

140. Mike Davis, "Learning from Tijuana," *Granta* 56 (1995): 33.
 141. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
 142. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Art public, art critique: textes, propos et documents* (Paris: Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1995), p. 212.
 143. *Ibid.*
 144. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
 145. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence*, Alphonso Lingis, trans. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), p. 37.
 146. Wodiczko, note 142, p. 206. The performance art of Guillermo Gomez-Pena, who refers to himself as a "migrant performance artist," constitutes another public intervention into the dominant construction of the alien other. Constructing and acting out cultural hybrids, Gomez-Pena seeks to attenuate both national borders and the prevailing discourses on cultural types. See his *The New World Border* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1996).
 147. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
 148. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
 149. The "amoeba" reference has two encouragements. First, Francis Jennings, in a discussion of the vagaries of various national territorial boundaries, remarks, "Poland's historical boundaries look like the antics of an amoeba in heat. What indeed shall we properly call the variform and culturally complex entity known as the United States of America?" (Jennings, note 124, pp. 37-38). Second, Boaventura De Sousa Santos contrasts "fortress-communities" with "amoeba-communities." The former "are communities that, whether aggressively or defensively, base internal identification on external closure"; in the latter "identity is always multiple, unfinished, undergoing a process of reconstruction and reinvention." See Boaventura De Sousa Santos, *Toward a New Common Sense* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 485.

At the End of Geopolitics? Reflections on a Plural Problematic at the Century's End

Gearóid Ó Tuathail*

It is now something of a cliché to assert that we live in an era of transition between a dying old world order and the birth of a new world order. A multiplicity of different theoretical schemas have tried to outline and chart this transition. For some, we are undergoing a wrenching but also exciting transition from a Second Wave civilization, where the norms of industrial society were paradigmatic, to a Third Wave civilization of informational capitalism that will establish a completely new order of norms, values, behaviors, and even subjects.¹ For others, we have reached the end of history and the dramas that face us are a triumphant liberalism grandly unfolding across the planet. Yet others stress the limits, contradictions, and dark future of world order, underscoring how the triumph of a fully neoliberal world order is impossible in a decentered, polyglot world of emergent anarchy and pervasive indifference.² Certainly, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 can be read as nothing other than a epochal event. The historian Eric Hobsbawm uses this date to mark the end of what he calls "the short twentieth century." It began in Sarajevo in 1914 and ends ironically not only with the collapse of the Soviet Empire but also where it began, in a Sarajevo under siege by the forces of fascistic nationalism.³

For students of geopolitics, these varied attempts to chart the end of the old and the beginning of the new have involved numerous pronouncements on the passing of geopolitics. Long before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, figures like Paul Virilio (and more recently James Der Derian) were arguing that "chronopolitics" is now more important than geopolitics in contemporary international affairs. "The loss of material space," Virilio

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argued, "Tends to the government of nothing but time." "Territory has lost its significance in favor of the projectile. In fact, the strategic value of the non-place of speed has definitely supplanted that of place."⁴ Never shy of hyperbole, Virilio proclaimed fourteen years ago that: "Space is no longer in geography—it's in electronics. . . . There is a movement from the geo- to chronopolitics: the distribution of territory becomes the distribution of time."⁵

Others, like Edward Luttwak, asserted—again, before the collapse of the Soviet Union—that the waning of the Cold War has reduced the significance of military power in international affairs. Summarizing a supposed consensus within the Western foreign policy community in 1990, he posited a transition from geopolitics to geoconomics: "Everyone, it appears, now agrees that the methods of commerce are displacing military methods—with disposable capital in lieu of firepower, civilian innovation in lieu of military-technical advancement, and market penetration in lieu of garrisons and bases."⁶ Luttwak's enthusiasms, however, fall far short of globalization boosters like Keniche Ohmae, who envisions a near-future world of borderless capitalism and "the end of the nation state."⁷ States, for Luttwak, are here to stay; they are "spatial entities structured to jealously delimit their own territories"; they are "inherently inclined to strive for relative advantage against like entities on the international scene." As bureaucracies, they are "impelled by the *bureaucratic urges of role-preservation and role-enhancement to acquire a 'geo-economic' substitute for their decaying geopolitical role*."⁸ Thus, the coming geo-economic age will not be one of harmonious global interdependence, but rather an age of continued state rivalry where "the logic of conflict" will be expressed in "the grammar of commerce."

Yet others have touted burgeoning environmental and ecological crises that threaten to alter radically the nature of international politics. For many environmentally conscious intellectuals and policy wonks, the real transition to be made is from geopolitics to ecopolitics.⁹ According to US Vice-President Al Gore, the explosion of the world's population, the loss of forest land, topsoil, stratospheric ozone, and species across our fragile planet pose unprecedented challenges to our civilization. To deal with this deterioration of the global environment, humanity needs not a Strategic Defense Initiative but a Strategic Environmental Initiative, a mission to planet earth.¹⁰ Ecology has become "the new sacred agenda" that requires a new faith in the future of life on earth and "a new reverence for absolute principles that can serve as guiding stars by which to map the future course of our species."¹¹

Combining elements of all, Richard Falk argues that the world is moving rapidly away from geopolitics "towards a more integrated, economic, cultural and political reality," a set of circumstances identified by him as "geogovernance."¹² The capacity of the sovereign territorial state as an actor to manage the history of humanity has diminished significantly; indeed, in many instances, the state is fragmenting, which reflects in the decline in governmental capacity at the level of the nation-state. The dilemma of global politics is no longer geopolitics but geogovernance, the ongoing and often unhappy struggle to establish workable governance structures at the global scale. Indeed, by the standards of justice and order held by Falk and those others associated with the World Order Models Project, this struggle is a dismal failure. The world order of the twenty-first century is likely to be one of "inhumane governance."

Different though all these arguments are, they do nevertheless have in common the thesis that we have reached the end of geopolitics. Geopolitics, it seems, belongs to the past, to an earlier technological and territorial era, an epoch of different institutions, degrees of globalization, and discourses of danger. What these arguments also have in common is a rather simplistic and limited notion of geopolitics that associates it with the Cold War and the logos of state sovereignty. Geopolitics is no more than realpolitik across space, a solid-state world of competing territorial monads, Kissingerian Cold War balance-of-power politics played out across the map.

In response to the generalized thesis of "the end of geopolitics," this article develops two arguments. The first is that the whole question of geopolitics is much richer than these and other intellectuals have acknowledged. Geopolitics works as an illusive complexity, not a manifest given, a plural problematic not a singular concept, a constellation in a Frankfurt School sense; namely, a "juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle."¹³ To engage geopolitics critically is to study how this dispersed cluster of changing elements has congealed historically into different orders of geographical knowledge and power.

In my second argument, problematic though sequences of *then/new* or *old/new* are, this article seeks schematically to outline a transformation in its conditions of possibility by contrasting geopolitical knowledge-production at the beginning of the century with geopolitical knowledge-production at the end of the century. It must be stated at the outset that this contrast is a heuristic device, a metahistorical myth-structure, comparing what we can describe, following

Lyotard, as modern and postmodern geopolitics.¹⁴ Yet the exercise is worthwhile in that it elaborates a macrohistory for geopolitics around and against which we can conceptualize specific clusters of the geopolitical problematic.¹⁵

In elaborating this shift in the following two sections of the article, the complexity of the unsettled historical and philosophical problematic(s) of geopolitics should become more evident. It also allows us to elaborate a critical geopolitics agenda of research into the postmodern technoformations and megamachinic flowmations of contemporary geopolitics.¹⁶ Though traditional understandings of geopolitics may be obsolete, the problematic of geopolitics—the geography/power/knowledge of the production of global space—demands our attention more than ever. The crises that characterize this plural problematic in the late twentieth century are significant ones that students of global affairs should not neglect or overlook.

Modern Geopolitics: A Spinning Globe in Perspective

Geopolitics is a twentieth-century concept. The term *geopolitics* was first coined by Rudolf Kjellen, a Swedish political scientist, in 1899. It did not come into widespread use, however, until the 1930s when it was championed by the group of German political geographers around the retired Major General Dr. Karl Haushofer in the Department of Geography at the University of Munich. Haushofer's association through Rudolf Hess with Adolf Hitler brought the concept to the attention of the world when Hitler consolidated power for himself and the Nazi Party in Germany during 1933. Numerous scholars in both the West and the East (Russia, China, and Japan) developed an interest in geopolitics as a science of statecraft, a method of thinking through the supposed significance of geographical factors upon the conduct of international relations. During World War II, a small caste of advocates in academic, business, and military circles in the United States pushed geopolitics as a form of spatial thinking that the United States should institutionalize and actively promote. Geopolitics was considered essential if the United States was to become and think like a global power. The writings of figures like the British geographer Halford Mackinder—who never used and reportedly disliked the term *geopolitics*—were suddenly rediscovered by the US foreign policy community at this time and represented as timeless and masterful geopolitical insights into the nature of international politics.¹⁷

The strange twists of the history of the term *geopolitics* in the first half of the twentieth century are no more than glimmering clues to the problematic its appearance and subsequent role in congealing certain spatial imaginations and desires reveals. Although a twentieth-century concept, geopolitics is best understood as a new field of discourse within the long-established domain of geopolitics, defined as the entwined historical development of geographical knowledge with state power and its imperatives of governmentality. Pre-twentieth-century doctrines and spatial ideologies like the Monroe Doctrine, Manifest Destiny, or France's "civilizing mission" in Africa can be described as geopolitics *avant la lettre*, but they are better understood as particular historical regimes of geopolitics implicating geographical visions and governmental ideals. Indeed, the distinctiveness of geopolitics in general is that geography and governmentality cannot be separated. The geographical vision is itself a governmental mission.¹⁸

To probe the distinctiveness of geopolitics as a twentieth-century field of discourse, we should begin not with the term's origins but with a text that does not use the term but is nevertheless subsequently identified and recalled as foundational to the geopolitical tradition; namely, Halford Mackinder's "The Geographical Pivot of History" (1904).¹⁹ From this piece, we can identify the first of three structural features that I wish to argue characterize *modern geopolitics*.

The first is that geopolitics is an early twentieth-century form of Cartesian perspectivalism, born in imperial capitals, cultivated by a caste of imperial men (who saw themselves as materialist-minded public intellectuals of empire), and fixated on how modern transnational networks, like railways and steamships, were transmutating territoriality as they knew it. In his 1904 presentation to the Royal Geographical Society, Mackinder describes a new geographical/geopolitical gaze that is made possible by the end of geography as exploration and discovery. In the new post-Columbian era of closed space, a *global view* is enabled. It is possible, for the first time,

to attempt, with some degree of completeness, a correlation between the larger geographical and the larger historical generalizations. For the first time we can perceive something of the real portions of features and events on the stage of the whole world, and may seek a formula which shall express certain aspects, at any rate, of geographical causation in universal history. If we are fortunate, that formula should have a practical value as setting into perspective some of the competing forces in current international politics.²⁰

The geopolitical gaze that Mackinder helped codify produced international politics as a detached perspectival scene. The viewing

subject is detached from the object viewed. The geopolitician is transcendent and objective, the unveiled objects inert and transparent. With the deployment of a trained geopolitical gaze, the everyday to and fro of a spinning globe is set in fixed global perspective. The concept of the global (which we should recall was not as common then as now) is both geographical and epistemological; a global view is not only a worldwide view but a total view—a view that enables “the real proportion of features and events” to be perceived and comprehended.

Mackinder’s gaze upon the spinning globe of 1904 revealed what he termed the “Natural Seats of Power” (displayed as a lantern slide of an oval-shaped Mercator map at the original lecture). This geopolitical map/picture was held to be transparent and natural, yet it was not a pure visual scene, stamped as it was by macrogeographical labels designating the revealed seats of power as “pivot area,” “inner or marginal crescent,” and “lands of outer or insular crescent.” Though geopolitics was about seeing, not writing, Mackinder was inevitably forced to fall back upon writing. What Mackinder *produced* (made visible) in his lantern-slide show and lecture was an understanding of international politics as a spatial spectacle, as a theatrical drama (“the stage of the whole world”), to be explained by the unveiling of the geographical regions and laws beneath the surface of world affairs. For Mackinder, the elemental plot in the theater of international politics is the eternal struggle between Man (*sic*) and Nature. Following a geographical determinist version of what Latour calls “the modern constitution,” Mackinder helps create a discourse on the human/nonhuman relation that purifies and translates this relation at the same time: certain things are natural and certain other things are social, and it permits hybrids that contain both, like *land-power* or *seapower*.²¹ Thus, we have declarations like “Man and not nature initiates, but nature in large measure controls.”²² From this premise, Mackinder creates (con)fusions of the human and the social that are projected as quasi-natural categories in opposition to each other—East and West, landpower and seapower, the continental heartland and the maritime world—and as the pivotal binaries of politics. Each is a natural geographical entity yet also a sociopolitical identity.

The operation of this *discourse of essential geographical entities qua identities in perpetual conflict* as an interpretative system that makes sense of international politics is the second distinguishing feature of modern geopolitics. Modern geopolitical discourse privileges the synchronic over the diachronic. It is a visual form of thought—a spatial mode of reasoning that evokes real timeless essences and natural laws, not mere historical conjunctures and social tendencies. Mackinder’s

essential entities in perpetual struggle transposed easily onto the USA-USSR conflict after World War II. The Soviet Union was the innately expansionist heartland that needed to be contained lest it dominate all of Eurasia. Whether echoing Mackinder’s rhetoric or not, Cold War geopolitics is characterized by its emphasis on the permanent struggle of essential geographical blocs and identities. It was an overdetermined struggle between a free, trade-dependent maritime West and a totalitarian, continental Eurasia. The zone of conflict between the two was the Third World, a zone that comprised a number of shatterbelts like Central America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the Horn of Africa, and southern Africa.²³

The third distinguishing feature of modern geopolitics is one that became significant as geopolitical discourse spiraled beyond its European and imperial places of birth. Married to the political realism of many émigrés in the post-World War II United States, geopolitics came to describe a perspective on international politics that treated the state as an irreducible monad. The game of geopolitics, most famously for Henry Kissinger, was to survey international politics with an imperial eye to the changing weight of these fixed monads, the object of the game being to try to establish and maintain conditions of equilibrium between competing monads and so secure an international peace and order favorable to the United States. Geopolitics, as Kissinger conceptualized it—an approach that pays attention to the requirements of equilibrium—was projected as neutral and rational, yet it concentrated all of its power to determine “the requirements of equilibrium” in the figure of the geopolitician as master (over)seer in international politics.²⁴ A central assumption of this type of reasoning, of course, was that global space was unambiguously mastered by the politics of sovereign territorial states. Global space was held to be a fully in-stated space.²⁵

So specified, modern geopolitics can be thought of as a regime of power/knowledge that produced international politics as an objective global spatial drama, a ceaseless global struggle between predetermined geographical entities, and as a vision of territorial states dominating global space. It is modern in Lyotard’s sense of the modern in that it is complicitous with a series of Western grand narratives (although which state best exemplified these—the British Empire, France, the German Reich, or the United States—was certainly in dispute until 1945). Its Cartesian perspectivalism normalizes a transcendent Western subject as the god’s-eye geopolitician, a detached and disembodied imperial subject who can decode the surface of international affairs and produce total(izing) views of its hidden essences. Its essentialist reading of international politics reveals the

hubris of Western scientific myths about uncovering timeless essences and determining universal causation. Its naturalization of an idealized version of the European state system, projecting this upon the world, and representing global politics as balance-of-power politics, reveal the operation of an ethnocentric grand narrative wherein history has realized itself as European conceptions alone. In sum, modern geopolitics is a condensation of Western epistemological and ontological hubris—an imagining of the world from an imperial point of view.

Obviously, these three features of modern geopolitics are no more than a quick snapshot of a much more complex and messy history involving the decline of the British Empire, the challenging rise of the German Empire, and the emergence of the United States as hegemon after World War II. Nevertheless, they serve as a useful contrast to the contemporary situation, where as we approach the end of the twentieth century, all three features of modern geopolitics are in crisis and under erasure.

Postmodern Geopolitics: The Vertigo of a Globe in a Spin

In *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard treats postmodernity as a condition of knowledge and as a historical period. As a condition of knowledge, the postmodern represents incredulity toward metanarratives. It is a crisis in the language of the universal and the absolute, a loss of confidence in the grand narratives of progress and truth. Speaking in particular about art, Lyotard observes that the “postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable.”²⁶ Joyce, for example, is a postmodernist for Lyotard, as are Nietzsche and Montaigne, because they wage war on totality.

Although not particularly contemporary, Lyotard generally associates the postmodern condition with the reconstruction of knowledge in computerized societies since the 1950s, the transition to informational capitalism, and the rising power of multinational corporations. As a result of technological changes, informationalization, and globalization, scientific knowledge has lost its traditional credibility and is now legitimated by performativity, not truth. Knowledge

is not produced for itself but instrumentalized to generate the best input/output equation.

Both of these senses of the postmodern are useful in specifying a postmodern geopolitics. It must be remembered that it was a growing incredulity toward the traditional British imperial metanarratives that motivated Mackinder’s geopolitics at the beginning of the twentieth century. He decried the disintegration and decay associated with international capitalism and modern urban life.²⁷ His global qua total geopolitical vision was asserted amid the tumult and confusion of the early twentieth century, a response to the weaknesses exposed within the British Empire by the Boer War.²⁸ More generally, Mackinder’s geography qua geopolitics was conceptualized, as he once wrote, “a standing protest against the disintegration of culture with which we are threatened.”²⁹ For geographically minded strategists like Mackinder, Haushofer, and, in the postwar period, Kennan, Kissinger, Brzezinski, and others, geopolitics was a method of establishing order and securing vision in the midst of the decay and chaos that always threatened.³⁰

The postmodern as the shadow of vertiginous anxieties has always haunted geopolitical visions, but these anxieties have become significantly amplified over the last three decades with the dissolution of the Pax Americana constructed after World War II. Beginning with the US defeat in Vietnam and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of pegged exchange rates in the early 1970s, the disintegration of the world order that US hegemony built has intensified with the globalization of communications, production, and finance in the 1980s, and the collapse of the Cold War as a defining metanarrative for the West in the early 1990s. Our contemporary condition appears to be, as *New Perspectives Quarterly* put it, one of “geopolitical vertigo.”³¹ Impacted by informationalization, globalization, and deterritorialization, global space appears less perspectivalist, more hybridized, and moving in multiple, decentered flowmations beyond the power of sovereign states.

First, electronic communication and accelerated modes of transport have provoked an intensified round of time-space compression, dramatically shrinking our experience of geographical space and planetary expanse.³² Technologies for envisioning global space have proliferated greatly in the last few decades, transforming the conditions of possibility of producing global space.³³ Within the state apparatus, a planetary watching machine comprising orbital “keyhole” intelligence satellites, global positioning systems, geostationary weather monitors, and high-altitude flight by aircraft and robotic drones offer perpetually updated technoscientific visions of global

space to national security technicians, intelligence officers, state bureaucrats, and political leaders. Whether it be electromagnetic scans of battlefields, remote sensing of the earth's vegetation, weather photoreconnaissance images of hurricanes, or bomb's-eye video from a cruise missile, the imagining of the globe is no longer the sole purview of the cartographer. Once a cartographic lantern-slide show, geographical knowledge has become cyberneticized and informationalized as the bit-stream of geographical information systems, database visualization software programs in the hands of the technological classes.³⁴ More profoundly, the very activity of visualization is transferred to the video screens and electronic optics of machinic systems. The imperial eye is now a cybercosmic electronic eye.

Beyond the state, global telecommunication and mass media networks offer real-time coverage of global space twenty-four hours a day. The spinning globe, the logo of CNN International, has produced a globe that is perpetually subject to CNN's spin. The everyday experience of geography is now also a collective experience of the virtual geography of global media events, as the world-making and world-disclosing vectors of the television, telephone, and tele-satellite uplinks make telethesia—perception at a distance—an integral part of late-twentieth-century "human" faculties and capabilities. Indeed, it can be argued, such teletechnologies are producing terminal subjects, cyborg entities defined not by where they live but by the telematic flows they receive and emit.³⁵

Thus, increasingly, the space of international politics has become a postperspectivalist (s)pace. Zbigniew Brzezinski, in a revealing book titled *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century*, articulates a general feeling of geopolitical vertigo in writing of "the notable acceleration in the velocity of our history and the uncertainty of its trajectory."

History has not ended, [he observes] but has become compressed. Whereas in the past, historical epochs stood out in relatively sharp relief, and one could thus have a defined sense of historical progression, history today entails sharp discontinuities that collide with each other, condense our sense of perspective, and confuse our historical perceptions.³⁶

Second, the end of the Cold War and the (con)fusions of hybridized globalization have provoked a generalized crisis of strategic discourse in the West. The geopolitical discourse of essential geographical entities in perpetual conflict is difficult to sustain in a world where geographical entities appear less solid, fixed, and pure

than they once did. Once a monolithic red space in the US mind, the territory of the former Soviet Union is now perceived as the wild east, an anarchic zone of warring ethnic groups, upstart capitalist entrepreneurs, parasitic criminal syndicates, and disintegrating military infrastructures. Nevertheless, attempts to re-map the surface of international politics in comfortingly essentialist terms persist in the Western foreign policy community. Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, for example, was a Mackinder-like attempt to assert—in the guise of uncovering—the existence of fundamental civilizational blocs beneath the "boomin' buzzin' confusion" of the present.³⁷ Other ambitious attempts to redraft global space to some unveiled underlying essence will, no doubt, continue, but so also has what David Campbell describes as "the globalization of contingency, the erasure of markers of certainty, and the rarefaction of political discourse."³⁸

Finally, the emergence of a condition of postmodernity over the last three decades has coincided with a dramatic materialist and ideological *detritorialization* of the geopolitical world order established under US hegemony after World War II. A new spatiality of flows is provoking the development of un-stated space, networks, and webs that are not simply beyond but that overwhelm the jurisdictional power and territorial control of sovereign states. Previously-national capital, equity, and bond markets are becoming untethered from national territorial space. The bound market of the Bretton Woods era has given way to an "unbound" global capital market that is, according to McKinsey and Company consultants Bryan and Farrell, "only now beginning to flex its muscles," "just now discovering its own strength and potential."³⁹ "Individual national financial markets are loosening their separate identities as they merge into a single, overpowering marketplace."⁴⁰ As a consequence, as financial power has gravitated toward global capital markets and networks, states can no longer control their own economic destiny. For neoliberal ideologists, this change is overwhelmingly positive and is discursively constituted as a contest between accelerating progress (globalization and transnational corporate capitalism promise a cosmopolitan world of abundance) and reactionary national resistance (governments offer only bureaucracy and deadening regulation). In Bryan and Farrell's terms:

As the market becomes unbound from the constraints of national governments, it is creating the potential for a tidal wave of global capitalism that could drive rapid growth and highly beneficial integration of the world's real economy well into the next century.⁴¹

The political and cultural wash from this tsunami of transformation is already finding expression in renewed efforts to *re-territorialize* identity around remythologized fixities of kin and country. Postmodernity, according to Zygmunt Bauman, is about living with the experience of absent totality—dealing with the erasure of tradition, with detraditionalization. Postmodernity is an age of contingency that inspires dreams of missing totalities:

Totality in space; a framed composition that would allow every brush stroke to bask in the glory of meaningful design. And totality in time: an unbroken thread of time that would keep every bead in place, and in its *right* place, as it is strung on the thread of time just after the one before and before the one that will come after.⁴⁶

The vertigo of the postmodern renders the absence of perspectival visions of space and time, place and tradition, all the more acute, engendering a politics of impossible returns and contradictory positionality, and unleashing desires for the very ordered unities and totalities of space/time the capitalist global market is shredding.

In sum, the certainties and fixities of modern geopolitics are disintegrating in complex and plural ways as global space becomes conditioned by telecommunicational dromologies, strategic discourse struggles to keep pace and up to speed, and state sovereignty reels from its disintermediation and dis-instatement by what Timothy Luke terms “un-stated sovran potentates.”⁴⁷ Is this condition, then, adequately described as the end of geopolitics?

Researching Postmodern Geopolitics

For many theorists of international affairs, the conditions just noted are sufficient evidence for the claim that geopolitics is over. Yet, most of these very same theorists would readily concede that questions of geographical politics are in the storm's eye of the maelstrom of postmodernity. Conceptualizing geopolitics not as an essence of vision, strategy, and state power but as an imperfect name for particular historical condensations of strategic geography and governmentality, a discursive constellation concerned with, among other things, the envisioning, strategizing, and disciplining of global space, enables us to appreciate it as a problematic that is pluralizing and splintering in strange new ways. Consolidated as a deconstructive approach to geopolitics at the end of the Cold War, critical geopolitics needs to acknowledge not only the erosion and fragmentation of modern

geopolitics but also the heterogenesis of the polycodal technoformations and megamachinic flowmations of postmodern geopolitics. Following the general trajectory of the structural features already noted, three emergent clusters of postmodern geopolitics suggest themselves for future research by critical geopoliticians.⁴⁸

The first is the postmodern production of “global views” namely, the capture and enframement of global space within certain technological and informational orders of power. Established and mobilizing global media empires and strategic alliances such as Warner-Turner, CNBC-Microsoft, AT&T-DirectTV, and MCI-News Corporation (which owns BSkyB and has a major stake in the Hong Kong based Star TV) promise to envelop the globe within their corporate telecommunications and televisual logos of power, producing global affairs as live action or a collage of sound bites, spectacular footage, and entertainment minutes. The electronic eyes of the media function as videocameralistic orders of power. To be *in camera* is to be enclosed, to be within the chambers of a judge or person of title; it is to be before an objective public authority with the power to issue (video) indictments if there is a noncorrespondence between the imaged world and the imagined moral world.⁴⁹ With their powerful systems of image-capture, global media machines have tremendous police power over how we see and understand “real (i.e., virtual) geography” in international politics. Together with other megamachinic assemblages, they help zone and format post-Cold War global space into sectors like “rogue states” (a war-machine zone), “failed states” (a paragovernmental zone), and “emerging markets” (a global financial-machine zone).⁵⁰

Beyond the mass media but still part of the technological enframement of global space, commercial and quasi-state enterprises—like Sovinformspunik and Prioda from Russia, Israeli Aircraft Industries, and the private California-based Core Software Technology, Space Imaging (led by Lockheed Martin), E-Systems (a Raytheon and Mitsubishi Corp. joint venture), EarthWatch (backed by Ball Aerospace, WorldView Imaging, and Hitachi), and Orbital Sciences—are all in competition to sell high-quality satellite images of any spot on the exposed face on the earth. The postmodern geopolitics of these satellite image companies is particularly interesting because they mark the privatization of previously state-monopolized intelligence operations. A subdivision of Orbital Sciences, Orbital Imaging's satellite OrbView is scheduled for launch in mid-1997 and offers exclusive territorial agreements for clients. Buy the images of a certain terrain or region and no one else will get access. In the future, states may be forced to buy up images of their own territory to prevent spying.⁵¹

The Israeli government has already objected to a Saudi Arabian investment in Orbital Science, resulting in an agreement to alter the satellite's software to block imaging of the Israeli state.⁴⁸ The French state, whose Helios-1A high-resolution optical spy satellite joined those of Russia and the United States in orbit in early 1996, understands the global view afforded by their system as a geopower that helps, literally and figuratively, to *define* the nation.⁴⁹ More than simply seeing actual high-definition images of France from space, it reconfirms France's mythical identity as a great power. As a Chirac aide put it: "Over-the-horizon information is a new source of geopolitical power, like nuclear weapons."⁵⁰ Other machinic systems producing techno-geopolitical views include the US-run global positioning system (GPS)⁵¹ and military intelligence platforms and systems whose ongoing efforts to police the planetary spectrum are driven by technoscientific and militaristic fantasies of pure global (war-machine) vision.⁵²

A complex postmodern geopolitics entwining territory, media, and machines was evident in the US cruise missile attacks against Iraq in September 1996. The latest version of the U.S. Tomahawk cruise missile used in these attacks (made by the GM-owned Hughes Aircraft Company at an estimated cost of \$1 million apiece) employed not only a supposedly improved terrain "scene-matching" computer but also a complementary guidance system that used satellites continually to update the missile's location and target. (Many of the missiles still missed.) The unusual geopolitics of these attacks—the use of drone weapons launched by warships in international waters and by B-52s based in Guam, a twenty-hour flight away—was necessitated both by territorial limits in the region, diplomatic restrictions on the use of airbases in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and televisual limits at home, and the Clinton administration's fear of the spectacle of US military casualties in the run-up to a presidential election. The geopolitics of vision, in this case, was triangulated by technology, territory, and television.

A second cluster of postmodern geopolitics is that emerging from the efforts of intellectuals and institutions of statecraft to re-map the global strategic landscape after the Cold War. While the crude Manichean world of the Cold War may be gone for now, the preoccupation of the national security establishment with "rogue states and nuclear outlaws" is indicative of a persistent territorial conceptualization of danger in international security studies. Underwriting these territorializing specifications of danger are, of course, old-fashioned essentialist identities—totalitarian states, Islamic fundamentalists, die-hard Communists, terrorists, criminals, and devils

(like Saddam Hussein)—and a longstanding strategic commitment on the part of the Western security apparatus to pro-Western states like Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The effort of NATO to extend this zone of strategic commitment and protection in Central Europe is evidence that a state-centric territorial geopolitics does persist, but increasingly it is also nonterritorial, "postmodern terrorist" threats in a speeding hybrid world that preoccupy the defense planners in the Pentagon, at NATO headquarters in Brussels, and elsewhere.⁵³ Threats from contraband flows and proliferations—the spread of nuclear weapons, plutonium, terrorists, drugs, illegal migrants, infectious diseases, money laundering, sensitive high-tech assets, biological and chemical agents, and so on—and threats to vital official flows and ports—oil pipelines, subways, world trading centers, airports, teleports, secret data archives, fiber-optic lines, international financial networks, and global sporting spectacles—have brought into being a postmodern geopolitics of security in which the geographies are in fluid formations, not fixed formations. Ostensibly preoccupied by a geography of territorial fixities during the Cold War, security discourse has expanded to encompass the protection of fundamental spaces of flows from material attack or the immaterial terrorism of computer hackers and software viruses. The creation of a Belfast-style "ring of steel" and CCTV system around the City of London—a strategic space of financial flows—and the militarization of US airports in response to recent spectacular bombings disclose a geopolitics that mixes traditional forms of containment and containment with new panoptic surveillance and scanning technologies. Again, media vectors are also implicated in the creation of these landscapes, one of their "strategic" functions being the simulation of security and the containment of media-borne viruses of panic and hysteria.

Even within the much remarked-upon emergence of "environmental security" and the sacred visions of green governmentals like Al Gore, geography is postterritorial in-flowmations of ozone gases, acid rain, industrial pollution, topsoil erosion, smog emissions, rainforest depletions, and toxic spills. Yet, there also persists the discourse of unveiled and primordial geographical regions. In the place of Mackinder's natural seats of power, Gore presents the "great genetic treasure map" of the globe—twelve areas around the globe that "hold the greatest concentration of germplasm important to modern agriculture and world food production."⁵⁴ Robert Kaplan's unsentimental journey to the "ends of the earth" where cartographic geographies are unraveling and fading has him disclosing a "real world" of themeless violence and chaos, a world where "[w]e are not in

control.⁵⁵ The specter of a second Cold War—"a protracted struggle between ourselves and the demons of crime, population pressure, environmental degradation, disease, and cultural conflict"—haunts his thoughts.⁵⁶ This equivocal environmentalization of strategic discourse (and vice versa)—and the environmental strategic think tanks like the World Watch Institute that promote it—deserve problematization as clusters of postmodern geopolitics, in this case congealments of geographical knowledge and green governmentality designed to recharge the US polity with a circumscribed global environmental mission to save Planet Earth from destruction.⁵⁷

Thirdly, the deterritorialization of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inherited identity by the transnational flowmations of economic, financial, and cultural globalization has already provoked a postmodern geopolitical rhetoric of acceleration and pace, on the one hand, and resistance and place, on the other hand, within US political culture. On the one side, one has dromomobiles like Jack Kemp and Newt Gingrich for whom "accelerating the transition" from Second Wave industrial capitalism to Third Wave informational capitalism has become a mantra.⁵⁸ The United States needs to dismantle its obsolete and old-fashioned regulatory "barriers" and speed itself out onto Microsoft's "road ahead" and into a futuristic "opportunity society" of friction-free (b)orderless capitalism. On the other hand, one has self-styled rebels, fundamentalists, and cultural warriors like Patrick Buchanan, Ross Perot, and Pat Choate, who campaign against the swamping of US identity by illegal immigration and multiculturalism, the erosion of US sovereignty by international agencies and corporations, and the dissipation of US patriotism induced by permissive individualism and radical social minorities. Buchanan's call for the construction of a vast wall along the Rio Grande seemed to symbolize his whole campaign for president, his metaphors of barriers, walls, and resistance being symptomatic of a profound desire to resolidify and reterritorialize the United States around imaginary notions of place, country, and kin. In a postmodern time where, Zygmunt Bauman notes, "formlessness is the fittest of forms," Buchananism represented a desire to return to a time when forms were enduring fixities—the durable structures of family, faith, and America First that made the United States the fittest of all the nations.⁵⁹ Yet Buchanan, an electronic populist—a product of the very screens of power he condemns—can offer only teletraditionalist solutions to deterritorialization, the simulation of sovereignty in a world where the real thing is gone forever.⁶⁰

Briefly summarized here are only some of the many decentered clusters in the postmodern geopolitics constellation now free-forming

around us. As should be evident, the condition of postmodernity is saturated with geographical politics of many different kinds. To assert glibly that geopolitics is coming to an end is to ignore the ongoing struggle over global space at the end of the twentieth century. The imperial visions of Halford Mackinder and Cold War geopoliticians may be obsolete, but new technoscientific visions of space have taken their place and strive to enframe our world. Geopolitics is not over; the struggle to envision and enframe global space in imperial constellations of geography/power/knowledge continues. So also do struggles of resistance.

Notes

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1. Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (London: Collins, 1980).
2. Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Coming Anarchy* 273, no. 2 (1994): 44–76; Stephen Gill, "Globalization, Democratization, and the Politics of Indifference," in J. Mittelman, ed., *Globalization: Critical Reflections* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996): 205–228.
3. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (New York: Vintage, 1994).
4. Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1986), p. 133. See also James Der Derian, "The (S)pace of International Relations: Simulation, Surveillance and Speed," *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (1990): 295–310.

5. Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983), p. 115.
6. Edward Luttwak, "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce," *The National Interest* 20 (1990): 17.
7. See Keniche Ohmae, *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), and *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economics* (New York: Free Press, 1995).
8. Luttwak, note 6, p. 19. Emphasis in original.
9. Mustafa Tolba, "From Geopolitics to Ecopolitics," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 7 (spring 1990): 60–63.
10. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (New York: Plume, 1992).
11. Al Gore, "Ecology: The Sacred Agenda," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 10 (winter 1993): 45.
12. Richard Falk, *On Humane Governance* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 1.
13. Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), p. 8.
14. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

15. An example of a useful yet flawed metaphorical myth-structure for thinking about geopolitics is that elaborated by Agnew and Corbridge. See John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 46–78. Agnew and Corbridge locate the origins of geopolitical discourse during the so-called Age of Discovery and provide a conceptual schema that covers five hundred years of history. The conceptual schema elaborated in this article covers only the twentieth century. For a critique of their schema, see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Political Geography I: Theorizing History, Gender, and World Order Amidst Crises of Global Governance," *Progress in Human Geography* 19, no. 2 (1995): 260–272.

16. For a discussion of critical geopolitics, see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), and *Political Geography* 15, nos. 6–7 (1996), special issues on critical geopolitics edited by Simon Dalby and Gearóid Ó Tuathail.

17. For an introduction to the twentieth-century history of geopolitics, see Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St Martin's, 1985), and the various entries in John O'Loughlin, ed., *A Dictionary of Geopolitics* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994).

18. Sankaran Krishna captures this when he writes of cartography in India as more than the technical and scientific mapping of the country (though this is relevant). "Cartography" is also the "representational practices that in various ways have attempted to inscribe something called India and endow that entity with a content, a history, a meaning, and a trajectory." See Sankaran Krishna, "Cartographic Anxiety: Mapping the Body Politic in India," *Alternatives* 19, no. 4 (1994): 508. For more on geopolitics, see Ó Tuathail, note 16, *Critical Geopolitics*, pp. 1–20.

19. Halford Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23 (1904): 421–437.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

21. See Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993).

22. Mackinder, note 19, p. 422.

23. For a discussion of Cold War geopolitics, see Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War* (London: Pinter, 1991).

24. Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).

25. For a discussion of the in-statement of space, see Timothy W. Luke, "Discourse of Disintegration, Texts of Transformation: Re-Reading Realism in the New World Order," *Alternatives* 18, no. 2 (1993): 299–258.

26. Lyotard, "What is Postmodernism," in Lyotard, note 14, p. 81.

27. On Mackinder's "organic conservatism," see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Putting Mackinder in His Place: Material Transformations and Myth," *Political Geography Quarterly* 11 (1992): 100–118.

28. On this topic, see A. Friedberg, *The Wary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

29. Halford Mackinder, "The Scope and Methods of Geography," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 9 (1887): 160.

30. On the organic conservatism of George Kennan, see Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

31. "Geopolitical Vertigo and the U.S. Role," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 9 (1992): 5–33.

32. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

33. See Francois Debrix, "Deploying Vision, Simulating Action: The United Nations and Its Visualization Strategies in a New World Order," *Alternatives* 21, no. 1 (1996): 67–92.

34. See John Pickles, ed., *Ground Truth: The Social Implications of Geographic Information Systems* (New York: Guilford, 1995).

35. There is a large literature on this topic. See Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), Verena Andermat Conley, ed., *Re-Thinking Technologies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), and Timothy W. Luke, "Liberal Society and Cyborg Subjectivity: The Politics of Environments, Bodies, and Nature," *Alternatives* 21, no. 1 (1996): 1–30.

36. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), pp. ix–x.

37. Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993): 22–49.

38. David Campbell, *Writing Security* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 19.

39. Lowell Bryan and Diana Farrell, *Market Unbound: Unleashing Global Capitalism*, (New York: John Wiley, 1996), p. 1.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

42. Zygmunt Bauman, "Morality in the Age of Contingency," in Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris, eds., *Detraditionalization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 50.

43. Comprising local militias and neighborhood gangs, ethnic warriors and renegade warlords, corporate networks and contraband economies, these local, national, and transnational authorities are inventing and mastering their own customized territorialities and sovereignties in counterdistinction to that of the state. See Timothy W. Luke, "Governmentality and Contragovernmentality: Rethinking Sovereignty and Territoriality after the Cold War," *Political Geography* 15 (1996): 491–507.

44. It should be noted that these three clusters do not constitute any kind of comprehensive or exhaustive list of research agendas within critical geopolitics.

45. This understanding of being *in camera* goes back to the seventeenth century. An observer, we should also recall, can be understood as one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities. See Jonathan Cray, "Modernizing Vision," in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), p. 32.

46. On videocameristics and failed states, see Timothy W. Luke and Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "On Videocameristics: The Geopolitics of Failed States, the CNN International and (UN) Governmentality," *Review of International Political Economy*, forthcoming. On "rogue states," see Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995). On "emerging markets," see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Emerging Markets and Other Simulations: Chiapas, Mexico and the Geofinancial Panopticon," *Ecumene*, forthcoming.

47. For a discussion of the geopolitics of the new spy-satellite images, see Vipin Gupta, "New Satellite Images for Sale," *International Security* 20 (1995): 94–125.

48. Jeff Cole, "Eyes in the Skies: New Satellite Imaging Could Transform the Face of the Earth," *Wall Street Journal*, November 30, 1995, A1.

49. On satellite images and the definition of the nation, see Jody Berland, "Mapping Space: Imaging Technologies and the Planetary Body," in Stanley Aronowitz, et al., eds., *Technoscience and Cyberculture* (New York: Routledge, 1996): 123–138. The French and German governments' plan to co-operate building a new Helios-2 (a radar satellite scheduled for launch in 2002) and the Horus generation of military spy satellites is designed to *define* an independent military-industrial base for the European Union. The plans involve a merger of the French state-owned Aerospatiale with the satellite division of Daimler Benz Aerospace (DASA).

50. Joseph Fitchett, "Now France, Too, Spies Aloft in a Challenge to American Supremacy," *International Herald Tribune*, July 5, 1996, p. 12. Optical satellites cannot see at night or through haze and cloud cover.

51. What could be more geopolitical than a navigational system that offers total planetary-location and guidance capabilities? See Irving Lachow, "The GPS Dilemma: Balancing Military Risks and Economic Benefits," *International Security* 20 (1995): 126–148. On the general panopticonism of spying, see Stephen Gill, "The Global Panopticon? The Neoliberal State, Economic Life, and Democratic Surveillance," *Alternatives* 20, no. 1 (1995): 31–35.

52. A 1996 report on the American intelligence bureaucracies (including the CIA, National Reconnaissance Office, National Security Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency) by the Twentieth Century Fund criticized the militarization of intelligence and overreliance on machines at the expense of people within the intelligence community. It was reported that, to analyze the information that machines collect, more than \$26 billion a year is spent on machines and less than \$3 billion on people. The CIA's "paramilitary" culture of spying and secrecy have dominated the agency at the expense of analysts. Put differently, the epistemology of the US intelligence community is primitive, technocratic, and realist. The emphasis is on gathering, sifting, and isolating supposedly "raw objective data" rather than on higher-order interpretative skills and creative thinking. No doubt this helps explain why the CIA did not have the capability to see one of the most significant events of the late twentieth century, namely, the collapse of the Soviet Union. See Tim Weener, "Spies Faulted for War Focus," *New York Times*, June 28, 1996, p. 20, and David Wise, "I Spy a Makeover," *Washington Post*, March 24, 1996, p. C2. On the culture of technocratic fantasy, see also Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Swerve Editions, 1991), pp. 179–231.

53. See Walter Laqueur, "Postmodern Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (September/October 1996): 24–36.

54. Gore, note 10, p. 134.

55. Robert Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 1996), p. 436.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 10. For a critique of Kaplan's "coming anarchy" thesis, see Simon Dalby, "Neo-Malthusianism in Contemporary Geopolitical Discourse: Kaplan, Kennedy and New Global Threats," *Ecumene*, forthcoming.

57. On Gore and green governmentality, see Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Timothy W. Luke, "Present at the (Dis)Integration: American Foreign and

the New World Order," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84 (1994): 381–398. On the WorldWatch Institute, see Timothy W. Luke, "Worldwatching at the Limits of Growth," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 5, no. 2 (1995): 43–63.

58. See E. J. Dionne, *They Only Look Dead* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 202.

59. Bauman, note 42, p. 52. For a full discussion of the competing discourses of pace and place, see Timothy W. Luke and Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Global Formations, Local Fundamentalisms, and Fast Geopolitics: 'America' in an Accelerating World Order," in Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Susan Roberts, and Andrew Herod, eds., *An Unruly World? Geography, Globalization and Governance*, forthcoming.

60. On teletraditionalism, see Timothy W. Luke, *Screens of Power* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).