

Chapter 1

The New Era in World Politics

INTRODUCTION: FLAGS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

In January 3, 1992, a meeting of Russian and American scholars took place in the auditorium of a government building in Moscow. Two weeks earlier the Soviet Union had ceased to exist and the Russian Federation had become an independent country. As a result, the portrait of Lenin which previously graced the stage of the auditorium had disappeared and instead the flag of the Russian Federation was now displayed on the stage wall. The only problem, one American observed, was that the flag had been hung upside down. After this was pointed out to the Russian hosts, they promptly and quietly corrected the error during the first intermission.

The years after the Cold War witnessed the beginnings of dramatic changes in peoples' identities and the symbols of those identities. Global politics began to be reconfigured along cultural lines. Upside-down flags were a sign of the confusion, but more and more the flags are flying high and true, and Russians and other peoples are mobilizing and marching behind these and other symbols of their new cultural identities.

On April 18, 1994, two thousand people rallied in Sarajevo waving the flags of Saudi Arabia and Turkey. By flying those banners, instead of U.N., NATO, or American flags, these Sarajevans identified themselves with their fellow Muslims and told the world who were their real and not-so-real friends.

On October 16, 1994, in Los Angeles 70,000 people marched beneath "a sea of Mexican flags" protesting Proposition 187, a referendum measure which would deny many state benefits to illegal immigrants and their children. Why are they "walking down the street with a Mexican flag and demanding that this

country give them a free education?" observers asked. "They should be waving the American flag." Two weeks later more protestors did march down the street carrying an American flag—upside down. These flag displays ensured victory for Proposition 187, which was approved by 59 percent of California voters.

In the post-Cold War world flags count and so do other symbols of cultural identity, including crosses, crescents, and even head coverings, because culture counts, and cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people. People are discovering new but often old identities and matching under new but often old flags which lead to wars with new but often old enemies.

One grim *Weltanschauung* for this new era was well expressed by the Venetian nationalist demagogue in Michael Dibdin's novel, *Dead Lagoon*: "There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage, their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven." The unfortunate truth in these old truths cannot be ignored by statesmen and scholars. For peoples seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential, and the potentially most dangerous enemies occur across the fault lines between the world's major civilizations.

The central theme of this book is that culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilization identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world. The five parts of this book elaborate corollaries to this main proposition.

Part I: For the first time in history global politics is both multipolar and multicivilizational; modernization is distinct from Westernization and is producing neither a universal civilization in any meaningful sense nor the Westernization of non-Western societies.

Part II: The balance of power among civilizations is shifting; the West is declining in relative influence; Asian civilizations are expanding their economic, military, and political strength; Islam is exploding demographically with destabilizing consequences for Muslim countries and their neighbors; and non-Western civilizations generally are reaffirming the value of their own cultures.

Part III: A civilization-based world order is emerging; societies sharing cultural affinities cooperate with each other; efforts to shift societies from one civilization to another are unsuccessful; and countries group themselves around the lead or core states of their civilization.

Part IV: The West's universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China; at the local level fault line wars, largely between Muslims and non-Muslims, generate "kin-country rallying," the threat of broader escalation, and hence efforts by core states to halt these wars.

Part V: The survival of the West depends on Americans reaffirming their Western identity and Westerners accepting their civilization as unique not

universal and uniting to renew and preserve it against challenges from non-Western societies. Avoidance of a global war of civilizations depends on world leaders accepting and cooperating to maintain the multicivilizational character of global politics.

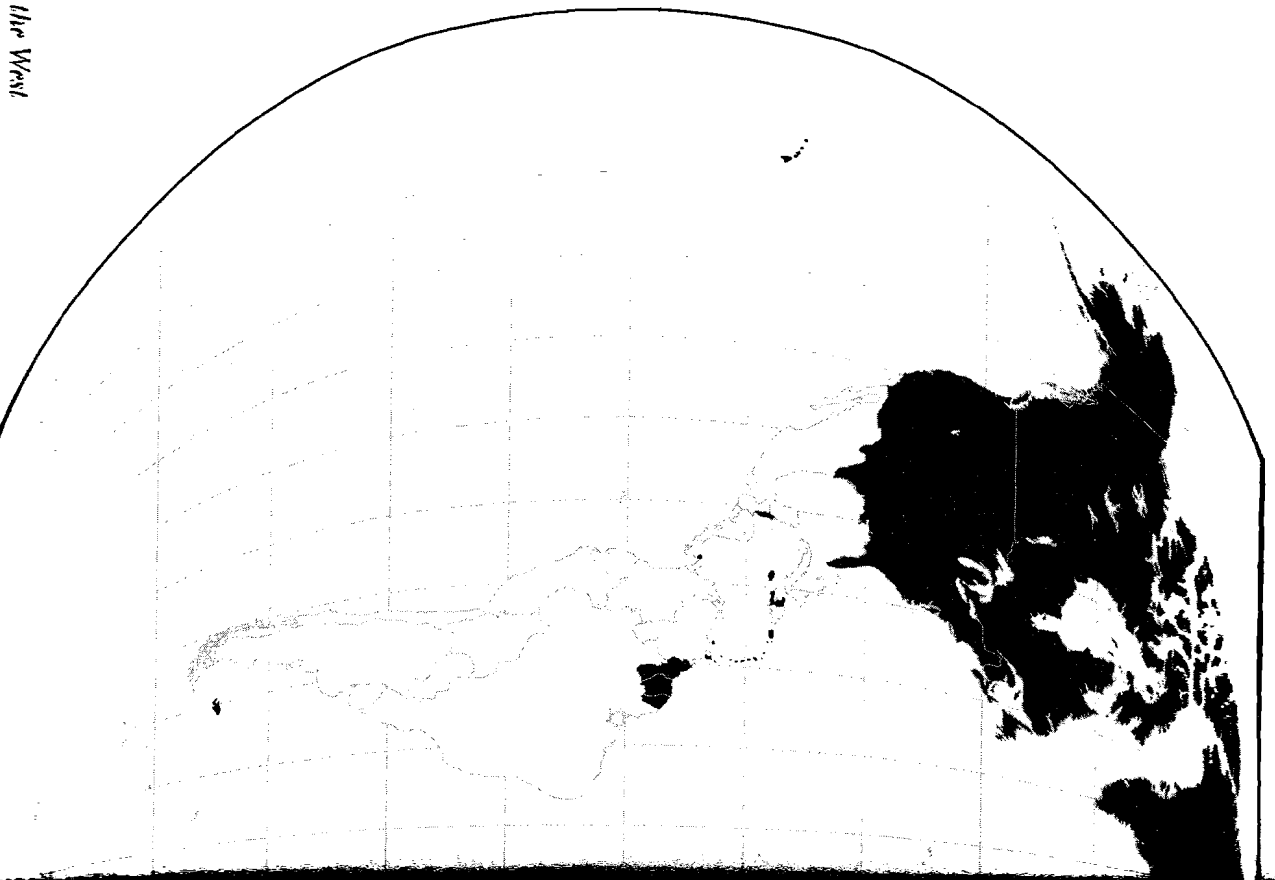
A MULTIPOLAR, MULTICIVILIZATIONAL WORLD

In the post-Cold War world, for the first time in history, global politics has become multipolar *and* multicivilizational. During most of human existence, contacts between civilizations were intermittent or nonexistent. Then, with the beginning of the modern era, about A.D. 1500, global politics assumed two dimensions. For over four hundred years, the nation states of the West—Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, the United States, and others—constituted a multipolar international system within Western civilization and interacted, competed, and fought wars with each other. At the same time, Western nations also expanded, conquered, colonized, or decisively influenced every other civilization (Map 1.1). During the Cold War global politics became bipolar and the world was divided into three parts. A group of mostly wealthy and democratic societies, led by the United States, was engaged in a pervasive ideological, political, economic, and, at times, military competition with a group of somewhat poorer communist societies associated with and led by the Soviet Union. Much of this conflict occurred in the Third World outside these two camps, composed of countries which often were poor, lacked political stability, were recently independent, and claimed to be nonaligned (Map 1.2).

In the late 1980s the communist world collapsed, and the Cold War international system became history. In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political, or economic. They are cultural. Peoples and nations are attempting to answer the most basic question humans can face: Who are we? And they are answering that question in the traditional way human beings have answered it, by reference to the things that mean most to them. People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and, at the broadest level, civilizations. People use politics not just to advance their interests but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against.

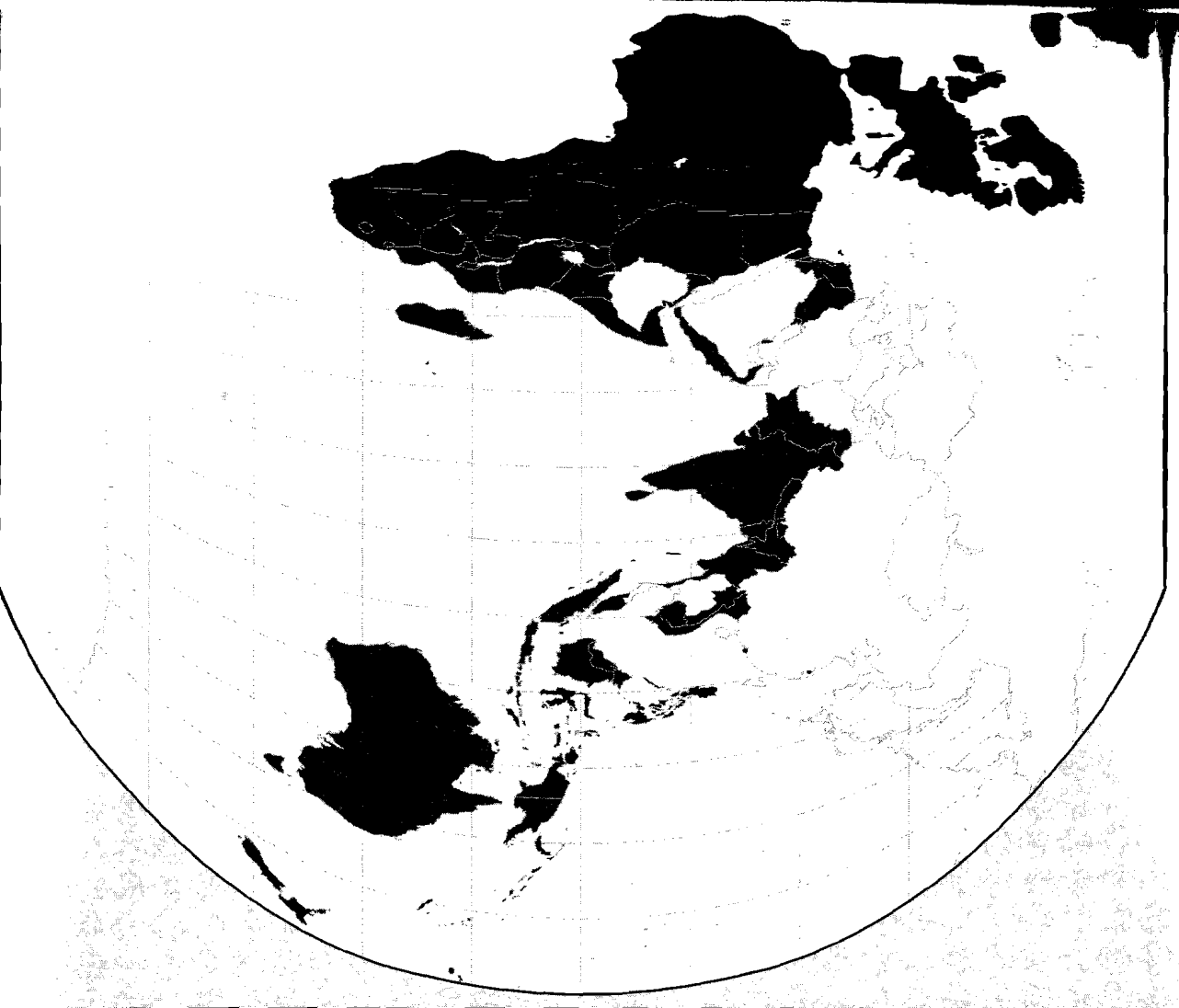
Nation states remain the principal actors in world affairs. Their behavior is shaped as in the past by the pursuit of power and wealth, but it is also shaped by cultural preferences, commonalities, and differences. The most important groupings of states are no longer the three blocs of the Cold War but rather the world's seven or eight major civilizations (Map 1.3). Non-Western societies, particularly in East Asia, are developing their economic wealth and creating the basis for enhanced military power and political influence. As their power and self-confidence increase, non-Western societies increasingly assert their

The West and the Rest: 1920



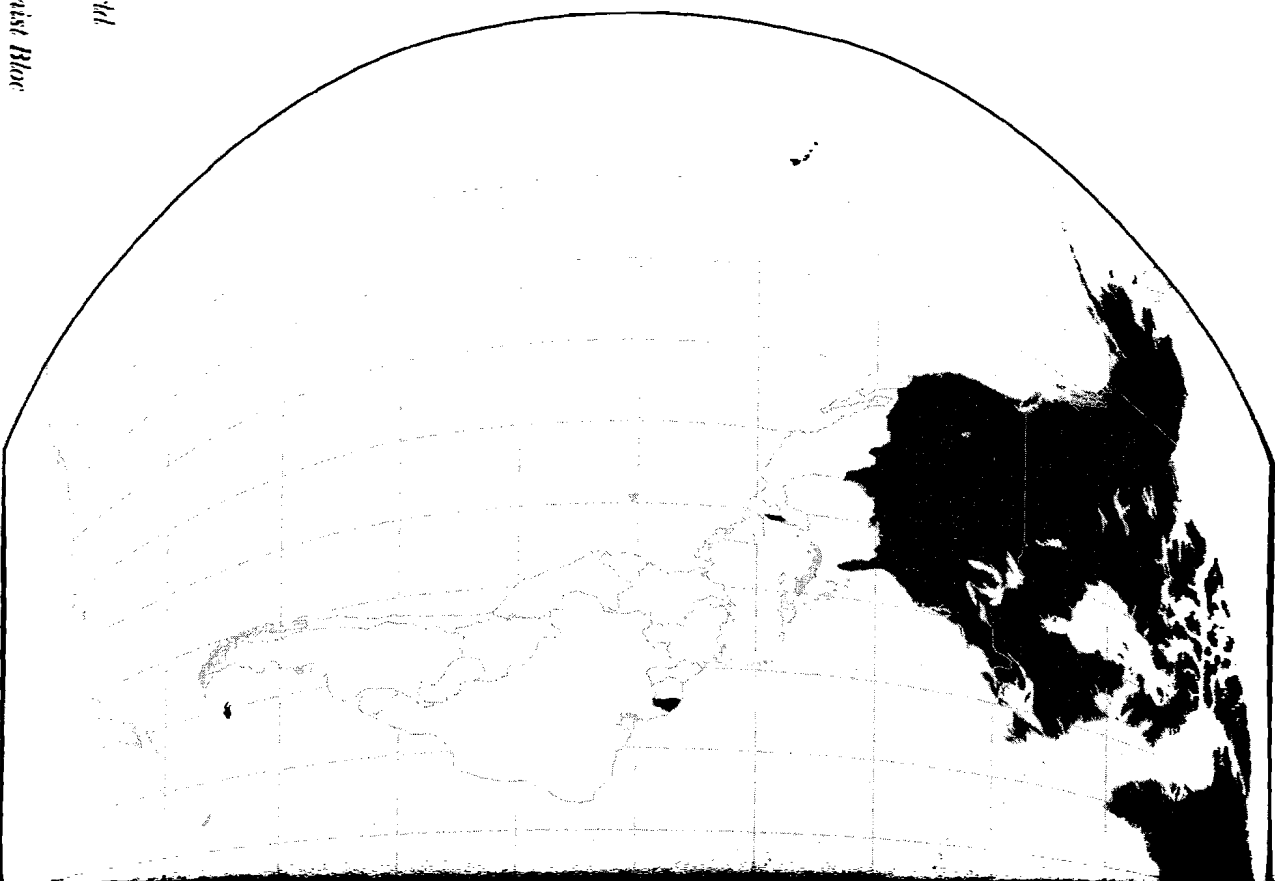
Ruled by the West

Actually or Nominally Independent of the West



Map 1.1

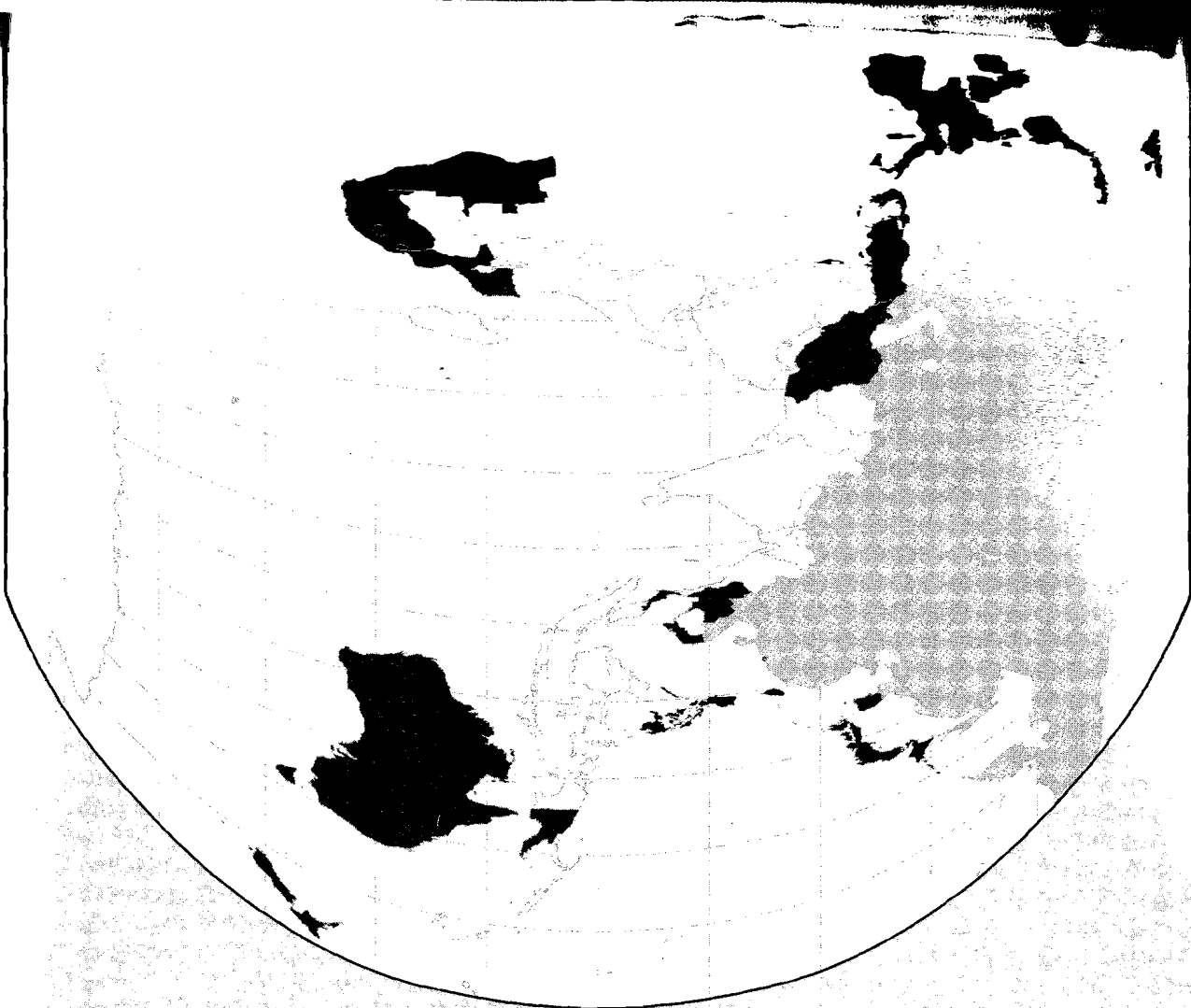
The Cold War World: 1960s



Free World

Communist Bloc

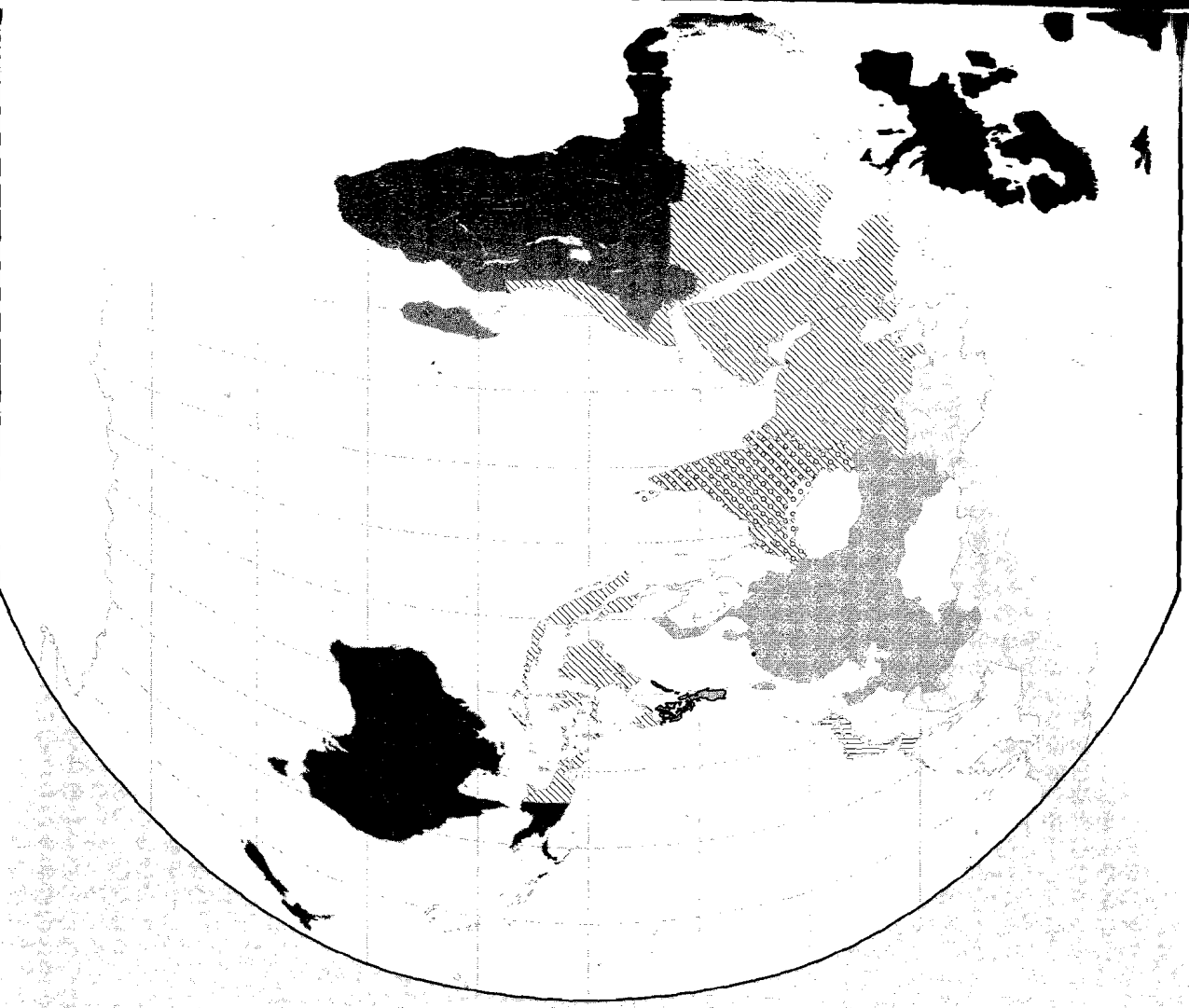
Unaligned Nations



Map 1.2

The World of Civilizations: Post-1990

- Western
- Latin American
- African
- Islamic
- Sinic
- Hindu
- Orthodox
- Buddhist
- Japanese



Map 1.3

own cultural values and reject those "imposed" on them by the West. The "international system of the twenty-first century," Henry Kissinger has noted, "will contain at least six major powers—the United States, Europe, China, Japan, Russia, and probably India—as well as a multiplicity of medium-sized and smaller countries."¹ Kissinger's six major powers belong to five very different civilizations, and in addition there are important Islamic states whose strategic locations, large populations, and/or oil resources make them influential in world affairs. In this new world, local politics is the politics of ethnicity; global politics is the politics of civilizations. The rivalry of the superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations.

In this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations. Violence between states and groups from different civilizations, however, carries with it the potential for escalation as other states and groups from these civilizations rally to the support of their "kin countries."² The bloody clash of clans in Somalia poses no threat of broader conflict. The bloody clash of tribes in Rwanda has consequences for Uganda, Zaire, and Burundi but not much further. The bloody clashes of civilizations in Bosnia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, or Kashmir could become bigger wars. In the Yugoslav conflicts, Russia provided diplomatic support to the Serbs, and Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, and Libya provided funds and arms to the Bosnians, not for reasons of ideology or power politics or economic interest but because of cultural kinship. "Cultural conflicts," Vaclav Havel has observed, "are increasing and are more dangerous today than at any time in history," and Jacques Delors agreed that "future conflicts will be sparked by cultural factors rather than economics or ideology."³ And the most dangerous cultural conflicts are those along the fault lines between civilizations.

In the post-Cold War world, culture is both a divisive and a unifying force. People separated by ideology but united by culture come together, as the two Germanys did and as the two Koreas and the several Chinas are beginning to. Societies united by ideology or historical circumstance but divided by civilization either come apart, as did the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Bosnia, or are subjected to intense strain, as is the case with Ukraine, Nigeria, Sudan, India, Sri Lanka, and many others. Countries with cultural affinities cooperate economically and politically. International organizations based on states with cultural commonality, such as the European Union, are far more successful than those that attempt to transcend cultures. For forty-five years the Iron Curtain was the central dividing line in Europe. That line has moved several hundred miles east. It is now the line separating the peoples of Western Christianity, on the one hand, from Muslim and Orthodox peoples on the other.

The philosophical assumptions, underlying values, social relations, customs, and overall outlooks on life differ significantly among civilizations. The revitalization of religion throughout much of the world is reinforcing these cultural

differences. Cultures can change, and the nature of their impact on politics and economics can vary from one period to another. Yet the major differences in political and economic development among civilizations are clearly rooted in their different cultures. East Asian economic success has its source in East Asian culture, as do the difficulties East Asian societies have had in achieving stable democratic political systems. Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world. Developments in the postcommunist societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are shaped by their civilizational identities. Those with Western Christian heritages are making progress toward economic development and democratic politics; the prospects for economic and political development in the Orthodox countries are uncertain; the prospects in the Muslim republics are bleak.

The West is and will remain for years to come the most powerful civilization. Yet its power relative to that of other civilizations is declining. As the West attempts to assert its values and to protect its interests, non-Western societies confront a choice. Some attempt to emulate the West and to join or to "bandwagon" with the West. Other Confucian and Islamic societies attempt to expand their own economic and military power to resist and to "balance" against the West. A central axis of post-Cold War world politics is thus the interaction of Western power and culture with the power and culture of non-Western civilizations.

In sum, the post-Cold War world is a world of seven or eight major civilizations. Cultural commonalities and differences shape the interests, antagonisms, and associations of states. The most important countries in the world come overwhelmingly from different civilizations. The local conflicts most likely to escalate into broader wars are those between groups and states from different civilizations. The predominant patterns of political and economic development differ from civilization to civilization. The key issues on the international agenda involve differences among civilizations. Power is shifting from the long predominant West to non-Western civilizations. Global politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational.

OTHER WORLDS?

Maps and Paradigms. This picture of post-Cold War world politics shaped by cultural factors and involving interactions among states and groups from different civilizations is highly simplified. It omits many things, distorts some things, and obscures others. Yet if we are to think seriously about the world, and act effectively in it, some sort of simplified map of reality, some theory, concept, model, paradigm, is necessary. Without such intellectual constructs, there is, as William James said, only "a bloomin' buzzin' confusion." Intellectual and scientific advance, Thomas Kuhn showed in his classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, consists of the displacement of one paradigm, which

has become increasingly incapable of explaining new or newly discovered facts, by a new paradigm, which does account for those facts in a more satisfactory fashion. "To be accepted as a paradigm," Kuhn wrote, "a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted."⁴ "Finding one's way through unfamiliar terrain," John Lewis Gaddis also wisely observed, "generally requires a map of some sort. Cartography, like cognition itself, is a necessary simplification that allows us to see where we are, and where we may be going." The Cold War image of superpower competition was, as he points out, such a model, articulated first by Harry Truman, as "an exercise in geopolitical cartography that depicted the international landscape in terms everyone could understand, and so doing prepared the way for the sophisticated strategy of containment that was soon to follow." World views and causal theories are indispensable guides to international politics.⁵

For forty years students and practitioners of international relations thought and acted in terms of the highly simplified but very useful Cold War paradigm of world affairs. This paradigm could not account for everything that went on in world politics. There were many anomalies, to use Kuhn's term, and at times the paradigm blinded scholars and statesmen to major developments, such as the Sino-Soviet split. Yet as a simple model of global politics, it accounted for more important phenomena than any of its rivals, it was an essential starting point for thinking about international affairs, it came to be almost universally accepted, and it shaped thinking about world politics for two generations.

Simplified paradigms or maps are indispensable for human thought and action. On the one hand, we may explicitly formulate theories or models and consciously use them to guide our behavior. Alternatively, we may deny the need for such guides and assume that we will act only in terms of specific "objective" facts, dealing with each case "on its merits." If we assume this, however, we delude ourselves. For in the back of our minds are hidden assumptions, biases, and prejudices that determine how we perceive reality, what facts we look at, and how we judge their importance and merits. We need explicit or implicit models so as to be able to:

1. order and generalize about reality;
2. understand causal relationships among phenomena;
3. anticipate and, if we are lucky, predict future developments;
4. distinguish what is important from what is unimportant; and
5. show us what paths we should take to achieve our goals.

Every model or map is an abstraction and will be more useful for some purposes than for others. A road map shows us how to drive from A to B, but will not be very useful if we are piloting a plane, in which case we will want a map highlighting airfields, radio beacons, flight paths, and topography. With no map, however, we will be lost. The more detailed a map is the more fully it

will reflect reality. An extremely detailed map, however, will not be useful for many purposes. If we wish to get from one big city to another on a major expressway, we do not need and may find confusing a map which includes much information unrelated to automotive transportation and in which the major highways are lost in a complex mass of secondary roads. A map, on the other hand, which had only one expressway on it would eliminate much reality and limit our ability to find alternative routes if the expressway were blocked by a major accident. In short, we need a map that both portrays reality and simplifies reality in a way that best serves our purposes. Several maps or paradigms of world politics were advanced at the end of the Cold War.

One World: Euphoria and Harmony. One widely articulated paradigm was based on the assumption that the end of the Cold War meant the end of significant conflict in global politics and the emergence of one relatively harmonious world. The most widely discussed formulation of this model was the "end of history" thesis advanced by Francis Fukuyama.* "We may be witnessing," Fukuyama argued, "... the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." To be sure, he said, some conflicts may happen in places in the Third World, but the global conflict is over, and not just in Europe. "It is precisely in the non-European world" that the big changes have occurred, particularly in China and the Soviet Union. The war of ideas is at an end. Believers in Marxist-Leninism may still exist "in places like Managua, Pyongyang, and Cambridge, Massachusetts," but overall liberal democracy has triumphed. The future will be devoted not to great exhilarating struggles over ideas but rather to resolving mundane economic and technical problems. And, he concluded rather sadly, it will all be rather boring.⁶

The expectation of harmony was widely shared. Political and intellectual leaders elaborated similar views. The Berlin wall had come down, communist regimes had collapsed, the United Nations was to assume a new importance, the former Cold War rivals would engage in "partnership" and a "grand bargain," peacekeeping and peacemaking would be the order of the day. The President of the world's leading country proclaimed the "new world order"; the president of, arguably, the world's leading university vetoed appointment of a professor of security studies because the need had disappeared: "Hallelujah! We study war no more because war is no more."

The moment of euphoria at the end of the Cold War generated an illusion of harmony, which was soon revealed to be exactly that. The world became different in the early 1990s, but not necessarily more peaceful. Change was inevitable; progress was not. Similar illusions of harmony flourished, briefly, at

* A parallel line of argument based not on the end of the Cold War but on long-term economic and social trends producing a "universal civilization" is discussed in chapter 3.

the end of each of the twentieth century's other major conflicts. World War I was the "war to end wars" and to make the world safe for democracy. World War II, as Franklin Roosevelt put it, would "end the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the balances of power, and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries—and have always failed." Instead we will have "a universal organization" of "peace-loving Nations" and the beginnings of a "permanent structure of peace."⁷ World War I, however, generated communism, fascism, and the reversal of a century-old trend toward democracy. World War II produced a Cold War that was truly global. The illusion of harmony at the end of that Cold War was soon dissipated by the multiplication of ethnic conflicts and "ethnic cleansing," the breakdown of law and order, the emergence of new patterns of alliance and conflict among states, the resurgence of neo-communist and neo-fascist movements, intensification of religious fundamentalism, the end of the "diplomacy of smiles" and "policy of yes" in Russia's relations with the West, the inability of the United Nations and the United States to suppress bloody local conflicts, and the increasing assertiveness of a rising China. In the five years after the Berlin wall came down, the word "genocide" was heard far more often than in any five years of the Cold War. The one harmonious world paradigm is clearly far too divorced from reality to be a useful guide to the post-Cold War world.

Two Worlds: Us and Them. While one-world expectations appear at the end of major conflicts, the tendency to think in terms of two worlds recurs throughout human history. People are always tempted to divide people into us and them, the in-group and the other, our civilization and those barbarians. Scholars have analyzed the world in terms of the Orient and the Occident, North and South, center and periphery. Muslims have traditionally divided the world into *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, the abode of peace and the abode of war. This distinction was reflected, and in a sense reversed, at the end of the Cold War by American scholars who divided the world into "zones of peace" and "zones of turmoil." The former included the West and Japan with about 15 percent of the world's population, the latter everyone else.⁸

Depending upon how the parts are defined, a two-part world picture may in some measure correspond with reality. The most common division, which appears under various names, is between rich (modern, developed) countries and poor (traditional, undeveloped or developing) countries. Historically correlating with this economic division is the cultural division between West and East, where the emphasis is less on differences in economic well-being and more on differences in underlying philosophy, values, and way of life.⁹ Each of these images reflects some elements of reality yet also suffers limitations. Rich modern countries share characteristics which differentiate them from poor traditional countries, which also share characteristics. Differences in wealth may lead to conflicts between societies, but the evidence suggests that this

happens primarily when rich and more powerful societies attempt to conquer and colonize poor and more traditional societies. The West did this for four hundred years, and then some of the colonies rebelled and waged wars of liberation against the colonial powers, who may well have lost the will to empire. In the current world, decolonization has occurred and colonial wars of liberation have been replaced by conflicts among the liberated peoples.

At a more general level, conflicts between rich and poor are unlikely because, except in special circumstances, the poor countries lack the political unity, economic power, and military capability to challenge the rich countries. Economic development in Asia and Latin America is blurring the simple dichotomy of haves and have-nots. Rich states may fight trade wars with each other; poor states may fight violent wars with each other; but an international class war between the poor South and the wealthy North is almost as far from reality as one happy harmonious world.

The cultural bifurcation of the world division is still less useful. At some level, the West is an entity. What, however, do non-Western societies have in common other than the fact that they are non-Western? Japanese, Chinese, Hindu, Muslim, and African civilizations share little in terms of religion, social structure, institutions, and prevailing values. The unity of the non-West and the East-West dichotomy are myths created by the West. These myths suffer the defects of the Orientalism which Edward Said appropriately criticized for promoting "the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them') and for assuming the inherent superiority of the former to the latter."¹⁰ During the Cold War the world was, in considerable measure, polarized along an ideological spectrum. There is, however, no single cultural spectrum. The polarization of "East" and "West" culturally is in part another consequence of the universal but unfortunate practice of calling European civilization Western civilization. Instead of "East and West," it is more appropriate to speak of "the West and the rest," which at least implies the existence of many non-Wests. The world is too complex to be usefully envisioned for most purposes as simply divided economically between North and South or culturally between East and West.

184 States, More or Less. A third map of the post-Cold War world derives from what is often called the "realist" theory of international relations. According to this theory states are the primary, indeed, the only important actors in world affairs, the relation among states is one of anarchy, and hence to insure their survival and security, states invariably attempt to maximize their power. If one state sees another state increasing its power and thereby becoming a potential threat, it attempts to protect its own security by strengthening its power and/or by allying itself with other states. The interests and actions of the more or less 184 states of the post-Cold War world can be predicted from these assumptions.¹¹

This "realist" picture of the world is a highly useful starting point for analyzing international affairs and explains much state behavior. States are and will remain the dominant entities in world affairs. They maintain armies, conduct diplomacy, negotiate treaties, fight wars, control international organizations, influence and in considerable measure shape production and commerce. The governments of states give priority to insuring the external security of their states (although they often may give higher priority to insuring their security as a government against internal threats). Overall this statist paradigm does provide a more realistic picture of and guide to global politics than the one- or two-world paradigms.

It also, however, suffers severe limitations.

It assumes all states perceive their interests in the same way and act in the same way. Its simple assumption that power is all is a starting point for understanding state behavior but does not get one very far. States define their interests in terms of power but also in terms of much else besides. States often, of course, attempt to balance power, but if that is all they did, Western European countries would have coalesced with the Soviet Union against the United States in the late 1940s. States respond primarily to perceived threats, and the Western European states then saw a political, ideological, and military threat from the East. They saw their interests in a way which would not have been predicted by classic realist theory. Values, culture, and institutions pervasively influence how states define their interests. The interests of states are also shaped not only by their domestic values and institutions but by international norms and institutions. Above and beyond their primal concern with security, different types of states define their interests in different ways. States with similar cultures and institutions will see common interest. Democratic states have commonalities with other democratic states and hence do not fight each other. Canada does not have to ally with another power to deter invasion by the United States.

At a basic level the assumptions of the statist paradigm have been true throughout history. They thus do not help us to understand how global politics after the Cold War will differ from global politics during and before the Cold War. Yet clearly there are differences, and states pursue their interests differently from one historical period to another. In the post-Cold War world, states increasingly define their interests in civilizational terms. They cooperate with and ally themselves with states with similar or common culture and are more often in conflict with countries of different culture. States define threats in terms of the intentions of other states, and those intentions and how they are perceived are powerfully shaped by cultural considerations. Publics and statesmen are less likely to see threats emerging from people they feel they understand and can trust because of shared language, religion, values, institutions, and culture. They are much more likely to see threats coming from states whose societies have different cultures and hence which they do not understand and feel they cannot trust. Now that a Marxist-Leninist Soviet Union no longer poses a threat to the Free World and the United States no longer

poses a countering threat to the communist world, countries in both worlds increasingly see threats coming from societies which are culturally different.

While states remain the primary actors in world affairs, they also are suffering losses in sovereignty, functions, and power. International institutions now assert the right to judge and to constrain what states do in their own territory. In some cases, most notably in Europe, international institutions have assumed important functions previously performed by states, and powerful international bureaucracies have been created which operate directly on individual citizens. Globally there has been a trend for state governments to lose power also through devolution to substate, regional, provincial, and local political entities. In many states, including those in the developed world, regional movements exist promoting substantial autonomy or secession. State governments have in considerable measure lost the ability to control the flow of money in and out of their country and are having increasing difficulty controlling the flows of ideas, technology, goods, and people. State borders, in short, have become increasingly permeable. All these developments have led many to see the gradual end of the hard, "billiard ball" state, which purportedly has been the norm since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648,¹² and the emergence of a varied, complex, multi-layered international order more closely resembling that of medieval times.

Sheer Chaos. The weakening of states and the appearance of "failed states" contribute to a fourth image of a world in anarchy. This paradigm stresses: the breakdown of governmental authority; the breakup of states; the intensification of tribal, ethnic, and religious conflict; the emergence of international criminal mafias; refugees multiplying into the tens of millions; the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; the spread of terrorism; the prevalence of massacres and ethnic cleansing. This picture of a world in chaos was convincingly set forth and summed up in the titles of two penetrating works published in 1993: *Out of Control* by Zbigniew Brzezinski and *Pandemonium* by Daniel Patrick Moynihan.¹³

Like the states paradigm, the chaos paradigm is close to reality. It provides a graphic and accurate picture of much of what is going on in the world, and unlike the states paradigm, it highlights the significant changes in world politics that have occurred with the end of the Cold War. As of early 1993, for instance, an estimated 48 ethnic wars were occurring throughout the world, and 164 "territorial-ethnic claims and conflicts concerning borders" existed in the former Soviet Union, of which 30 had involved some form of armed conflict.¹⁴ Yet it suffers even more than the states paradigm in being too close to reality. The world may be chaos but it is not totally without order. An image of universal and undifferentiated anarchy provides few clues for understanding the world, for ordering events and evaluating their importance, for predicting trends in the anarchy, for distinguishing among types of chaos and their possibly different causes and consequences, and for developing guidelines for governmental policy makers.