

National University of Singapore
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

**GEH1022/GEK1022: GEOPOLITICS:
GEOGRAPHIES OF WAR AND PEACE**

SEMESTER 2: 2017/2018

EXAMINER: DR CARL GRUNDY-WARR

28 APRIL 2018 (9 AM) TIME ALLOWED: 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Please write your matriculation/registration number only.
Do not write your name.
2. This examination paper contains **SEVEN** questions and comprises seven printed pages.
3. Answer **ANY THREE** questions.
4. Start each question on a new page. Please write legibly.
5. This is a **CLOSED BOOK** examination.

ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS

1. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, a scholar of “critical geopolitics” argues that: ‘One reason why geopolitics has become popular once again is that it deals with comprehensive visions of the world political map. Geopolitics addresses the “big picture” and offers a way of relating local and regional dynamics to the global system as a whole.’ (Ó Tuathail, G., Dalby, S., and Routledge, P., editors (2003 edition) *The Geopolitics Reader*, London: Routledge, p.1). Discuss this notion of geopolitics with reference to at least **two** cases examined in this module.
2. ‘We live in a mediated world – all that we know about the world beyond our personal experience comes to us from us via various media, whether it is the printed word, the televisual, radio, or something else entirely. The media, even colonize our personal experiences; it is almost impossible to go somewhere without preconceived notions of what to look at and how to feel about it. (...) Thus, the media play a major role in not only how we see the world, but also how we make sense of it.’ (Jason Dittmer, 2010, *Popular Culture, Geopolitics and Identity*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, pp.15-16). With reference to any **two** of the images below, plus other cases as appropriate, discuss how and why media shapes ways of seeing and thinking geopolitically.



Figure 1 Picture by photographer Nick Ut, children fleeing napalm strike, Vietnam, 1972.

Source: <http://www.artnet.de/k%C3%BCnstler/nick-ut/>



Figure 2 Still shot from Rithy Panh's 2013 film about life under the Khmer Rouge, *The Missing Picture*.

Source: <https://howardforfilm.com/2014/08/28/movie-review-the-missing-picture/>



Figure 3 Nuon Chea, former Brother Number 2 of the Khmer Rouge, in a scene with one of film-makers and leading researcher, Thet Sombath, in the 2010 film *Enemies of the People*.

Source: <http://enemiesofthepeoplemovie.com/Press/DownloadPressKit>



Figure 4 Bradley Cooper as Chris Kyle in Warner Bros. Pictures' and Village Roadshow Pictures' *American Sniper*.

Source: <http://time.com/3712801/american-sniper-oscars-box-office/>

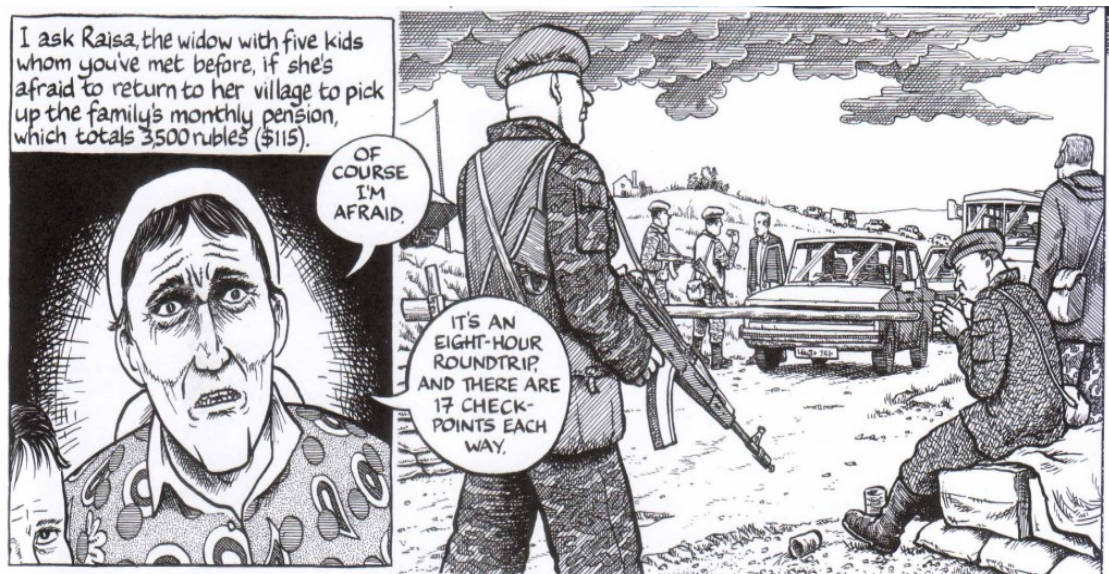


Figure 5 Images by cartoon journalist, Joe Sacco.

Source: <http://www.hoodedutilitarian.com/2012/07/joe-saccos-journalism/>

3. 'Borders should be studied not only from a top-down perspective, but also from the bottom up, with a focus on the individual border narratives and experiences, reflecting the ways in which borders impact upon the daily lives of people living in and around the borderland and transboundary transition zones' (David Newman, 2006, 'The lines that continue to separate us. Borders in our 'borderless' world', *Progress in Human Geography*, 30, 2: 143-161, p. 143). Critically discuss with reference to at least **two** distinct examples.

4. Territory is not just a geographical backdrop to politics: Politics is actively engaged in the transforming, molding and changing of space for particular purposes (from Lecture 4 on Territory). According to Eyal Weizman, who studies forensic architecture: 'Political action is fully absorbed in the organization, erasure and subversion of space' (Weizman, 2007, *Hollow Land. Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, London and New York: Verso, p. 7). Critically examine these statements in relation to the geopolitical issues that relate to Figure 6 **and** Figure 7.



Figure 6 Eyal Weizman questions an Israeli soldier at Oush Grab military base in the West Bank, video still.

Source: *Al Jazeera* documentary, *Rebel Architecture*, episode 3. Taken from: <http://www.uncubemagazine.com/blog/14190357>



Figure 7 Building up a reef in the South China Sea.

Source: <http://www.dw.com/en/chinese-media-tough-us-line-on-south-china-sea-islands-would-risk-war/a-37118221>

5. Two developments after I became Secretary of Defense reinforced my way of thinking about Vietnam; the intensification of relations between Cuba and the Soviets, and a new wave of Soviet provocations in Berlin. Both seemed to underscore the aggressive intent of Communist policy. In that context, the danger of Vietnam's loss and, through falling dominoes, the loss of all Southeast Asia made it seemed reasonable to consider expanding the US effort in Vietnam.' (Robert S. McNamara).



Figure 8 Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defence for the USA, at a news conference at the Pentagon in 1965.

Source:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/07/us/07mcnamara.html?pagewanted=all>

With reference to McNamara's statement and the "hot" Cold War in Vietnam, discuss why practical geopolitical discourse does not necessarily reflect grounded political geography and the politics of place.

6. Define what is meant by the term ecological security, and critically discuss the relevance of this term to Arctic geopolitics.

7. According to many observers, the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative is a geopolitical project devised by the leaders of China to realise the dream of making the country strong and powerful again. With reference to Figures 9 and 10, critically discuss the statement.



Figure 9 Source: Outlook Magazine, India

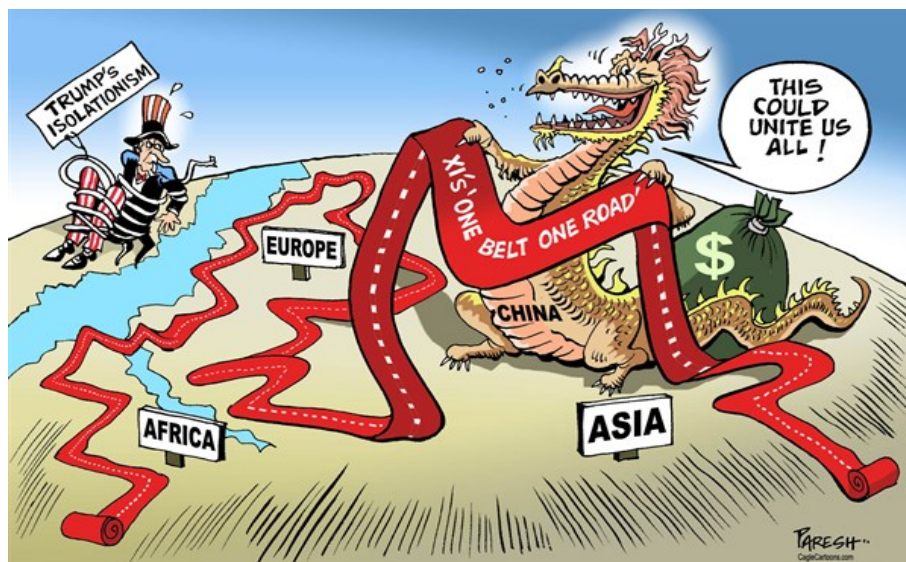


Figure 10 Source: The Khaleej Times, United Arab Emirates

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