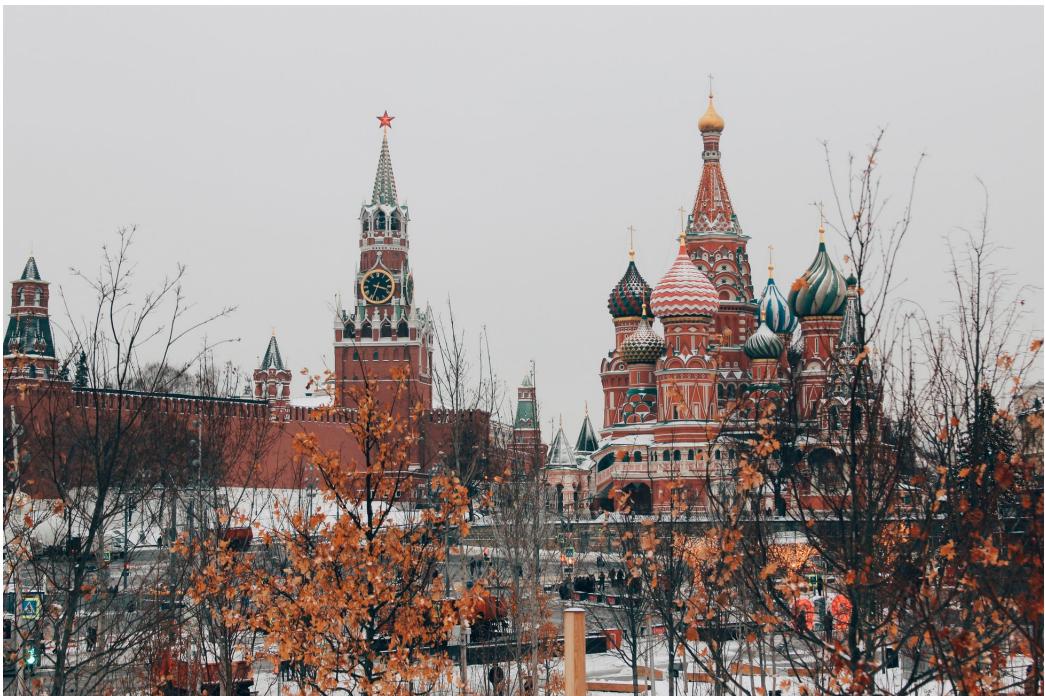


Prisoners of Geography

By Tim Marshall

Notes by Damian Bogunowicz

Russia



- "There is nothing which they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness." - Churchill
- ' - Are you European or are you Asian? - Neither, I am Russian.'
- "I am dreaming of a day when Russian soldiers can wash their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and switch to year-round summer uniforms" - Zhirinovsky

Geography

- The Russian Federation consists of **21 countries**. Even though it is **twice the size of the USA**, its population is smaller than that of Nigeria or Pakistan. Nowadays, it takes about six days to cross the country.
- Its agricultural growing season is short, the country struggles to adequately distribute what is grown around the **eleven time zones** which Moscow governs.
- You can see Russia from America (Alaska).
- 75 percent of its territory is in Asia, while only 22 percent of its population lives there.
- **Siberia** is Russia's *treasure chest*, containing the majority of the mineral wealth. But it's also a harsh land with poor soil for farming and large stretches of swampland.

- Much of the Russian Federation is not ethnically Russian and pays little allegiance to Moscow (e.g. states of Chechnya or Dagestan). While most of its states were historically separate countries, there are many 'Stans', which borders were deliberately drawn by Stalin as to weaken each state by ensuring it had large minorities of people from other states.
- The biggest Russian dream: **to control a warm water port**, where the water does not freeze in winter and has free access to world's major trading routes.
- Russia is the **world's second biggest supplier of natural gas** (Nord Stream, Yamal, Blue Stream). However, in the future, the USA can become Russia's competitor on the European market through the export of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas).

History

- Russia dates back to the **9th century**. Back then it was known as Kievan Rus'. Continuous mongol raids forced the Slavic ancestors to flee to Moscow. Unfortunately, the Grand Principality of Muscovy was difficult to defend - it lacked natural fortifications such as mountains, deserts or big rivers. This is why **Ivan the Terrible** has decided to use *attack as a defence* and aggressively expanded the country to make sure that it gains a solid buffer zone (the hinterland). In the 16th century, the country had access to Ural Mountains, the Caspian Sea and Arctic Circle.
- Peter the Great** and **Catherine the Great** had the ambitions to make Russia a part of the *western world*. They pushed Russia into the modern era. This is when the country further expanded and gained the territory of the Ukraine and Baltic States.
- After the Second World War the Soviet Union stretched from the Pacific to Berlin, from the Arctic to the boarders of Afghanistan. It was a **superpower** only rivalled by the USA.
- Russian's Vietnam: The Soviet Afghan War** (1979-1989). The pro-soviet government took power through a coup in Afghanistan and pushed for an aggressive secular modernisation program and suppressed opposition. A lot of Islamist groups that opposed these measures began an armed insurgency against the government. The USSR sent its troops to support the pro-soviet government. The US and China also supported the rebels because of their geopolitical concerns about Soviet influence in Afghanistan. The war was bloody and costly to both sides. With the opening of the USSR's political processes and media in the early 80s, opposition to the war grew immensely. Eventually, the USSR withdrew.
- Ukraine's president **Viktor Yanukovych** sparked massive protests when he turned down a deal that would have brought Ukraine closer to the EU in favour of closer ties with Russia. After he fled the country, a new, more pro-Western government was elected that promptly signed that deal. Putin's regime, seeing Ukraine as a necessary buffer and **viewing Ukraine not entering NATO and the EU as a vital national interest**, launched a covert war of aggression in the east of the country (where there are lots of Russian speakers and pro-Russian sentiment is higher) and engineered the annexation of Crimea. Similar modus operandi in Georgia and Moldova.

China



- China is a civilisation pretending to be a nation. - Lucian Pye.
- **The Han people** make up 90 percent of the Chinese population and they dominate Chinese business and politics. **Mandarin** Chinese, which originated in the North, is the dominant language in the media and politics.
- Chinese thought prizes **the collective above the individual**.
- The West frowns upon the Communist Party's resistance to democracy and individual rights. If the population were to be given a free vote, the unity of the Han might begin to crack or, more likely, the countryside and urban areas would come into conflict. That in turn would embolden the people of the buffer zones, further weakening China. The deal is: **we make you better off, you follow our orders**. So long as the economy keeps growing, this grand bargain may last.
- Catch 22: China needs to keep industrialising as it modernises and raises standards of living, but that very process threatens the production. **If the Chinese cannot solve this problem, there will be social unrest**.
- There are now around **500 mostly peaceful protests a day** across China over a variety of issues. If you introduce mass unemployment, or mass hunger, that tally will explode and we may see social unrest of the unimaginable scale.
- Having spent 4000 years consolidating its land mass, **China is now building a blue water navy**. Gradually the Chinese will put more and more vessels into the seas off their coast, and into the Pacific. Each time one is launched, there will be less space for the Americans in the China seas.
- Even though it was said that creating a railroad system in Tibet was impossible, the Chinese proved them wrong. Since 2006 **Lhasa, the capital of Tibet**, is connected with the rest of the China and the *Iron Roosters* bring Han people and the modern world directly to the ancient kingdom.

Geography

- **North China Plain** is the birthplace of Chinese civilisation and one of the most densely populated areas in the world.
- It is often true, that when China opens up to trade with the West, the coastland region prosper (Shanghai, Hong-Kong, Macau) but **the inland areas are neglected**.
- In the North, China shares the border with Mongolia. This is where **the Gobi Desert**, a massive early warning defence line, is located.
- The natural southern borders with **Laos and Burma** are composed of the jungle and mountains.
- From the West we have the **Karakoram** mountain range and two crucial regions: Tibet and Xinjiang.
- **Xinjiang** is an important buffer territory: it borders 8 countries, is valuable for its oil and is a home to China's nuclear weapon testing sites. But the Muslim Uyghur people rebel against the wave of Han settlers. For the past several years China has been cracking down on religious minorities.

History

- The Chinese has used the *attack as a defence* strategy for millennia to become a country that it is now.
- The erection of **the Great Wall of China** started in the 200 BCE during the reign of Qin dynasty. It took 2000 years to complete the project.
- The construction of **the Grand Canal** (world's longest man-made water between Yellow River and Yangtze) started in 600BCE under the reign of Sui dynasty.
- After the **reign of the mongols** in the 13th century (the Yuan dynasty), the empire was retrieved by the Han people- start of the Ming dynasty.
- The **century of humiliation**, also known as the hundred years of national humiliation, is the term used in China to describe the period of intervention and subjugation of the Chinese Empire and the Republic of China by Western powers, Russia and Japan in between 1839 and 1949.
- From 1927-1950, China fought an extended civil war. The fighters were **Mao Zedong's Communists and Chiang Kai-Shek's authoritarian party of the Republic of China**. In 1949, the Communists completely stomped Kai-Shek, forcing him to run to the island of Taiwan.
- In **Taiwan**, Kai-Shek continued to claim to rightfully rule all of China. The US supported this idea completely until the 1970s. Still, even today Taiwan is officially known as the Republic of China and claims the mainland. China proper calls Taiwan a runaway province, and most nations don't recognise Taiwan as a country anymore (Beijing won't do business with anyone who does). Matter of fact, the only thing stopping China from "retaking its renegade province" is American protection.
- The 1980s saw the rise of a (predominantly student) democratic movement in China, which opposed the authoritarian communist government. It reached a culmination point at the beginning of June 1989, when **protesters and the regime faced off on Tiananmen Square**. During the violent crackdown that happened on June 3/4, an unknown number of people were killed, with some estimates ranging in the thousands. The iconic picture was taken the day after the massacre. The name of the man blocking the tanks isn't known.
- **Tibet** is now ruled by the Chinese in the similar fashion as Inner Mongolia or Xinjiang. Tibet is crucial for the Han people, because it is the *China's water tower*. The Han Chinese moved into Tibet: now they comprise the majority of people and control all the economic resources. The Tibetan people are a minority in their own country. The head of the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama, lives in exile in India. He was driven out by the Chinese in 1959. The Chinese do not perceive Tibet through the prism of human rights, but geopolitical security.

USA



- God has a special providence for fools, drunkards, and the United States of America. - Otto von Bismarck
- One of the early principles of the USA was to **steer clear of permanent alliances** with any portion of the foreign world. This was the case until 1941, when the Americans intervened in the WWII.

Geography

- The USA can be divided into **three regions**: East Coast Plain (fertile soil, short navigable rivers), the Great Plains (Mississippi river which starts in Minneapolis and flows all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico) and the East Coast (Sierra Nevada mountains).

History

- There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans. - Thomas Jefferson

Louisiana Purchase was so cheap because Napoleon needed cash for his wars a lot more than he needed a big hunk of real estate in North America. The US desperately wanted to secure free passage in the Mississippi.

- **The Florida Treaty** of 1819 was a treaty between the United States and Spain that ceded Florida to the USA and defined the boundary between the USA and New Spain. It settled a standing border dispute between the two countries and was considered a triumph of American diplomacy.
- The **Monroe Doctrine** is a key part of US foreign policy. President **James Monroe** issued the policy in 1823. It stated that North and South America were no longer open to colonisation. It also declared that the United States would not allow European countries to interfere with independent governments in the Americas.
- After the **Mexican War** the boarder of the USA expanded to the bank of the Rio Grande in the South.
- Under the **Homestead Act** (1862), a person who cultivated a piece of land for 5 years was entitled to its ownership.
- *Seward's folly*. On March 30, 1867, Secretary of State William H. Seward agreed to **purchase Alaska from Russia for 7.2 million dollars**. The press accused him of purchasing snow, but minds were changed with the discovery of major gold deposits in 1986. Decades later huge reserves of oil were also found.
- The **Marshall Plan**, also known as the European Recovery Program, was a US program providing aid to Western Europe following the devastation of World War II. It was enacted in 1948 and provided more than 15 billion dollars to help finance rebuilding efforts on the continent.
- The **destroyers-for-bases deal** was an agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom on September 2, 1940, according to which 50 US Navy destroyers were transferred to the Royal Navy from the United States Navy in exchange for land rights on British possessions. This was de facto beginning of the ubiquitous presence of the American military on the territories of western countries. Even now, the final say regarding NATO's decision belong to the Washington.
- **Korean War**: Japan annexed Korea in 1910, and governed it as a colony until their defeat in WWII. After WWII, the Soviet Union occupied the north of the Korean Peninsula, and the USA occupied the southern part. Shortly afterwards, they each set up puppet governments in their parts of Korea. In 1950, North Korea attacked the South in an attempt to re-unite Korea. After initial success, they were almost completely defeated by the response of the US and other UN allies. However, China intervened on the side of North Korea and helped them fight to a stalemate, and after three years of war, the border was back roughly where it was in the beginning, and a truce was signed.

The Vietnam War

- After communism took over and the USSR grew into power, they still had spheres of influence over areas of Asia. The perception is that they were **spreading communism across the globe and the US was determined to stop them** from 'creating' more communist nations or bolstering current ones.
- The US and the USSR were in the middle of the Cold War. They couldn't just fight and get it over with without starting a gigantic war, so **they fought the war by proxy**. Vietnam was one of the areas where the Cold War warmed up.
- Vietnam was, prior to WWII, a French colony. The French lost control to Japan for a while before deciding they were going to gain control back. The French had a rather hard time beating the communists and **the US agreed to help out** because France was a friend and, "because.... communism!"
- 20 years of off an on combat later the fighting between the original combatants were forgotten and it turned into US vs. Minh conflict with supporting roles from e.g. Australia.

Cuba

- Cuba was initially a Spanish colony. By the 1890s, it was fighting for its **independence from Spain**. The American press bristled with stories of Spanish cruelty against the glorious Cuban freedom fighters and urged the U.S. to step in. In 1898, an American ship, **the USS Maine**, was blown up in Havana Harbor. The American press hysterically declared it to be Spanish sabotage and the U.S. Congress finally declared **war on Spain**. Spain's dying colonial empire was no match for the newly industrialised U.S. and the Spanish lost the last of their New World colonies.
- Although the war had allegedly been fought for Cuban independence, Cuba came out of the war under the effective thumb of the U.S. The new U.S.-friendly Cuban government gave the Americans **pretty much whatever they wanted, including a perpetual lease on a naval base at Guantanamo Bay**.
- Some sixty years later, in 1959, **Fidel Castro overthrew that U.S.-friendly Cuban government and established a communist regime** friendly to the Soviet Union. From the U.S. perspective in the midst of the Cold War, this constituted going over to the side of the enemy. Castro further angered the U.S. by nationalising resources and industries which were owned by U.S. corporations. In 1960, the U.S. responded with the embargo, which is still in effect.
- Hoping to mitigate the threat of U.S. missiles in Turkey, **the Soviet Union began placing nuclear missiles in Cuba** in 1962, resulting in the Cuban missile crisis. The crisis was resolved with the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba, a pledge from the U.S. to never invade Cuba, and a secret deal guaranteeing the removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey.
- From that point on, **the U.S. and Cuba continued to be hostile**. They were on opposite sides of the Cold War, with Cuba doing all it could to support communist movements around the world while the U.S. sought to prop up anti-communist regimes. In the 1980s, this led the Reagan administration to declare Cuba to be a state-sponsor of terrorism.

Europe



- For those who didn't live through this themselves and who especially now in the crisis are asking what benefits Europe's unity brings, the answer despite the unprecedented European period of peace lasting more than 65 years and despite the problems and difficulties we must still overcome is: peace. - Helmut Kohl

Geography

- Europe's geography has given the Europeans a significant head start. Instead of fighting for survival, the Europeans could focus on **developing technology, philosophy and arts**.
- Europe has barely any deserts or volcanoes. **Flooding or earthquakes are extremely rare**.
- **One of the main factors of Europe's success were its rivers**. They are long, flat and navigable, perfect for trade. European rivers usually never meet, this is why so many countries are confined within a relatively small piece of land. Rivers act as natural boundaries. This is especially true for the **Danube**, which was used as a natural fortification by the Roman Empire, Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire. European coastline is also very useful - one can find a lot of natural harbours there.
- **Northern Europe** is usually perceived as richer than the south. This can be attributed to the fact, that:
 - Northern countries are **clustered tightly together**. If a Spaniard or Portuguese wished to trade with the North, they had to cross the Pyrenees.
 - **Protestants**, with their work ethics, propelled northern countries towards prosperity. This does not apply to catholic Bavaria, obviously.
 - The South has fewer coastal plains for agriculture. Southern countries more often **suffered from droughts**

and natural disasters.

History

- In contrast to e.g. the USA, Europe **grew organically over millennia** and remains divided between its geographical and linguistic regions.

Africa



- History might have turned out differently if African armies, fed by barnyard-giraffe meat and backed by waves of cavalry mounted on huge rhinos, had swept into Europe to overrun its mutton-fed soldiers mounted on puny horses. - Jared Diamond
- Sometimes you will hear leaders say: I'm the only person who can hold this nation together. If that's true then that leader has truly failed to build their nation. - Barack Obama

Geography

- The geography of the Africa is **partially "responsible" for its status as one of the least developed continents.** The history shows that the innovation used to spread from the east to the west (or other way round), but not from the north to the south. Because the continent is in large enclosed by the Sahara desert, the Atlantic and Indian Ocean, **technological revolutions and new ideas could not reach Africa for thousands of years.**
- Africa is **much bigger compared to how it's depicted on the Mercator world map.** The Mercator projection inflates the size of objects away from the equator, so it is quite difficult to acknowledge how huge, in reality, Africa is (3x bigger than the USA).
- Vertically, Africa is divided into **four regions:** Sahara, Sahel, jungle area and the "mediterranean-like" south.
- **African coastline is smooth**, which means that the natural harbours of Africa are not very useful for sea trade.
- Africa undoubtedly has some **magnificent, great rivers** - the Niger, the Kongo, the Zambezi or the Nile. Sadly, they are almost useless when it comes to trade. The great rivers do not connect, are hardly navigable and full of waterfalls.
- Because of its climate, Africa is the home to a **vast, virulent diseases** such as malaria, yellow fever or HIV.

- Africa is both **blessed and cursed by the abundance of natural resources**. Even though the continent is richly endowed, it is mostly the outsiders who benefit from plundering them.

History

- Despite occasional trade between Arabs/Europeans and the Africans, the former **mostly kept the technology to themselves and took away whatever they found**, mainly natural resources and slaves.
- Another reason why **no advanced trading networks were built across communities are local languages**. More than thousands of languages exists in Africa, but (before colonialism) there was no force, which could dominate a significant part of the continent. There was no "lingua franca".
- There are 56 countries in Africa. The Africans can be thought of as **true prisoners of geography**: imprisoned by the natural barriers and well as the colonisers, who divided the continent to their liking. The Africans had internal conflicts (e.g. Zulus vs Xhosas), but the Europeans are the primary cause of the modern wars.
- There are **Chinese businessmen** everywhere in Africa. The third of China's import comes from Africa. China builds rail connection from Mombasa to the Nairobi. Because the Chinese **don't ask difficult questions about human rights or demand economic reform**, they are a very good trade partner for many African leaders.
- **It's great to see that the state of the continent is improving**. The poverty has fallen, while healthcare and education levels have risen. Many African countries are English speaking, which is an advantage in the global economy. However, Africa is still very much **dependent on global prices for minerals and energy**. Manufacturing output levels remain close to where they were in the 1970s. The continent is not free from corruption or numerous hot (or merely frozen) conflicts.

Democratic Republic Of Kongo

- One of the biggest failures of colonialism was the creation of the **Democratic Republic of Kongo** (DRC). In practice, it is neither democratic nor it is a republic. The **second largest country in Africa** (75 million people), bigger than Spain, France and Germany combined. It is the home of the second biggest **tropical rainforest**. Inhabited by about 200 ethnic groups.
- **The official language is French**. This is the legacy of the country being a Belgian colony from 1960 to 1966. Under the rule of the King Leopold (hence the name Léopoldville), the country, rich in natural resources, has been exploited by the colonialists.
- **Civil Wars**: Kinshasa backed the rebel side in Angola war. Thus, it has gotten closer to the USA, which was also supporting rebel movement against soviet-backed Angolan government. Each side poured millions of dollars' worth of arms.
- When Cold War ended nobody cared about Zaire (Congo). The country has but one great feature, the abundance of natural resources: cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, coal and manganese. **China buys approximately 50 percent of DRC's export, but the country does not get richer**. It has a development index 186 out of 187. Note, 18 countries in Africa are in the bottom of this list. Everybody wants the piece of DRC and it has no power to bite back.

African World War

- The 1994 **Rwandan genocide** was the spark that lit the regional fire. In the Rwandan genocide, Hutu-power

groups (called the *Interahamwe*) led mass killings of Tutsis and pro-peace Hutus, murdering 800,000 people in approximately 100 days. In response, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front overthrew the Rwandan Hutu government. During and after the genocide, an estimated 2 million refugees, mostly Hutu, poured over Rwanda's western border into the Congo.

- The refugee camps in eastern Congo served as **de facto army bases for the exiled Interhamwe and Army for the Liberation of Rwanda**. They terrorised and robbed the local population until October 1996, when **Tutsi led an uprising to force the Rwandans out of the Congo, sparking the First Congo War**.
- In response, Rwandan and Ugandan (backed by Burundi and Eritrea) armies invaded the Congo. The combined effort was called the **Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire**. By December, they controlled eastern Congo, and in May 1997 they marched into Kinshasa and overthrew Mobutu's government.
- However, the government forces **did not give up** and - with the involvement of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe - continued the fight.
- **More than twenty fractions were involved in the war**. Conflict in numbers: tens of thousands deaths due to the conflict, six million deaths due to disease and malnutrition. About 50 percent of victims were children under the age of five. Many ongoing conflicts in Africa are the echoes of the African World War.

Egypt

- The Suez Canal controls **2.5 percent of the world's oil and 8 percent of entire trade**. Closing the canal would add several days of transit time to the overseas deliveries.
- The African rivers are in general not good for trade, but good for **hydroelectricity**.
- **River Nile affects 10 countries**. However, as Herodotus said: **Egypt is the Nile and the Nile is Egypt**. The majority of Egyptians live within a few miles of the Nile. Measured by the area in which people dwell, Egypt is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.
- Despite the long history of conflicts with Israel, the likely quarrel right now is with Ethiopia - **the issue over the Nile**. Ethiopia is Africa's water tower. Due to its geography, it can collect big amounts of water from the Nile - over twenty dams built. Recently, Ethiopia has built The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Now it needs to be filled with water.
- As a result, **Egypt is worried about the reduced river flow in its part of the Nile**. It demands the guarantees from Ethiopia that water the flow will never be stopped.

Nigeria

- **Subsaharan Africa's largest producer of oil**. While the south benefits from high quality oil, the north complains that profits are not shared suitable across all the regions.
- Nigeria is the most **important economy** in the Africa.
- The branch of Islamic State, **Boko Haram**, is operating in the north of Nigeria. They form alliances with the jihadists up north in the Sahel region. They are known for terrorist activities which damage Nigeria's reputation abroad as a place to do business.

Angola

- **Subsaharan Africa's second-largest oil producer.** Former Portuguese colony.
- After gaining the independence, Angola was devastated by the **civil war from 1975 to 2002**. Cuba and the Soviet Block supported the socialists. South Africa and the USA supported the insurgent anti-communist.

RSA

- **The Republic of South Africa** is the second biggest play on the continent in terms of economy.
- It has access to two oceans, natural wealth (gold, silver and coal). It has very moderate climate and fertile land that allows for large scale food production. It is also not threatened by typical African diseases like malaria.
- **Cape of Good Hope** allows for the control of the sea lanes between the Atlantic and Indian oceans.

Middle East



Geography

- **Greater Middle East** stretches from Mediterranean Sea to mountains of Iran. From the Black Sea to the Arabian Sea of Oman.
- It is a **fertile region** (Mesopotamia with Tiger and Euphrates rivers), also rich in oil and gas.
- **Rub al-Khali**, vast desert region in the southern Arabian Peninsula, constituting the largest portion of the Arabian Desert.

History

- **Ottoman Empire**, which ruled those lands never tried too hard to divide local people into artificial countries. Only after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the British and French started to divide the land and create countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Iraq or Palestine (**Sykes-Picot agreement**).
- **Sunni Islam** (85 percent of all followers): orthodox, believed that the successor of the prophet ought to be chosen using Arab tribal traditions.
- **Shia Islam** (15 percent of all followers): believed that the caliph is to be divinely appointed, and that blood was the main factor of succession.
- **Middle East is a set of nation states ruled by leaders, who tend to favour whichever branch of islam they themselves come from.**

- In **Iraq**, Shias never accepted never accepted sunni lead government controls holy cities of Najaf and Karbala (where martyrs Ali and Hussain are buried).
- **Kurdistan** is a fairly large area which exists in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Kurds have their own culture and language, but unfortunately political borders have split them all up, and they are subject to the laws of all these different nations. They have no proper nation of their own, even though they have historically lived in their own region and some have been granted regional autonomy.
- Before the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US, **Saddam Hussein** and his regime did terrible things to the Kurds. This includes bombing at least one village with mustard gas. Because of this, as well as underlying discrimination, the Kurdish people have been seeking their own nation. It's been proposed that Kurdistan be carved out of the northern section of Iraq.
- **The demise of Saddam Hussein** started due to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait (first USA-Iraq war). After that Iraq was targeted with sanctions of many different kinds. As trade was not too easy, Saddam Hussein started eventually to sell energy with other currencies than the US Dollar. Right then, at the same moment, USA "noticed" that Iraq has "problems with not-too-democratic government and lack of civil liberties". The second USA-Iraq war started.
- **Gaza and West Bank** were created in the aftermath of the 1948 war. "Gaza" is the part of Palestine that the Egyptian army captured. The "West Bank" is the part of Palestine that the Jordanian army captured. "Israel" is the part of Palestine that the Jewish militias captured. From 1948-1967, the Jews developed a state on the land they captured. Jordan tried to integrate the West Bank into its own state. Egypt tried to make Gaza a vassal state of Egypt. No one recognised a "Palestinian state" because nobody claimed a Palestinian ethnicity. Fast forward to 1967 when Egypt was bombing Israeli ships. There were UN peacekeepers between Egypt and Israel but Nasser (king of Egypt) told the UN to leave the border. Syria and Lebanon attacked Israel by way of artillery. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan collected their armies on the border of Israel. So Israel decided that waiting to be attacked was silly. They attacked the armies of invasion that were collected on their unrecognized borders. War broke out. Israeli armies advanced into Gaza and the West Bank. Cease-fire agreements were signed while the Israeli army was still in this area (that Jordan and Egypt called their own, without any reference to the yet-unborn Palestinians).
- **Lebanon** is a tiny country in the middle east. It's bordered by Syria from the north and east, Israel from the south, and the Mediterranean Sea from the west. Syria has been in a deadly civil war since 2012. Lebanon and Israel are officially "at war" since the inception of Israel, though currently there isn't any war going on, and the last real war between the two countries happened in 2006 and lasted only 30 days.
- **The Arab Spring** was the uprising of peoples in middle eastern countries against their governments (usually religious governments). Once it began, different ideas and ideals carried through the Arab world and other countries followed suit in hopes of each creating new governments. Some have been successful, others not so much.

India and Pakistan



- Pakistan has decided to bleed India with thousand cuts. It's the policy of Pakistan. The creation of Bangladesh, which happened with the help of India, was a very humiliating defeat for them, and they feel that this is one way of avenging that defeat. They are avenging this defeat by causing casualties to our security forces and creating mayhem amongst the people. - General Bipin Rawat
- Pakistan stands for *pure land*. **It is one state, but not one nation.**
- The official language of Pakistan is **Urdu**, the mother tongue of all the people who fled India in 1947.

Geography

- The problem of Bangladesh is not that it has little access to the sea, but **the sea has too much access to Bangladesh** (devastating floods).
- The Kashmir issue is partially one of national pride, but it is also strategic. Full control of Kashmir would give India **a window into Central Asia and a border with Afghanistan**. It would also deny Pakistan a border with China and thus diminish the usefulness of a Chinese-Pakistani relationship.,

History

- When India was partitioned between Hindu and Muslim areas, there existed quite a few nominally independent areas called the Princely States, who were in theory given the choice of remaining independent or

joining India or Pakistan. In practice varying degrees of coercion were employed to make them join one of the countries, up to and including an armed invasion by India in the case of Hyderabad. **The Kashmir had a Muslim majority so Pakistan felt it should be part of it, but Kashmir's ruler joined India.** Pakistan invaded and started the first of several wars.

- Pakistan is, in all aspects, **weaker than India**. The country received just 17 percent of national reserves of original India after end of the colonial times.
- For a lot of the western and northern parts of China, it would be a shorter distance to ship products from ports in Pakistan. This is why the Chinese spent around \$40 billion on a **China Pakistan Economic Corridor**, a road which goes from the border to Gwadar and then on the port itself. The corridor allows China to bypass the problematic Strait of Malacca.
- Gwadar could have been the reason, why USSR invaded Afghanistan - **to gain access to the warm-water port**.
- Islam, cricket, the intelligence services, the military and the fear of India are what holds Pakistan together. **Is has been in a state of civil war for more than a decade.**
- Situated at over 20,000 feet, the **Siachen Glacier** is the highest battleground (1984) on Earth, with both countries (India and Pakistan) maintaining a permanent military presence in the region.

South America



Geography

- South America is a living proof, that **if the geography is against you, then you are bound to have limited economic success**. The continent has just few deep, natural harbours.

History

- It is believed that the first human populations of South America **either arrived from Asia into North America via the Bering Land Bridge**, and migrated southwards or alternatively from Polynesia across the Pacific.
- The USA developed very quickly due to the fact, that small landholders used to own the land. However, in the South America, there were **powerful landowners and serfs - this is led to significant inequality**. Also, the first European settlers stayed near the coast. They built roads to connect the interior with the coastal capitals, but **neglected the connection between the towns in the heart of the continent**. This resulted in the majority of wealth being transferred from each region to the coast.
- **The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)** neatly divided the *New World* of the Americas between the two superpowers - Spain and Portugal. The countries adhered to the treaty without major conflict between the two. This is why Spanish language is being spoken in South America (with exception of Brazil and French Guiana).
- The two leading figures of the South American wars of independence were **Simon Bolívar in the North and José de San Martín in the South**. Their paths met in Ecuador, where the modest and unselfish San Martín came off second best. While he is honoured in Argentina as a national hero, in South America Bolívar is

revered almost as a god. Bolivarianism is a mix of pan-American, socialist and national-patriotic ideals fixed against injustices of imperialism, inequality and corruption.

- **South America was a proxy battlefield of the Cold War.** This environment has allowed dictatorships to flourish. The continent experienced economic instability mixed with a loss of faith in democratic institutions. The military was more efficient than a legislature. One thing unique to Latin American states was the heavy involvement of foreign governments, especially the United States, in their internal affairs.
- **China has been investing heavily in South America**, especially in Argentina, Venezuela and Ecuador. It has replaced USA as Brazil's main trading partner. In return, China hopes for the support in the UN for its national claims back home (e.g. regarding Taiwan). It has been confirmed that Beijing is the major weapon supplier to South American countries.
- The basic idea of the **Monroe Doctrine** is that the United States has historically had a special relationship with countries in our hemisphere, and an obligation to intervene if those countries were threatened by European expansion or colonialism.
- Even though France, the Netherlands, and the UK still have nominal colonies in the hemisphere, the US is not going to intervene in these territories, nor will they ever under any foreseeable circumstances. This is why the US did not take a real side in the Falkland island war. The islands were invaded by Argentina, an act of aggression which they can't condone but can't side with the UK as it would be completely **contrary to the Monroe doctrine if the US sided with a European power against a Latin American Country**.

Bolivia

- After loosing in the War of the Pacific (over guano and saltpeter discovered in the Atacama Desert) in 1904, **Bolivia became landlocked**. Up to this day the relationships between Chile and Bolivia remain hostile.
- **Chile is in dire need of a stable gas supply and Bolivia possesses vast gas reserves**. However, it is very unpopular in Chile to speak about buying natural resources from the old enemy. Even though some Bolivian leaders (e.g. Evo Morales) have been proposing to strike a deal, the pride of the Chileans does not let them buy gas from the Bolivians.

Panama

- Panama is famous for the **Panama Canal** (1914), which connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.
- Even though there were plans to build a **second canal in Nicaragua**, the investment seems to have failed. Initial agreement between the president Daniel Ortega and Chinese billionaire Wang Jing stalled. There are rumours of insufficient financing and overall abandonment of the project.
- Because of very good relationships with the USA, some can accuse the country of being an *American lackey*.

Brazil

- Brazil can be seen as the most **powerful country on the continent**. It is almost as big as the USA.
- The future of the **Amazon rainforest** seems bleak. It falls victim to *slash-and-burn agriculture*, a method of growing food in which farmers and cattle ranchers deliberately cut down and burn forestland to clear it for crops and livestock. However, once the rainforest is cut it will not grow back.
- Even though the **Amazon is huge and navigable**, its coast is muddy and it's difficult to build on it.

- Brazil's seven largest ports move **fewer goods** than a single port in New Orleans.
- 25 percent of Brazilians live in **favela slums**.
- To develop the interior of the country, **the capital of Brazil has been moved from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia**.

Argentina

- **Runner-up in the competition of the most powerful country on the continent.**
- It can boast with a quality of land **comparable to the European countries**. It actually used to be richer than France or Italy in the past, but lost its wealth due to mismanagement.
- **Vaca Muerta** is a geologic formation located in northern Patagonia. It is well known as the host rock for major deposits of shale oil and shale gas. Argentina requires massive investment to make use of those deposits. But out of national pride it will refuse to strike a deal with any company which has previously taken advantage of the gas fields around the Islas Malvinas...
- ... a.k.a the Falkland Islands. This oversea territory by Argentina is currently owned by the UK. Argentina claims ownership of the Falklands. The control of the islands was the cause of the **Falkland War in 1982**. Had Argentina waited a few more years, the British Navy would likely have been unable to react to the invasion of the Falklands since the last remaining aircraft carrier of the UK was set to be retired that very year. In a 2013 referendum, 99.8% of the population voted in favour of remaining with the United Kingdom, with three dissenting votes in total. The territorial dispute with Argentina is ongoing, and it became more relevant since the discovery of gas fields near the islands.

The Arctic



- Offshore fields especially in the Arctic, are without any exaggeration, our strategic reserve for the twenty-first century. - Vladimir Putin
- They have cities in arctics, we only have villages. - Melissa Bert
- Polar region located at the northernmost part of Earth. The Arctic consists of the Arctic Ocean, adjacent seas, and parts of Alaska (United States), Finland, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Canada, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. Its name comes from Greek word **arktikos - near the Bear** (reference to Ursa Major). The first known explorer of the Arctic was Pytheas of Massalia (he called it Thule).
- After Pytheas, there were other prominent explorers fascinated by the Arctic. **Roald Amundsen** has sailed in 1918 from Norway, through the Arctic Sea and Bering Strait to California. In 1926, Amundsen and 15 other men made the first crossing of the Arctic in the airship Norge. While flying over the Arctic they dropped Norwegian, Italian and American flags. **Shinji Kazama** reached the North Pole on 21 April 1987 on a motorbike.
- It is the fact, that the **climate is changing and biological shuffle is under way**. Ice melts and recedes, animals migrate, sea levels are rising. The climate change is perpetuated by the albedo effect (when ice is replaced by water or land, the lower albedo value reflects less and absorbs more energy, resulting in a warmer Earth). Maldives, Bangladesh and Netherlands are in grave risk of flooding. However, there are also benefits of the process: many transport routes are becoming available, local populations benefit from new food sources.
- Northwest Passage links Atlantic and Pacific Ocean and can **facilitate transport from Europe to China**. This means that the shipping companies would be less dependent on the Suez and Panama canals. In 2014 the first cargo ship, *Nunavik* sailed the Northwest Passage without an aid of an icebreaker.
- As the ice slowly melts, we **are getting access to natural oil and gas reserves of the Arctic**. ExxonMobil, Shell, Rosneft are all applying for licenses to operate in this region. It would be difficult to work in this harsh environment (endless nights, frozen sea, waves forty feet high). We should be concern about the presence of

the companies in the Arctic. There is a thread that they will not be concerned about potential environmental consequences and may accelerate the climate changes.

- There are **many legal disputes over the governance of the Arctic**. However, the colonisation of the Arctic will be different from e.g. *race to conquer Africa*. This new race has rules a formula and a forum for decision making

Russia vs the USA

- **Russia has the heaviest presence in the polar region.** Very eager to establish dominance in the north. Planted a rust-proof titanium Russian flag on the seabed in 2007 as a statement of their ambition.
- There have been claim that Arctic Ocean should be renamed to **Russian Ocean** (Lomonosov Ridge argument). They are claims to Spitzbergen (Svalbard Islands). Norwegian islands are densely inhabited by Russian coal-mine workers.
- The Russian fleet could **be easily blocked** on the Baltic Ocean (Skagerrak Strait) and GIUK region by NATO forces.
- **Russia is building an arctic army.** 6000 combat soldiers station in the Murmansk region. There have been large-scale exercises performed with 155,000 soldiers, thousands of tanks, jets and ships. The Russians have 32 icebreakers to their disposal. 6 of them are nuclear. They consider building a floating nuclear power plant.
- **The USA is not even close to dominate the Arctic.** The USA has one, single icebreaker.

Korea and Japan



- The recent relationship between both Koreas, Japan and the USA has resembled a long-lasting Mexican stand-off. **Solving the North Korean problem may have properties of a self-fulfilling prophecy.** One on hand world leaders should intervene against the regime. However, they are aware that the collapse of North Korea will, without any doubt, cause huge chaos to every party involved.
- For most of the history Korea was a *hermit country*. Confined between its seas and Yalu river, it always attempted to shield itself from the violent neighbours. **The Japanese occupation** (starting in 1910) may serve as an example. Back then, it was forbidden to speak Korean, teach Korean history or cultivate Korean traditions. To this day, those past events are a source of resentment for the Koreans.
- After the defeat of Japan (1945), **the Americans divided Korea in two parts, along the 38 parallel**. The Soviets had been commanded to halt before the border, and so they did. From now on the Communist regime reigned over the North Korea (first under Soviet, later the Chinese banner). South Korea remained under American supervision. The Koreans did not have any say regarding the division of their country.
- Shortly after, both Americans and Soviets started losing interest in the peninsula. This is why in 1950, North Korea (backed by communist China) decided to march south with the ambition to reunite Korea under the communist reign. However, losing South Korea was not an option for Americans. They could not afford to show any sign of weakness in the face of the Cold War. They quickly stopped the North Korean army and regained south territory. **Technically, both Koreas are still at war - the treaty was never signed.**

South Korea

- **Seoul, the capital of South Korea is located just 30 miles away from the DMZ.** It is home to half of the South

Korean population (50 million in total). The proximity to North Korea is why South Korea strives for relative peace. It is afraid of 100 000 artillery pieces aimed at all times directly at the city. Additionally, it is believed that North Korea can quickly move their troops into the city through secret, underground tunnels. Finally, about 100 000 undercover agents (sleeper cells) are stationing in the city.

North Korea

- **The least democratic state in the world**, famous for its combination of fierce nationalism, communism and fierce self-reliance. Population of about 25 million people. It is being estimated that 150 000 political prisoners are being held in the "re-education" camps on the North Korean territory. North Korean army is one of the biggest in the world. Its economy is 80 times weaker than South Korean's.
- Even if the North agreed to *surrender* and join South Korea, it would be extremely difficult to merge the advanced, rich South with the poor, underdeveloped North.

China

- **China's goal is to keep North Korea stable for two reasons.** Firstly, it does not want to become a home to millions of refugees fleeing from the Korean regime. Secondly, China is North Korea's only trade partner.

Japan

- Japan has been always **conveniently separated from the outside world**. However, its geography is at the same time problematic. Japan is a mountainous country, where it is difficult to farm or establish river trade. It has also very little natural resources. This is why it remains one of the biggest importers of oil and natural gas.
- The **hunger for natural resources** was one of the reasons for Japan to participate in the second world war. Even though the USA has threatened Japan to halt their oil supplies, Nippon answered with Pearl Harbor attack and further conquests in the South-East Asia. Due to the mountainous terrain, the Americans were unable to invade the Japanese islands. This is why they resorted to nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Nowadays, **Americans are allowing Japan to rebuild their army**. Both countries regard are ready to compromise in the face of the looming, Chinese dominance.