

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

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Outline

- Basic definitions
- The role of colonialism
- Definitional complexities
 - Multinational states
 - Stateless nations
- The role of absolute and relative location
- Strategic location
- Capital cities
- Alliances of states

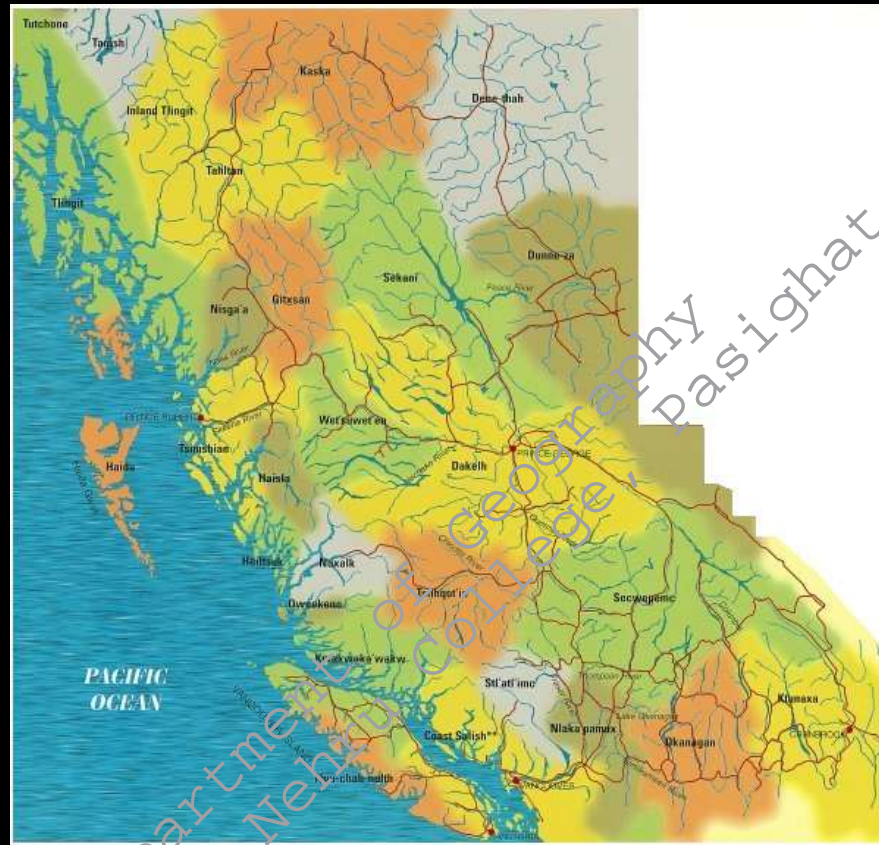
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State



- An independent political unit holding sovereignty over a territory (Canada)
- Casually referred to as "country"
- United States of America: 50 theoretically independent units that chose to join together in 1 'State'

Nation

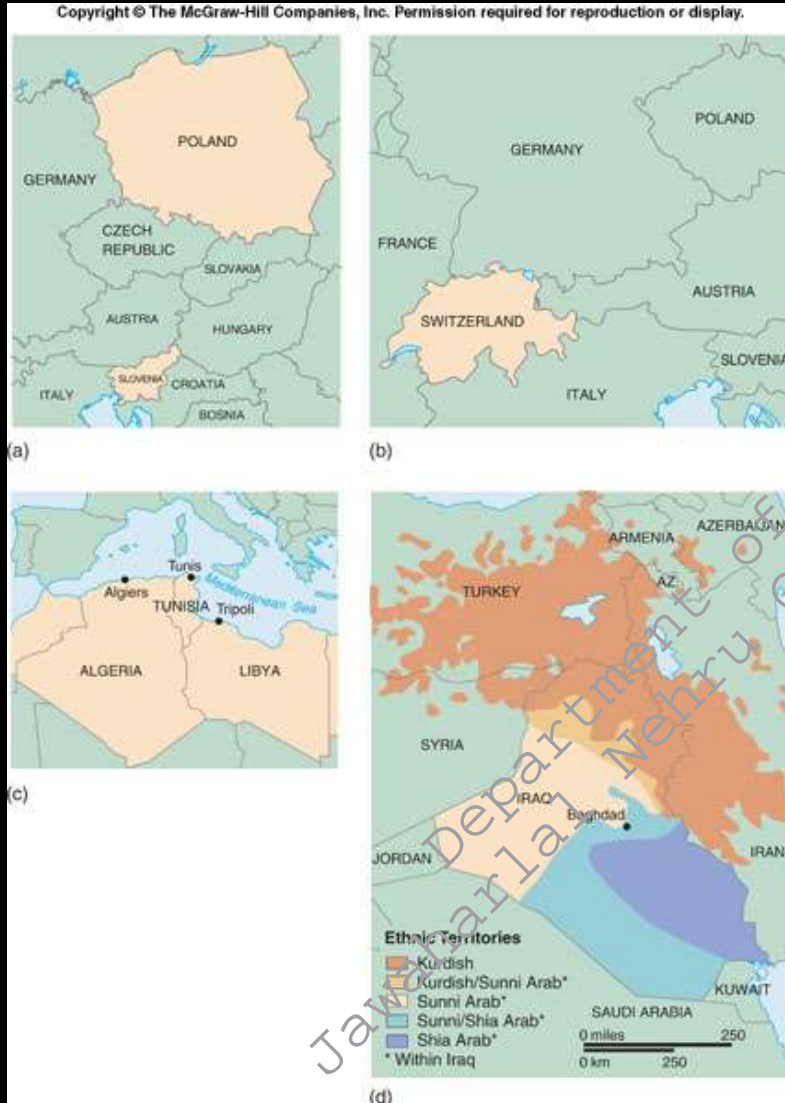


- Geographers' definition: community of people with common ancestry, culture and territory
- Does not imply an independent political unit
- e.g. Quebec; Acadians in Eastern Canada; "First Nations" throughout Canada

Nation-States

- State whose territory coincides with the area occupied by a single nation
- E.g. Iceland – all residents of the state are members of a single Icelandic nation
- vs. Canada – several different nations within the boundaries of the Canadian state

Definitional complexities



- Poland is essentially a nation-state
- Switzerland is a multinational state
- The territory of the 'Arab nation' extends over several Arab states
- The Kurds are a stateless nation. Some Kurds are fighting for their own state, Kurdistan.

Multi-national States

- e.g. Canada – several nations within borders of Canadian state
- United Kingdom – Scots, English, Irish, Welsh are separate nations
- Former Yugoslavia (will discuss later in 1050)
- All Western Hemisphere states
- All African states

Stateless Nations



- ethnic groups (nations) occupying territory, but not belonging to a single state
- Basques in Spain and France – there is no Basque state
- Basque nationalist organizations want autonomy or independence for a Basque state

The Kurdish Nation

25-40 million people, depending on how it is defined

Area $\geq 190,000 \text{ km}^2$



- Opposition to Ottoman Empire in WW 1
- promised independence by UK & France (1920); but Turkey established control, internat. acknowledged 1923
- Boundaries for political, not ethnographic reasons
- Kurds not recognized as a nation by Turkey, Iraq, Iran
- Kurds supported USA invasion of Iraq 2003

Area claimed by Kurdish nationalist groups;
Kurdistan nationalist flag

Geographic Characteristics of States

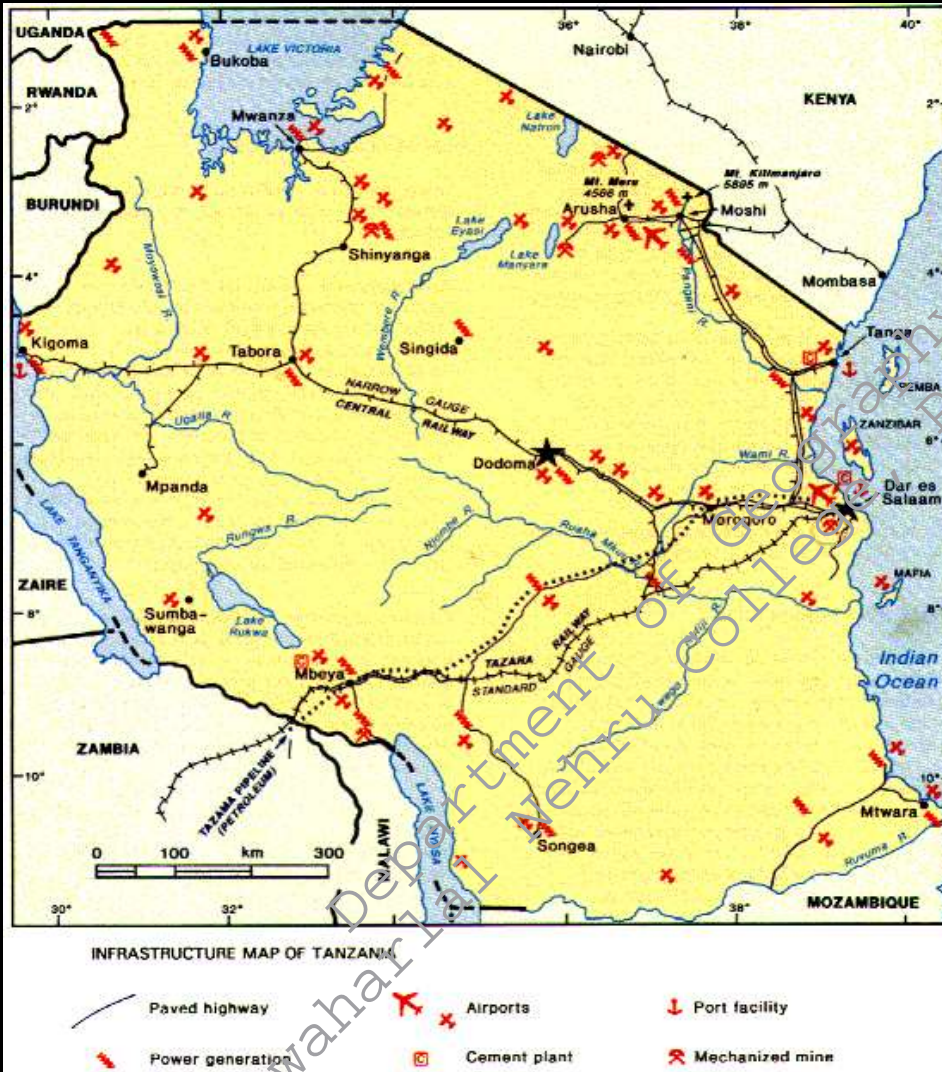
- Size - important for resources, power, governance, communication
 - Russian Federation- 17,075,000 km² Nauru - 20 km²
- Shape - for governance/transport
- Location - Absolute & Relative

Location

- Absolute Location
 - Position with respect to grid (lat/long) Gibraltar's absolute location is $36^{\circ}09'N$ $5^{\circ}21'W$
- Relative Location
 - Position with respect to other states and regions. Gibraltar's relative location is crucial as a British colony at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.

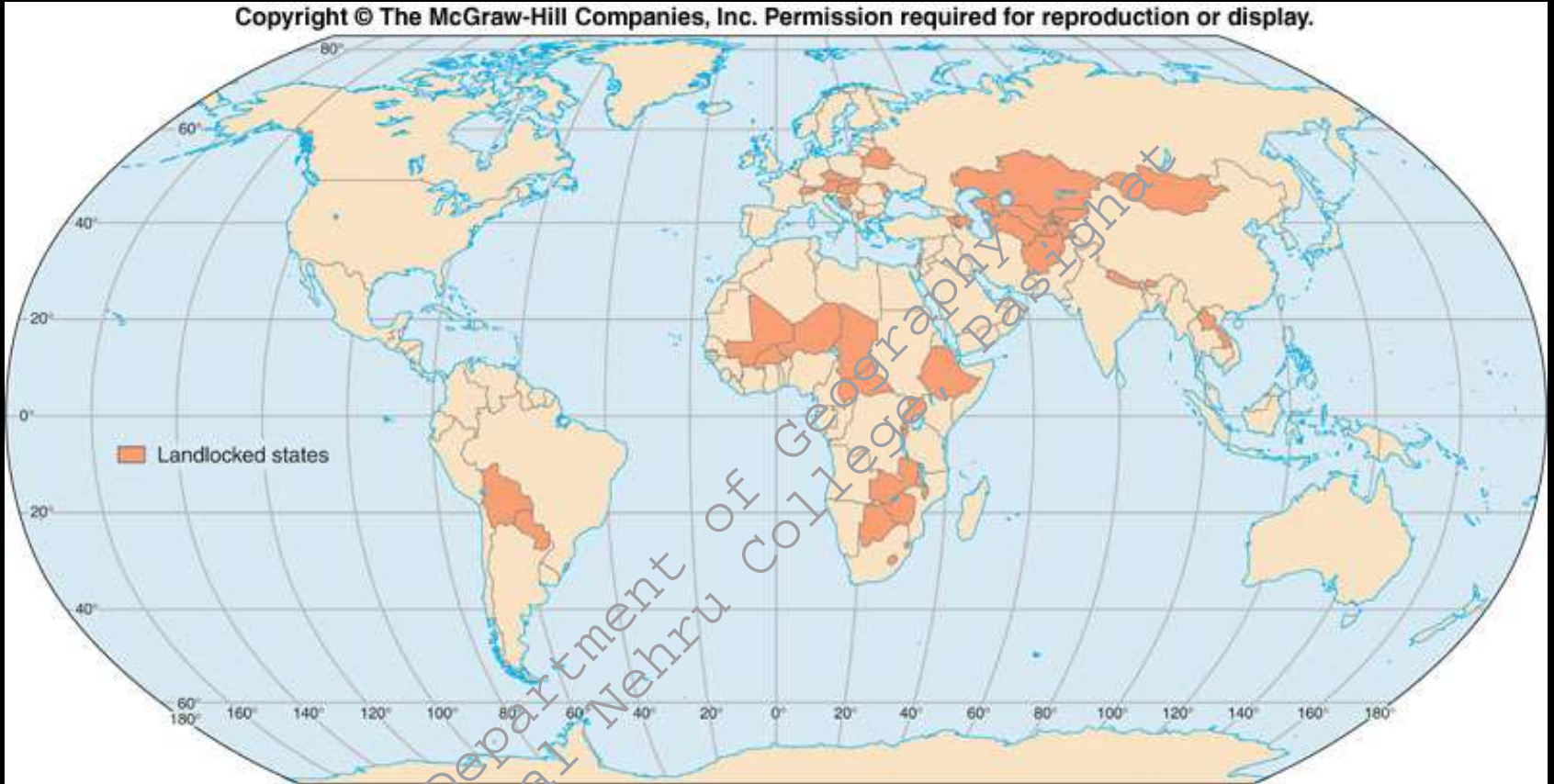
Absolute & relative location: Tanzania

- Colonial legacies today



Relative Location

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- Landlocked States are disadvantaged for access to ocean and resources
- Some have land corridors to ocean (e.g. Democratic Rep of Congo)

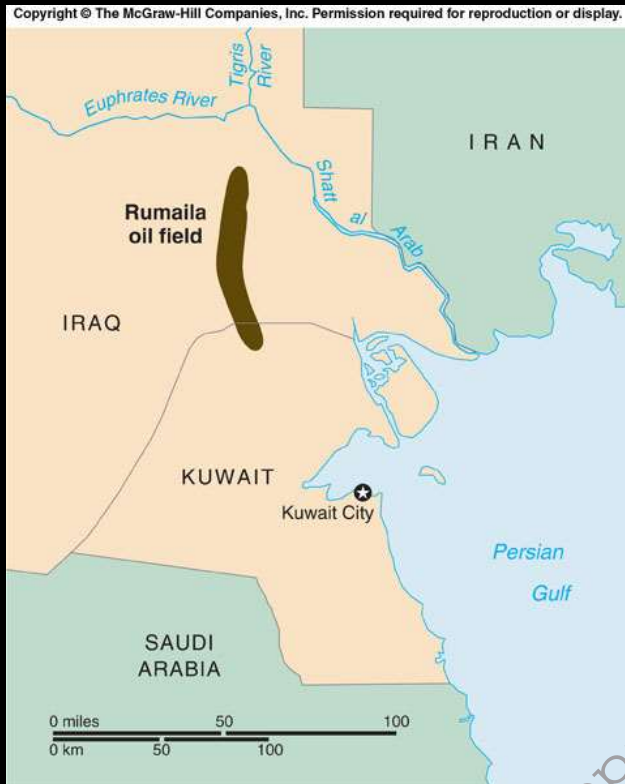


Landlocked Bolivia

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



Strategic Locations



□ Strategic Location of oil resources in Iraq/Kuwait.

- Relative locations of importance to two or more states
- Military or economic significance
- differs over time – e.g. results of change from wind to coal to petroleum as fuel for shipping
- many Straits are good examples -- Malacca, Bosphorus, Bering Strait, Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Gibraltar
- Canals – Suez, Panama

Where the Oil Is

Despite the Bush administrations desire to reduce the nations dependence on oil from the politically unstable Middle East and the increased efforts by American energy companies to find oil and natural gas closer to home, the region remains at the heart of the business because of its vast reserves.

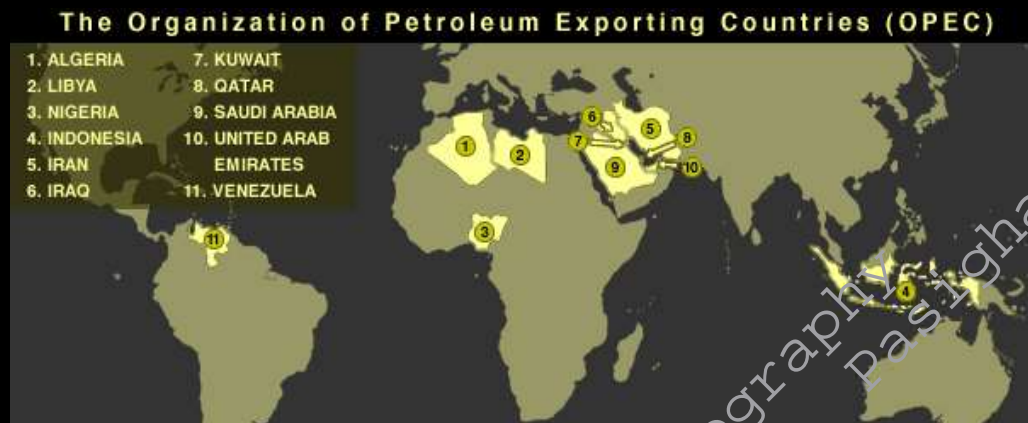
KNOWN OIL RESERVES BY REGION, IN 2000

In billions of barrels



Source: Energy Information Administration

Strategic location: oil geopolitics & formation of OPEC



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

Pipeline Development: The Caspian Basin

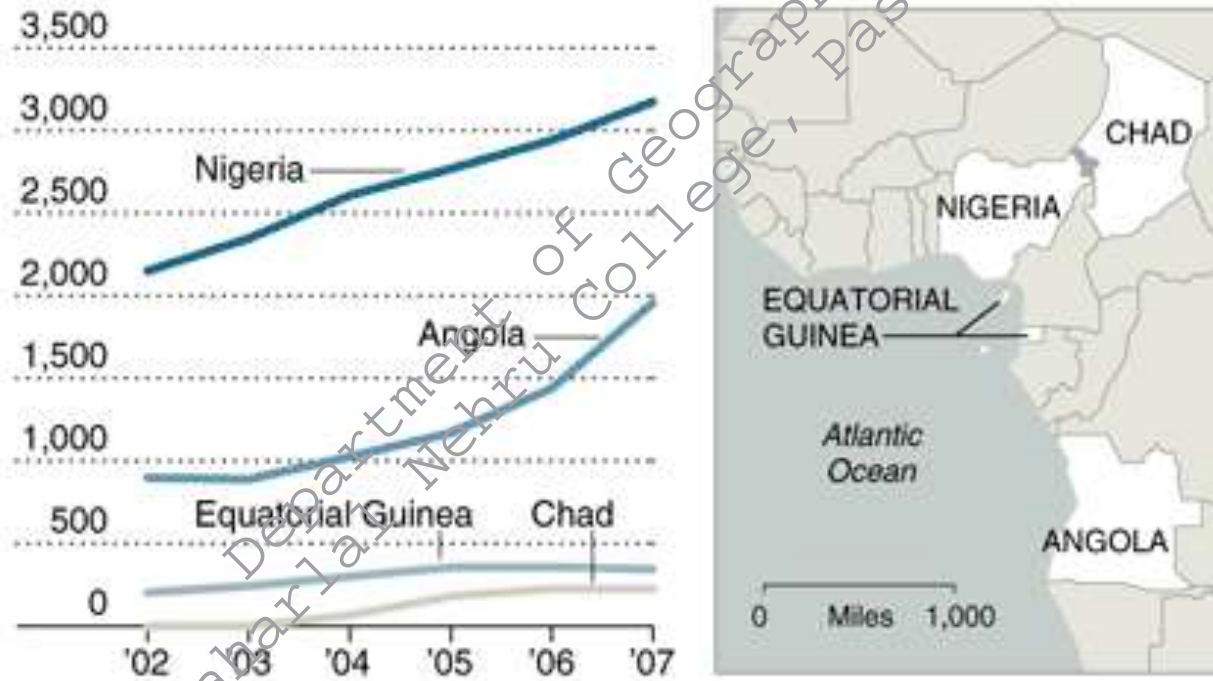


- Push for greater energy security; reduced dependence on Middle Eastern oil and OPEC
- Russia, a non-OPEC nation, attempting to garner foreign investment
 - Massive devaluation of the ruble, IMF loans; sell resources to garner foreign currency
- Major exploration efforts by US and European petroleum companies after 1989 collapse of communism
 - Potential for conflict with break-away republics: self-determination, economic development and emerging nations

Oil in Africa

Increasing Oil Production in Africa

Oil production forecasts for selected sub-Saharan African countries, in thousands of barrels a day.



Source: Petroleum Finance Company

Pipeline Development: SE Asia



- Economic development of impoverished nations
- Social, environmental, and cultural change: 'modernization' and resistance to it e.g. Kra isthmus, Thailand



Panama Canal Area

- constructed by USA after initial failed French attempt
- 1903 – USA supports Panama’s separation from Colombia; gains control over strip bordering canal
- “Panama Canal Zone”
- 31 Dec 1999- sovereignty over Canal Zone given to Panama

Capital Cities



- Seat of government. Often centre of finances, education, health services
- Symbol of national or state pride
- May be oldest & largest city in state, centre of most activities – *Primate City*

London is the *Primate City* of the United Kingdom

Primate Cities

- A primate city is the largest and most important city ***by far*** in a country.
- It dominates the urban system of its country.
- Examples: Paris, London, Mexico City, Seoul
- Toronto and New York are ***not*** primate cities.
- Ottawa is a capital that is ***not*** a primate city

Moving the Capital ...

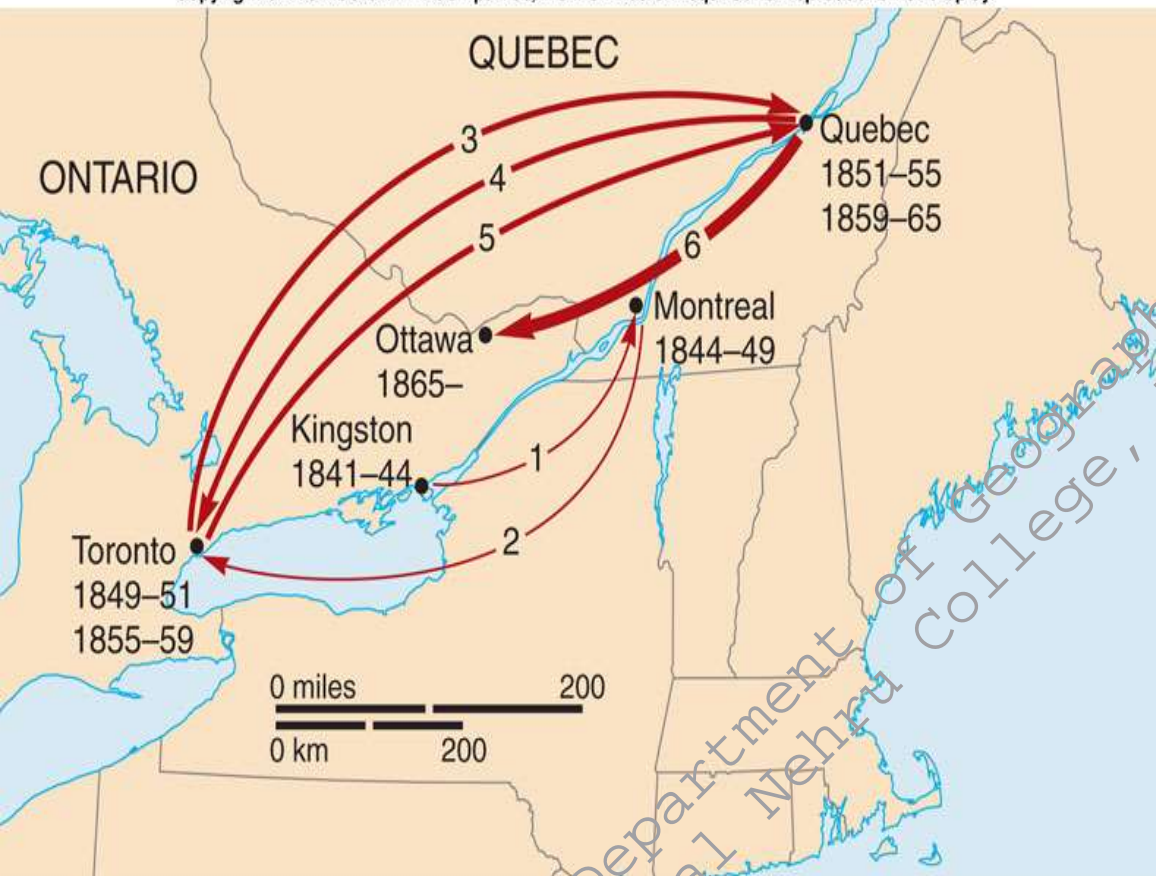


Brasilia

- To access the ocean – St. Petersburg
- To open new territory – Brasilia
- Due to boundary change – Bonn; Berlin
- To choose a 'neutral' site – Washington, Canberra
- To lessen the dominance of a primate city – Ankara (vs. Istanbul)
- To change attitudes – all of the above

Moving the capital:

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- Ottawa (Bytown) was selected in 1865 as a neutral site.
- small lumbering town.
- “in the middle of nowhere” and on the boundary between Lower and Upper Canada.
- More distant from the US and therefore less subject to attack.

What would be an equivalent choice today for a new capital for Canada?



Canberra

- capital of Australia
- city planned as the centre of federal government
- separate from commercial and economic activity in Sydney and Melbourne
- deliberately situated in area of mild climate

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Capital cities





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Alliances of States - Power in Numbers

- United Nations
 - military, cultural, scientific, social welfare mandates
 - attempts to be universal
 - sponsors many agencies for common good of all people
- NAFTA - Canada, US and Mexico for economic reasons
- NATO - military alliance by western Europe, Canada and US

United Nations



- Established in 1945 in response to World War II, and failure to avert war
- Initiated by US President FD Roosevelt
- has always involved states, not 'nations' (as understood by geographers)

UN objectives and structure

- Objectives:
 - international peace and security
 - development of friendly relations among states
 - cooperation in solving international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems
- UN Structure:
 - All states members of General Assembly
 - Secretary-General appointed by GA
 - 15 states are members of Security Council
 - 5 permanent SC members – Russia, USA, UK, France, China

United Nations Membership

- Open to all “peace-loving” states
- 191 member states
- Most recent members: Switzerland and East Timor (both Sept. 2002)
- Observers (no voting rights) include Holy See (Vatican) and Palestinian Authority

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Non-members

- States admitted only after General Assembly vote
- Western Sahara has not been admitted – government largely in exile
- Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) expelled in 1971; replaced by People's Republic of China
- Taiwan has applied for readmission on several occasions, vetoed by PR China
- Stateless nations cannot be members

State alliances: military & economic

- Military
 - NATO
- Economic
 - NAFTA
 - ASEAN
 - MERCOSUR
 - EU (European Union)



NATO

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- formed after World War II
- East. European states are recent applicants
- Renewed interest in alliance with USA request to invade Iraq

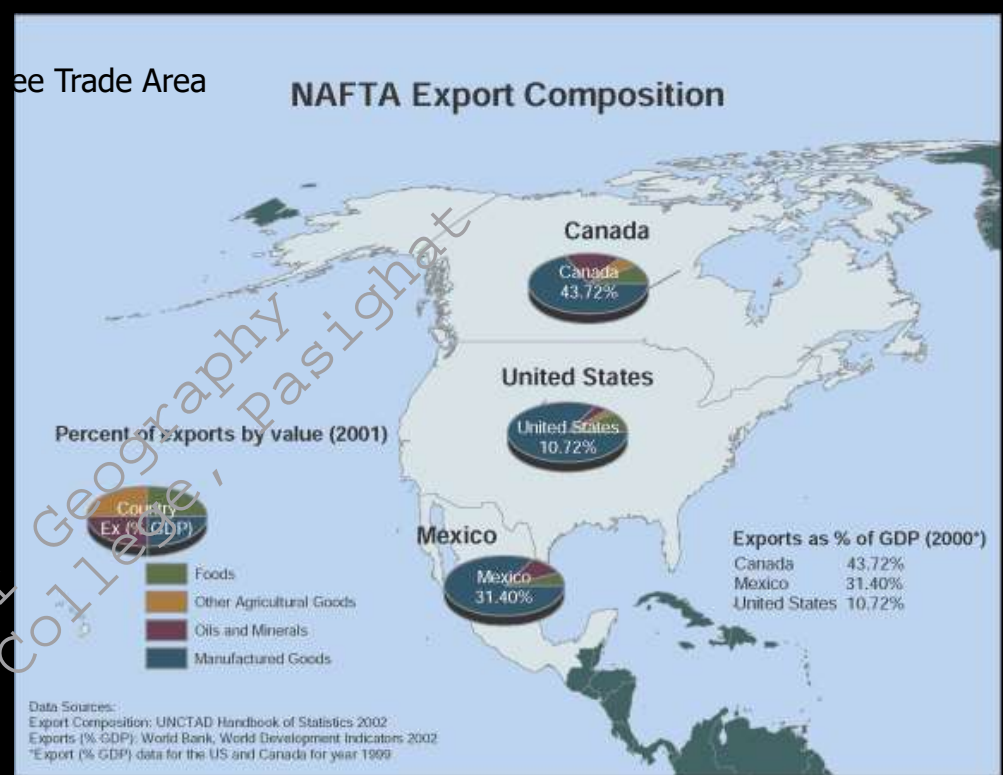
States alliances: economic



- Free-trade area: removal of member state trade restrictions; maintenance of policies toward non-members

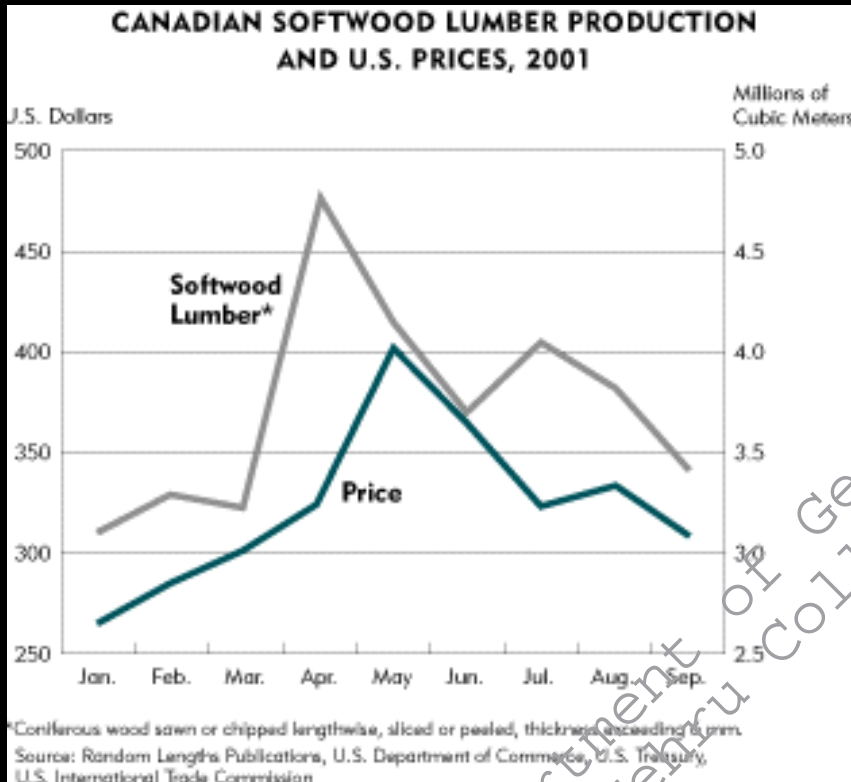
State alliances: economic

Free trade areas



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State alliances: economics and conflict?



- Can we think of states as economic actors on their own? Why or why not?
- Who are key actors in state alliances and conflicts? Where are some key sites of action?

State alliances: economic Common market



State alliances: economic

Economic union

EU 15 Export Composition

