

self-confidence. Yet Russia is also in an untenable geopolitical position. Unless Russia exerts itself to create a sphere of influence, the Russian Federation could itself fragment. On the other hand, creating that sphere of influence could generate conflict with the United States and Europe.

Third, there is continuing doubt about the ultimate framework of Europe. For five centuries Europe has been an arena of constant warfare. For the last sixty years it has been either occupied or trying to craft a federation that would make the return of war impossible. Europe may yet have to deal with the resurgence of Russia, the bullying of the United States, or internal tensions. The door is certainly not closed on conflict.

Fourth, there is the Islamic world. It is not instability that is troubling, but the emergence of a nation-state that, regardless of ideology, might form the basis of a coalition. Historically, Turkey has been the most successful center of power in the Muslim world. Turkey is also a dynamic and rapidly modernizing country. What is its future, and what is the future of other Muslim nation-states?

Fifth, there is the question of Mexican-American relations. Normally, the status of Mexico would not rise to the level of a global fault line, but its location in North America makes it important beyond its obvious power. As the country with the fifteenth highest GDP in the world, it should not be underestimated on its own merits. Mexico has deep and historical issues with the United States, and social forces may arise over the next century that cannot be controlled by either government.

In order to pinpoint events that will occur in the future, we need to examine now which of these events are likely to occur and in what order. A fault line does not necessarily guarantee an earthquake. Fault lines can exist for millennia causing only occasional tremors. But with this many major fault lines, conflict in the twenty-first century is almost certain.

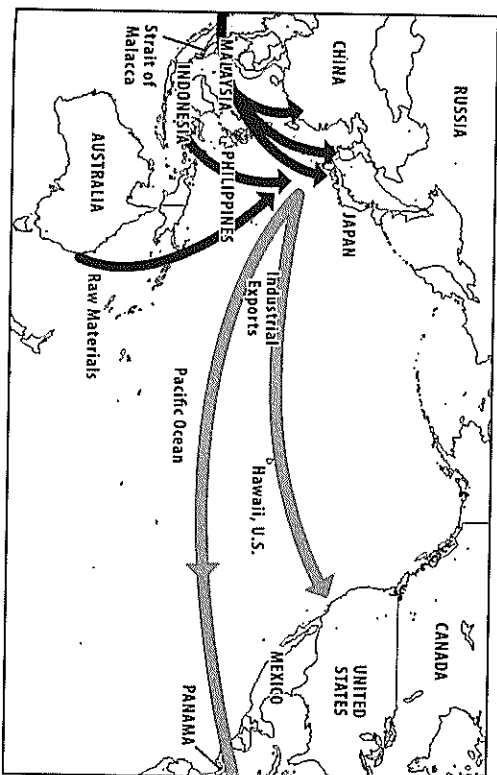
THE PACIFIC BASIN

The western shore of the Pacific has been the fastest-growing region in the world for the past half century. It contains two of the world's largest economies, those of Japan and China. Along with other East Asian economies,

they are heavily dependent on maritime trade, shipping goods to the United States and Europe and importing raw material from the Persian Gulf and the rest of the Pacific Basin. Any interruption in the flow of commodities would be damaging. An extended interruption would be catastrophic.

Let's consider Japan, the world's second-largest economy and the only major industrial power to possess no major natural resources of any sort. Japan must import all of its major minerals, from oil to aluminum. Without those imports—particularly oil—Japan stops being an industrial power in a matter of months. To gauge the importance of this flow, bear in mind that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941 because the United States had interfered with its access to raw materials.

China has also emerged as a major industrial power in the last generation, with growth surpassing that of any other major economy in the world, although its economy is still far smaller than that of Japan or the United States. Nevertheless, China is now a key player in the Pacific Basin. Previously, it was much more self-sufficient than Japan in terms of primary commodities. But as China has grown, it has outstripped its own resources and become a net importer of raw materials.



Pacific Trade Routes