“Location, location, location. If you won the lottery, and were looking to buy a country to live in, the first one the real estate agent would show you would be the United States of America.” -- p. 68

“God has a special providence for fools, drunks, and the United States of America.”

– Otto von Bismarck, First Chancellor of Germany, 1871-1890

The emergence of the United States as a superpower in after World War II was no surprise. Those who understood the value of natural resources, natural physical defenses, and a sufficient population foresaw the rise of the United States, just as they foresaw the rise of China in the 21st century. This chapter focuses on how a number of different factors, especially geography, offered the nation that established itself in North America tremendous economic, military and political advantages.

p. 68-70. Opening pages explain the physical geography of the United States as three regions. Marshall mentions “strategic depth” for a defending force to fall back into,” just as he did regarding Russia.

p. 70-80. This section offers a different kind of overview of American history, one that shines a different light on the country’s expansion and the motives for its growth.

- The original thirteen colonies (70)
- The Declaration of Independence (71)
- Jefferson’s recognition that New Orleans was the key to controlling North America, & the importance of the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803 (72)
- The Transcontinental Treaty of 1819 -- Spain ceded to the U.S. land to California (73)
- Mexico as an obstacle to the U.S. reaching the Pacific (74)
- The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 (74)
• The conquest/acquisition of Texas -- 20,000 white, Protestant, pro-slavery American settlers. (75-76) Control of the Mississippi Delta was at stake. What if Mexico had defeated the Texans in 1835-36? “It is one of the great what-ifs of history.”

• The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848 – The U.S. acquires California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado

• Culturally, this region is Latino/Hispanic today (75)

The development of a blue-water navy by the U.S. allowed more extensive expansion and acquisition of strategic territories. (76)

War with Spain gained the U.S. Cuba, with its strategic importance, then the U.S. acquired Hawaii, then the Panama Canal.

![Panama Canal Map](image)

Theodore Roosevelt’s 1907 “Great White Fleet” was a projection of American hard and soft power, noted by every power in the world. (77)


p. 79. The U.S. assumed the position of world leader over Great Britain. And control of global strategic locations was essential.

“This was…about concrete. Concrete for the building of ports, runways, hardened aircraft hangars, fuel depots, dry docks, & Special Forces training areas.”

The Marshall Plan of 1948-51 was critically important. (79)
p. 79. The creation of the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** effectively gave the U.S. control of the Western world’s military might to oppose the USSR and its intent to expand communism.

p. 80 What was the **Suez Crisis of 1956**? How did it signal that the U.S. was the world’s superpower?

p. 80 Despite the loss in Vietnam, “there were now only three places from which a challenge to American hegemony could come: a united Europe, Russia, and China. All would grow stronger, but two would reach their limits.”

p. 81 **The European Union (EU)** is like a United States of Europe. It is a political and economic union of **28 member states** located primarily in Europe. It has an estimated population of about 513 million. The EU has developed an **internal single market** through a standardized **system of laws** that apply in all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one. EU policies aim to ensure the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the internal market, enact legislation in justice and home affairs and maintain common policies on trade, **agriculture**, **fisheries** and **regional development**.

p. 80 Despite the loss in Vietnam, “there were now only three places from which a challenge to American hegemony (dominance) could come: a **united Europe**, **Russia**, and **China**. All would grow stronger, but two would reach their limits.”
In 2016 Great Britain chose, in a very close vote, to leave the EU in a move that is now called the Brexit, and ever since Britain has been struggling to find a way to leave the EU without significantly damaging its economy. Leaving the EU common market will likely have serious economic costs to Britain.

**Russia**
The demise of the USSR in 1991 reduced the economic and military power of Russia. In recent years, under Vladimir Putin, Russia has re-asserted itself, as it wishes to be a world power once again instead of a “regional power.” (p. 81) Russia cannot match the U.S.’s dominance, but it can be a thorn in the U.S.’s side.

**China**
p. 82. China is the big challenger. “Most analysis…assumes that by the middle of the 21st century China will overtake the United States and become the leading superpower.” Marshall believes it may take a century for that to occur.

p. 83 Southeast Asian nations are willing to make agreements with the U.S. in order to avoid being dominated by China. As a result, beginning with the Obama administration in 2011, the U.S. has begun a “pivot to China,” meaning that the U.S. is emphasizing its attention and resources on East Asia than Europe or the Middle East.

p. 83 “The history of the 21st century will be written in Asia and the Pacific.”

p. 84 **Why a Navy is critical to influencing the world order.** The U.S. Navy may have to engage the Chinese Navy, which is challenging Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and other traditional U.S. allies.

p. 85 A model example? The **1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.** What was touted as a U.S. victory was actually a compromise.

The Chinese know that they cannot yet challenge the U.S. Navy, so they are playing “a long game.” Time is on their side, they believe.

p. 86 The U.S. must continue to align with Japan, they must continue to protect Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Keeping the **Strait of Malacca** open is critical.

“The Chinese can accept America guarding most of the sea lanes that deliver goods to the world, so long as the Americans accept that there will be limits to just how close to China that control extends.”
Flash Point of potential conflict between China and the United States: Taiwan. China claims Taiwan—which Chinese anti-communists fled to after the communist army under Mao defeated them in 1946--broke away belongs to China, has a treaty with the U.S. by which the U.S. pledges to go to war if Taiwan is attacked.

p. 86-87 China’s growing thirst for oil and gas is growing rapidly. The U.S. now looks to be self-sufficient in energy. This is good in one sense, but it means the oil-rich nations of the Middle East may cozy up to Iran or China if business with the U.S. diminishes.

This is why the U.S. 5th Fleet will remain in the Persian Gulf in Bahrain. The U.S. wants to make sure that Iran does not become too strong. Under Obama the U.S. made a deal to prevent Iran from building nuclear bombs, but the Trump Administration negated that deal and decided to take a hard line with Iran, imposing economic sanctions in order to strangle the Iranian government into submission. It is unclear if this strategy will work or backfire.

p. 87-89 The U.S. relations with Israel remain important, though the U.S. attention may shift to Latin America and the Far East.

The Panama Canal remains critical to U.S. and global trade, and the relationship with Cuba after the death of communist leader Fidel Castro is important, especially since it is only 90 miles from Miami.

The U.S. interest in Africa is no different than China’s, and the Chinese are investing heavily in Africa now.

Not so many years ago the U.S. wanted to establish countries based on democracy and aligned with free-market capitalism. It hasn’t worked out in key instances. It failed in Iraq. “America’s experiment with nation-building overseas appears to be over.”

Despite setbacks, the U.S. is no in imminent decline.

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