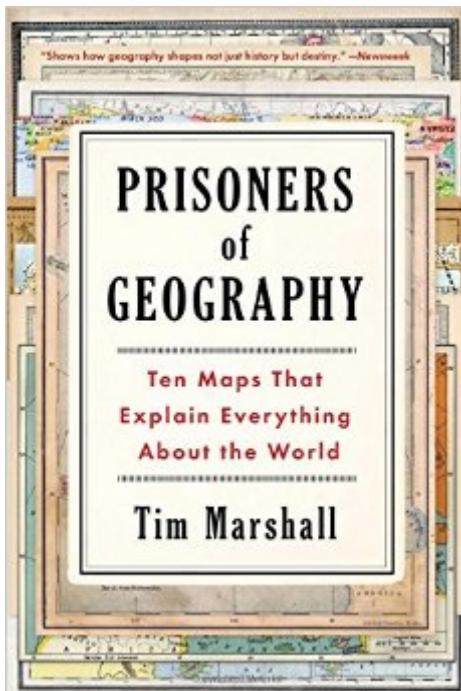


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# Prisoners Of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About The World



## Synopsis

In the bestselling tradition of *Why Nations Fail* and *The Revenge of Geography*, an award-winning journalist uses ten maps of crucial regions to explain the geo-political strategies of the world powers. All leaders of nations are constrained by geography. Their choices are limited by mountains, rivers, seas, and concrete. To understand world events, news organizations and other authorities often focus on people, ideas, and political movements, but without geography, we never have the full picture. Now, in the relevant and timely *Prisoners of Geography*, seasoned journalist Tim Marshall examines Russia, China, the USA, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Japan and Korea, and Greenland and the Arcticâ "their weather, seas, mountains, rivers, deserts, and bordersâ "to provide a context often missing from our political reportage: how the physical characteristics of these countries affect their strengths and vulnerabilities and the decisions made by their leaders. In ten, up-to-date maps of each region, Marshall explains in clear and engaging prose the complex geo-political strategies of these key parts of the globe. What does it mean that Russia must have a navy, but also has frozen ports six months a year? How does this affect Putinâ "s treatment of the Ukraine? How is Chinaâ "s future constrained by its geography? Why will Europe never be united? Why will America never be invaded? Shining a light on the unavoidable physical realities that shape all of our aspirations and endeavors, *Prisoners of Geography* is the critical guide to one of the major (and most often overlooked) determining factors in world history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Using physical geography with a bit of climatology thrown in, author Tim Marshall explains Planet Earth's geo-politics in a refreshing and stimulating way. His structure is to lay out ten maps of continents and countries and to delve into the specifics of oceans, rivers, mountains, deserts and climate to explain how some countries have expanded greatly (Russia), others not at all (Korea) and why certain places in the world lend themselves to strife and conflict, while others lead to greater economic opportunity, cooperation, trade and stability. "Prisoners of Geography" is a bold work. Some readers may think that Marshall's approach is reductionist in a 19th century sort of way, that everything can be explained by geo-determinism. I found it quite the opposite. Marshall's analysis of Japan and Korea (one of his ten maps) and of India and Pakistan (another of the ten) explain how in these situations, two different nation-states and cultures butt-up against each other and unfortunately are stuck in a permanent dance pose that neither wants to be in. His map of Africa with its current political boundaries resulted when six 19th century European colonial powers in the second "Great Game," arbitrarily drew lines on a map. A century later, the post-WWII drive to independence among these weak colonies resulted in several dozen new nation states most of which lack a well-defined cultural, linguistic and religious, as well as a primary tribal or ethnic identity. Most of these new African nations are destined to continue as weak nation-states for the immediate and foreseeable future, "prisoners of geography" as Marshall would say.

Wealth, Poverty and Politics: An International Perspective Recently, I read Thomas Sowell's outstanding new book "Wealth, Poverty and Politics: An International Perspective" in which the author argues passionately and convincingly that it is geography and not the so-called evils of capitalism that accounts for much of the economic disparity in the world today. Thus, when I spotted Tim Marshall's new book "Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World" I decided to take my investigation into this subject to a whole other level. This definitely proved to be time very well spent. According to some in the media with a political ax to grind, we in the developed world are something akin to vultures swooping down intent on robbing third world nations of their wealth and natural resources. This is the constant drumbeat. Rarely do the reporters who cobble together these stories take the time to consider why these countries have been unable to mine or extract these assets themselves. What you will discover in this book is that it all too often boils down to impediments caused by geography. Economic development in Africa has been stymied for centuries by a number of factors such as a lack of deepwater harbors, rivers that are simply not navigable and tropical diseases. It is much the same story in Latin America where mountainous terrain, jungles and a lack of deep harbors restrain development. You will discover that

save for certain geographic obstacles the nation of Brazil would already be an economic powerhouse. Meanwhile, geography has implications for rich and powerful nations as well.

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