



Why Geography Matters: Three Challenges Facing America: Climate Change, the Rise of China, and Global Terrorism

Harm de Blij

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Over the next half century, the human population, divided by culture and economics and armed with weapons of mass destruction, will expand to nearly 9 billion people. Abrupt climate change may throw the global system into chaos; China will emerge as a superpower; and Islamic terrorism and insurgency will threaten vital American interests. How can we understand these and other global challenges? Harm de Blij has a simple answer: by improving our understanding of the world's geography.

De Blij demonstrates how geography's perspectives yield unique and penetrating insights into the interconnections that mark our shrinking world. Centuries ago a surge of climate change halted China's maritime plans; more recently, environmental calamity altered the course of geopolitical events in East Asia; today, terrorists look for failed and malfunctioning states to base their operations--and some of these are in our own hemisphere.

Preparing for climate change, averting a cold war with China, defeating terrorism: all of this requires geographic knowledge. In *Why Geography Matters*, de Blij makes an urgent call to restore geography to America's educational curriculum. He shows how and why the U.S. has become the world's most geographically illiterate society of consequence--and demonstrates that this geographic illiteracy is a direct risk to America's national security.

In this personal and engaging book, de Blij provides a geographer's perspective on the challenges of this new century. As he states, "We are crossing the threshold to a century that will witness massive environmental change, major population shifts, persistent civilizational conflicts [and] while geographic knowledge by itself cannot solve these problems, they will not be effectively approached without it."

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