# Ch. 8 Political Geography

Key Issue 1: Where are states located?

*State- an area organized into a political unit and ruled by a sovereign government. It occupies a defined area on Earth’s surface and has a permanent population. Sovereignty- a state’s independence of internal affairs from other states.*

Antarctica is the only large landmass that officially belongs to no state, as part of the Treaties of Antarctica 1959 and 1991. Several countries claim portions of the continent, but the U.S., Russia, and numerous other states refuse to recognize these claims.

Korea was originally a colony of Japan, but was divided into two occupation zones along the 38th parallel by the U.S. and former Soviet Union after Japan’s defeat in WWII. The division became permanent in the 1940s when the zones were turned into autonomous states. North Korea became the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and South Korea became the Republic of Korea. In 1950, N. Korea invaded the South, sparking a three-year conflict that ended with a ceasefire line near the 38th parallel. Both governments are committed to reuniting the country; however, attempts at reconciliation were halted when N. Korea decided to build nuclear weapons while its people starved.

Chinese Nationalists who fled the country after communist takeover, established control over the island of Taiwan. The Nationalists claim that they still are the legitimate rulers of China, but for the time being will rule Taiwan. The communists claim control over Taiwan, but most other world states believe the two are separate and sovereign states. After ruling power was shifted in 1971 from the Nationalists to the communists, Taiwan became the most populous state not in the United Nations.

A similar problem of defining a state is seen in Africa, where the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) is considered by most to be a sovereign state but Morocco claims the territory and built a 3,000 km wall around it to keep out rebel forces. A cease-fire signed in 1991 is supervised by U.N.

peacekeeping forces. Spain controls two cities in Morocco.

*Microstates- states with very small land areas. The smallest U.N. state is Monaco (.6 square miles)*

Development of the state concept

*City-state- a sovereign state that comprises a town and the surrounding countryside. These were the first states to develop in ancient times. Reached highest point in the Roman Empire.*

Early European states evolved after the fall of the Roman Empire as powerful nobles emerged and began consolidating surrounding estates into kingdoms. This

method formed the basis for the development of states like England, France, Spain, etc.

*Colonialism- the effort by one country to establish settlements and to impose its political, economic, and cultural agenda on an uninhabited territory. The three reasons for colonialism are:*

1. *European missionaries establishing colonies to promote Christianity.*
2. *Governments establishing colonies to access raw materials and resources.*
3. *Governments establishing colonies to increase prestige of that country.*

*These 3 reasons are often summated as “God, gold, and glory.”*

*Colony- a territory that is legally tied to a sovereign state rather than being completely independent.*

*Imperialism- establishing control of a territory already occupied and organized by an indigenous society.*

After colonization ended, many former colonies established their independence from the mother country. Thus, very few colonies exist in the modern world, nearly all of which are small islands in the S. Pacific or Caribbean.

Pitcairn Island is the world’s smallest colony, with 54 residents on an island less than 2 square miles. It was originally settled in 1790 by the crew of the British vessel *Bounty.* The islanders survive by selling fish and postage stamps to collectors.

Key Issue 2: Why do boundaries cause problems?

*Boundary- an invisible line marking the extent of a state’s territory.* There are two types of boundaries:

-PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

-Mountains are effective if they are difficult to cross.

-Deserts are effective if hard to cross and sparsely settled.

-Water boundaries can be effective for defense because an assailant’s troops must establish a beachhead in order to attack. Rivers pose problems because they tend to move across the Earth’s surface as a result of erosion. Oceans are the cause of some controversy because of arguments about how far a state’s boundary protrudes into the water. The Law of the Sea, signed by 117 countries in 1983, established the territorial limits for most countries at 12 nautical miles, and fishing rights at 200 miles

-CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

-Geometric boundaries are simply mathematical lines drawn on a map.

-Religious boundaries are rarely used, b/c they normally coincide with state boundaries.

-Language boundaries are especially numerous in Europe.

-Implemented boundaries are those established by the ruling organization. Ex. The “Green Line” boundary in Cyprus. (p.277-78)

-Relic boundaries are nonfunctional partitions that still exist. Ex. The Great Wall of China.

There are 5 shapes of states:

-*Compact states- the distance from the center to any boundary varies little. Generally found in smaller states.*

*-Prorupted states- an otherwise compact state with a large projecting extension. Ex. Congo*

*-Elongated states- have a long and narrow shape. Ex. Chile*

*-Fragmented states- have several discontinuous pieces of territory. Ex. U.S.A. -Perforated states- completely surround another state. Ex. South Africa*

*Landlocked state- a state that lacks a direct outlet to the ocean. Especially common in Africa.*

*Frontier- a zone where no state exercises complete political control.*

*Unitary state- a state that places most of the power in the hands of a central govt.*

*Federal state- a state that allocates strong power to units of local govt. w/in the country.*

The trend in recent years has been more states moving from their unitary stance to a more federal government.

*Gerrymandering- the process of redrawing legislative boundaries for the purpose of benefiting the party in power. “Packing” places many voters of one type into a single area, whereas “stacking” arranges the voters to win a majority of the seats.*

Key Issue 3: Why do states cooperate with each other?

*Balance of power- a condition of equal strength betwixt opposing alliances.*

States cooperate for political and military reasons. The most important supranational organization is the United Nations. Established in 1945, it contained 49 members. As of 2003, 190 countries were part of the U.N. Though the power of the U.N. is somewhat limited, it is still a substantial step in the direction toward global peace. The U.N. nations can elect to create peacekeeping forces, and can request the military assistance from other states. Other significant military organizations are:

-Organization of American States (OAS) all 35 W. Hemisphere states -Organization for African Unity (OAU) all African states -Commonwealth of Nations the U.K. and 53 former colonies.

States also cooperate for economic purposes. The best example is the European Union. The EU main goal is to promote development within the member states through economic cooperation. Farmers subsidies, and the introduction of the common currency the EURO, are some of the methods through which the EU has developed W. Europe into the most viable market on Earth. Germany dominates the EU. Stringent guidelines prevent many Baltic states from being admitted, thus preserving the economic benefits reaped by the 15 older members.

Key Issue 4: Why has terrorism increased?

Terrorism is the systematic use of violence by a group in order to intimidate a population or coerce a government into granting its demands. The increasing level of radical fundamentalism in many religions and the creation of the terrorist network al-Qaeda have led to an increase in the number of terrorist attacks worldwide.

Al-Qaeda is a network founded by Osama bin Laden who used his several million dollar inheritance from his billionaire father to fund the program. Al-Qaeda (an Arabic word meaning “the base”) was formed in 1990 to unite *jihad* fighters from around the world in an organized offensive against the United States, whom bin Laden sees as the “Great Satan” because of U.S. support for the royal family of Saudi Arabia and for supporting the Jewish state of Israel. Al-Qaeda’s holy war against the U.S. reached its apex on Sept. 11, 2001.

Another reason for increased terrorist activity is the increased amount of state support for terrorism, defined as:

1. Providing sanctuary for terrorists wanted by other countries. Ex. The Taliban govt. of Afghanistan harboring al-Qaeda fugitives.
2. Supplying weapons, money, and/or intelligence to terrorists. Ex. Libyan Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi provided terrorists with money to kill his opponents living in exile.
3. Planning attacks using terrorists. Ex. The Libyan govt. hiring terrorists to bomb a Berlin nightclub frequented by U.S. soldiers.

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan to hunt down members of al-Qaeda. The Taliban govt.

was also overthrown for its support of al-Qaeda. The U.S. then invaded Iraq in order to investigate reports that Iraq had been develop weapons of mass destruction. Little conclusive evidence has been recovered to justify that Iraq had WMDs or was in the process of developing them.

Other states considered by the U.S. to be state sponsors of terrorism are:

-Yemen

-Sudan

-Syria

-N. Korea

-Iran