power policy, was able to dominate the world by her sea power. With the rise of the United States to the status of a world power after the Spanish-American war, the power of Great Britain in the western Atlantic and South America declined. Similarly, with the Japanese rise to power after the World War, and especially after the Washington Conference established the rank of Japan on the seas, Great Britain and the United States lost their predominant position in the western Pacific.

The center of world power has left western Europe; or rather there is no longer a center of world power. An epoch in the world's history has come to an end. Characteristic of the new period is the decentralization of power and the creation of great spheres dominated from different centers—the Americas from the United States, the Far East from Japan, the heartland of Eurasia from Moscow, and the Eastern Atlantic and Indian Ocean from Europe. By such great shifts, the significance of the location of every area is affected and thereby the problems of foreign policy. Rome's problem is no longer Carthage but London, the Central American Republics exchange their worries about the intentions of London for worries about the plans of Washington, and the Chinese are faced, not

with the demands of far distant European powers, but with an aggressive neighbor.

While shifts in centers of civilization and power occur only slowly, shifts in routes of communication may change the significance of location in a relatively short period of time. With the discovery of the sea-route to India, the old route through the Near East, the Mediterranean, and Central Europe was superseded. This, together with the discovery of America, made the Atlantic the scene of the world's most important activity, and the Mediterranean a minor inland sea. Venice yielded her place as queen of world commerce to Spain and Portugal. At the same time, the Baltic, formerly the center of northern European commerce, became cut off from the main trade routes. Nürnberg and Augsburg, which had prospered, sank into insignificance with Lübeck and the other Hanseatic cities,[10] and Hamburg and Bremen, and even more the Netherlands and England, moved from the periphery of world trade to its center. As ships began to sail around the southern tip of Africa, Capetown came into prominence, only to lose its commercial significance in 1869 when the opening of the Suez Canal diverted trade once more into the Mediterranean, and the Near East regained its early importance, enhanced today because it is now the funnel for the air route from Europe to Asia. A large portion of the traffic which once flowed past the ports of Brazil and Argentina now flows through the Panama Canal, with benefit to Central America and the western coast of the United States, and to the corresponding detriment of the trade of the eastern coast of South America.

The construction of railroads as well as of canals may bring about a change in the significance of location. The opening of the trans-Siberian railroad in 1901 dealt a deathblow to Kjachta, the former center of the Chinese tea trade, for the road was unkind enough not to include Kjachta in its itinerary, while Chita, Irkutsk, and other slumbering Siberian towns found themselves by the side of the road from Petrograd to Vladivostok. And the construction of the Turk-Sib railroad from Novo Sibirsk to the Moscow-Tashkent line placed in direct communication with the Pacific

[10] Vogel disputes the generally accepted conclusion that the decline of the Hanseatic cities was due to the discovery of America and of the sea route to India, and attributes it rather to the political disintegration of Germany and the inability of the German imperial power to protect Hanseatic political interests. [W. Vogel, *Die Entstehung des modernen Weltstaatensystems* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 62–63.]

coast on one side, and with Moscow and Petrograd on the other, a district that had been practically isolated for centuries. Yarkand, the point from which the trade of Sinkiang had formerly flowed to British India, yielded its place as a commercial center to Kashgar and Kuldja because the latter towns had access to the railroad. Nikolaievsk, at the mouth of the Amur, has become one terminus of the railroad from Taishet to the coast, and Komsomolsk, which until recently did not exist, is now the main terminus of the railroad and the junction of its three branches to Nikolaievsk, Khabarovsk, and a new and as yet nameless port to be created east of Komsomolsk, giving the maritime provinces a commercial and strategic importance undreamed of fifty years ago.

It seems almost axiomatic that a country or section should benefit from a shift in communication or trade routes which places it on or near the line of traffic. Although this is true from an economic point of view, it is not necessarily true politically. If the country through which the route runs be weak, and the route of great significance, the section in question may well become a bone of contention among the great powers of the world and may pay for its advantageous location with its independence. Egypt was not strong enough or stable enough to be trusted with the defense of the Suez Canal and was forced to submit to British occupation. The isthmian canal in the New World was too vital a route of communication between the eastern and western coasts of the United States to be left in the hands of Colombia, and the state of Panama accordingly declared its independence. The isthmus of Kra is the logical place for a canal from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. The Japanese, with their gift for imitation, may some day like to copy their Anglo-Saxon sisters and run a canal of their own, thereby upsetting the existing power relation in the Indian Ocean and destroying the value of Singapore. For that season, Siam may continue to expect a lively interest in her development both in London and in Tokyo.

Some of the changes in routes already indicated and their effect on the significance of geographic location are the result of technological development in the means of communication. It was not until the development of the steamship that men could follow the great circle routes on the sea. With the development of the aëroplane has come the possibility of following the great circle routes overland to a greater extent than ever before, although over the

broader stretches of the sea the aëroplane, until its effective cruising radius has been increased, must follow routes where it can find island bases.

As such new routes of communication come into existence, new parts of the earth's surface will obviously gain, and other sections will decline, in importance. The future development of air transportation will mean that many now worthless and unclaimed bits of territory will become highly desirable. The United States, Great Britain, and Russia have long been disputing the possession of Wrangel Island, which was discovered in 1881, and which lies in the Arctic Ocean on the direct air route from New York to Tokyo. Great Britain claimed the island in 1916, the United States raised its flag in 1924, and three days later the Russian flag was raised. Russia proclaimed her annexation of the island in 1916, 1924, and 1926, and in 1927 established a colony there, but the United States has refused to recognize the annexation. The camping trips of the Hawaiian boy scouts to Baker, Jarvis, and Howland which strengthened legal titles to these coral specks by adding occupation to discovery is entered in the record of good deeds. The Bermudas, the Azores, the Cape Verde islands, St. Helena, Ascension, Tristan d'Acunha, Fernando Noronha, and St. Paul all lie on possible air routes of the future, and Midway, Wake, and Guam mark the route from the United States to the Philippines. Sections of the mainland hitherto excluded from world trade, such as northern Siberia, Ireland, and Greenland, which lie on the direct air route from New York to Europe, will find themselves in the center of the stream of world trade instead of far beyond its edges.

But the same geographic location will acquire a new strategic and political meaning with new means of communication even if it involves no change in route, for distance is defined not in miles but in hours, and therefore in concrete terms of movement possibilities. As we have progressed from the horse and cart through the railroad, the motor car, and tractor to the aëroplane and airship, and on sea from the sailing vessel through the steam and motor vessel to the hydroplane and airship, distances have grown consistently less. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Atlantic Ocean was six weeks wide and the United States was practically isolated from Europe. The same ocean is now three days wide, with week-ends in Paris becoming not too remote a possibility for the restless New Yorker.

When the Greeks, after their victory over the Persians, stipulated that no Persian army should come nearer to the coast than the distance a horse could run in twenty-four hours, they provided a large degree of security for themselves. The same stipulation would today afford little security against a Turkish air attack from well behind the line that marked the cruising radius of the fleetest Persian steed. The English Channel, reinforced by the British navy, remained a barrier behind which the British felt secure even after the development of the swiftest ships. In terms of air transportation, London is now no more secure from attack than if it were on the Continent.

It is the application of such technological development to the weapons of war that causes the quickest variations in the strategic, and therefore political, significance of a specific area. In the days before aërial warfare, naval bases and naval stations performed their function if fleets could lie protected behind their land fortifications. Offshore islands or narrow peninsular points near weak powers were ideally suited for such purposes and much sought after by the British and other naval powers. During the post-war period, the bomb attack obtained a tactical advantage over air defense, and the latter was primarily dependent on counter-attack by fighting planes. This presupposed depth of territory before the objective to insure adequate warning. But many of the outlying naval stations had been obtained under different tactical conditions, when ease of defense suggested smallness of size. Under modern circumstances they are hardly a safe place in which to keep a fleet at anchor, if in the vicinity there be a potential enemy air fleet superior to the local air force. The changed position of Malta under these circumstances has not been without influence on recent Italian-British diplomacy. But it is not only Malta but also Aden, since the conquest of Ethiopia, that has undergone this change, and the future may create the same problems for Gibraltar and Hongkong. Should, however, the more recent development in anti-aircraft guns make possible adequate defense of a narrow territorial base, these points might regain their former significance.

The preceding pages have provided an analysis of the ways in which geography conditions foreign policy. The influence of size has been indicated, as modified by climate, topography, and technological development, and the significance of location has been demonstrated as modified by shifts in centers of power, changes in

routes of communication, and new inventions in transportation and warfare. The emphasis has been on world location, and therefore the most immediate factor in foreign policy, regional location, remains to be treated. It is already clear, however, that, whatever aloofness the student of international law may permit himself, the student of international politics must deal with geography as a basic reality.[11]

[11] The second and concluding instalment of this article will appear in the April issue of this REVIEW. MAN. ED.