

Political concerns include Turkey's stance on Cyprus (discussed previously in the chapter) and its human rights record, especially discrimination against Turkey's Kurdish minority.

The status of Turkey's application to the EU has become a divisive issue. Proponents of Turkey's membership highlight the value to be gained from additional market expansion, access to a large pool of labor, and the strategic importance of Turkey's geographic location, especially in terms of improved energy security for Europe. Proponents also maintain that admitting Turkey would send a powerful signal that the EU is not an elite, Christian-only club.

The EU is significant for many reasons, but two reasons deserve special attention. First, the EU is the best example of successful supranational economic cooperation and has become a model for other supranational economic organizations to follow. Second, it has pushed supranational cooperation to an unprecedented level such that the EU is beginning to take on some of the functions of a state in ways that challenge the traditional conception of the state. For example, the EU has

a parliament, a central bank, a flag, and a national anthem. It has also developed a constitution, though it has not been ratified. These developments have led many scholars to ask whether the EU represents a new kind of supranational state.

CONCEPT CHECK

STOP

1. **What** is a supranational organization, and what are some costs and benefits associated with membership in one?
2. **How** is the Security Council different from the General Assembly of the United Nations, and what role does the Security Council play?
3. **How** does the present-day EU differ from its forerunner supranational organizations Benelux, the ECSC, the EEC, and the EC?
4. **Why** is admitting Turkey into the EU a divisive issue?

Global Geopolitics

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **Define** geopolitics.
2. **Summarize** the Heartland Theory.
3. **Distinguish** between Cold War geopolitics and contemporary geopolitics.
4. **Explain** how globalization can influence the diffusion of terrorism.

As we have seen, political geographers have spent much time trying to understand how states function—how they organize their territory, how the government distributes power to different territorial units within the state, and how states forge supranational organizations. Over the years political geographers have proposed different theories concerning the development of the state and the nature of political power. In this section we examine a few of the most important schools of thought or traditions within political geography.

The Geopolitical Tradition

As traditionally practiced, **geopolitics** has focused on the ways in which states acquire power, the relations among states, and the formulation of strategic foreign policy. Geopolitics, one branch of political geography, has its roots in the work of the German scholar Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). Ratzel, a zoologist by training, became interested in political geography and in 1897 published his *Theory of the Organic State*, which

geopolitics

The study of the relations among geography, states, and world power.

compared the growth of a state to the growth of an organism. Ratzel theorized that, like organisms, states needed sustenance in the form of resources and room to grow. Ratzel used the term *Lebensraum*—literally “living space”—to describe these needs.

The Theory of the Organic State draws a strong connection between the natural environment and the power of a state, as demonstrated by the idea that states develop and grow stronger through the addition of new territories. Ratzel’s theory provides an example of the environmental determinism (see Chapter 1) that informed early geopolitical thought. It also shows the influence of Charles Darwin’s ideas. Ratzel was familiar with Darwin’s work, and the Theory of the Organic State placed importance on the concept of competition. According to Ratzel’s theory, states competed with one another for resources and space, as do members of the animal world.

Ratzel never used his theory to guide foreign policy, but others did. Ratzel’s ideas were adopted by Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922), a Swedish professor and the person who actually coined the term *geopolitics*. Kjellén used Ratzel’s ideas to argue that only large states would endure and that

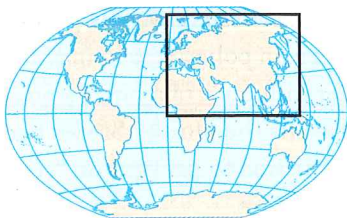
foreign policy should support the creation of a large state. Kjellén’s work was translated into German and was used by the Nazis in the 1930s to support their goal of strengthening and enlarging the German state. As a result, German geopolitics was, for several decades, tainted by its connections with the Nazis.

The Heartland Theory

Halford Mackinder (1861–1947), a British geographer and member of parliament, contributed another geopolitical theory called the *Heartland Theory*. To understand this theory, it helps to know that Mackinder linked geopolitical stability with maintenance of a balance of power among states. Thus, if the balance of power was upset, a state or a combination of states could become *the* dominant world power. How might the balance of power be upset? It was not through control of the seas, Mackinder theorized, but rather through control of the large Eurasian landmass. In the interior of Eurasia was a region free from the danger of being attacked from the sea. Mackinder called this area the *geographical pivot*; later he referred to it as the **heartland** (Figure 7.13).

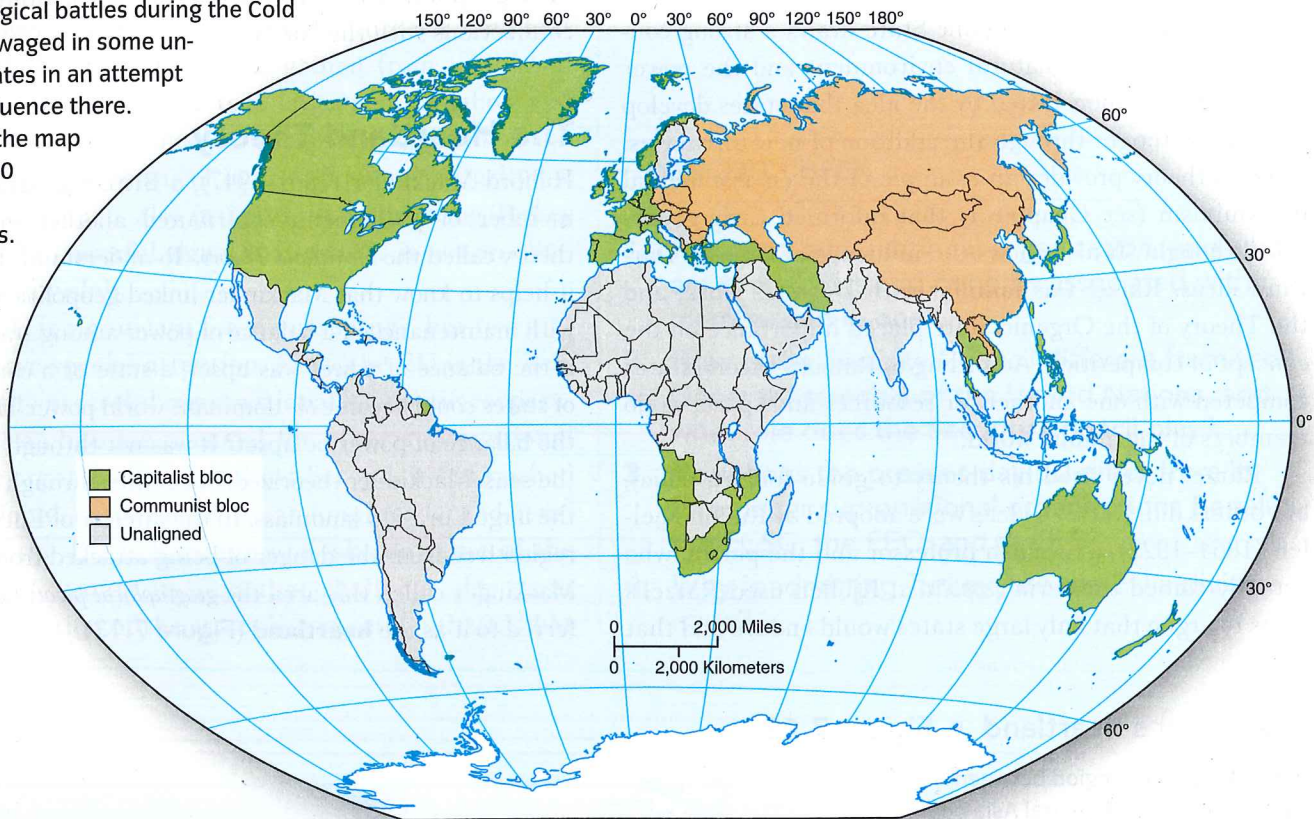
Mackinder’s heartland • Figure 7.13

To Mackinder, the region between eastern Europe and Central Asia possessed the best combination of strategic geographic factors for world domination. Control of the heartland meant access to a sizable resource base and possession of a strategic, interior location that was safe from attack. In Mackinder’s view, whoever dominated the heartland would be able to defeat any sea power.



Cold War geopolitical configuration • Figure 7.14

The bipolar configuration during the Cold War pitted the capitalist West (the United States and its allies) against the Communist East (the Soviet Union and its allies). However, important military and ideological battles during the Cold War were waged in some unaligned states in an attempt to gain influence there. Note that the map shows 1980 political boundaries.



Mackinder's Heartland Theory also contains some elements of environmental determinism. Although he was aware of nonenvironmental factors, such as economic strength and transportation networks, Mackinder considered the territorial basis of states to be crucial to geopolitical power. In his words, "the [physical] geographical quantities in the calculation [of balance of power] are more measurable and more nearly constant than the human" (Mackinder 1942 [1919], p. 192). Thus, a major criticism of the Heartland Theory is that it oversimplifies the complexity of factors that shape global geopolitics.

Cold War Geopolitics

After World War II, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union cooled significantly. The term **Cold War** describes the hostility and rivalry that existed between the United States and the Soviet Union from the mid-1940s to the late 1980s. The race to build nuclear

weapons was one expression of the rivalry between these superpowers. Geopolitically, the Cold War created a *bipolar world*—that is, a world divided into two opposing groups (**Figure 7.14**).

During the Cold War, the foreign policy of the United States was heavily influenced by the theory that if one country became Communist, other countries in the region would do the same and thus enable Communist domination of the world. Called the *domino theory*, this philosophy was used to justify the American policy of *containment*—the effort to limit the spread or influence of a hostile power or an ideology. One of the reasons the United States became involved in the Vietnam War was to prevent or "contain" the spread of communism in Asia.

Contemporary and Critical Geopolitics

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s brought an end to the bipolar capitalist–Communist geopolitical configuration of the world. However, many political geographers

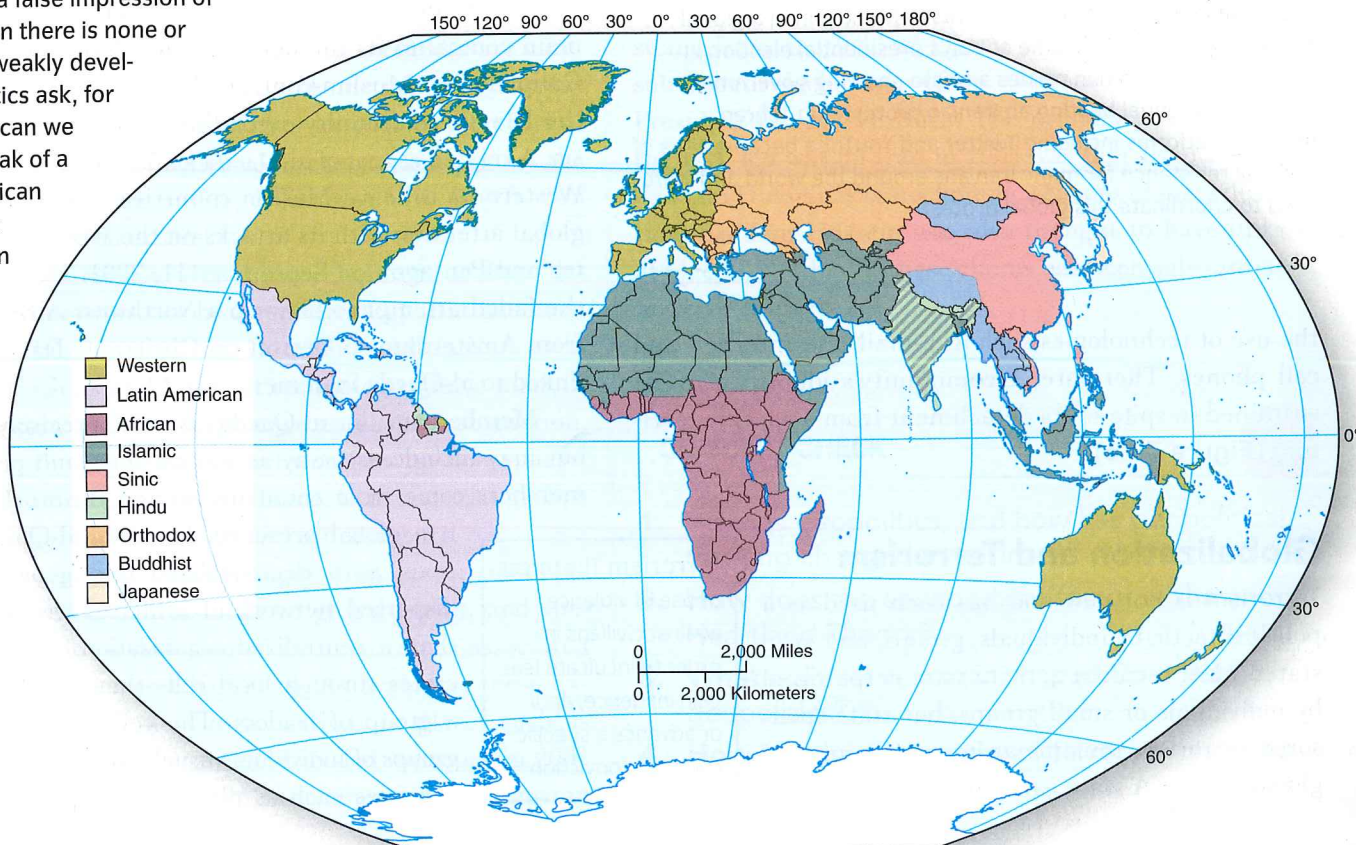
maintain that there is still a bipolar configuration of the world that consists of a Global North and a Global South, separated on the basis of levels of development and wealth. We explore the basis for a North–South divide in greater detail in Chapter 9. Here, we focus on two other prevalent schools of thought. The first draws on the ideas of political scientist Samuel Huntington and his book, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, published in 1996. In this book Huntington argues that instead of two opposing groups, there is a global configuration that is *multipolar* and consists of several groups or “civilizations.” Using the terms *tribe*, *ethnic group*, *nation*, *civilization* as indicators of scale, Huntington argues that a civilization is the largest scale from which meaningful personal identity is derived. In his view, religion is the most important component that gives a civilization its identity, even more so than language or ancestry.

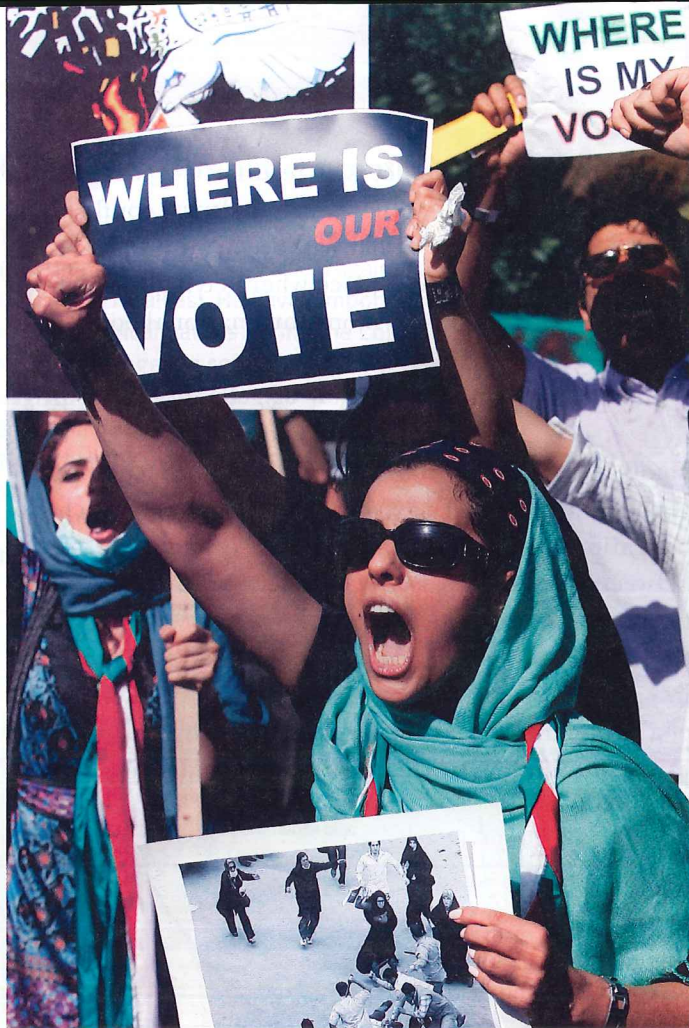
Therefore, future conflict will result from the clash of these civilizations—in other words, cultural conflict, and the locations of this conflict will occur on fault lines. In this sense, a *fault line* is a place where civilizations meet, either within a country or along international boundaries (Figure 7.15).

This civilization-based view of geopolitics still privileges a geopolitical view of the world that sees strong bonds between people and territory. But a second school of thought sees a very different world order in which globalization enables *detrterritorialization*, a loosening of ties between people and place. The modern state has its roots in the concepts of territoriality and sovereignty, but globalization—especially greater human mobility and technological integration—may facilitate detrterritorialization. Members of a nation may be extremely geographically dispersed but can maintain close ties, even virtual communities, through

Huntington's “civilizations” • Figure 7.15

Huntington theorizes that geopolitics since the 1990s has been shaped more by factors affecting cultural identity—especially religion—than by the ideological differences that fueled the Cold War. Compare this map to Figure 7.14. His civilizations are, however, very broad categories that may give a false impression of unity when there is none or it is only weakly developed. Critics ask, for example, can we really speak of a single African or Islamic civilization today?





Technological integration • Figure 7.16

Iranian university exchange students in Rome join in a global protest against the outcome of Iran's presidential election in June 2009. This woman carries a photo showing government security personnel beating an Iranian protester in Tehran. Internet platforms including Twitter and YouTube became sites of political resistance for many Iranians around the world and were used to coordinate this global protest.

the use of technologies such as e-mail, the Internet, and cell phones. Therefore, a community's identity may be sustained in spite of its detachment from a specific territory (**Figure 7.16**).

Globalization and Terrorism

Terrorism is not new and has been used as a political tactic by individuals, groups, and even states. Most terrorist activities are perpetrated by individuals or small groups, but state-sponsored terrorism remains an important part of global affairs. A state can sponsor terrorism in

terrorism The threat or use of violence against civilians in order to inculcate fear, gain influence, and/or advance a specific cause or conviction.

several ways. It might provide a refuge for terrorists, help train them, provide them with weapons or equipment, share intelligence with them, or support them financially. A state might also be directly involved in designing terrorist activities. The United States Department of State currently recognizes four state sponsors of terrorism: Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria.

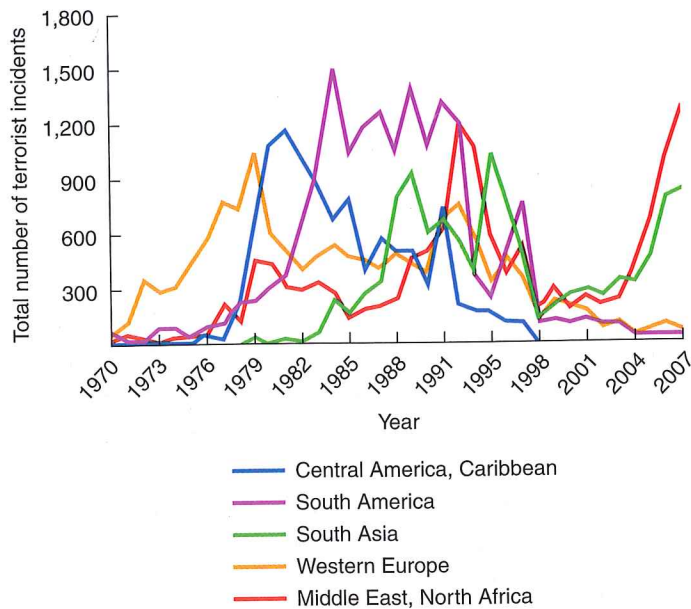
There are four broad and often overlapping categories of terrorism: revolutionary, separatist, single-issue, and religious. Revolutionary terrorism seeks regime change. For example, the Algerian terrorist group Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) fought against French colonial rule from 1954 to 1962. Separatist terrorism may be perpetrated by groups seeking autonomy or independence, such as the Basque group ETA. Use of terrorism by individuals or groups to advance a specific cause, such as animal rights or environmental values, constitutes single-issue terrorism.

Al-Qaeda is a major terrorist organization whose motives are both revolutionary and religious. When al-Qaeda was formed by Osama bin Laden in 1988, its revolutionary cause was initially directed against the Soviet Union, whose troops had invaded Afghanistan and occupied the capital city. Gradually, bin Laden fused this revolutionary cause with a religious one as well: the waging of a holy war against the invaders.

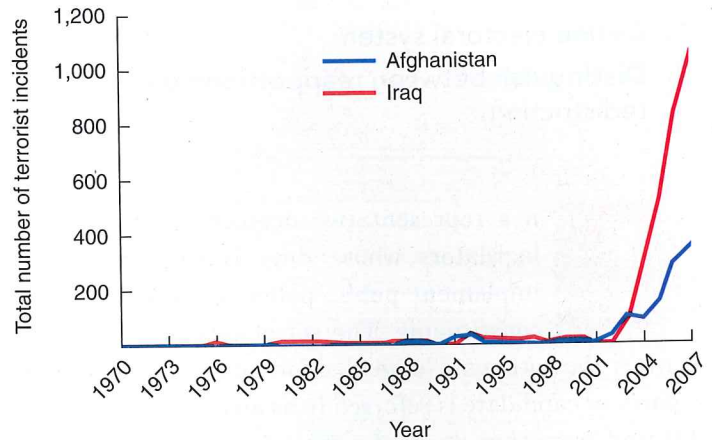
The revolutionary and religious goals of al-Qaeda remain central to its mission of establishing a Pan-Islamic Caliphate—a Muslim-controlled state that encompasses the Islamic community extending from Spain to Indonesia. A related aspect of al-Qaeda's mission involves forcing Westerners to leave Muslim countries. Al-Qaeda gained global attention with its attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. More recently, the failed attempt to blow up a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day 2009 was linked to al-Qaeda in Yemen.

Membership in al-Qaeda is not precisely known but may include as many as several thousand people. Its members come from countries around the world, giving it a global presence. Even so, al-Qaeda functions as a decentralized and geographically dispersed network of affiliated groups rather than a centralized organization. Al-Qaeda operates through local cells that are directed by a group of leaders. The cells consist of small groups of individuals usually tasked with specific activities such as planning or carrying out an

Terrorism over time and by region, 1970–2007 • Figure 7.17



a. The graph shows the number of terrorist incidents by region. Terrorist activity related to the status of Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, and the French island of Corsica in the Mediterranean Sea helps explain the spike in western Europe in the 1970s.



b. The Taliban has been responsible for most of the terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, whereas al-Qaeda and affiliated groups are leading perpetrators of terrorism in Iraq. Attacks often target government facilities and personnel, police, as well as the Coalition Forces and foreign workers in both places.

attack. Communications between cell members are carefully managed so that members of one cell do not know the nature of the work, identity, or location of members of another cell. Thus, effective counterterrorism against the al-Qaeda cells in one country is likely to have no effect on its cells in other countries.

Some experts consider the development of these decentralized networks to be a new strategy that has been facilitated by globalization. In other words, advances in communications and Internet technologies have made it easier, faster, and less expensive to share information. Moreover, the Internet has helped open up new spaces, including websites and chat rooms, that terrorist groups can use to spread threats or recruit members.

Other terrorist experts argue that terrorism today is an expression of resistance to globalization, and specifically the global diffusion of Western values associated with modernism (see Chapter 5). As evidence, these experts cite the rise in terrorist activity in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq since the U.S.-led invasions in 2001 and 2003, respectively. U.S. involvement in Afghanistan

stems from the 9/11 al-Qaeda attacks in 2001 and the subsequent declaration of the “war on terror” by former President George W. Bush. The primary justification for the U.S.-led war on Iraq in 2003 was that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein was also thought to have links to al-Qaeda. Neither of these claims has been substantiated, however (Figure 7.17).

CONCEPT CHECK



1. **What** is geopolitics, and how has geopolitical thinking changed over time?
2. **How** does the environment factor in the Heartland Theory?
3. **What** political concerns shaped Cold War geopolitics?
4. **How** has the geography of terrorism changed over time?