1 Regional Great Powers

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THE PROBLEM AND THE PUZZLE

The category of states called 'regional great powers' is one which we feel, intuitively, must be affected by strategic postures and power relationships at the global level. It has often been argued that the *really* Great Powers may fortify regional alliance partners by relative retrenchment, or that superpower accomodation generally might increase the scope for regional assertiveness. On the other hand is the equally conventional view that powers at the local level reflect regional configurations relatively isolated from external control; the 'region' is a microcosm of the states system. For a variety of reasons, these are some of the murkier waters of international commentary. One may even ask whether 'regional great power' is a fruitful category at all, and if there is some sort of general role for states of this elusive standing.

Although the expression is widely employed in everyday language as well as in academic studies, the category of regional great powers has never been properly specified. It is as analytically evasive as it is intuitively important. The cluster of states in geographical regions, however delineated, is also a system with specific distributions of state power, territorial space, resources, and status. There may well be hegemonic relationships between regional polities; there may be more or less autonomous balances of power among them; and there may be historically contingent changes in the interstate 'correlation of forces' at the regional level.

Still, there is next to nothing on the regional great power in the academic literature on the grading or hierarchy of states. Martin Wight gives the category a passing note in his *Power Politics*.[1] He regards it as a subset of minor powers, together with 'middle powers', but with a geographically more restricted range: in a culturally united but politically divided subsystem of states, the features of the general states system may be reproduced in miniature. Within this limited framework some states may have more general interests and a capacity for acting alone – the regional great powers. Wight's examples are Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the Arab world, Argentina and Brazil in South America and the Republic of South Africa on the African continent. He then proceeds to a more general

discussion of 'middle powers' in diplomatic history from the Vienna Congress to the United Nations. Carsten Holbraad, equally, concentrates on the multifarious indices of 'middle powers' – diplomatically, empirically, and in the history of ideas – with hardly any place for a 'regional great power' subset.[2]

The lacuna is also notable in the more general works on the gradation or hierarchy of states. Hedley Bull concentrates on the role and character of great powers generally, with respect to international order, while Robert Klein, in his study of the historical evolution of the principle of sovereign equality, likewise focuses on the centre stage of the states system.[3]

Neither is the category of regional great power recognised in a recent study of the hierarchy of states, although hegemonic change and regional rivalries are included in the analysis.[4] There are two fundamentally different inferences to be drawn from this neglect in the academic literature; the category is either an analytical dead end, or it is still a worthwhile challenge.

In any case, the topic is analytically evasive for three fairly distinct reasons. Firstly, it is not clear how 'great powers' at a regional level build a reasonably self-contained relationship irrespective of the wider international system. They are of course affected by numerous links to the wider order, where 'global' great powers play a vital role. If the category of 'regional great power' shall retain any substance, however, their standing cannot be purely derivative. The importance of the wider international framework will have to be assessed.

Secondly, the criteria for great power status – globally or regionally – are not evident. We might agree on a formal definition, but the empirical specifications are still contestable. Some states might, for instance, have a paramount standing in some respects, with more dubious substance in other relevant spheres. Again, a status that seems adequate intuitively might dwindle on further scrutiny.

Thirdly, a world 'region' is no given unit. It might, conventionally, be synonymous with a continent. We might employ geographical delineations like oceans, deserts and mountain ranges, realising that the relevance of topographical characteristics are highly dependent on existing communications technology. We might employ political criteria, like alliance configurations or spheres of influence, or we might use economic indicators, like commercial networks or conditions of production. We know, accordingly, that different academic disciplines employ different territorial delineations: the 'region' of the geographer is often at odds with the 'region' of the student of international relations. Furthermore, many specific regions have been on the move in our politico-geographical imagery. The 'Middle East' is not quite where it was 50 or 90 years ago. 'Eastern Europe' was a political as well as a geographical category from the late 1940s to the late 1980s, while it hardly remains more than a geographical conception after November 1989. Likewise, 'Mitteleuropa' has on and off been a plausible idea.

'Regional great powers', then, are hard to identify at the margins, when a 'region' has unclear or changing contours, and the 'power' in question has a dubious or equivocal standing, bending towards a wider global role or towards a minor local position. Any line of demarcation will be somewhat arbitrarily drawn, and any selection of 'regional great powers' is likely to rouse sensible controversy.

THE HIERARCHY OF POWERS

The states system is characterised by the striking contrast between the formal principle of sovereign equality on the one hand and the enormous empirical variation of constituent units on the other. States are conventionally differentiated according to size and population, according to economic prosperity and economic system, according to foreign policies and international role and according to power, however recognised. Hence the traditional ordering according to politico-strategical power: great powers, middle powers, small powers, micro-states. The idea of a hegemonic state, or of 'superpowers', are often added at the top of the hierarchy, while 'regional great powers' are down the list – somewhere.

The hierarchical states system may be conceived at three different levels of precision. The least sophisticated is just the idea of a multidimensional scale of inequalities, variation, differentiation, with the major categories as rather imprecise shorthand for chosen intervals on the scale. The more ambitious conceptual ordering is the identification of clusters of types in a hierarchical order, with some deeper systemic reality to the basic categories. Here, the idea of great powers – global or regional – acquires a theoretical meaning beyond the merely conventional shorthand. The most precise conceptual reference is hierarchy as a structural ordering principle of the international system. This is the notion employed in Kenneth Waltz's structural theory, with *hierarchy* as an alternative to the *anarchy* of the states system.[5] The idea of types of powers in our context is somewhere within the second range – more ambitious than a linguistic shorthand, but less precise than the structural principle of hierarchy employed by Waltz.

One group of criteria for the differentiation of states is the various empirical indices referred to above: size and population, economic

prosperity, political régime, economic system, foreign policies, military power. Great powers, middle powers, small powers and so on may be defined according to their relative position on scales of these indicators, or certain combinations from them. The quantitative study of international relations offers several proposals of this kind. The first problem with a merely statistical ranking is that international roles, ambitions and political influence are left out or are only indirectly hypothesised, even if quantitative resources undoubtedly make up the backbone of the standing of 'powers'. The second problem is that the lower limit of a great power, or a middle power, or a regional great power, is quite arbitrary in these statistical terms. The third one is, further, that certain states may play a role far beyond their relative amount of the traditionally relevant resources, for reasons which beg for supplementary perspectives. The other group of criteria for differentiation is derived from typified models of the international system. The economic stratification into the First, Second and Third World (or more) is in fact more than an economic stratification, since it also involves an element of self-conscious mobilisation of organised 'estates' on the world scene, parallel to the constitution of the Third Estate during the French Revolution. This was in fact the linguistic point of departure for the French conception of *le tiers monde* in the early 1950s, and the Bandung Conference was the turning point for incipient third world mobilisation. The concept of the 'regional great power', then, might be connected to the major alignments and cleavages in the years after the Second World War: the newly independent states system in Africa and parts of Asia, the gap between the industrialised North and the underdeveloped South, the Cold War contest between East and West as it was played out in alliance patterns – or programmatic non-alliance – in regions peripheral to the rivalry. The tripartite classification of states is derived from all these three international cleavages – decolonisation, the development problem and the Cold War. Third World mobilisation has seen a fluctuation of 'regional great powers' in various phases of the period after the Second World War, as will be indicated below.

A widely different model is the spatial distribution within 'world systems analysis' as developed by Immanuel Wallerstein and associates.[6] Here, state structures and relative strength are derived from positions within a capitalist exchange system, that is, strong states of the dominant core, and weak states of the dependent periphery. An intermediate area – the mixed and composite *semi-periphery* – is a buffer zone, but also a politico-economic stage in its own right, with a range of medium powers that may play a paramount regional role. The semi-pheriphery, however, is the most indistinct category of the world-system model, and the corresponding regional states system is equally undecided. Still, the idea of regional great powers might have an analytical potential within this systemic conception.

The traditional ordering of powers might also acquire model-like characteristics when the categories have conceptual meaning beyond their position on a continuous scale, when there is a formal standing attached to the hierarchical order or when types of powers are specified in terms of particular international roles. These dimensions of a hierarchy of states should be considered in turn.

Great power standing has been intimately connected to relative military force. In a famous phrase, Leopold von Ranke argued that 'a definition of a great power [is] that it must be able to maintain itself against all others, even when they are united'.[7] Treitschke derived a slight modification of this criterion when he said that a great power is a power whose destruction would require a coalition of other powers.[8] Martin Wight states bluntly that 'great power status is lost, as it is won, by violence'.[9] Relative military force, then, has to prove itself in war, and the hierarchy of states is established and changed during the history of interstate conflict. While the 'global' great powers retain their capacity for self defence irrespective of other aspects of the international order, the standing of the *regional* great power is confined to local interrelationships, and therefore conditioned by the wider balance of forces; the regional hierarchy of states is never completely autonomous.

It is, however, far from evident that a great power will have to prove itself in war. Historically, this is a dubious criterion, since great power status has been acknowledged for potential rather than actual war-fighting. At present, no great power can fend off any attack, but acquires its standing by a credible capability for fatal retaliation. The rank of a modern 'superpower' – corresponding to the classical great power – is not acquired by actual violence, but by the credibility of a viable second-strike force. Correspondingly, regional great power status might also rest on reputation rather than proven performance.

There is a more formal aspect to the reputational criterion. In diplomatic history after the Congress of Vienna, types of powers have had a formal standing, recognised in treaties and international organisations. The classical great power concert was a system based on formal recognition, and the Charter of the UN specified an order with great power prerogatives. The formalisation of the grading of powers implies the possibility for non-correspondence between formal standing and real strength. Some of the formally recognised great powers may be great by courtesy, while some

of the really great ones may suffer formal neglect. Diplomatic history is rife with divergences and incongruous time lags of this kind. It might be found as well in the organisation of regional states systems.

The final criterion on the standing of powers is not so much their resources as what they actually do; their interests and their international role. Conventionally, a great power is supposed to be a power with general, or world-wide, interests, while a regional great power, again, has notable interests within a wider regional area. Although such 'general interests' can hardly be described in the abstract and although the edges of this criterion are indeed vague, there may be a workable starting point here.

There is probably more to be said about the international role of great powers. They have, seemingly *per se*, a managerial role in the international system.[10] Firstly, they manage the relations between each other by means of military balances, diplomatic accomodations, linkage policies, codes of crisis management and so on. The international order of the Cold War has been described as an amazingly stable system dependent upon the managerial functions of the dominant powers.[11] Secondly, the great powers give organisational direction to the international system as a whole. The basic mechanisms here would be the counter-balancing of unequal alliances in the periphery, the policing of trans-border territories and spheres of influence, the control of unruly client states involved in regional conflicts or civil strife and the weight in the establishment of international régimes and rules of the game. The managerial role of great powers is here diagnosed in a purely descriptive way, without any evaluation attached to it.

However we define them, middle powers, or regional great powers, make up an ambiguous category, with a rather arbitrary lower limit. There are, furthermore, two distinct types of 'middle powers'. One type is constituted by states in an intermediate position in a hierarchy, however specified. Another is, linguistically, the states *in the middle*, in other words, the buffer states between powerful rivals or regional areas. The intermediate powers, neither great nor small, are hard to define clearly in politico-military or economic terms, except as a statistical medium category. Unlike the great powers, they seldom, and then only occasionally and rudimentarily, have a clear-cut formal status. For example, when the UN was established in 1945, some demand was voiced for recognising a group of second rank states by granting them priority as non-permanent members of the Security Council. Likewise, states informally recognised as regional great powers may experience preferential diplomatic treatment when wider interests are involved. A regional great power may be a middle power in the global context, but not necessarily so. It seems reasonable to argue that Israel qualifies as a regional great power in the Middle East, but most definitely not as a 'middle power' globally. The same goes for the Republic of South Africa in its area. On the other hand, a middle power generally is not necessarily a great power regionally, since it may exist in the close and dominated vicinity of really great powers, or of a number of other powers aspiring to a leading regional role. Generally, a middle power is defined within an international hierarchy of powers, while a regional great power is determined within a regional division of the globe.

In so far as the region is an international states system in miniature, the regional great power is just a great power writ small: it either has a dominant position within the regional hierarchy of states, or it is party to a regional balance of power system – presumably able to defend itself against a coalition of other parties. Even more important, perhaps, it has a managerial role at the regional level. It balances other forces, maintains codes of conduct, stabilises spheres of influence and polices unruly clients. These are some of the major functions to be identified and analysed.

THE EXPANSION OF THE STATES SYSTEM

In diplomatic terms, the grading of powers was introduced by the peace settlement after the Napoleonic wars. The European Concert was composed of the five great powers, Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia. A class of middle powers was also recognised among German states. They comprised in particular the South German states of Bavaria, Wurttemburg and Baden, which sometimes tried to pursue an independent policy.[12] During most of the nineteenth century the modern states system remained fairly exclusively European.

By 1914 the European states system was remarkably changed. Austria had declined dramatically, while Prussia in particular had acquired a much higher standing. Italy claimed great power status after the unification in 1860, but never really made it. Two claimants outside Europe, however, now enlarged the geographical scope of the great power system: the United States, especially during the decades after the civil war, and Japan, which had modernised rapidly after the Meiji Restoration, formally aligned with Britain in 1902, and even proved victorious against Russia in the war of 1904–5.

The expansion of the states system is clearly reflected in the major international conferences.[13] Whereas the Congress of Vienna had been

exclusively European, the conference in Paris in 1856 also included the Ottoman Empire, and thereby coopted Turkey. The Hague conferences in 1899 and again in 1907 enlarged the system considerably. In 1899 the USA, Mexico, China, Persia and Siam also took part, and European powers spoke on behalf of vastly expanded colonial empires. In 1907 the sixteen Latin American republics were included, on US initiative. The extended geographical scope of the system of states had crucial implications for the hierarchy of powers. The globalisation of the states system affected intra-European relationships as well as the balances between Europe and the external world. Extra-European rivalries and politico-economic projections led to rearrangements within Europe, particularly in the age of imperialism towards the turn of the century. New centres of political power emerged outside Europe, as demonstrated by the self-assertion of Japan in the Far Eastern crisis from 1895 to 1905. The grading of powers with the expansion of the states system was partly affected by the cooptation of non-European states, partly by peripheral self-assertion, and partly by imperialist rivalries.

The European system of the nineteenth century was also transformed by the principle of nationality. German and Italian unification altered the continental balance to the disadvantage of France. The break-up of empires meant new political realities in regional affairs, with nationalist Turkey as a new 'regional great power' in the Middle East, with a wholly new political geography in the old 'Mitteleuropa' and on the Balkan, and with a new territorial basis for countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia. The First World War was the major catalyst for these transformations.

Middle powers, or indeed regional great powers, did not figure formally within the League of Nations system, although the unstable power rivalries of the inter-war years granted them a structural space both in central Europe and in the Far East. The League became perhaps basically an international instrument of Britain and France, trying to contain the revisionist revanchism of Germany and its allies.[14] Unstable regional balances collapsed with the global ramifications of the Second World War, and heralded the more bi-polar world of the post-war years. The new bi-polarity, however, had significant modifications, and increasingly so. The bi-polar balance of power during the Cold War developed in notable contrast to the conception of a great power concert on which the United Nations was drafted. In the world of power politics, there were gross inequalities between the five permanent veto-invested members of the Security Council. France was coopted as a great power by courtesy – and of course as a future anchorage of Western interests in Europe; Britain, the hegemon of the age of imperialism, increasingly declined to a middle power status, and the membership of China became a pawn in the American-Soviet rivalry.

At the founding conference of the UN in 1945, there was also voiced some demand to recognise powers of the second rank by granting them priority in the selection of the non-permanent Security Council members.[15] These potentially formalised middle powers included Canada, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Poland, Holland and Belgium. The last two candidates may – besides the courteous inclusion of Poland – seem particularly strange today, but they were of course colonial powers of considerable range in 1945. Generally, however, this list, and any such list, is highly contestable, and may create continuous jealousies and demands for revision. The idea of middle powers, then, was abandoned in the eventual arrangements of the UN.

Decolonisation, indeed, was the crucial process through which regional great powers emerged. The rise of the Third World, as a demand for politico-economic standing for a nascent global 'estate', was symbolised by the colonial defeat at Dien Bien Phu, and voiced in the Bandung Conference. The spirit of Bandung, however, was not carried by a faceless anti-colonial mass. The leading centres of Third World mobilisation, and later within the non-allied movement, were new 'regional powers' like India, Indonesia, Egypt and, somewhat later, Algeria. These countries had considerable size, a large population and some strategical assets in terms of resources or location. But first and foremost they had an ambitious and able political leadership. India's early position was greatly enhanced by the leadership of Nehru; Indonesia likewise gained much of its standing from president Sukarno; Egypt acquired a higher profile through the ambitions and role of Nasser; Algeria aspired to regional and Third World leadership during the presidency of Boumedienne. Even smaller countries like Cuba, Ghana and divided Vietnam played a role in Third World mobilisation, due to offensive leaders such as Castro, Nkrumah and Ho Chi Minh. The new regional and Third World leaders did, of course, not attain their position in a systemic vacuum, but they may have been necessary if not sufficient conditions for the standing of their states.

The history of Third World mobilisation, and the concomitant emergence of regional powers in the periphery of superpower rivalry, testifies to the importance of charismatic leadership in the hierarchy of states. Structural power base and ambition as well as natural resources and action may interact and compensate for each other, even if no general assessment of the range of such compensations is possible.

Regional great powers in the modern world, however a 'regional power' is identified, operate in a wider context. The gradual relaxation of the post-Second World War bi-polar structure – expressed by the independent stance of China, the economic position of Japan and the NICs and the oil crises and the self-assertion of OPEC/OAPEC in the 1970s – implied higher standing for regional subsystems and their predominant states. Multi-polarity is *as such* a regionalisation of interstate power relationships.

The character of regional states systems is also, however, conditioned by the variation of Cold War strategies. On the Soviet side, the post-Stalin idea of peaceful coexistence implied intensified rivalries in the decolonising 'grey zone' between the power blocks. Non-communist, nationalist régimes in the Third World were no longer conceived as imperialist pawns, but as a potential area for friendship and cooperation to the ultimate disadvantage of the West, as a revival of the post-revolutionary front strategy of the early 1920s. Accordingly, several Third World states acquired Soviet economic and technical support, even if they eventually employed these externally supplied assets to gain a higher regional standing on their own. The vacillating loyalties of Egypt, Indonesia or Algeria during the 1960s are cases in point, and so are the shifting alliance patterns on the Horn of Africa in the late 1970s. North Vietnam remained the only former colony to achieve independence under a clearcut communist leadership, and Castro remained the prime example of a Third World leader converting to communism after fulfilling an originally non-communist revolution. The doctrine of peaceful coexistence was not only a strategy for Soviet influence. Incidentally, it also served to bolster non-communist régimes, with enhanced opportunities for regional governments to exploit the superpower rivalry.

American strategies of containment, on the other hand, were equally ambiguous. Periodically, containment implied a direct military response to perceived communist challenges, and involved intervention by force in shaken spheres of influence or even in the grey zones of rivalry. Periodically, however, it involved relative military retrenchment, with containment through support to regional alliance partners. There was a characteristic pendulum swing between 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' containment strategies throughout the Cold War years.[16] The dilemma of indirect containment through strong regional allies, however, is the risk that the regional ally may use the supplies transferred to it for ends which are not in the interest of the supplier, be that in the form of regional assertion or otherwise. To 'play the China card' in anti-Soviet diplomacy, with partial US retrenchment, meant that the card could also be played according to local rules. The Nixon-Kissinger strategy of relative retrenchment, known as the Guam doctrine, meant that key allies like Iran or South Vietnam could transform their diplomatic position if the favoured régime collapsed. Even 'superpower', for short, is quite limited power in the peripheral zones of rivalry. Regional great powers have partly been produced as the incidental bi-product of incomplete attempts to control regional developments from outside.

Finally, it is quite likely that an end to the Cold War would mean even greater opportunities for regional great powers. The multi-polarity of the last decades would be fortified with the declining role of global great powers and with the declining intensity of the rivalry between them, even if some regional balances could shift dramatically. The 'hegemonic decline' of the US *per se* implies greater regional assertiveness. Likewise, a 'world without the USSR' – as a current expression goes – would have unpredictable consequences for the hierarchy of states in the Asian and eastern European rims of that state formation.

THE GEOPOLITICS OF REGIONAL POWER

There is complex interaction between political, socio-economic and geographic elements both within regions and in their external relations. Any regional states system may be characterised and differentiated according to internal cohesion – culturally, politically and economically; according to infrastructure and communications; according to interstate relations like conflict, cooperation, and means of contact; and according to the regional hierarchy of powers.[17] Correspondingly, external and intrusive powers may affect regional affairs as to internal cohesion, communications systems, intensity of conflict or degree of cooperation, and power relations between regional states. The standing of powers, as we have seen, includes material capacities and location, military capabilities and motivational factors. The specification of regional great powers would require a comparative assessment of geopolitical characteristics like strategic location and size, centre-periphery structures, ethno-cultural diversity or cohesion, infrastructure and economic base.

It is, however, hard to find general correlates between political standing and geopolitical features, even if the academic literature is rife with suggestions. One author argues that 'the initial geopolitical characteristic of the dominant state is that its original core area is located at the junction

between the territory of its parent culture and that of a different culture'.[18] He cites historical examples like Castile and Austria between Christendom and Islam, but also has to recognise striking exceptions like the territorial expansion of the French state. Even if certain initial conditions and geopolitical correlates might explain historical cases of regional great power status, the explanations typically work only retrospectively, since *ad hoc* conditions, or the shadowy motivational factor, might account for the numerous power failures.

Most illuminating, perhaps, is the regional great power which aspired to a more comprehensive role, but which evidently failed because of geographic position and lack of resources for a wider power projection. Sweden, for one, was once a great power in the Baltic, but never gained a similar standing in the wider northern Europe. Poland, correspondingly, had dominated eastern Europe, but failed to attain a more comprehensive Slavic role. Italy, also, had acquired dominance in the eastern Mediterranean, while Mussolini failed to reassert Roman dominance in the wider Mediterranean area. There seem to be notable geopolitical differences between states which expanded to real great power status, and those which achieved only limited regional hegemony.[19]

The prerequisites and mechanisms of great power standing – global and regional – might be sought inductively and specifically. The general pattern, however, is likely to remain elusive. Still, a regional great power will at least be

- a state which is geographically a part of the delineated region
- a state which is able to stand up against any coalition of other states in the region
- a state which is highly influential in regional affairs
- a state which, contrary to a 'middle power', might also be a great power on the world scale in addition to its regional standing.

We may finally propose the major geopolitical regions and their candidates for regional great power standing.[20]

THE MAJOR CONTEMPORARY REGIONS – A TENTATIVE SUGGESTION

In *Europe* the most consistent candidates for great power status have been Germany, France, Russia and Great Britain, all based on a combination of military and economic strength. The modern states system itself originates in Europe, and the major states have also been great powers at the global arena. Germany has probably been the strongest continental candidate for regional great power status, and the paramount military conflicts in the area have been between Germany and various coalitions established to contain the German quest for power.

The Middle East and North Africa is characterised by several contenders for regional dominance, but no stable position for a singular great power has been achieved. Most Arab candidates have seen Arab unification as a vehicle to regional standing, while there is a basic conflict between Israel and all the other states. In its military standing Israel is a regional great power.

South Asia has a small number of states, with India as a dominant power in terms of population, military capabilities and economic strength. The wider influence of India is, however, somewhat frustrated by the conflict with Pakistan.

In *South East Asia* the state with the strongest power potential, Indonesia, is a regionally peripheral and insular country, without sufficient industrial, commercial and naval strength to dominate the adjacent area. The central area of the region is characterised by the polarity between Thailand and Vietnam, with Laos and Cambodia as buffer states. The advantage of Thailand in the rivalry with Vietnam has been the ASEAN cooperation and the alliance with China.

East Asia includes the Soviet Union, China and Japan, where all of them might be said to be great powers also in world politics. Regional affairs are dependent upon the tripartite relationship between these powers, and historically the rivalry has been expressed in wars over Korea and Manchuria. The potential for regional cooperation was aborted by the Japanese defeat in the Second World War, and by the the alliance patterns of the Cold War – as expressed most visibly in the sharp division of Korea. While the USSR also plays a role in Europe, *China* might alternatively be seen as a region in itself, with one imperial state including Tibet and Manchuria, and with a precarious independence of Mongolia and Taiwan – supported by alliances with the USSR and the USA respectively. A relatively weak economy, the burden of imperial cohesion, and the ideological isolation of the régime, have undermined China's standing as a real world power.

Australia and Oceania is a region dominated by Australia. Australia is, however, somewhat enclosed in the region, and this condition is underlined by the antagonism with Indonesia, which is in a way blocking the open access towards South East Asia.

Africa south of the Sahara has two major powers – Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa. The region is characterised by numerous weakly

integrated states with poorly developed production capacities. It is, furthermore, characterised by the antagonism between the strongest state, the Republic of South Africa, and the majority of the population on the continent, including the majority within the republic itself. These factors have contributed to the isolation of black Africa in world politics.

South America is overall characterised by underdeveloped economies, weakly developed state apparatuses and the dominance of the United States. Brazil and Argentina are the major candidates for regional great power status.

North America is, of course, completely dominated by the United States, which is also the strongest single state in the world. The US is the only great power which has consistently played a major role in all the other regions over the last 50 years.

NOTES

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15. Wight, *Power Politics*, p. 64.
16. John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
17. Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, 'The International Relations of Regions', *Polity*, II (1970): 397–425.
18. Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 64.
19. It was Stein Tønnesson who pressed for sticking one's neck out in this direction. I am grateful for his suggestions.