

STUDY MATERIAL FOR STUDENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, B.P.CHALIHA COLLEGE

TOPIC : NATURE AND SCOPE OF POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY IS THE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EARTH'S PHYSICAL CONDITION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. **POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY** IS CONCERNED WITH THE STUDY OF BOTH THE SPATIALLY UNEVEN OUTCOMES OF POLITICAL PROCESSES AND THE WAYS IN WHICH POLITICAL PROCESSES ARE THEMSELVES AFFECTED BY SPATIAL STRUCTURES. CONVENTIONALLY, FOR THE PURPOSES OF ANALYSIS, POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY ADOPTS A THREE-SCALE STRUCTURE WITH THE STUDY OF THE STATE AT THE CENTRE, THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (OR GEOPOLITICS) ABOVE IT, AND THE STUDY OF LOCALITIES BELOW IT. THE PRIMARY CONCERNS OF THE SUBDISCIPLINE CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE, STATE, AND TERRITORY. FOREIGN POLICIES MUST FUNCTION WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF THE EARTH'S ENVIRONMENT. GEOGRAPHY, THEREFORE, PROVIDES FIXED POINTS OF REFERENCE. THE ABILITY OF HUMANKIND TO MANIPULATE, DEVELOP, AND UTILIZE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT CAN LEAD TO HUMANITY'S WELL-BEING OR TO ITS DISINTEGRATION. ANALYSIS OF THESE REFERENCE POINTS AND THE ABILITIES OF PEOPLE TO MANIPULATE THE ENVIRONMENT ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND HISTORY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT, ALTHOUGH THE EARTH'S POINTS OF REFERENCE ARE FIXED, HUMANKIND HAS BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME, THROUGH TECHNOLOGY, MANY PHYSICAL OBSTACLES. THE BUILDING OF THE PANAMA AND SUEZ CANALS PROVIDES TWO EXAMPLES OF HUMANITY'S ALTERATION OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. THE BUILDING OF THESE TWO CANALS HAS HAD A MAJOR EFFECT ON THE ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES OF THE NATIONS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THEIR CONSTRUCTION AND UTILIZATION. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT, IN THE FUTURE, WITH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY, PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO ALTER THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE POLITICAL ARENA.

GEOPOLITICS IS THE SCIENCE OF APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY TO MODERN STATECRAFT. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A

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STATE IMPOSE FACTORS BOTH ENHANCING AND LIMITING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION. A NATION'S ABILITY TO GROW AND PROSPER ECONOMICALLY, POLITICALLY, MILITARILY, AND SOCIALLY DEPENDS ON ITS SIZE, SHAPE, PROXIMITY, NATURAL RESOURCES, CLIMATE, POPULATION, TOPOGRAPHY, AND THE NATURE OF ITS SOIL. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOUND DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES MUST BE BASED ON THESE FACTORS. RECENT AMERICAN AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES HAVE CLEARLY SHOWN GEOPOLITICS IN ACTION. THE SOVIET UNION, THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN INVADED BY NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE AND ASIA. THE SOVIETS HAVE ALWAYS DESIRED TO ESTABLISH A BUFFER BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THESE NATIONS. THE BUFFER WAS ESTABLISHED AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR WITH THE CREATION OF THE SOVIET SATELLITE STATES AND THE WARSAW PACT. RECENT UNITED STATES POLICY IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA HAS ATTEMPTED TO LIMIT SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD BECAUSE OF ITS PHYSICAL PROXIMITY TO OUR NATION. THE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION ESTABLISHING A PRESENCE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA WOULD BE ENORMOUS. IN BOTH EXAMPLES, THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES HAVE ATTEMPTED TO MEET THE GOALS OF THEIR INTERNATIONAL POLICIES BY USING GEOGRAPHY TO FURTHER THEIR GOALS.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND GEOPOLITICS

1. ADVANCED CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS DO NOT DEVELOP IN CLIMATES WHICH ARE EXTREMELY HOT OR COLD.
2. NATIONS WHICH ARE LOCATED IN ISOLATED AREAS OF THE WORLD AND AWAY FROM THE MAJOR FRICTION ZONES HAVE MORE LATITUDE IN ESTABLISHING A SOCIETY WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.
3. NATIONS WHICH ARE LOCATED IN PHYSICAL PROXIMITY TO A MAJOR SUPERPOWER OR IN A FRICTION ZONE ARE MORE APT TO BE INVOLVED IN POWER POLITICS.
4. LANDLOCKED NATIONS ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE IN WORLD TRADE. THEY OFTEN MUST DEPEND ON A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR TO ASSIST THEM WITH FOREIGN COMMERCE.

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5. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF A NATION PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN DETERMINING A SOUND NATIONAL DEFENSE.
6. A NATION'S RESOURCES DETERMINE THE ECONOMIC AND OFTEN THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROSPERITY OF THAT NATION.
7. INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS ARE DEPENDENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF RAW MATERIALS.
8. THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREE OR LESS RESTRICTIVE TRADE POLICIES AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGREEMENTS CAN REDUCE THE INTERNATIONAL TENSION GROWING OUT OF THE SEARCH FOR RAW MATERIALS.
9. NATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED ON THE BASIS OF ARTIFICIAL BOUNDARIES ARE LESS COHESIVE AND SUFFER FROM MORE FREQUENT INTERNAL DISSENSION THAN DO NATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED WITH NATURAL BOUNDARIES.
10. RECENT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS IN WEAPONS, INCLUDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND SOPHISTICATED MISSILES AND BOMBERS, HAVE ALTERED INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHY, POWER, AND POLICY.

REFERENCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.CENTERFORLEARNING.ORG/C/ARTICLE.WEB?ARTICLE@DAC108B+s@fZdPX1QATMFSA](https://www.centerforlearning.org/c/article.web?article@DAC108B+s@fZdPX1QATMFSA)