



# **TISHK International University**

FASE | IRD Department

**Geopolitics**

**Chapter 1 :Introduction**

**Spring Semester**



# Geopolitics

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- Geopolitics may be defined, crudely, as the influence of geography upon politics: how distance and terrain and climate affect the affairs of states and men.
- The struggle over the control of geographical entities with an international and global dimension, and the use of such geographical entities for political advantage
- At the level of international relations, geopolitics is a method of studying foreign policy to understand, explain and predict international political behavior through geographical variables. These include area studies, climate, topography, demography, natural resources, and applied science of the region being evaluated.

# What does Geopolitics focus on ?

- Geopolitics focuses on **political power** linked to: **geographic space**. In particular. **Territorial waters land territory** in correlation with **diplomatic history**.
- 1. The study of power relationships past, present, and future
- 2. The study of the relationship among politics and geography, demography, and economics, especially with respect to the foreign policy of a nation.
- 3. A branch of political geography that considers the strategic value of land and sea area in the context of national economic and military power and ambitions.



# What does Geopolitics focus on ?

- 4. The state's power to control space or territory and shape the foreign policy of individual states and international political relations
- 5. Geopolitics is concerned with how geographical factors, including territory, population, strategic location, and natural resource endowments, as modified by economics and technology, affect the relations between states and the struggle for world domination.
- 6. Geopolitics is defined as a branch of geography that promises to explain the relationships between geographical realities and international affairs.

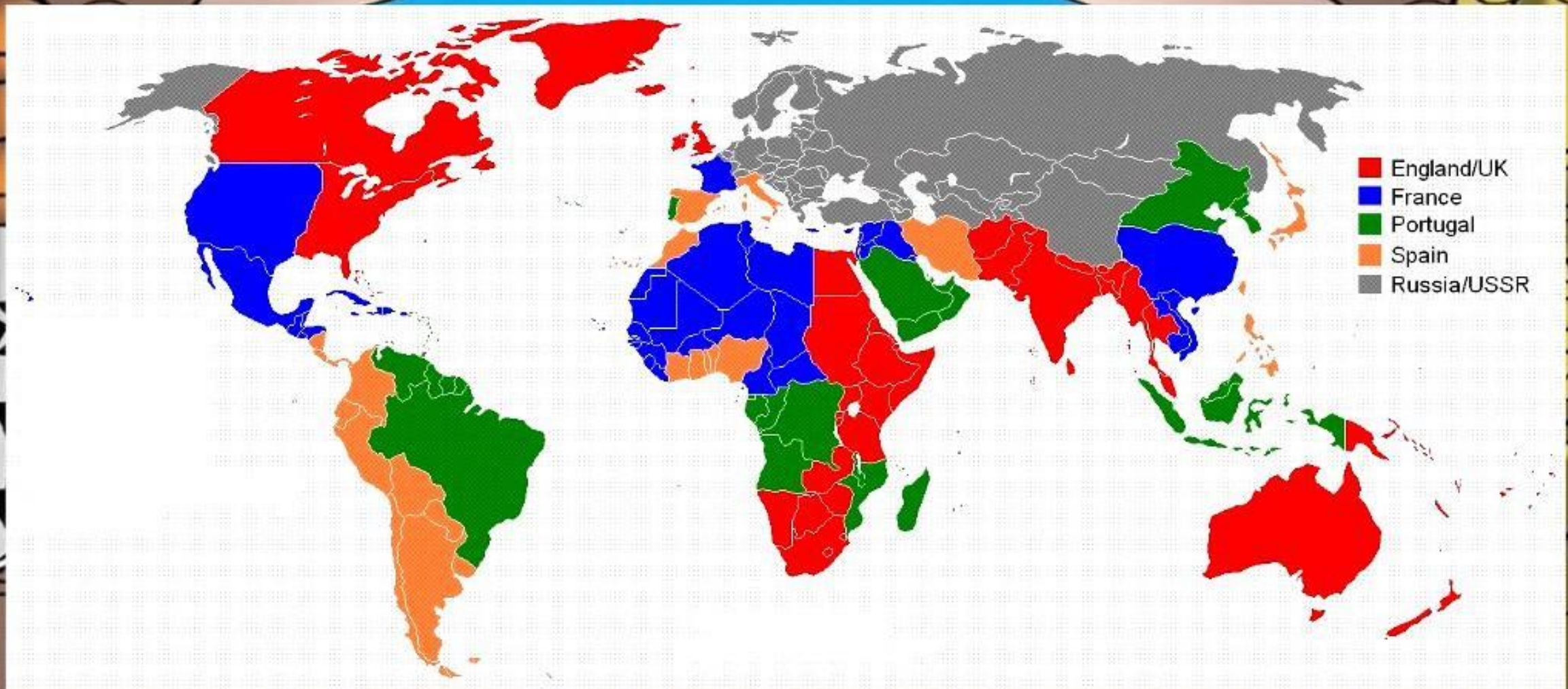




# 19<sup>th</sup> Century Geopolitics

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- 1. Colonization:** is the practice by which a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses their resources to increase its own power and wealth.
- 2. Mercantilism:** an economic theory developed in the 16th to 19th centuries holding that a government should control the economy and that a nation should increase its wealth by selling more than it buys from other nations.
- 3. Imperialism:** is a system in which a rich and powerful country controls other countries, or a desire for control over other countries.
- 4. White Man's Burden:** the supposed duty of White people to bring education and Western culture to the inhabitants of their colonies.
- 5. Manifest Destiny:** the 19th-century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the United States throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable.



# Four Pillars of Power

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- A nation's claim to power rests on four pillars:
  1. overwhelming military strength and the willingness to use it;
  2. surplus economic energy to enable it to provide aid and invest in other states;
  3. ideological leadership that serves as a model for other nations;
  4. a cohesive system of governance.



# 1. Military Power

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- This period of transition from a world dominated by superpowers to a polycentric power system is marked by significant changes in warfare. The United States, by far the world's strongest traditional military power, has overwhelming strength in tanks, aircraft, naval fleets, and superbly equipped armed forces.
- Nevertheless, it failed to attain its political goals in Iraq and Afghanistan as guerrilla warfare and terrorism has torn those two countries apart. In Iraq, the American occupation has been unable to impose a peace upon this regionally and ethnically fragmented land. In Afghanistan, US and NATO troops and weaponry, which so easily dislodged the Taliban, were unable to overcome the guerrilla forces in this tribally and ethnically torn country. The Afghan Taliban regained a powerful foothold within Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US and NATO combat troops from the country in 2020





## The lessons learned from America's military experience in Afghanistan and Iraq

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- First, soft power may yield greater success than warfare.
- second, weapons of warfare are radically changing. In wars against guerrillas and terrorists, drones—unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with surveillance and missile capacities and robots—and unmanned ground vehicle (UGVs), combined with special strike forces and cyberwarfare, have proven more effective than traditional weapons and massed armed forces.



## 2. Economic Capacity

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- Economics and international security are intrinsically linked, a connection that is only becoming more important in today's era of emerging multipolarity. The building of effective military force is contingent on domestic economic capacity, while countries are dependent on international markets for their energy security and supply chain needs. Meanwhile, the major powers are increasingly resorting to the use of economic statecraft – sanctions, tariffs, and lending – to achieve their geopolitical goals.



## 3. Ideological leadership

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- Americans have taken pride in their ideals, which are a blend of the principles of freedom of expression and religion, concern for human rights, the rewards of free enterprise, and the practice of democracy in governance. Since the founding of the republic, these principles have been widely embraced throughout the world. However, much of US foreign policy has often not been true to them. While preaching democracy, Washington has long supported dictatorships and overthrown governments not to its liking. It has tolerated widespread corruption in supporting allies. The Arab Spring was only the last of the upheavals that laid bare the contradiction between the myth of American exceptionalism and its practice of realpolitik.



## 4. Political Cohesiveness

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- In a pluralist democracy, with different values and interests, with different social classes and political organizations holding different ideologies, political cohesion is essential as the groups should all work for progress and security for the whole political body, despite all divergences.
- Political cohesion is based on the development of strong and subjective identities that are central in the construction of a socio-political membership
- In the United States the recent stalemate between the two major parties has been a factor in undermining America's ability to provide international leadership. A government that can suddenly be shut down, budgets that cannot be agreed upon, and a proposed health system that has divided the nation are poor models for international friends and foes alike.



# Applying the 4 pillars – China

- China, for its part, lacks the capacity to apply military power beyond its contiguous Asian borders. Instead, it relies on economic trade and investment to extend its influence. In doing so, the Chinese have used their sovereign funds to purchase or invest in natural resources throughout the world. While such economic initiatives have been welcomed, the political fallout from these actions has often been rising suspicion and opposition on nationalistic and environmental grounds.
- Moreover, the need for China to focus on building its own national infrastructure and realign its populace from rural agricultural to urban industrial and service pursuits sets a limit on China's foreign aid capacities. Although the mixture of state and private capitalism as practiced in China has been adopted in many other countries, the repressive nature of the Chinese Communist regime has been widely rejected as an ideological model by people who yearn for individual freedom as well as economic advancement.