



Ottoman Empire

the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 and consider which country must be taken seriously in the region, it seems obvious that it must be Turkey, an ally of the United States and the region's most important economic power.

MEXICO

If anyone had said in 1950 that the world's great economic powerhouses a half century later would be Japan and Germany, ranked second and third, that person would have been ridiculed. If you argued in 1970 that by 2007 China would be the world's fourth-largest economic power, the laughter would have been even more intense. But it would have been no funnier than arguing in 1800 that the United States by 1900 would be a world power. Things change, and the unexpected should be expected.

It is important to note, therefore, that in 2007 Mexico had the world's fifteenth-largest economy, just a bit behind Australia. Mexico ranked much lower in per capita income, of course, placing sixtieth, with a per capita in-

come of roughly \$12,000 a year as measured by the International Monetary Fund, ranking with Turkey and way ahead of China, undoubtedly a major power.

Per capita income is important. But the total size of the economy is even more important for international power. Poverty is a problem, but the size of the economy determines what percentage of your resources you can devote to military and related matters. The Soviet Union and China both had low per capita incomes. Yet the sheer sizes of their economies made them great powers. In fact, a substantial economy plus a large population have historically made a nation something to be reckoned with, regardless of poverty.

Mexico's population was about 27 million in 1950. It surged to about 100 million over the next fifty years and to 107 million by 2005. The UN forecast for 2050 is between 114 million and 139 million people, with 114 million being more probable. Having increased about fourfold in the last fifty years, Mexico's population will be basically stable in the next fifty. But Mexico will not lose population (like the advanced industrial countries will in the future), and Mexico has the workforce it needs to expand. This gives it an advantage. So, in terms of population or size, Mexico is not a small country. Certainly it is an unstable country, torn by drugs and cartels, but China was in chaos in 1970. Chaos can be overcome.

There are plenty of other countries like Mexico that we would not label as significant geopolitical fault lines. But Mexico is fundamentally different from any of these, like Brazil or India. Mexico is in North America, which, as we have discovered, is now the center of gravity of the international system. It also fronts both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and shares a long and tense border with the United States. Mexico has already fought a major war with the United States for domination of North America, and lost. Mexico's society and economy are intricately bound together with those of the United States. Mexico's strategic location and its increasing importance as a nation make it a potential fault line.

To understand the nature of the fault line, let me briefly touch on the concept of borderland. Between two neighboring countries, there is frequently an area that has, over time, passed back and forth between them. It is an area of mixed nationalities and cultures. For example, Alsace-Lorraine lies between France and Germany. It has a unique mixed culture and indi-