

Tim Marshall – ‘Prisoners of Geography : Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need To Know About Global Politics’

This is a very readable book on geopolitics. Marshall is a journalist, reporter and a leading authority on foreign affairs. The book is split into 10 chapters covering different regions of the world and explaining how physical geographical features such as mountains and rivers have determined what various countries have been able to achieve over the centuries and what limitations they have faced. The book is full of information and in many cases the points made are obvious but Marshall explains the consequences of the geographical features on the development of the countries concerned in a way that is easy to understand. He also occasionally injects humour into his writing - for example his chapter on Korea and Japan starts with the words “How Do You Solve A Problem Like Korea?” Much is also made of the fact that many countries’ borders were lines drawn on a map by colonial officials without regard to the true position on the ground thus giving rise to future conflict. The maps

accompanying each chapter added to the understanding of the issues and the enjoyment of the book.