

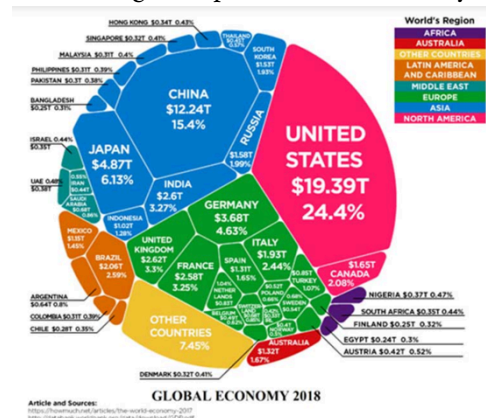
The Power of Geography

Reading Guide for Introduction & Chapter 1, Australia

Introduction

“We are entering a new era of great-power rivalry in which numerous actors, even minor players, are jostling to take center stage.” –Tim Marshall, p.1

Marshall introduces here that we are in a **multi-polar world**, which was the norm for most of human history. During the Cold War (1946-1991) the USA-USSR rivalry created a bi-polar world, and after the fall of the USSR in 1991 the United States was the dominant global power. Until recently.



Russia began to reassert itself as early as 1999 – in **Kosovo** – and has continued to do so ever since, culminating thus far with its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Iran, the major Shia power amid the majority Sunni nations of the Islamic World, has also asserted itself, hoping to dominate the Middle East. They did so as the USA under Obama and Trump withdrew from the international scene.



Marshall makes the point that there are many other nations besides Iran – Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom – which are positioning themselves for future power.

Marshall notes that it seems likely that “by the end of this century we will again be in a bipolar era, this time between China and the US.”

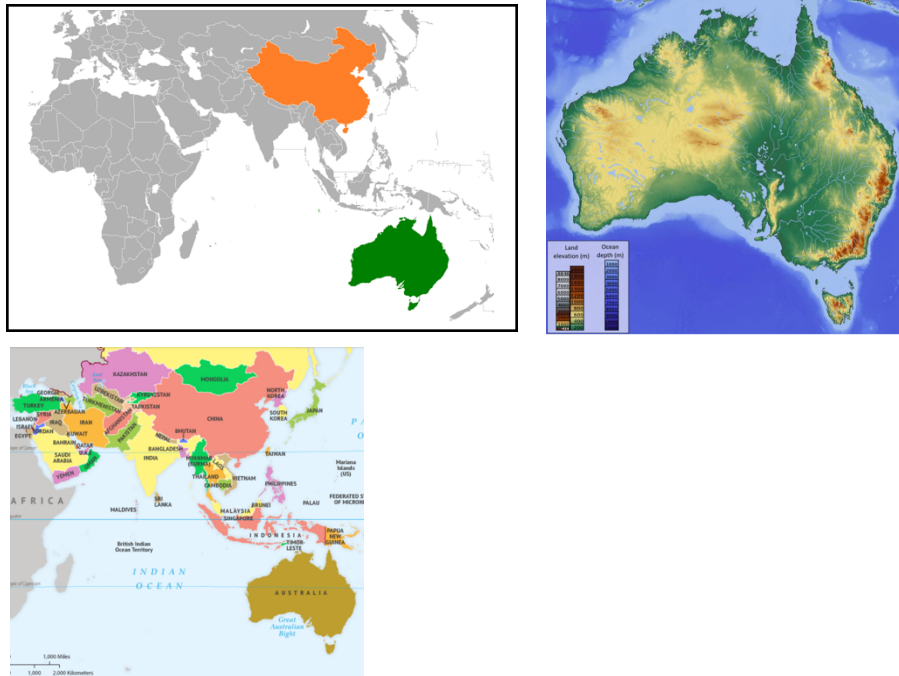


In determining how nations operate, “politicians are important, but geography is more so.” And in the next three pages Marshall identifies what regions of the globe will play important roles in the coming decades.

Chapter 1, Australia

“Australia was in the middle of nowhere...and is now center stage. How did that happen?”

Marshall shows Australia’s true position in a geopolitical sense is its proximity to China.



The early pages of this chapter summarizes the British colonization of Australia as well as the geographic features that shape where people have settled on that huge landmass.

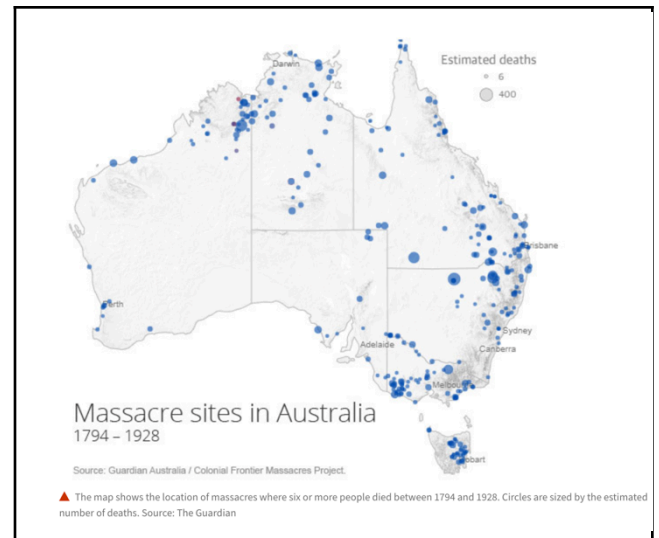
The topography of *Terra Australis Incognita* (“unknown southern land”) limits the size of the population. Today it is 26 million, with 50% of the people living in three cities: Sydney, Melbourne, & Brisbane.



The Outback

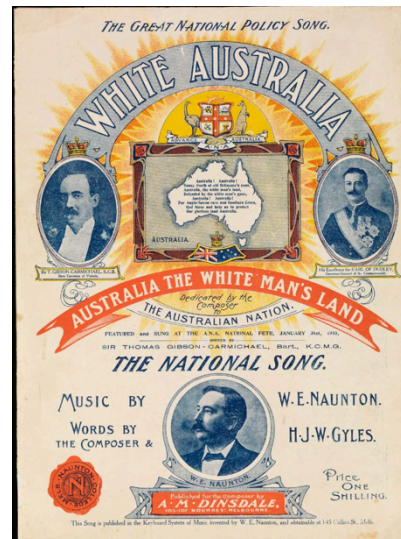
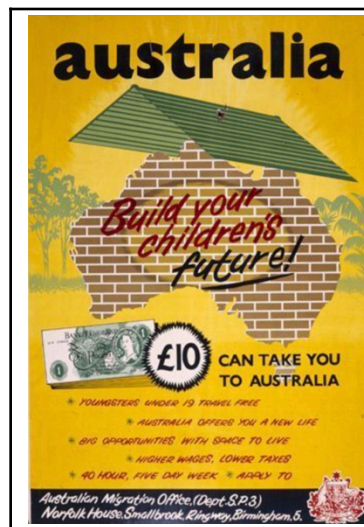
In these pages Marshall summarizes how the British subjugated the native inhabitants of Australia, the Aboriginals, pointing out that “there are numerous groups and languages throughout the country.”

The Frontier Wars...forced assimilation...the “stolen generation”...the loss of hundreds of languages.



Marshall recounts the gradual expansion of white Australia across the entire country.

The “**gold generation**”...emergence of a railroad system...the passing in 1900 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900...1901 the Commonwealth of Australia... the Immigration Restriction Act (**The White Australia Policy**)....After World War II Australia encouraged immigration to Australia by offering Britons the chance to sail to Australia for a fare of 10 British pounds-- “**the Ten Pound Poms**” – 1.5 million immigrants came between 1947 and 1982...Poms, short for **pommygrant** (slang for immigrant)...



Latter decades of the 20th century saw arrivals of non-white immigrants, changing Australia to a multicultural country.

20th century saw arrivals of non-white

Australia, the “lucky country” with abundant natural resources, abundant sunshine, but lacking water.

Climate Change threatens Australia – but coal is abundant & likely to be used for years to come. And access to energy is a major concern for Australia, “unavoidably linked with security issues.”

The focus of the remainder of this chapter is on the Australia’s foreign policy and its strategic focus is to its north and east.

Marshall discusses Australia's vulnerability to invasion, the necessity of keeping the Malacca Strait open (the Malacca Strait was emphasized in *Prisoners of Geography*), the need for it to ensure energy sources, and the vital importance of Australia's navy to its defense.



Australia depends on its relationship with the USA, just as it did Great Britain before World War II. And Australia is very concerned about China's expansionism.

Like the USA, Australia's biggest trading partner is China, but it also claims the South China Sea as its own while it extends its influence into the Pacific islands like **Vanuatu**.



China's technology and power exceed Australia's. Cyberattacks are a real potential threat, but Australia has worked to reduce China's influence – by freezing out China's communications corporation **Huawei**.

Australia is a member of “the world's most efficient intelligence-gathering network, the so-called Five Eyes (USA, UK, New Zealand, Canada, Australia).

And the **Pine Gap military base near Alice Springs** is a very important intelligence-gathering facility.

Australia and Japan are developing a military relationship, partly because all the countries in the Indo-Pacific region are intent on keeping international sea lanes open. China is the threat to those sea lanes.

The Quad – the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** (USA, Australia, Japan, India) is a strategic framework for the four navies to cooperate in the Pacific –mainly to curb Chinese influence. (India is a nation whose influence and importance is growing.)

The potential challenge of China is real, the fear is that China will become a threat to Australia, even as it is a trading partner, and Australia is working to maintain Chinese trade as it maintains a military defense in case China threatens it.