



# Unit 4: Political Geography



# Political Geography

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- ❖ The study of the political organization of the world
  - How people organize space



# State

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## ❖ State

- The largest political unit
- Independent political unit holding sovereignty over a territory
- Usually capitalized to should what “state” is being talked about

## ❖ Requirements to be a state

- Have a defined boundary
- Permanent population
- Has a government and organized economy
- Has sovereignty over domestic and international affairs
- Recognized by other states

# Micro-states and notable Not-States

❖ **Microstates: States with a small population or land mass (usually both)**

➤ Ex. Luxemburg, Vatican City

❖ **Not-States**

➤ Hong Kong

➤ Scotland

➤ Wales

➤ Puerto Rico



# Nation

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- ❖ **Community of people with a common ancestry, culture, and territory**
- ❖ **A nation does not have to be a state and there can be several nations within a state**
- ❖ **Nation-States**
  - **When a nation of people have a State of their own**
  - **Ex. Iceland and Japan**
  - **Usually when 85% of a state's population is one ethnic group**

# Multi-Nation State

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## ❖ Multi-Nation State

- A state that contains more than one nation
- Usually consist of one dominant nation that controls most of the power
- Can lead to acceptance of another culture or oppression
- Ex. US, Russia

## ❖ Autonomous Regions

- Area with a high degree of self-governance and freedom
- Created by some multi-nation states to maintain cohesion

# Multi-State Nation and Stateless Nation

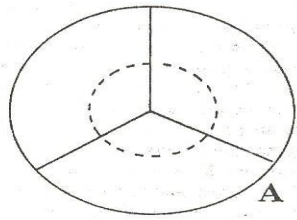
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## ❖ Multi-State Nation

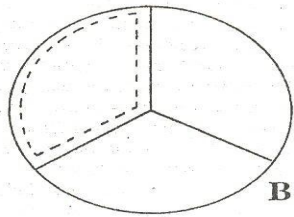
- When a nation has a country of their own, but the nation stretches into other neighboring states
- Or nation spread among several States
- Ex. Palestinians and Albanians

## ❖ Stateless Nation

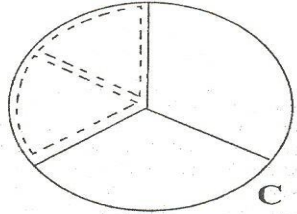
- Nation that does not have a state of its own
- Can stretch over several nations
- Ex. Kurds



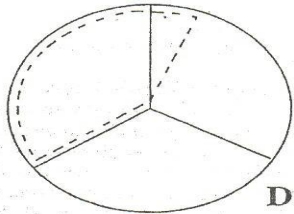
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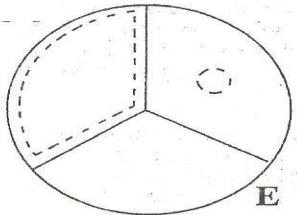
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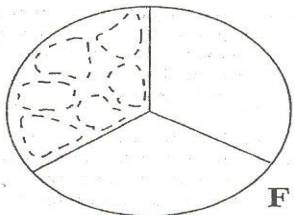
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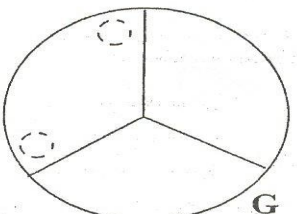
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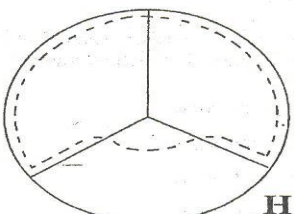
E



F



G



H

—— State Boundary  
 - - - - Ethno-National Boundary

- A. **Multi-State Nation:** Eg. Palestinians have no state. They are spread over Israel, Jordan and Syria.
- B. **Nation State:** Eg. Iceland is a country entirely comprised of Icelanders.
- C. **Multi-Nation State:** Eg. Belgium is made up of Flemings (north) and Walloons (south). Canada can also be considered a Multi-Nation State.
- D. **Multi-State Nation:** Albanians live in **Albania**, but a number of Albanians also live in a new state called Kosovo (recently part of Serbia)
- E. Most of Hungarians live in **Hungary**, but there is a group that lives in the middle of Romania.
- F. **Multi-Nation State:** Eg. Russia has over 100 different nationalities. The USSR ceased to exist in part because a lot of these nationalities wanted their own country.
- G. Eg. The majority of people in **France** are French but there are two small groups the Bretons and Basques.
- H. Eg. There are two German states; **Germany** and **Austria** but 70% of Switzerland is German speaking.



# Forces that have shaped the world map



# Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces

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## ❖ Centripetal Forces

- Forces that unify a nation
- Shared religion, external threats, common language, nationalism

## ❖ Centrifugal Forces

- Forces that break apart a state or prevent one from forming
- Religion, language, etc.

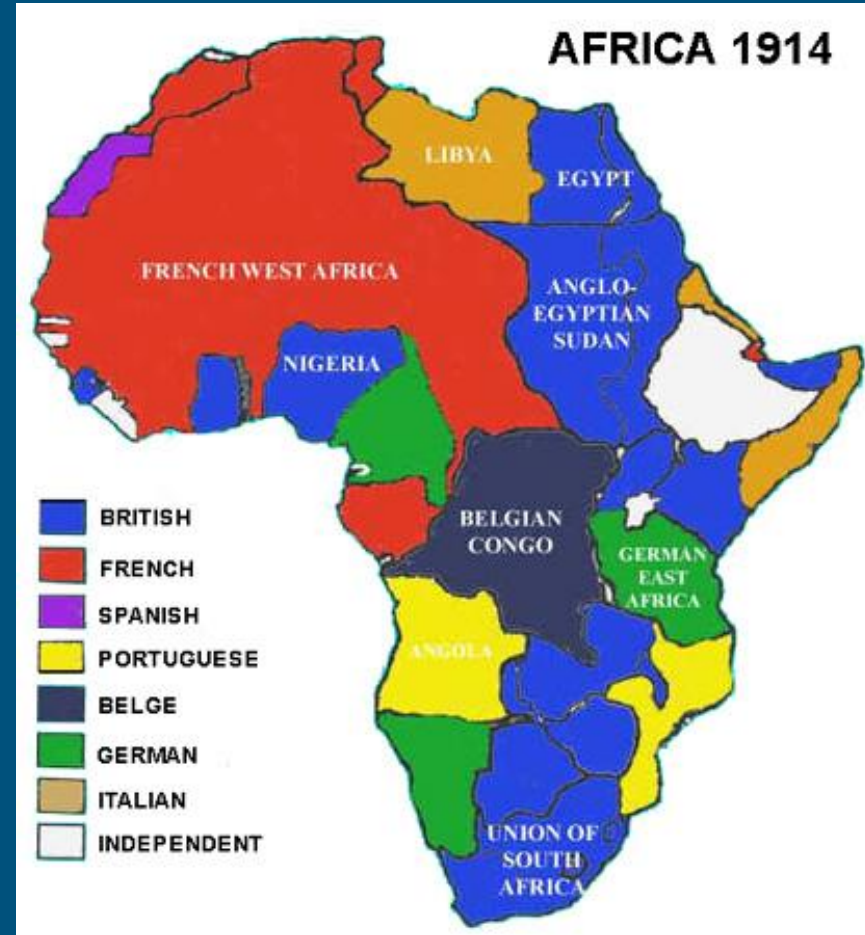
# Imperialism

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- ❖ **Influencing and controlling another country or group of people**
- ❖ **Several means to reach:**
  - **Direct conquest, economic dominance, or cultural dominance**
- ❖ **Colonization**
  - **Form of imperialism**
  - **To move into and settle on the land of another country**

# Colonization

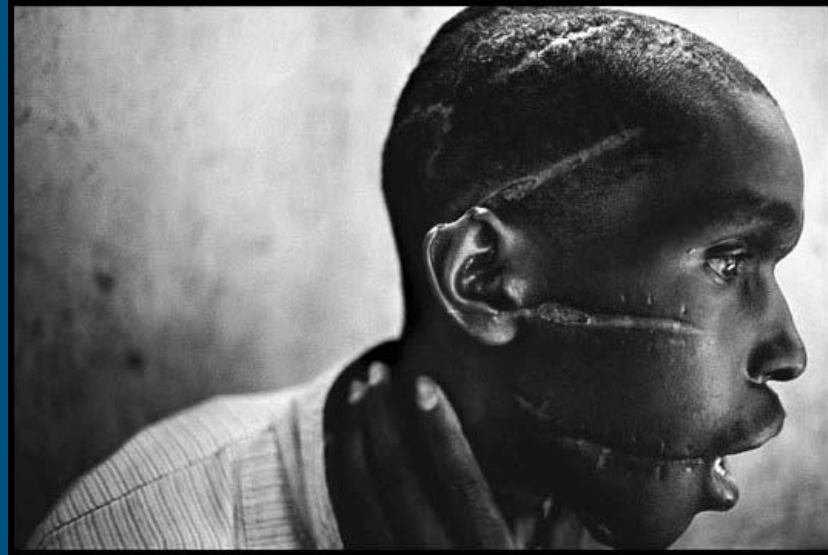
- ❖ **Early colonization**
  - The 3 G's
  - Justified by *Terra Nullius* ("land belonging to no one")
  - Most latin american countries were free by 1833
- ❖ **Later colonization**
  - Focused on Asia and Africa
  - Berlin Conference (partitioning of Africa)



# Decolonization and Civil Wars

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- ❖ Colonial territories win their independence
- ❖ Rise of neocolonialism
  - Gaining control over developing countries through indirect means
- ❖ New found freedom in Africa led to civil wars
  - Caused by the partitioning of Africa
  - In some countries led to genocide (ex. Rwanda Hutus and Tutsis)



# Territoriality

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- ❖ **Influence or control over a geographic area**
- ❖ **Geographic expression of power**
- ❖ **Territorial integrity**
  - **Government has right to keep the borders and territory of a state intact and free from attack**
- ❖ **Commonwealth**
  - **Territory with a mutual agreement with another state for the benefit of both parties**
  - **Puerto Rico and the US**

# Forms of Government: Unitary

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- ❖ **Highly centralized government where the capital city serves as a focus of power.**
  - **Centralized governments & uniform laws**
  - **relatively few internal contrasts**
  - **strong sense of national identity and unity**
  - **little provincial/local power**
  - **Examples: France, Japan, China and newly independent states developed out of former colonies.**

# Forms of Government: Federal

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- ❖ Power is shared between a central government and the governments of provinces. (national vs. local, national supremacy vs. states' rights)
- ❖ Acknowledges and gives some powers to its constituent parts; have strong regional government responsibilities (“closer” to the people).
- ❖ Examples: the US, Canada, Germany, Australia.
  - Usually larger, more diverse countries
  - One result of federalism is to lessen public support for something so radical as secession (as in Canada).



# Electoral Geography

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- ❖ Partitioning of state territory into electoral districts.
- ❖ Reapportionment: districts are moved according to population
  - each district has about the same number of people.
- ❖ Redistricting for advantage is known as gerrymandering
  - Can provide representation for minorities
  - Can provide unfair advantage for certain parties/candidates

# GERRYMANDERING EXPLAINED

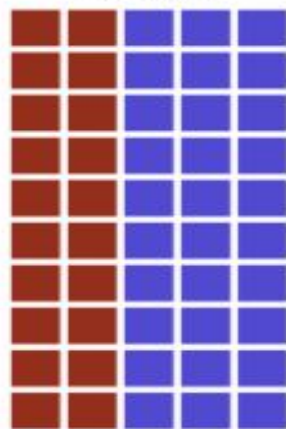


**H**  
HISTORY

# Gerrymandering, explained

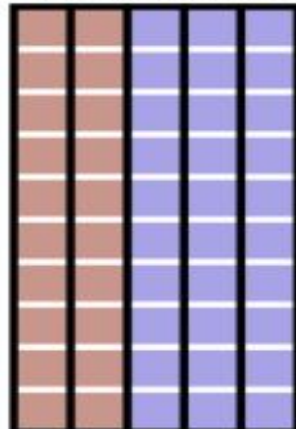
Three different ways to divide 50 people into five districts

50  
people



**60% blue,  
40% red**

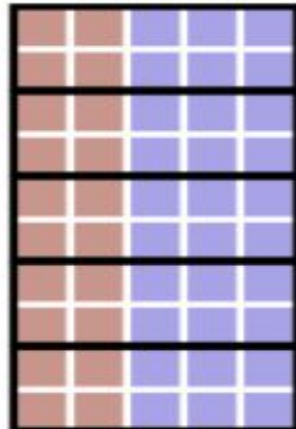
1. Perfect  
representation



**3 blue districts,  
2 red districts**

**BLUE WINS**

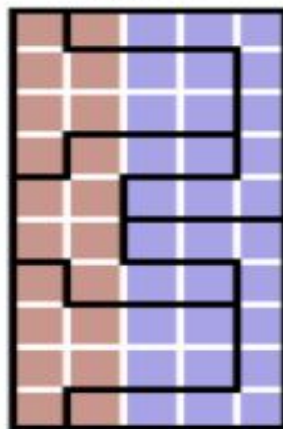
2. Compact,  
but unfair



**5 blue districts,  
0 red districts**

**BLUE WINS**

3. Neither compact  
nor fair



**2 blue districts,  
3 red districts**

**RED WINS**

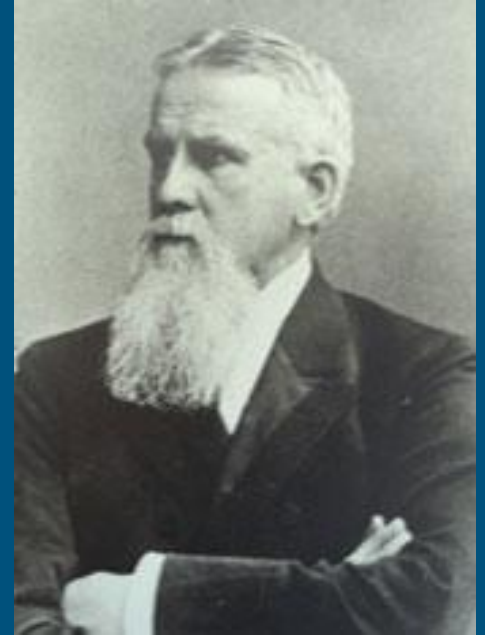
# Geopolitics



# Organic Theory

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- ❖ **Fredrick Ratzel**
- ❖ **The state resembles a biological organism**
  - Life cycle extends through maturity and then declines and lies
- ❖ **Nourishment for the state come from the acquisition of territory that provides space for the states dominant population**
- ❖ **If a state stops expanding is will begin to die**



# Heartland Theory

- ❖ Halford MacKinder
- ❖ British/American School
- ❖ Whoever controls the resource-rich “Heartland” of eastern Europe would eventually dominate the world
  - So Russia
  - Thought process behind the US Containment Policy against the USSR

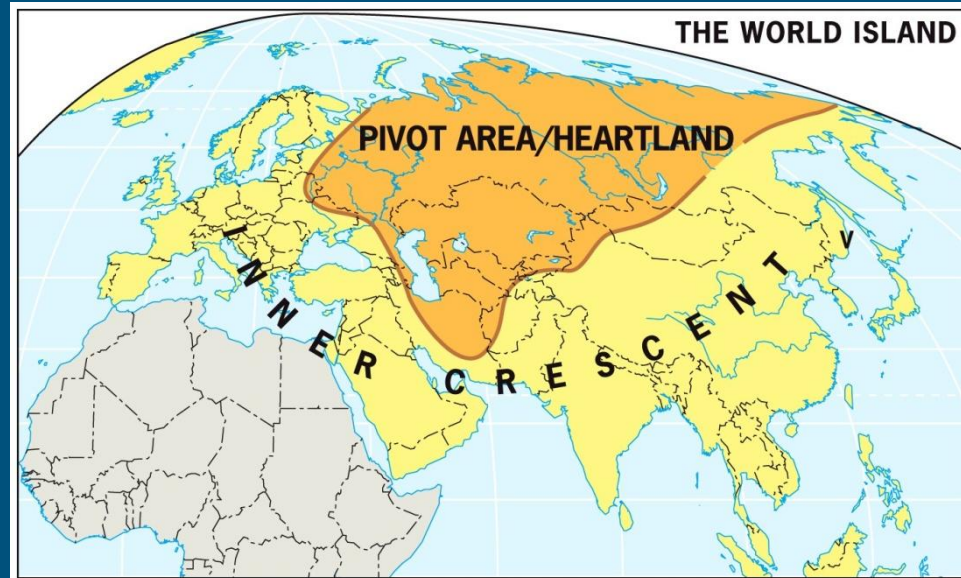
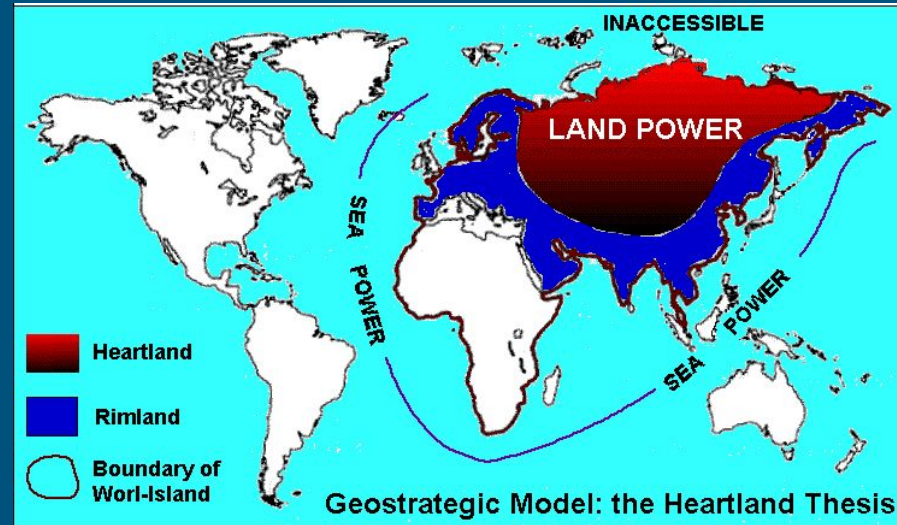


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# Rimland Theory

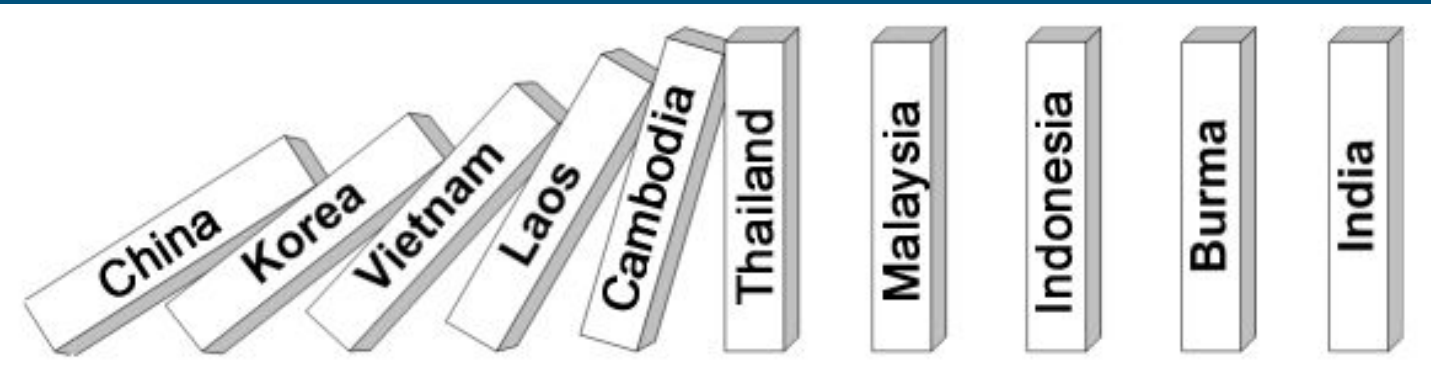
- ❖ Nicholas Spykman
- ❖ Domination of the coastal fringes of Eurasia (“Rimland”) would provide the base for world domination
- ❖ Control the coast you control the interior



# Domino Theory

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- ❖ Foreign policy theory used from 1950-1980
- ❖ Used by the US during the Cold War
- ❖ Theory that if one state in a region came under the control of communism then the other states in the region would fall to communism





# Supranational Organizations

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- ❖ **An organization where countries come together for a common cause with some sacrifice to autonomy.**
  - **Supranational alliances are created so states can collectively reach a common goal that they may not be able to reach independently.**
- ❖ **International Organization**
  - **an alliance or cooperation with each other without giving up autonomy or self-determination.**

# Shapes of States

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# Shapes of States

- **Compact States**

- Efficient
- Theoretically round
- Capital in center
- Shortest possible boundaries to defend
- Improved communications
- Ex. Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Poland, Uruguay



# Shapes of States

- **Prorupted States**
  - Large projecting extension
  - Sometimes natural
  - Sometimes to gain a resource or advantage (reach water)

Ex. Myanmar,  
Democratic Republic of  
Congo



# • Elongated States

- States that are long and narrow
- Suffer from poor internal communication
- Capital may be isolated
- Ex. Chile, Norway, Vietnam, Italy, Gambia



# • Fragmented States

- Several discontinuous pieces of territory
- Technically, all states w/ offshore islands
- Two kinds: separated by water & separated by an intervening state

- Ex. Indonesia,  
USA, Russia,  
Philippines



## • Perforated States

- A country that completely surrounds another state
- **Enclave** – the surrounded territory
- Ex. Lesotho/South Africa, San Marino (world's smallest republic) & Vatican City/Italy



# Enclaves

- area surrounded by a country but not ruled by it.
  - It can be self-governing or an exclave of another country. Example-- Lesotho
  - Can be problematic for the surrounding country.



# Exclave

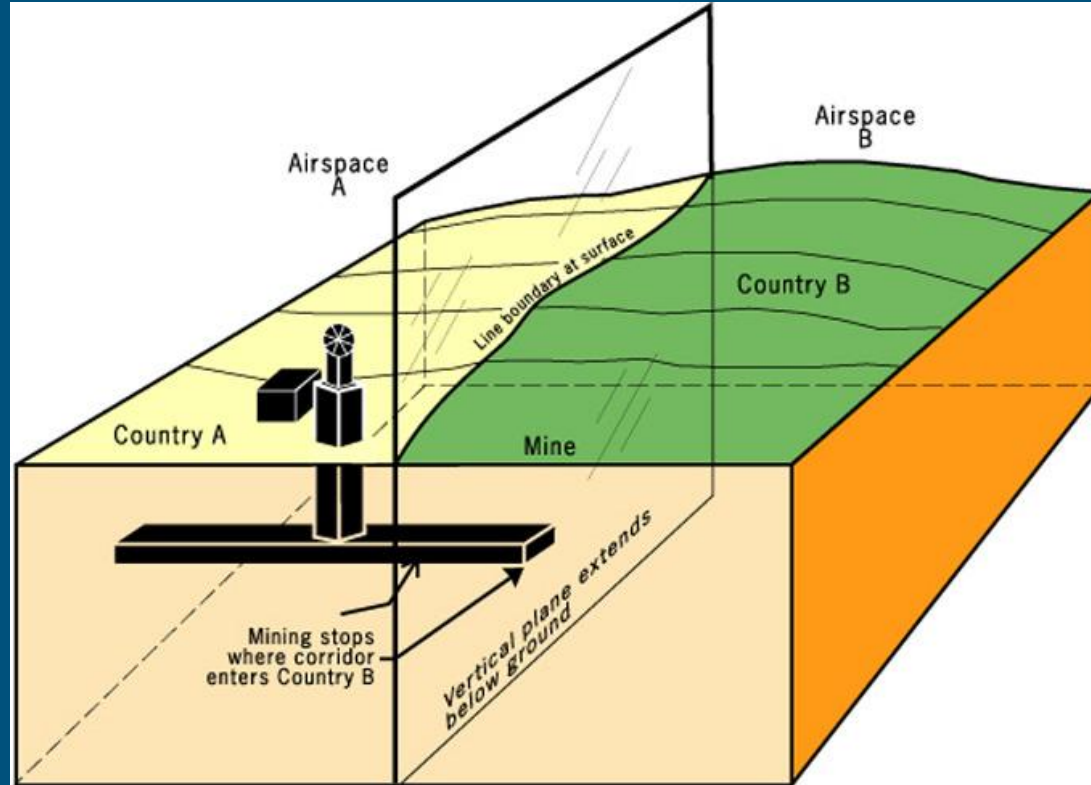
- national territory separated from the main body of the country to which it belongs.
- Example: Kaliningrad, separated from Russia.

Very undesirable if a hostile power holds the intervening territory.

Defense and supplies are problematic. Inhabitants may develop separatist ideas.  
Example: Pakistan and Bangladesh.



**Boundary:** a vertical plane that cuts through the rocks below and the airspace above, dividing one state territory from another



# Four Steps to Making Boundaries:

## Step 1: Definition

- Identify the boundary
  - ∞ physical barrier (mountains, rivers etc.)
  - ∞ culture traits (religion, language, ethnicity)
  - ∞ historical event (war)

## Step 2: Delimitation

- Survey the boundary & draw it on a map
  - ∞ neighboring countries have to agree
  - ∞ World Community must agree and recognize it

## Step 3: Demarcation

- Build an actual marker
  - ∞ Fences, Flags, Pillars etc.

## Step 4: Administration

- Impose rules and laws at the boundary
  - ∞ border guards, passports, etc.



# Types of Boundaries

- **Geometric boundaries** are drawn using grid systems such as latitude and longitude or township and range
- **Physical-political boundaries** follow an agreed upon figure in the natural landscape



**You can even classify boundaries in the following way:**

**Antecedent – The boundary was set up before a settlement – Land was surveyed first. Ontario and it's Concession System.**

**Subsequent – The boundary was set up after the settlement established itself. Most of the borders in the world were established after the fact so to speak.**

**Superimposed – Another country puts down the boundary. Colonial powers. Most of Africa was done this way – this is one of the reasons why Africa has issues**

**Relic - Boundaries that are no longer there, but still exist in a cultural sense. French Canada is somewhat like this.**