

# POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

## PART IV

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.

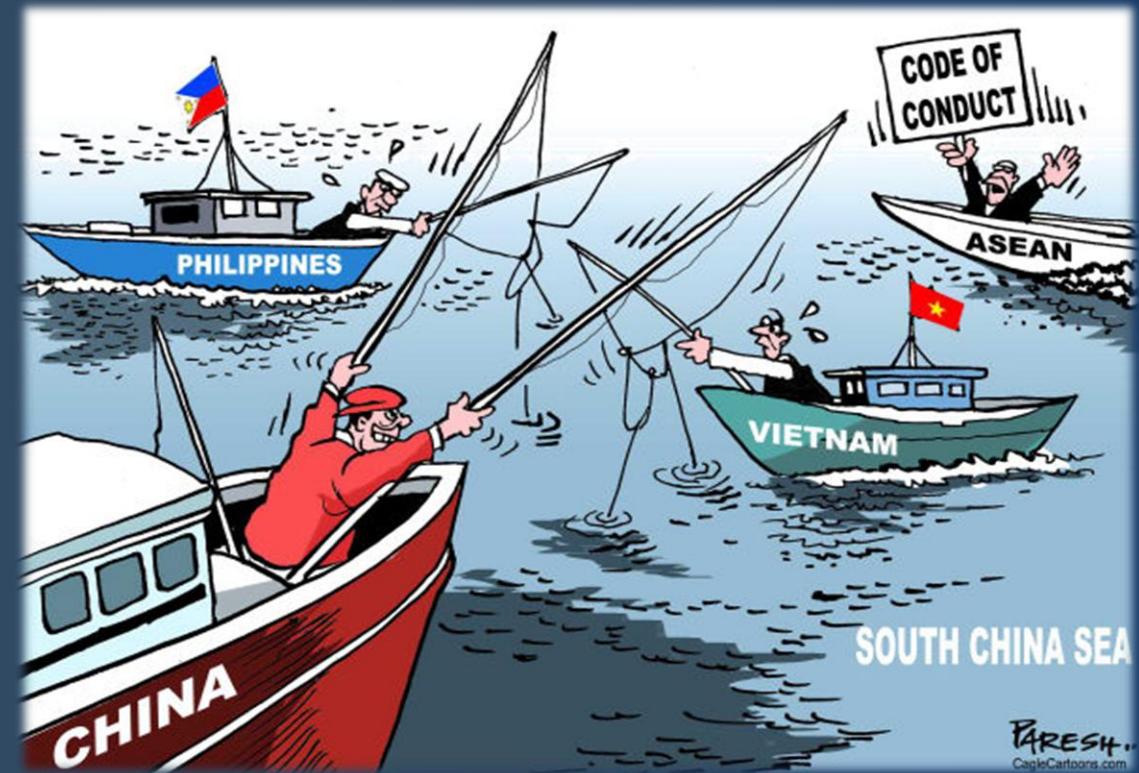
If the system works well on the whole, it is a lucky accident – the luckiest, indeed, that can befall a society.

-Edward C. Banfield



# Political Characteristics of States

- Alliances





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# *ALLIANCES*



# *Erosion of State Power: NGOs, Supranational Organizations and Terrorism*

- Borders are increasingly permeable and meaningless, especially for capital and goods.
- It's difficult - perhaps impossible - to control the spread of ideas, diseases, industries, weapons, narcotics, etc.
- state sovereignty vs. the UN and EU





# *Erosion of State Power: NGOs, Supranational Organizations and Terrorism*

- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have increasing power.
  - organized international interest groups
  - multinational corporations, charitable organizations, drug cartels, terrorists
  - Al Qaeda, irregular armies, ISIS - not recognized governments
  - separatist movements
- And not every NGO has our best interests at heart.



# *Globalization*

Globalization ensures that everything – good or bad – quickly spreads around the globe.

We may want to stop the spread of terrorism, drugs, disease, etc but there *are* things we want everyone to have ... things such as

justice

human rights

free trade

security



# *Globalization of Justice*

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the UN. The Court's role is to:
  - settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted by states
  - give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies

ICJ





# *Globalization of Justice*

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an independent judicial body with jurisdiction over persons charged with genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- The ICC is not part of the UN. It was established by the Rome Statute, negotiated within the UN, which created an independent judicial body distinct from the UN.

new ICC  
headquarters, The  
Hague, Netherlands

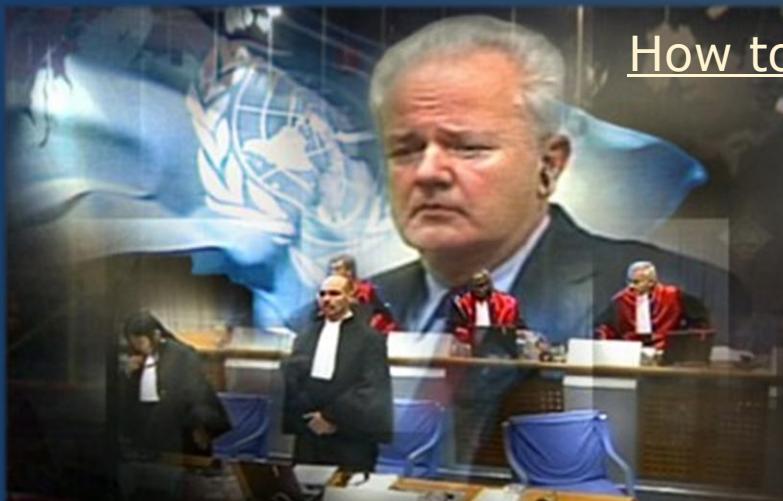




# *Globalization of Justice*

- International War Crimes and Genocide Tribunals: ad hoc Criminal Tribunals established by the UN to bring justice to victims of international crimes, example: International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) [See picture below.]

[How to Watch a War Crimes Trial in the Hague](#)





# *Globalization of Justice*

Although we'd like to think otherwise, we aren't always on the "right" side.

- Middle East Uprisings of 2011
  - indigenous protests
  - US and European leaders conflicted because the dictators being protested against were *our* dictators (Mubarak in Egypt, Ben Ali in Tunisia, etc.).
- The *Axis of Evil* was a unilateral declaration (US as world's policeman?).
  - referred to Iran, Iraq, North Korea
  - labeled by President GW Bush



Sousse, Tunisia



# Human Rights

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
  - signed by US
  - does not include *Right to Refuse to Kill*
- Rights of individuals vs. rights of the whole society? Who defines? Who decides? UN Human Rights Commission has no power of enforcement and its members often ignore the declaration.
  - Libya's UN representative was elected Chairman of the UN Commission in 2003 although Libya has a record of torture ... but then so does almost every state on earth.





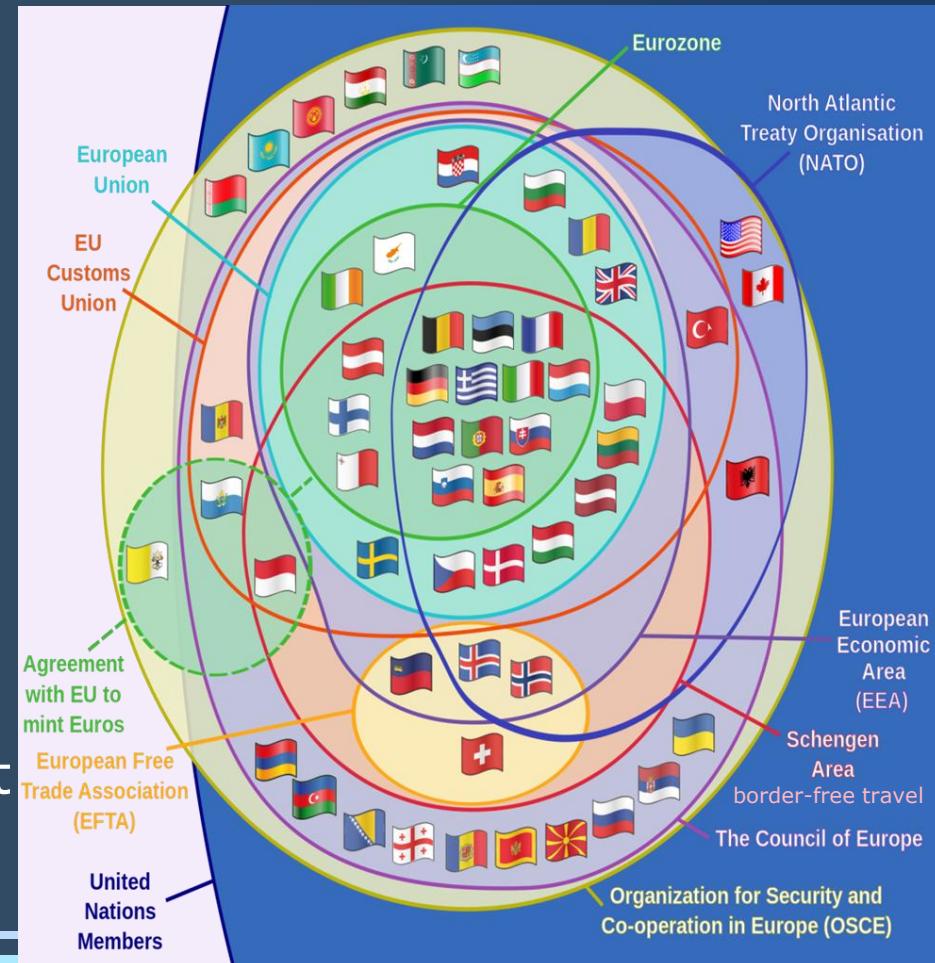
# *Human Rights*

- Human rights and development aid: Should development aid be restricted and used as a coercive tool for the promotion of human rights?
  - Need some kind of carrot-and-stick system to use with states violating human rights.
  - Why give aid to violators?
  - Lack of development is felt most by those on the bottom. Violations are perpetrated by those on the top.
  - Trying to punish the violators by withholding aid will most likely only punish the poor.



# Multi-State Organizations

- international organizations: coordinate activities among states (UN)
- supranational organizations: exercise power over states (EU, WTO, OPEC)
- commonwealth: limited control over former colonies
- bloc: group of states with common policy
- trade bloc: group of states that reduce or eliminate trade barriers for member states





# *States Join Together to Form International Units*

- political reasons
- military reasons
- economic reasons
- example: UN (United Nations), OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), G8 Summit, World Bank, UNICEF, WHO, etc





# *Alliances of States: Power in Numbers*

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



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# United Nations (UN)



- Established in 1945 in response to WWII and failure to avert war.
- Initiated by US President FD Roosevelt.
- Has always involved states, not nations (as defined 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

## Structure

- All states are members of General Assembly.
- Secretary-General is appointed by General Assembly.
- 15 states are members of Security Council.
- 5 permanent Security Council members: Russia, US, UK, France, China

Are there potential pitfalls from objectives or structure?



# *United Nations Membership*

- open to all “peace-loving” states
- 193 member states
- most recent member: South Sudan (07/2011)
- observers (no voting rights) include Holy See (Vatican) and Palestinian Authority



UN General Assembly



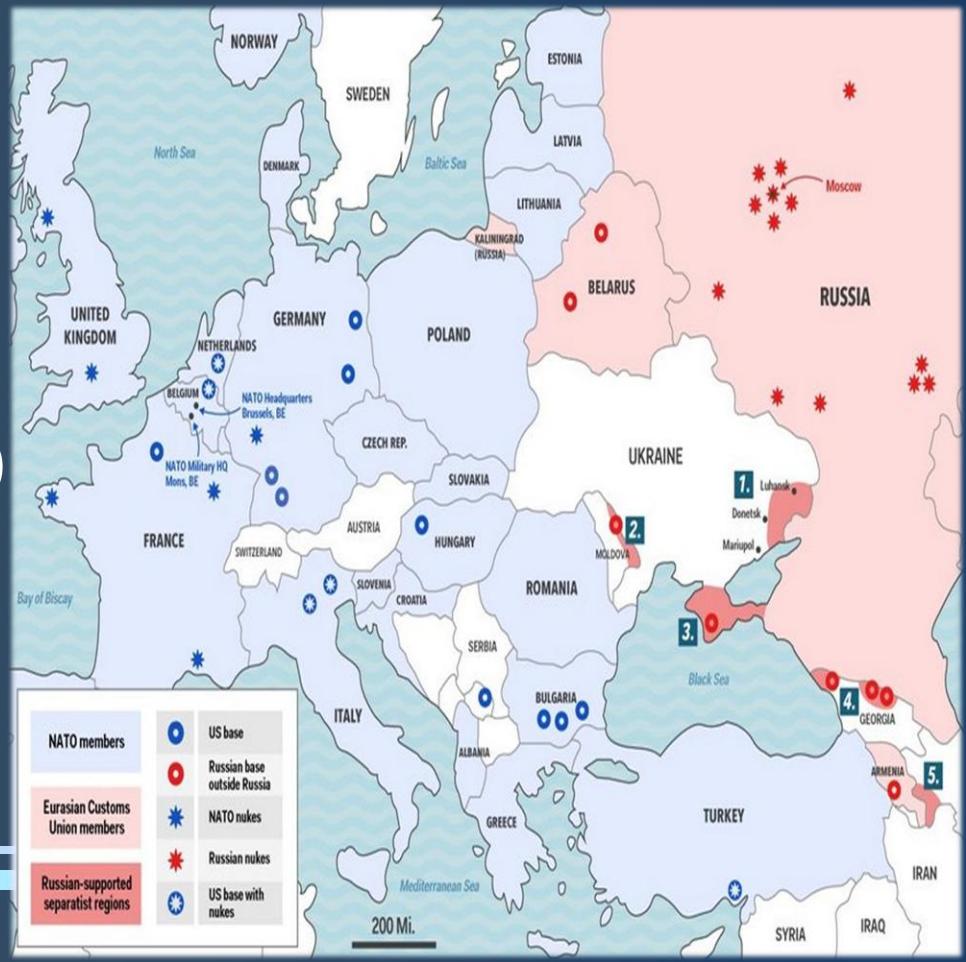
# *UN Non-Members*

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



# State Alliances: Military and Economic

- military
  - NATO
- economic
  - EU (European Union)
  - ASEAN
  - NAFTA
  - MERCOSUR





# State Alliances: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)



- formed after WWII
- Eastern European states are recent applicants.
- renewed interest in alliance after US invaded Iraq



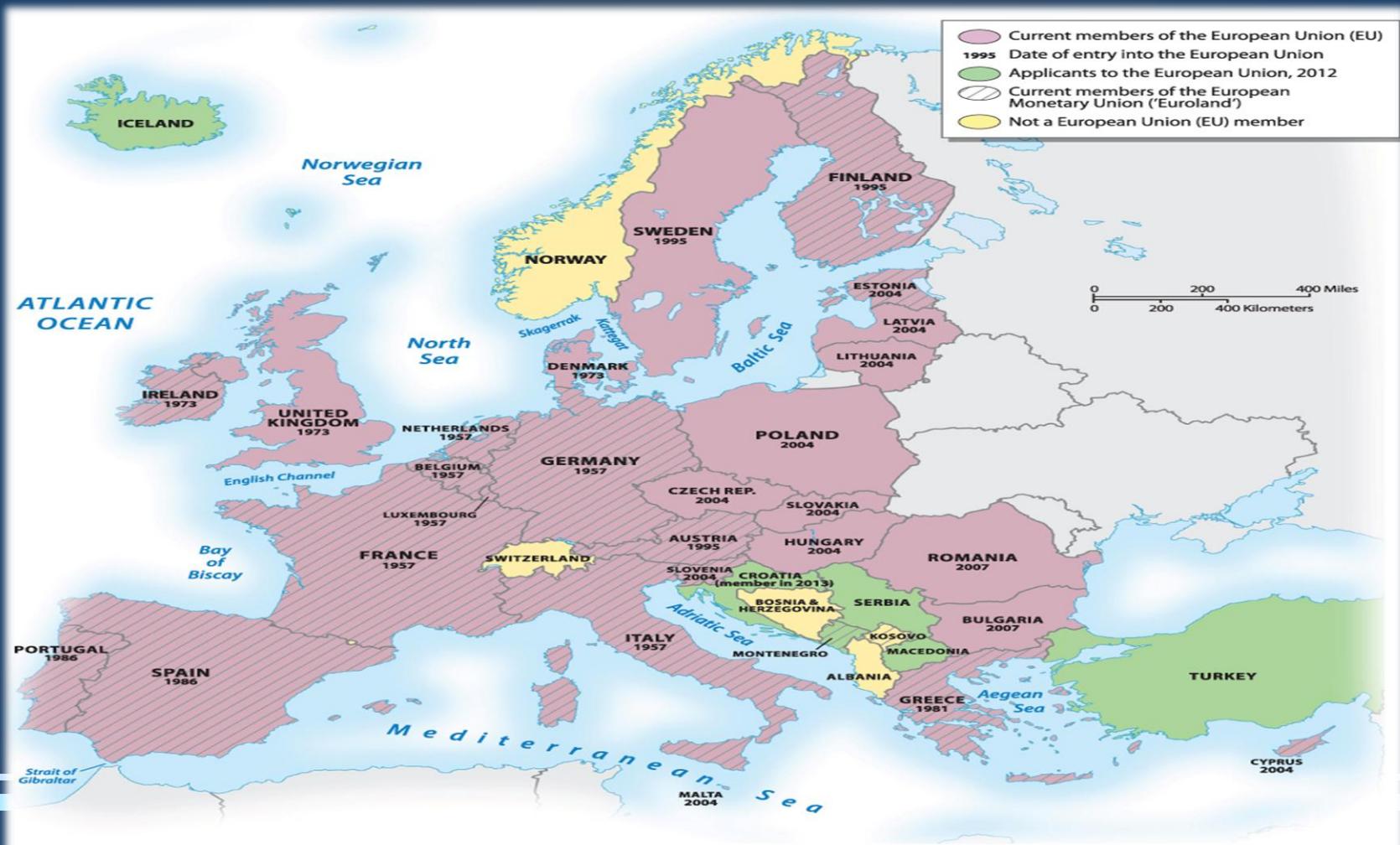
# *State Alliances: European Union (EU)*

- ...economic and political confederation of 28 member states located primarily in Europe
- Operates through a system of supranational independent institutions and intergovernmental-negotiated decisions by member states.
- Includes free movement, a single market and a common currency (euro).





# State Alliances: European Union (EU)

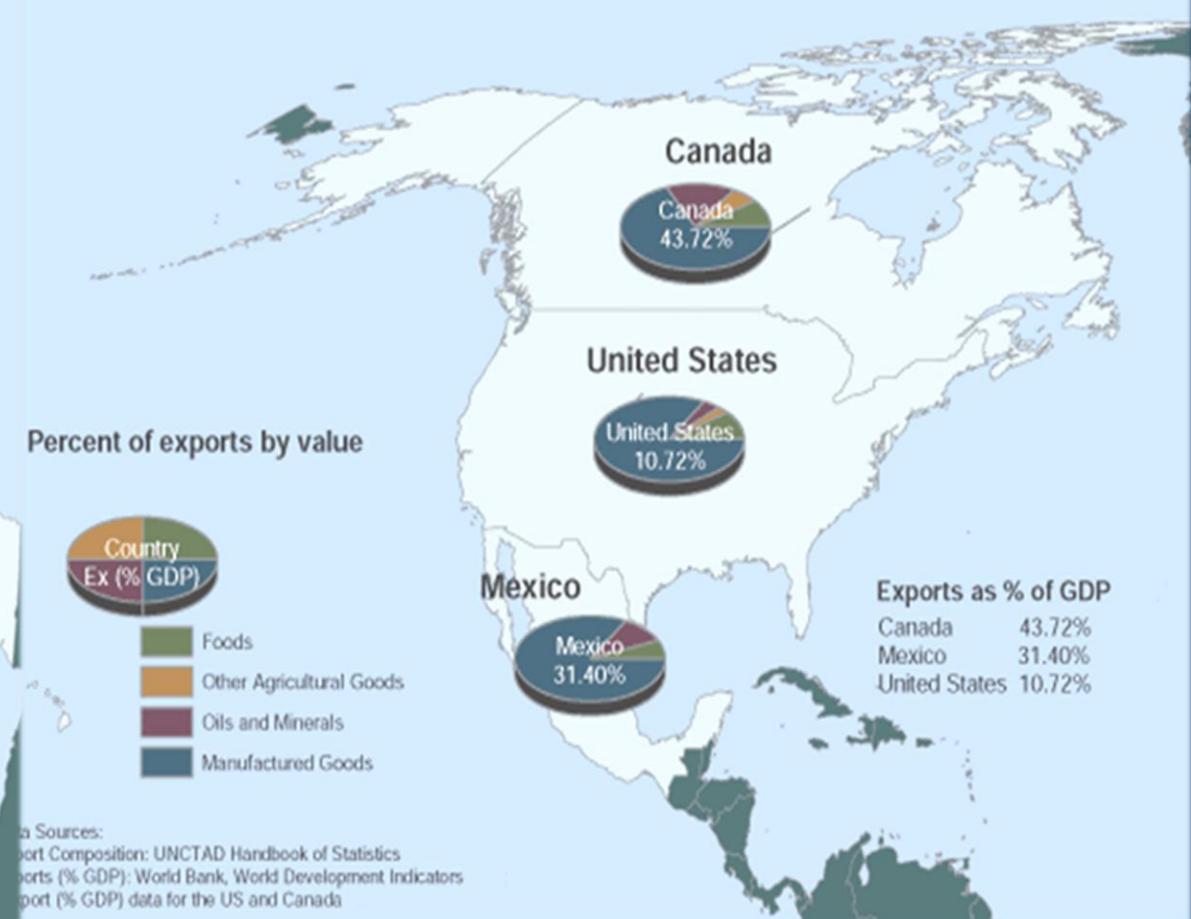




# State Alliances: ASEAN and NAFTA



### NAFTA Export Composition





# *State Alliances:* **MERCOSUR**

...an economic and political agreement among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela designed to promote free trade and the fluid movement of goods, people and currency





# *State Alliances: Trade Blocs*

Reasons for formation of blocs:

- emphasis on removal of trade barriers
- coordination and bargaining power
- trade gains
- increased returns and increased competition
- investments
- security



# *State Alliances: Trade Blocs*

Features of trade blocs:

- reduction or elimination of barriers to trade
- huge market to members
- distribution cost is reduced
- increases trade
- regional market has better economy of scale
- economical, industrial, social development
- jobs creation





# *State Alliances: Trade Blocs*

Types of trading blocs:

- preferential trading agreement
- free trade area
- customs union
- common union
- economic union
- political union

(See next slide.)



# *State Alliances: Trade Blocs*

## Political Union

group of states with shared sovereignty or complete unification

## Economic Union

common market plus full economic policy harmonization, example: EU

## Common Market

custom union plus free movement of goods, services, people and capital,  
example: *Comunidad Andina* (CAN), Bolivia, Perú, Colombia, Ecuador

## Custom Union

free trade area plus a common external tariff, example: MERCOSUR

## Free Trade Area

formal tariff-free trading area between states, example: NAFTA

## Preferential Trading Agreement

reduces tariff or special quotas allowing preferential access to market,  
example: India, Sri Lanka



# *State Alliances: Trade Blocs*

Positive Effects of Trade Blocs:

- trade creation
- competition
- economic growth
- economic development
- employment
- technological development
- investment
- social cultural relations
- utilization of resources
- consumer welfare





# *State Alliances: Trade Blocs*

## Negative Effects of Trade Blocs:

- loss of sovereignty
- interdependence
- distortion of trade
- loss to developing states
- loss of benefits



# Other Trade Blocs

- CARICOM: 15 states of the Caribbean
- MERCOSUR: 5 Latin American states full members, 6 associate members
- ASEAN: association of 10 Southeast Asian states
- SADC: South African Development Community of 15 Sub-Saharan African states
- African Union: union consisting of 54 states in Africa, involves more than economics
- Arab League: 22 independent Arab States in north and northeast Africa and southwest Asia for the purpose of strengthening relations between member states





# *State Alliances: Economics and Conflict?*

- Can we think of states as economic actors on their own? Why or why not?
- Who do you think are the key actors in state alliances and conflicts? Are there any nonstate actors?
- Where do you think are some key sites of action? Look at Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Mali, Sudan, Haiti, Iraq or others of interest to you.

Myanmar



Mali



Iraq



Libya



Syria





**THE END**

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The Spread of Colonization, 1600-1700

