

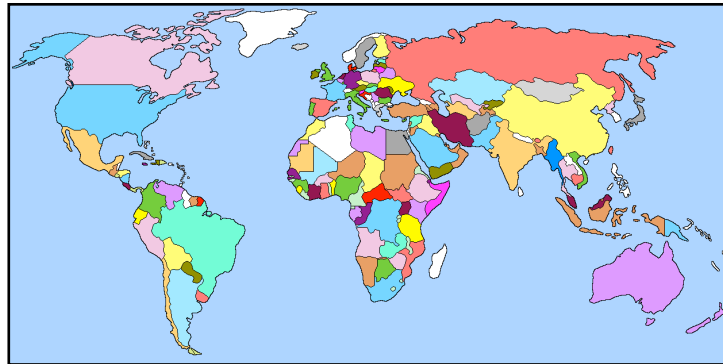
AMERICA AS THE WORLD POLICE POWER

I. The World We Live In

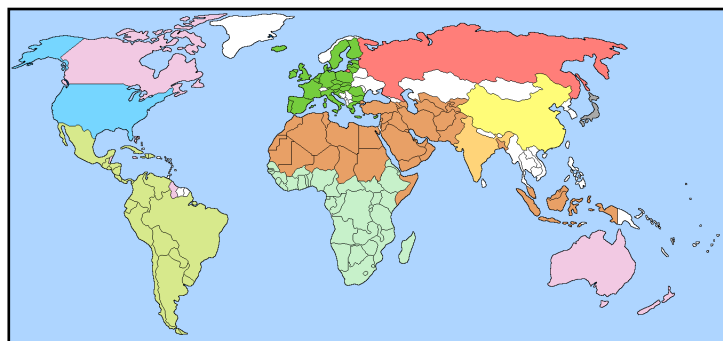
A. The Ten Cultural Blocks of the World

1. To understand America's unique role in the world, we must learn to see the world as an organized whole. Some—very few, in fact—give the world a uniquely national impulse:
 - a) **The United States** - It is the world's greatest military superpower by far, and also collectively the world's richest and most influential country. No nation has ever played a more disproportionately important role in directing the course of history.
 - b) **China** - This ancient nation is a distant second, but still a very populous and now economically important country. The "Made in China" phenomenon is a global reality that could not have been imagined just 40 years ago.
 - c) **Russia** - This former communist country engages in relatively little international trade, despite its sheer size and resources, but it has an anti-American posture and a large military that gives a distinctive thrust to history.
 - d) **Japan** - This island nation once tried to create a massive empire, but was stopped by the United States and is now an American ally in Asia, and an exceptionally prosperous and technologically advanced country.
 - e) **India** - This very populous nation has a distinctive spectrum of religious practices known collectively as "Hinduism." As a country, it seeks to maintain these values even though they have no applicability elsewhere.
2. Most countries, like most people, experience history as a "tide" of human events carrying them along, over which they have little or no control. Some countries participate in alliances or associations that are historically important. We will refer to these as "cultural blocks":
 - a) **The European Union** - Germany, France, and Britain used to be among the world's great powers, projecting their *national* cultures out into the world. Now they affect the world by seeking peaceful coexistence through *supranationalism* (which suppresses national values) in the form of. Since there are generally no border controls between these countries and they use the same money (the "Euro") they almost act like a single "United States of Europe."
 - b) **The Islamic World** - Northern Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia include countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran as cultural block. None of the countries in this block have sufficient military power or a *national* culture that impacts the world beyond their immediate neighborhood. But the religiosity of this collection of nations does impact the course of history today. Most followers of the religion of Islam have acquiesced to a cosmopolitan way of life, but a modern reaction against religious toleration and peaceful coexistence with other cultures in the form of *Islamism* (which notoriously promotes terrorism) means that this block is deeply divided and imparts a violent thrust to history.

- c) **The Anglosphere** - Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (along with a few smaller countries) make up a group of former possessions of the British Empire, which is not important enough to change the course of history by itself, but its members tend to be allied with the United States, thus contributing to the *America-centrism* of the world.
- d) **The Iberosphere** - This other group of former European colonies includes Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which were once controlled by their mother countries, Spain & Portugal (together known as “Iberia”). These countries impart little to history other than their continuing desire to maintain a degree of independence from their overbearing neighbor, the United States.
- e) **Sub-Saharan Africa** - These nations, south of the Sahara desert in Africa, are poor and still struggling to develop stable governments. They are distinct from northern Africa by the wide acceptance of Christianity and influence of European culture upon them instead of Islam.
- f) Not all the countries of the world fit into a model with ten major blocks. This does not mean they are of no interest. It simply means that they do not affect history on the same scale. They are either entirely within the orbit of some major country or block, or they exhibit strong dependencies upon more than one major country or block. We must always be mindful of the role they might play in affecting how the major blocks act and interact.



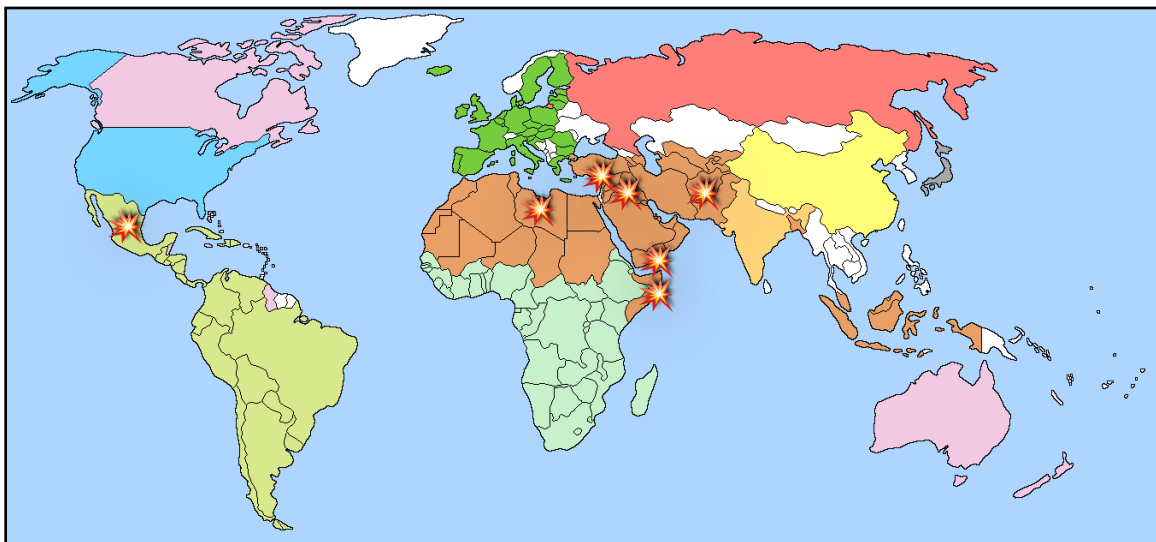
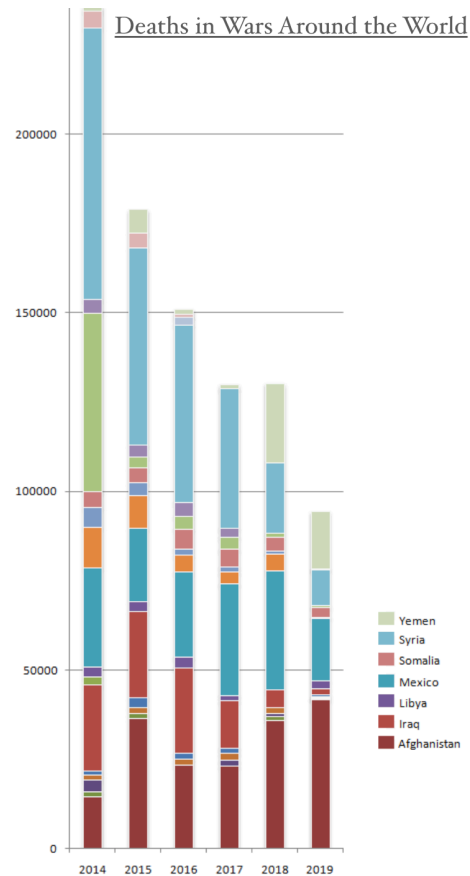
The pattern of the world's countries today is too complex to use as a base for learning about history. We need to learn to see the world in terms of its most important historical building blocks.



Thinking of the world in terms of historical building blocks or “cultural blocks” gives us a much clearer picture. *Please be sure to study your geography handout, if you are not clear which is which.*

B. Wars Around the World Today

1. Although there are significant wars being waged around the world today, we live in a surprisingly peaceful time, in large part due to the fact that the United States acts as the self-appointed “world police power.”
2. In 2019, for instance, there were fewer than 100,000 deaths from major armed conflicts around the world, which is by far the lowest number over the past five years, and vastly smaller than the death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic, which may reach a death toll of 2,000,000 in 2020 alone.
3. Apart from a conflict in Mexico, which is unique because it consists of a war between the government and an organized criminal organization, all the major wars (Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan) are found in the Islamic world. (Mapping the conflicts onto our organized world map gives us one dramatic illustration of how useful the concept of “cultural blocks” can be. One is obviously different than all the others.)



Mapping the location of the world’s most destructive wars in 2019 with “cultural blocks” as a backdrop gives an obvious indication that major wars are a distinguishing feature of one cultural block in particular.