



# *POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY*

## *PART II*

Every political system is an accumulation of habits, customs, prejudices and principles that have survived a long process of trial and error and of ceaseless response to changing circumstances. If the system works well on the whole, it is a lucky accident – the luckiest, indeed, that can befall a society.

-Edward C. Banfield



# *Geographic Characteristics of States*

- Boundaries
- Location





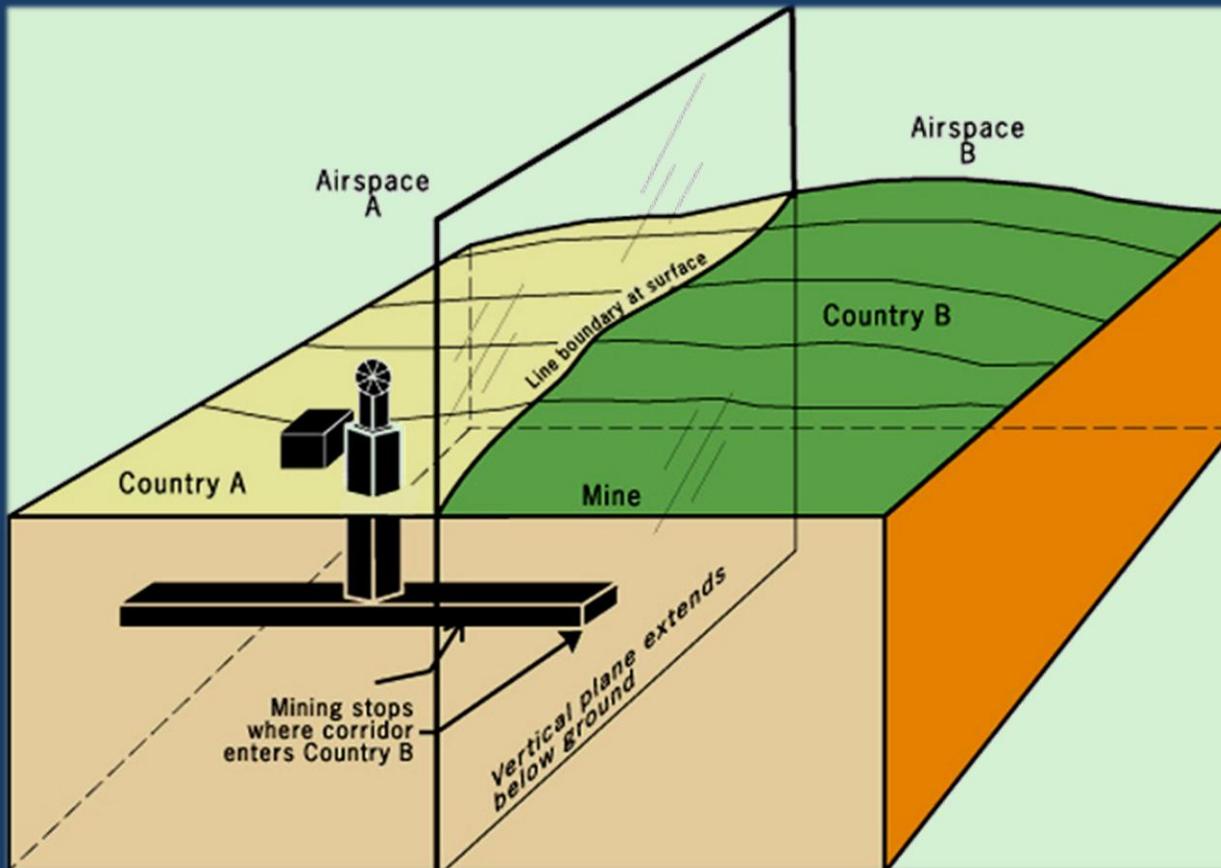
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# *BOUNDARIES*





# What Is a Boundary?



...a vertical plane that cuts through the ground below and the airspace above, dividing one state territory from another



# *Boundary Development*

## Boundary Development (a three step process)

1. Definition: the boundary is defined and described.
2. Delimitation: the boundary is mapped.
3. Demarcation: the boundary is made visible in the physical landscape.



# *Boundary Landscapes*

- There are two general types of boundary landscapes.
  - exclusionary: designed to keep people out (the US-Mexico border)
  - inclusionary: designed to facilitate trade and movement (the US-Canada border)



US-Canada Border Crossing at Ontario



# Boundaries Often Divide Resources



Kuwait pumps oil from a large reserve that lies mostly in Iraq.



# *Boundary Types*

- natural
- artificial
- antecedent
- subsequent (2 types)
  - consequent
  - superimposed
- relict
- vertical



# Natural Boundary



...a boundary or part of a boundary that *follows a physical feature* – lake, river, coastline, valley, etc – such as the boundary between Costa Rica and Nicaragua

May seem like a good idea but, in practice, there are problems.



# Artificial Boundary

...an alternative to natural boundaries ... Geometric boundaries usually initially drawn on a map *without regard for existing features* or populations – such as Wyoming's state boundaries.





# *Antecedent Boundary*



*...a boundary drawn before an area is well populated and prior to any cultural landscape features ...*  
example: the state boundaries of Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia; the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel separating the US and Canada



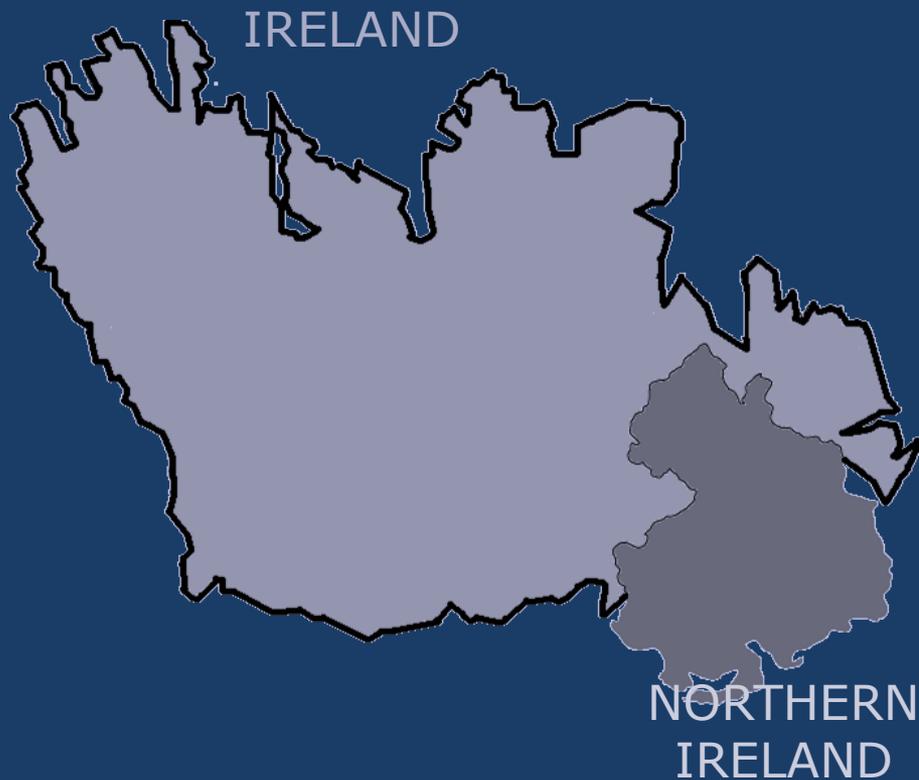
# *Subsequent Boundary*

...a boundary drawn after the development of the cultural landscape, such as the boundary between Vietnam and China, *resulting from a long period of modification* ... There are two types of subsequent boundaries -  
- *consequent* and *superimposed*.





# *Consequent Boundary*



...a border drawn to  
*accommodate*  
*existing cultural*  
*differences* ... the  
border between  
Northern Ireland  
and Ireland, for  
example



# *Superimposed Boundary*

...a boundary imposed on an area by a conquering or colonizing power that is *not concerned about pre-existing cultural patterns*  
... Africa, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Indonesia and etc





# *Relict Boundary*

...a former boundary that once had meaning but *no longer functions* as such, usually marked by landscape features – for example, the border between the former North and South Vietnam, the abandoned castles dotting the frontier zone between Wales and England, the border between the former East and West Germany

FORMER NORTH



VIETNAM

FORMER SOUTH



# *Vertical Boundary*

- Vertical territory
  - How much airspace and subsurface does a state own?
- For centuries the common-law doctrine was "To whomsoever the soil belongs, he owns also to the sky and to the depths." In other words, you had *complete control over everything above and below your property*.
- In 1926, Congress passed the Air Commerce Act, which declared that the navigable air space of the US was *a public highway, open to all citizens*. (Other states did the same.)



# *Vertical Boundary*

- The 1944 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation declared that *each state had sovereignty over the airspace above its territory*. (Now states had the rights that historically had belonged to individuals.)
- Today, by international law, the notion of a state's sovereign airspace corresponds with the maritime definition of territorial waters with regard to how far it extends *horizontally*.
- There is no international agreement on the *vertical* extent of sovereign airspace (Outer space is not subject to state jurisdiction.), with suggestions ranging from 19 to 99 miles.
- Quite a bit of international agreement exists concerning states' fresh water rights. Despite that, armed conflict over fresh water rights is frequent.





# *Vertical Boundary*

- There is little international law regarding underground resources (oil, gas, gold, coal and other metals and minerals) other than that it is the right of sovereign states to legislate and regulate activities such as resource extraction. (The US is one of the few states in which individuals, not the government, own mineral rights.)
- While it is clear that a state has sovereignty over anything under its territorial jurisdiction (including both water and other resources), there is no practical process for dealing with an aggressive neighbor other than armed conflict.
- Currently, the closest thing we have to a practical agreement in this area is the Van Bynkershoek Principle. Van Bynkershoek was a Dutch jurist in the 17<sup>th</sup> century who had a lasting influence on the field of international law.



# Vertical Boundary

- The Van Bynkershoek Principle says the state's claim to space is as far as the state has *the ability to back up the claim* unless there is an international agreement.
- In the absence of an international agreement, then, a state has sovereignty over whatever it can defend.



Iraq and Syria, witnessing their farmland turning into dustbowls and their people migrating elsewhere, say upstream Turkey's Atatürk Dam on the Euphrates River is the root of the problem.



# *Law of the Sea*

- Needed because of the weakness of the older *freedom of the seas concept*, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century: states' rights limited to 3 nautical miles. All water beyond states' boundaries was considered international waters – free to all states, but belonging to none of them.
- In the 20<sup>th</sup> century many states expressed a need to extend claims. In 1945 President Truman extended the US's control to cover all the natural resources of its continental shelf.



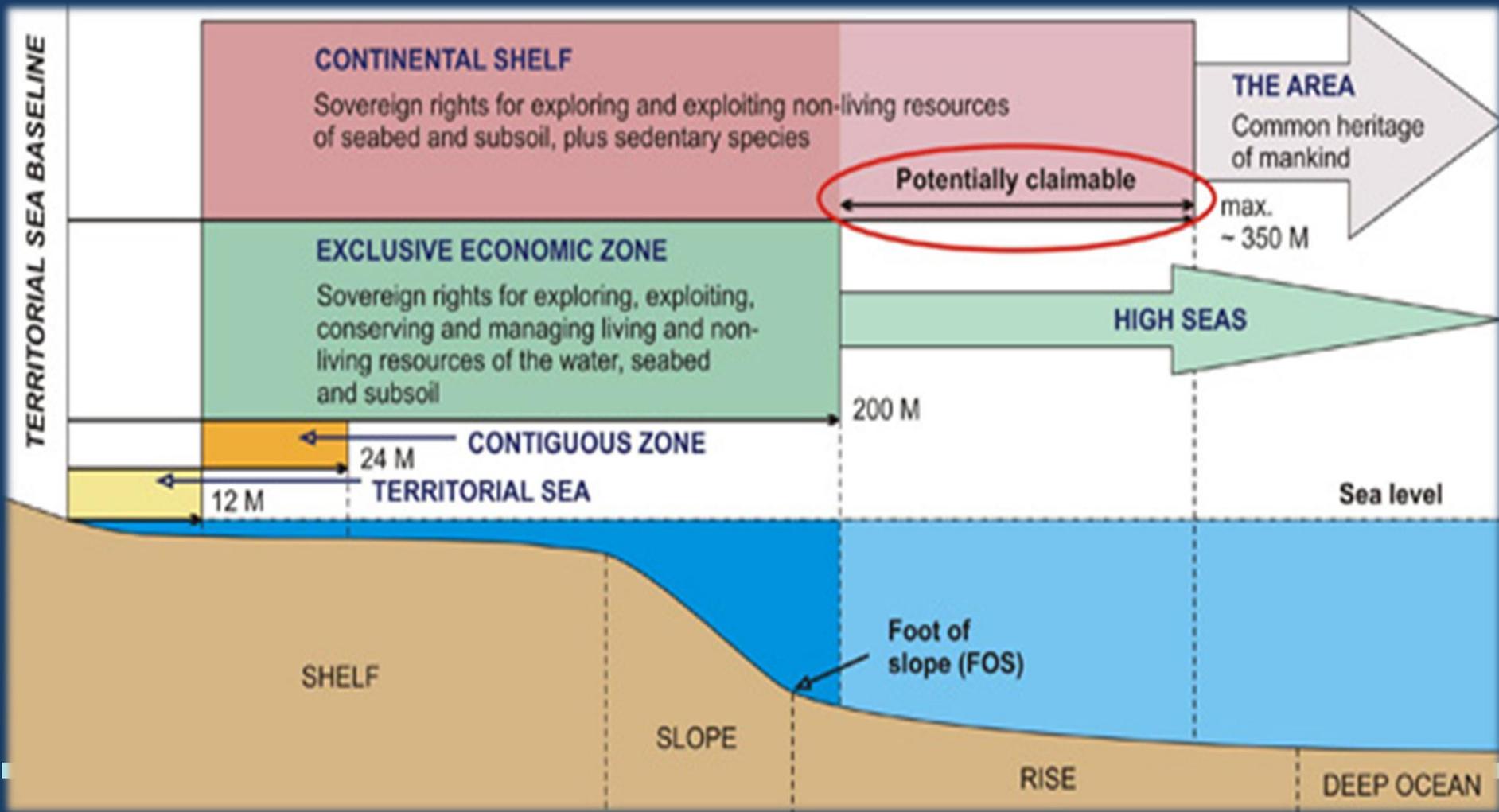
# *Law of the Sea*

- Other states were quick to emulate the US. Between 1946 and 1950, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Ecuador all extended their sovereign rights to a 200 nautical miles distance, to cover fishing grounds. Other states extended their territorial seas to 12 nautical miles. [See next slide.]
- As of 2006, only a handful of states use the old 3 miles limit, among those are Jordan, Palau and Singapore.





# Law of the Sea





# *LOCATION*

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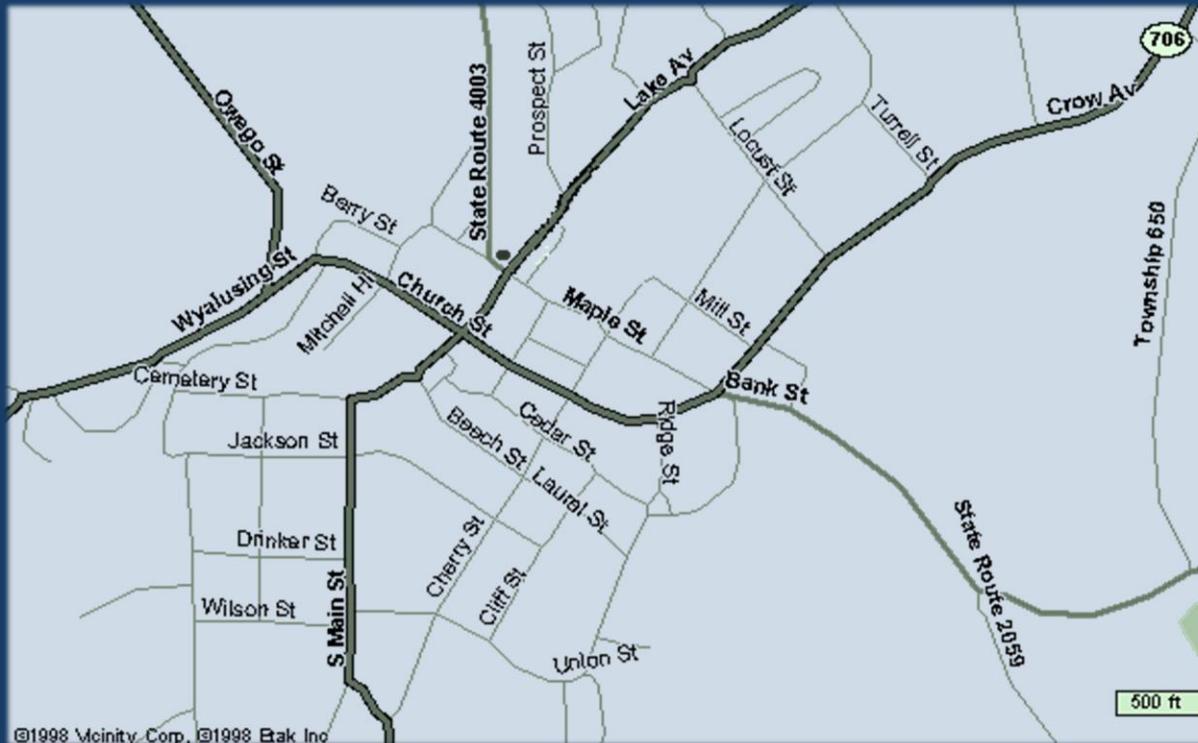
# *Location*

- **Absolute Location**
  - ...position with respect to grid (latitude and longitude)
  - For example, Gibraltar's absolute location is 36°09N 5°21W.
- **Relative Location**
  - ...position vis-à-vis other states and regions
  - For example, Gibraltar's relative location is crucial as a British colony at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Strategic Location**
  - ...position of some significance to other states



# *Absolute Location*

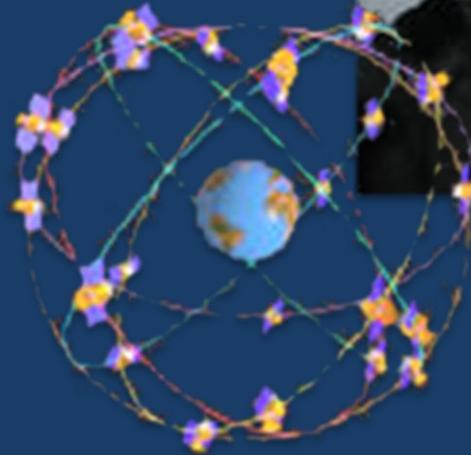
An exact address





# *Absolute Location*

GPS – Global  
Positioning  
Satellite  
System









# *Who are the landlocked states?*

- Landlocked states have a serious disadvantage in trade and access to resources.
- In Europe, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia, Moldova, Slovakia, Switzerland and the Czech Republic are landlocked. San Marino and Vatican City are surrounded by Italy. Also landlocked are Andorra, Hungary, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Macedonia and Serbia.
- In South America, Bolivia and Paraguay lost their coastlines in war.





# *Who are the landlocked states?*

- Africa has more landlocked states than any other continent. Sahel is poorly linked to coastal ports. Uganda is linked by rail. Zimbabwe has access via South African and Mozambique ports. Zambia and Malawi have only poor connections. Lesotho is surrounded by South Africa. Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, South Sudan and Swaziland are also landlocked states.





# *Who are the landlocked states?*

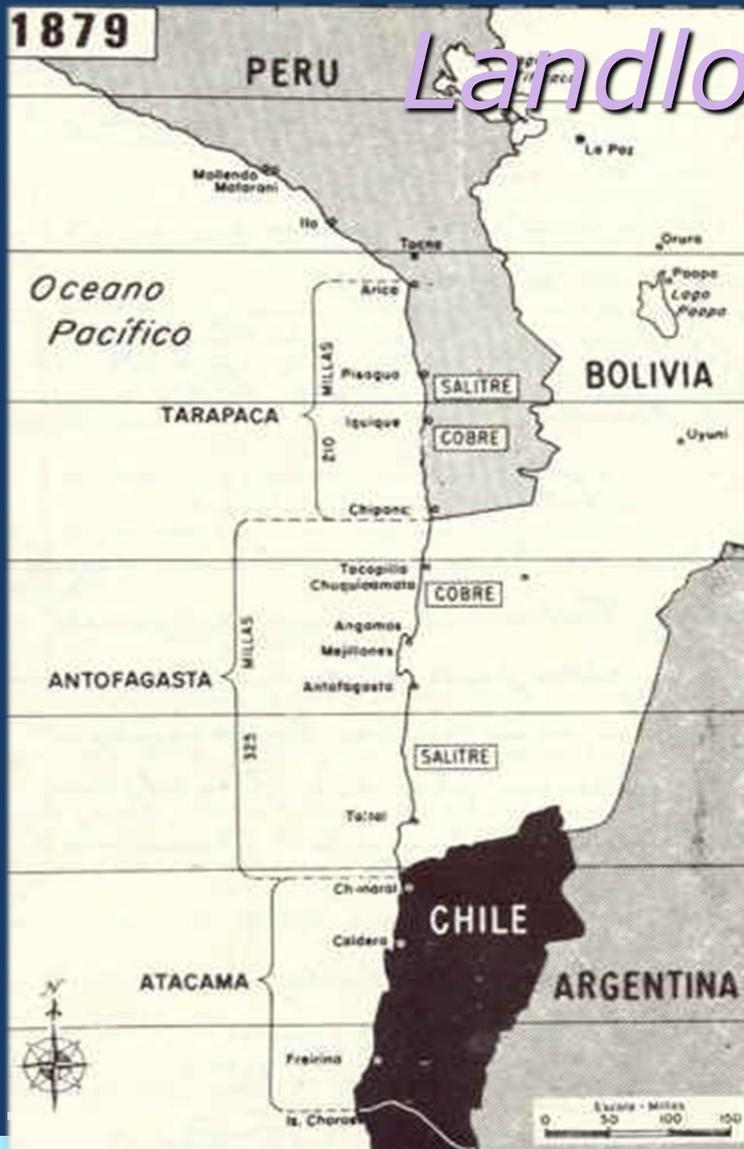
- In Asia, Mongolia and Nepal are landlocked with rough terrain, great distances and limited communication. Others include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, South Ossetia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.





# *Landlocked States*





# Landlocked Bolivia



- In 1879-1883, Bolivia and Peru allied against Chile in the War of the Pacific.
- Chile won and took Antofagasta, Tarapaca and Arica, coastal areas rich in nitrates.
- Bolivia lost access to the Pacific and became landlocked.
- The Bolivian Navy still practices on Lake Titicaca.



# Strategic Location



strategic location of oil resources in Iraq and Kuwait

- ...relative location of importance to two or more states

- military / economic significance

- many **straits** are good examples – Malacca, Bosphorus, Bering Strait, Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Gibraltar

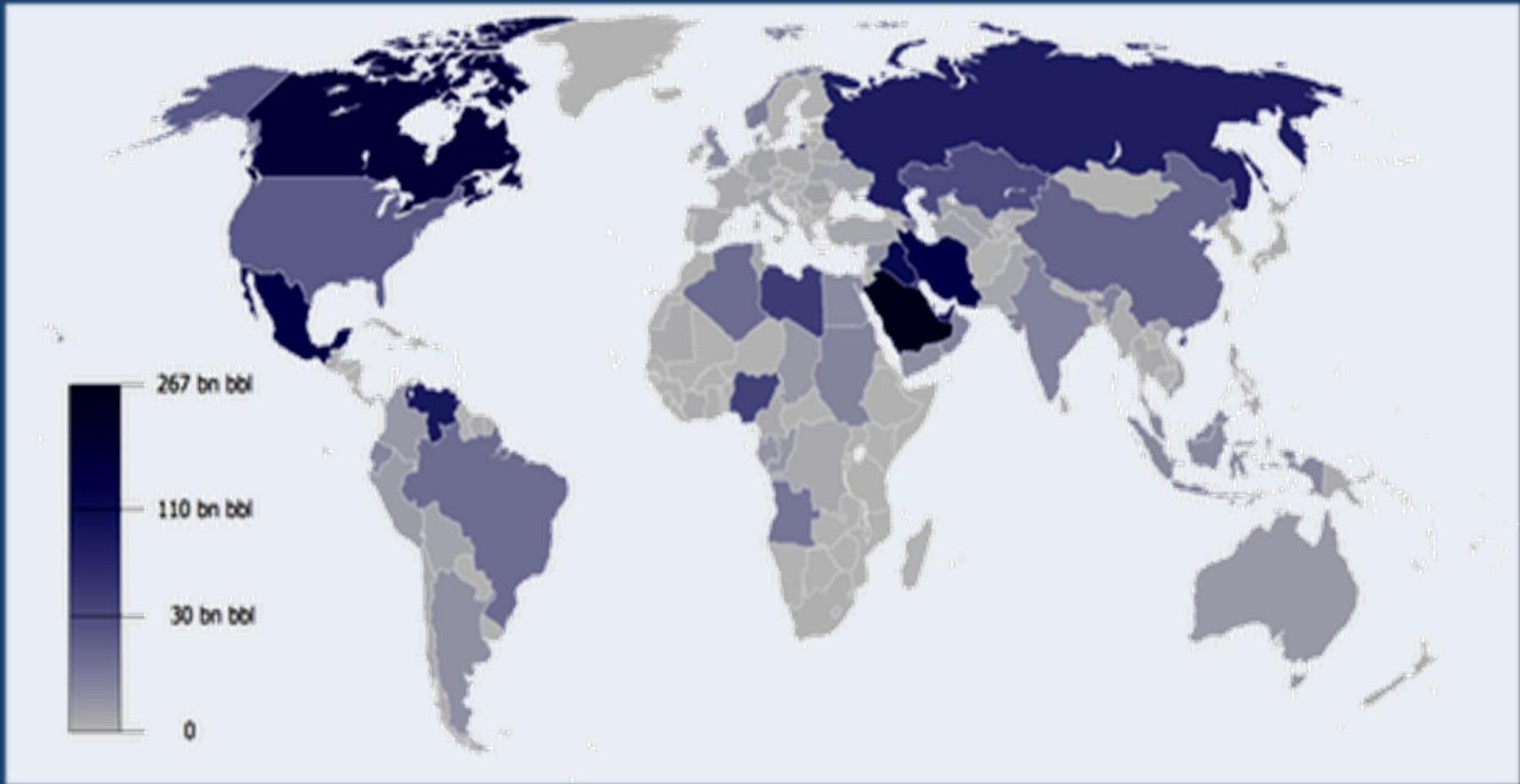
- **canals** – Suez, Panama

- source of **strategic resources**

- differs over time – example: results of the change from wind to coal to petroleum as a fuel for shipping



# *Where the Oil Is*





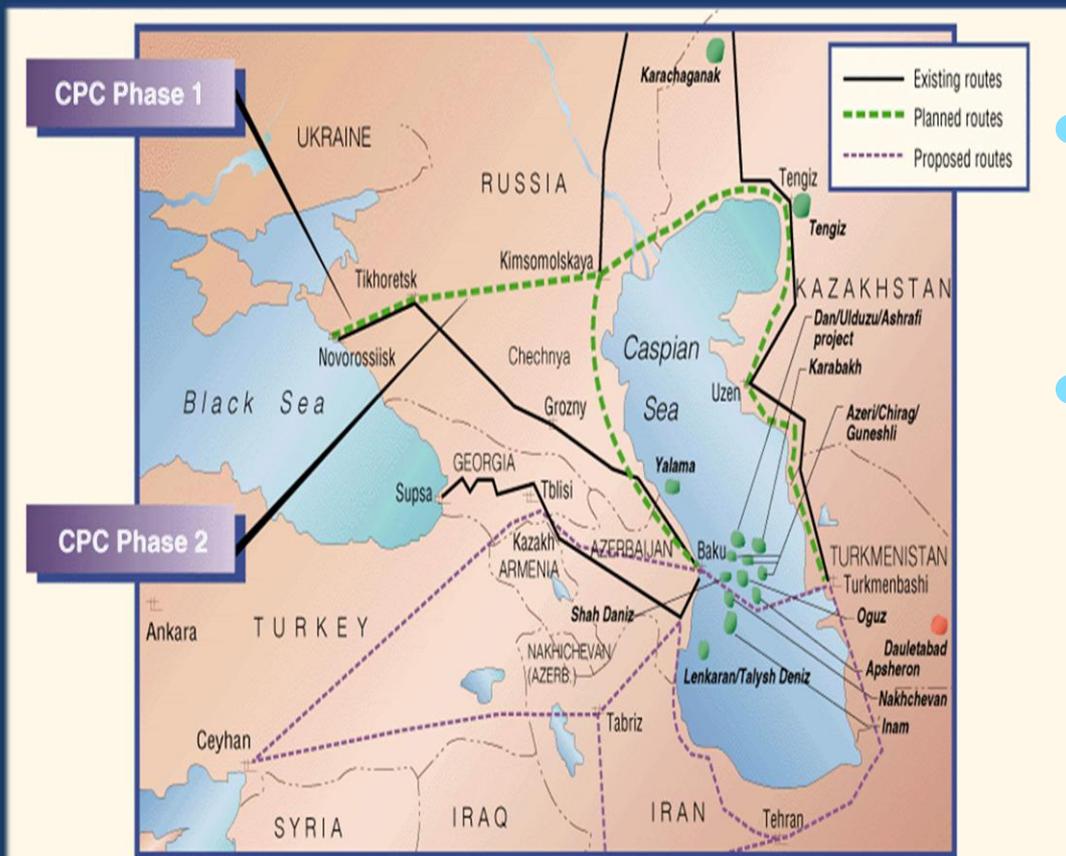
# *Strategic Location: Oil, Geopolitics and OPEC*



- 1960 - OPEC founded in Baghdad by Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela to win better return for oil producers whose output was controlled by Western multinationals.
- 1973 - An Arab oil embargo during the Arab-Israeli war disrupts oil flows and triggers panic buying.
- 1974 - OPEC states wrest pricing fully from Western multinationals in first **Oil Shock** and prices soar from around \$2.50 a barrel to \$11.50 in 1 year.



# Strategic Location: Caspian Basin Pipeline



- Russian push for greater energy security, and a reduced dependence on Middle East oil and OPEC

- Russia, a non-OPEC state, attempts to gain foreign investment.

- massive devaluation of the ruble, IMF loans, sells resources to get foreign currency



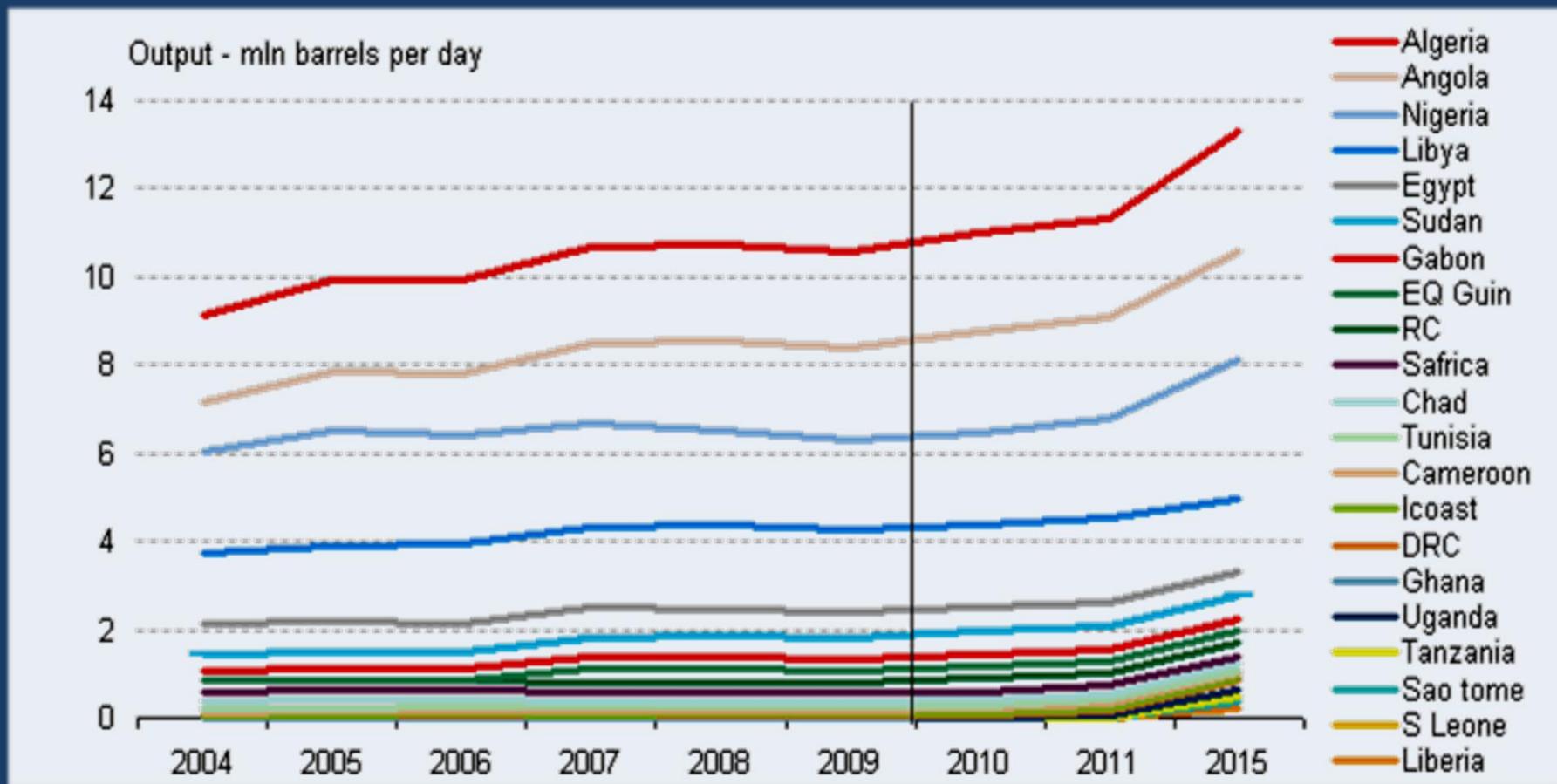
# *Strategic Location: Caspian Basin Pipeline*



- major exploration efforts by US and European oil companies after 1989 collapse of communism
- potential for conflict with break-away republics, self-determination, economic development and emerging states
- Now 5 states have access to the large volumes of oil and natural gas reserves with no agreement on how to split the resources.



# Strategic Location: Oil in Africa





# Strategic Locations: SE Asian Pipeline and Kra Canal

- economic development of impoverished states
- social, environmental and cultural change: modernization and resistance to it, example: Kra isthmus in Thailand

A Thai Canal to Be Part of China's Silk Road

Southeast Asia's Pipeline Challenges

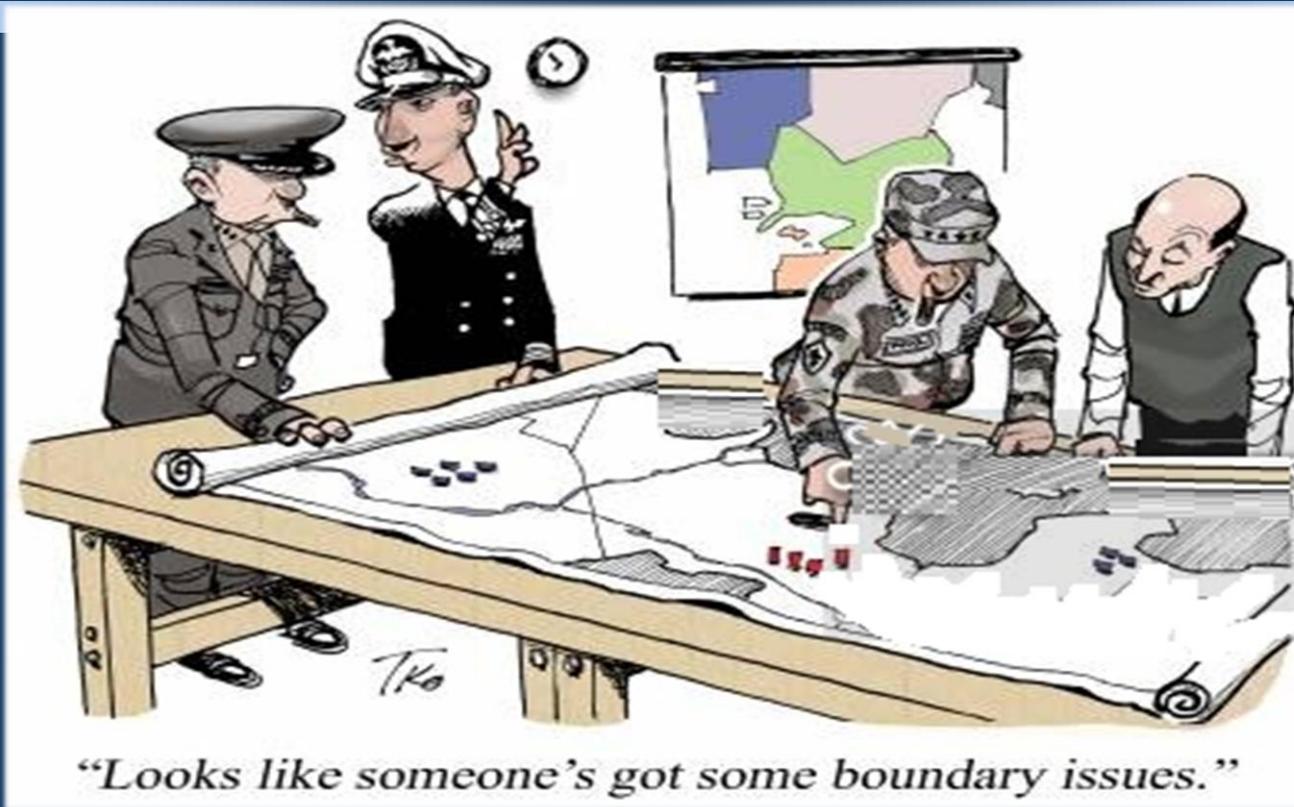




# Strategic Location: Panama



- constructed by US after initial failed French attempt
- 1903 - US supports Panama's separation from Colombia, gains control over strip bordering the canal, Panama Canal Zone
- 31 Dec 1999 – US gives sovereignty over Canal Zone to Panama



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***POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY PART III***