

On China's New Silk Roads

**Geopolitical – Economic – Trade Expansion
in the 21st Century**

Dr. Nick Demos - Presentation at SBT 31 - Winter 2018

China's Vision: Easy access to resources & markets



China's Mission: Easy access to sea routes



China's Land & Sea Expansion (6A-A+E)



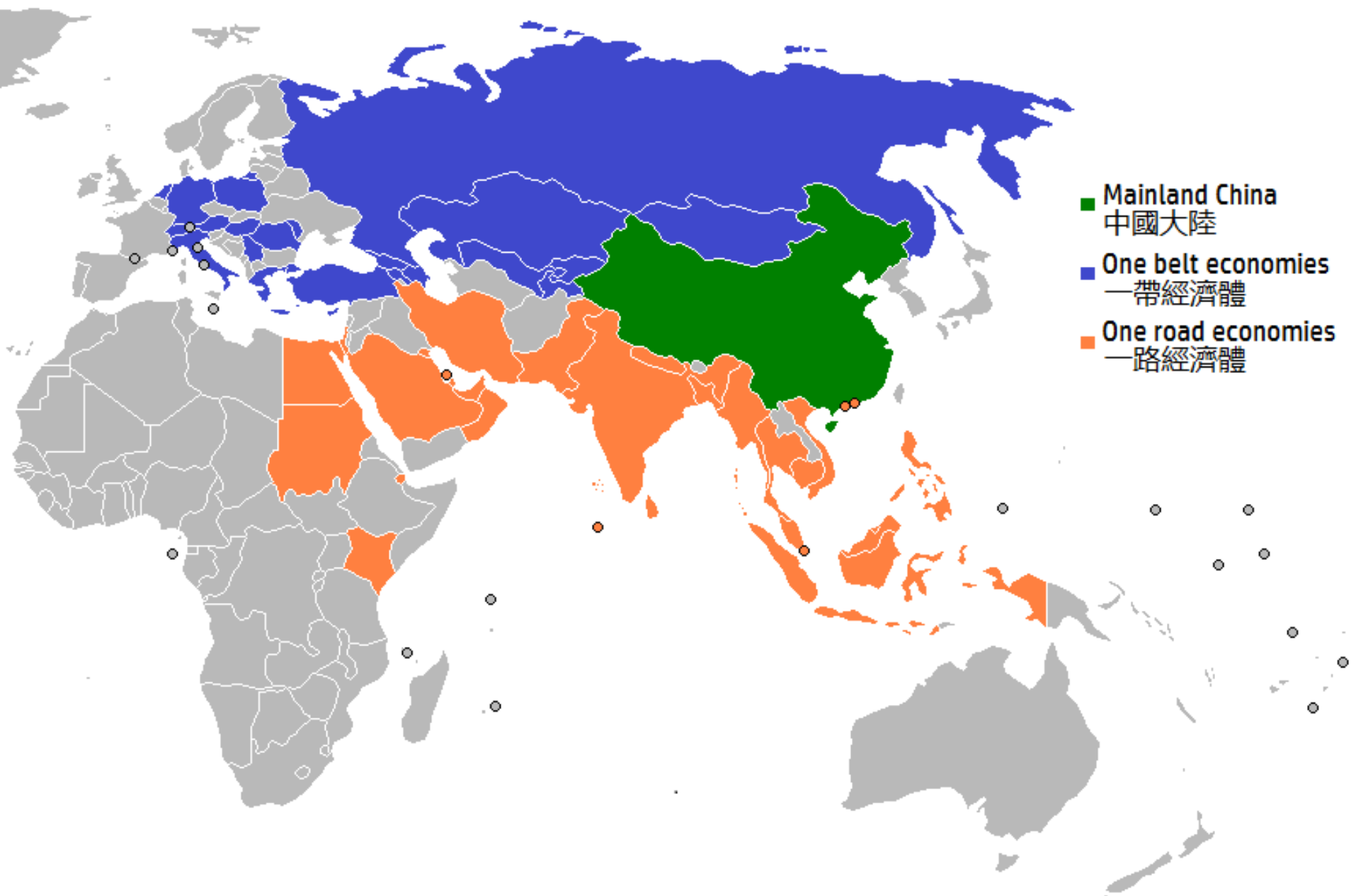
Sea Routes to 5A+E

To cap it all

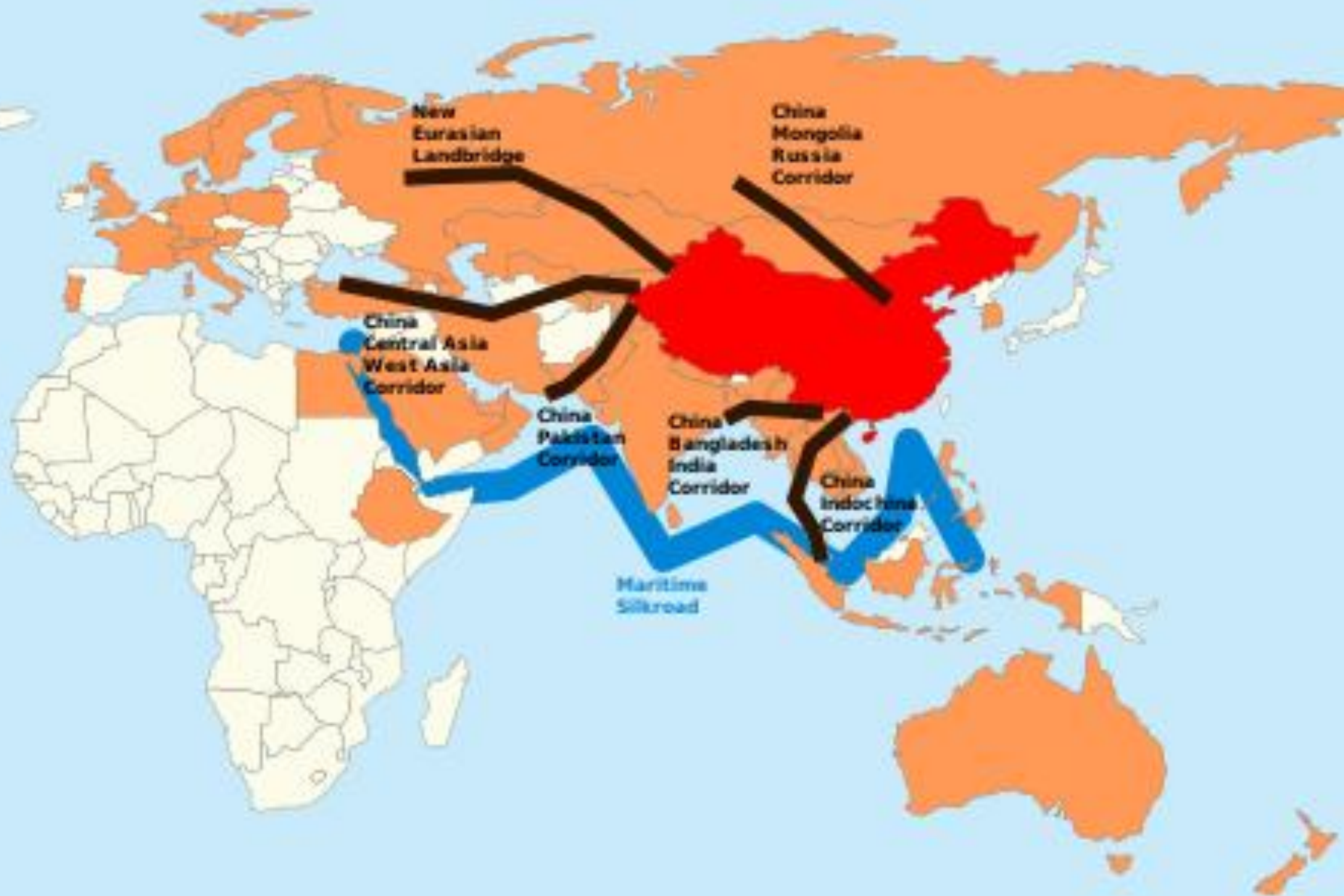
Planned areas of infrastructure building



Land Collaborators



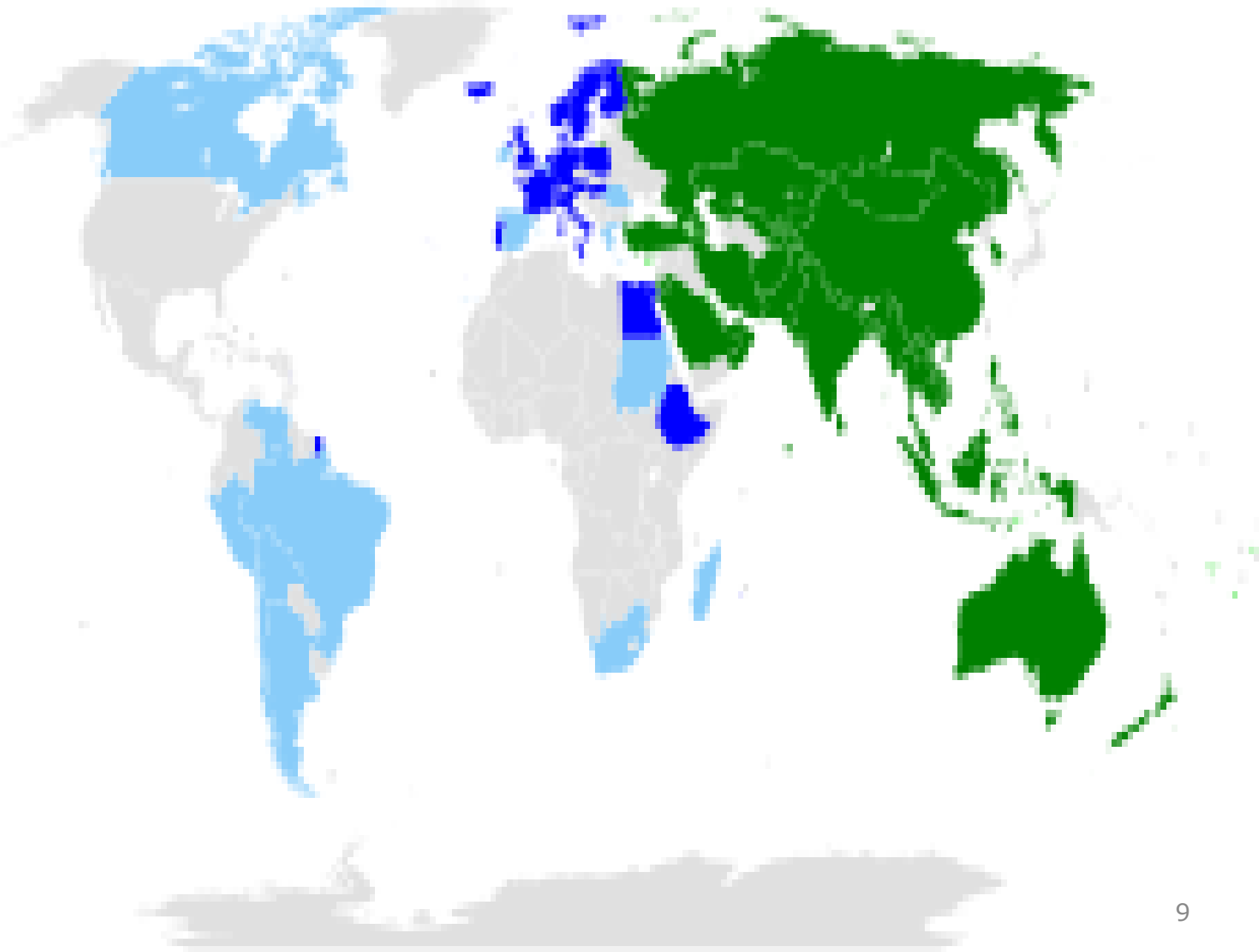
Following Zheng He's expedition (1405-1433)



Following Marco Polo



China's Investments (6A+E=II)



Geographically & Historically ...

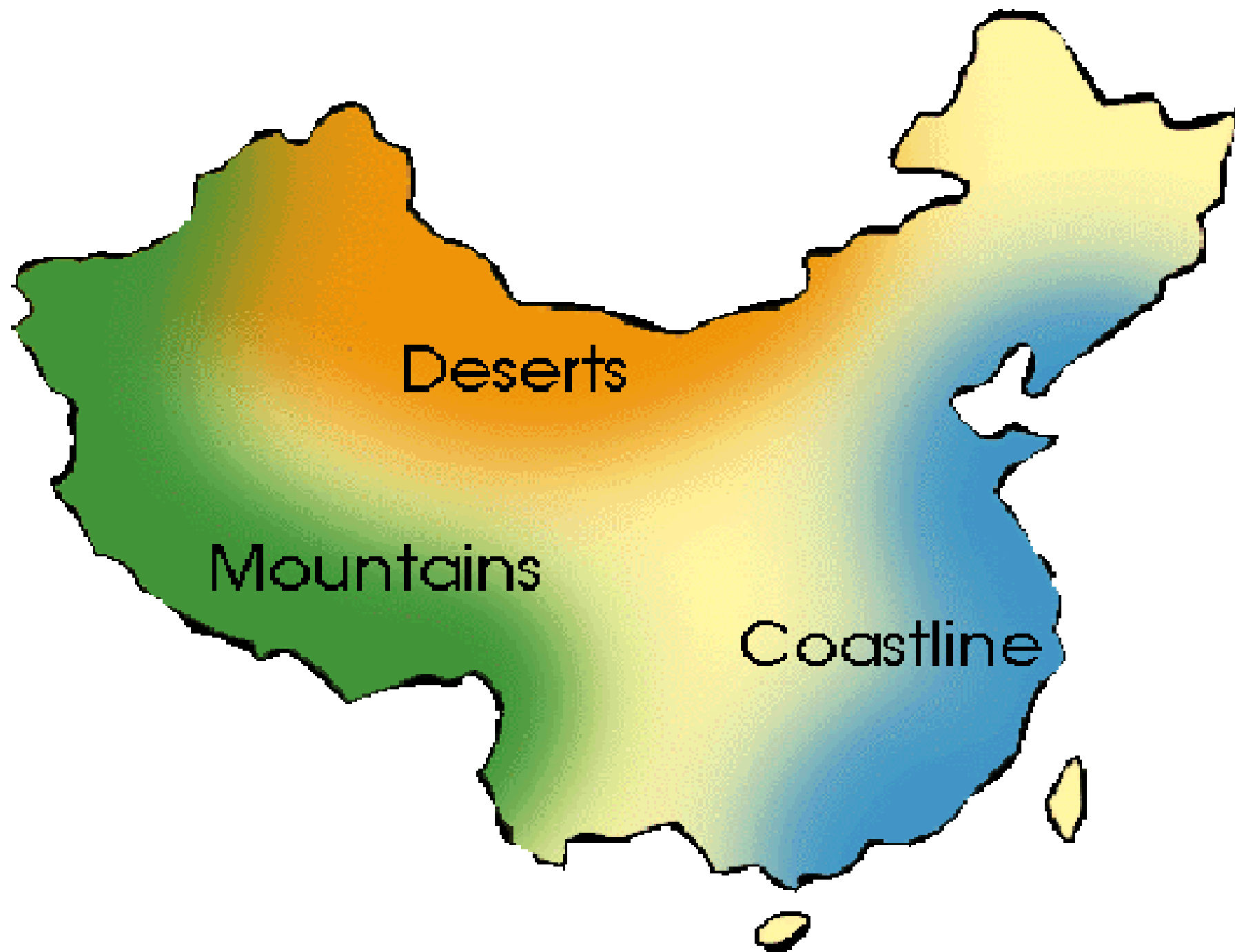
CHINA's Geography & History



Geography of China







CHINA's Historic Silk Road



CHINA as Global / Regional Power

Longest Time Superpower on Earth

- **The longest global superpower on the planet**
- **Modern Global Superpower (2008 - ????)**

History — *Longest Superpower*

- **Warring City States** (1500 BCE)
- **First Consolidation** — *Chinese State (Han people) – Shang Dynasty*
- **Han People** (*Mandarin & Cantonese... Language*)
- **Heartland** (*1 bn people – ½ of the USA 350 ml*)
- **Building Long (Great) Wall** (221-207 BCE – *Qin Dynasty*)
- **Building Grand Canal** (605-609 CE)
- **Battling Islam – Battle of Talas** (10/7/751) *maps from my book p.272*
- **Mongol treat** (1279 Kublai Khan)
- **1st foreign occupation** (Mongols 1279-1369)-(Ming Dynasty)
- **2nd foreign occupation** (Europeans 18th-19th Century)
- **Struggle against Japan, Europeans, etc.**
- **Communist governance**

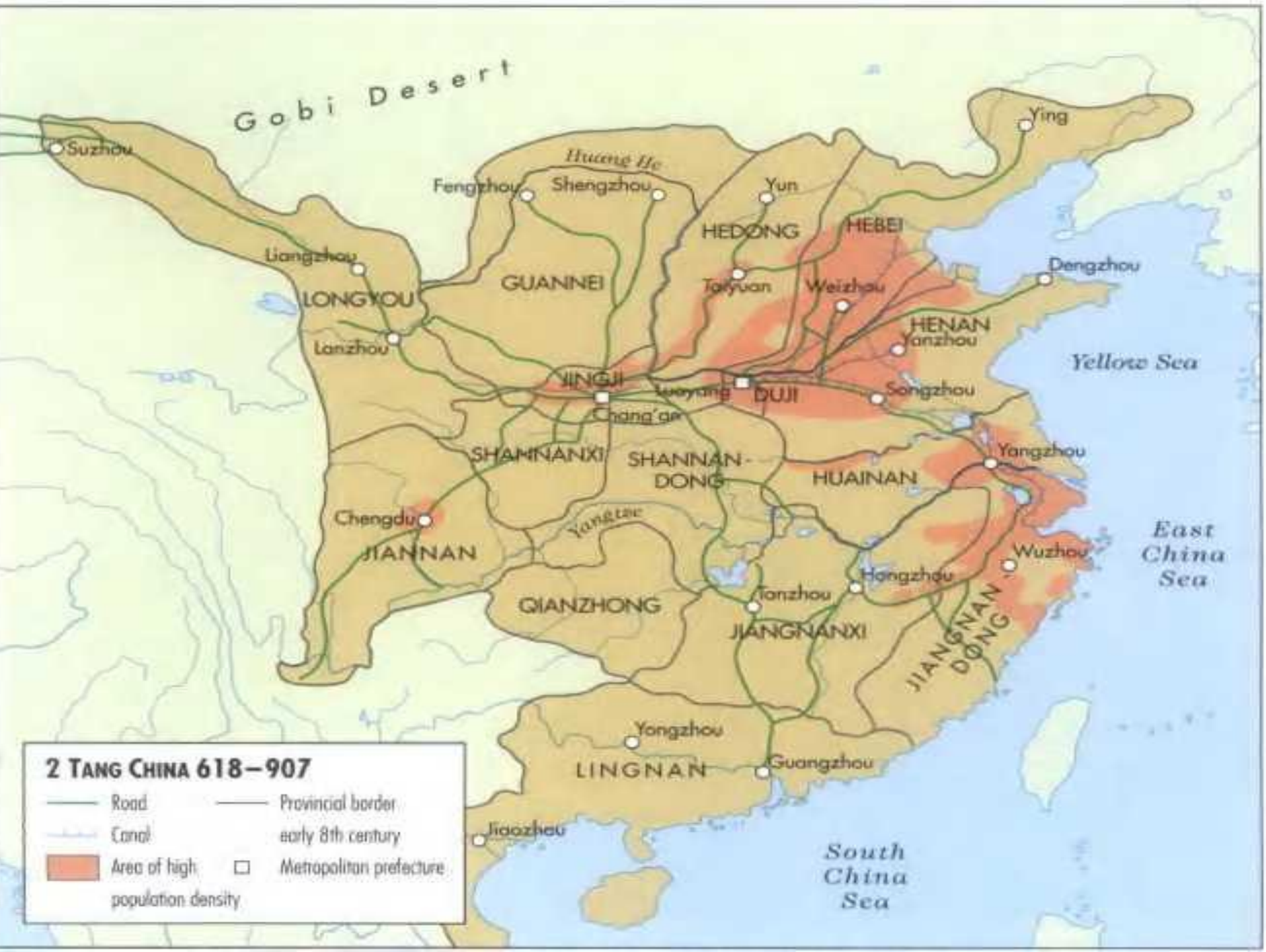
Ancient Times...





Medieval Times...





Historic Tribulations

Ordeals that shaped the Chinese soul

1. Battling Islam

Battle of Talas (July 10, 751)

2. Battling Mongols

1st Foreign Occupation (Mongols 1279-1368) - (*Yuan Dynasty*)

3. Battling Europeans

2nd Foreign Occupation (Europeans 1839-1949)

- *Portuguese*
- *Spanish*
- *Dutch*
- *English*
- *Germans*
- *Russians*

4. Battling Japan

3rd Foreign Occupation (*Japanese 1931-1945*)

Battling Islam



The Dynasty that stopped Islam at Talas 751

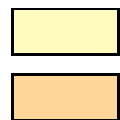
Talas Battle - 751 (8th Century)



Talas location ...



Talas battle affected massively East and West



Tang Empire

Area of Islamic influence



Major city



Trade route



China boundary today



Great Wall

0

0

1,500 Miles

1,500 Kilometers

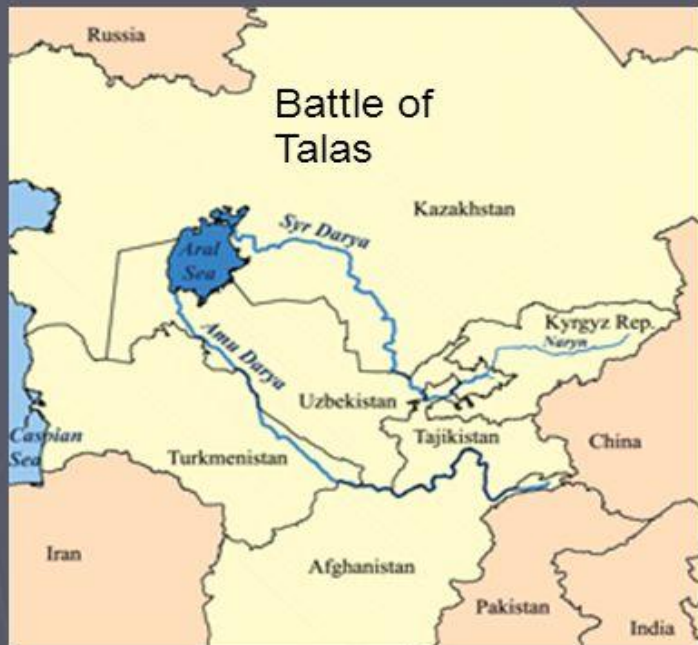
... some intended and unintended consequences ...

ARAB/ISLAMIC EMPIRES AND CHINA

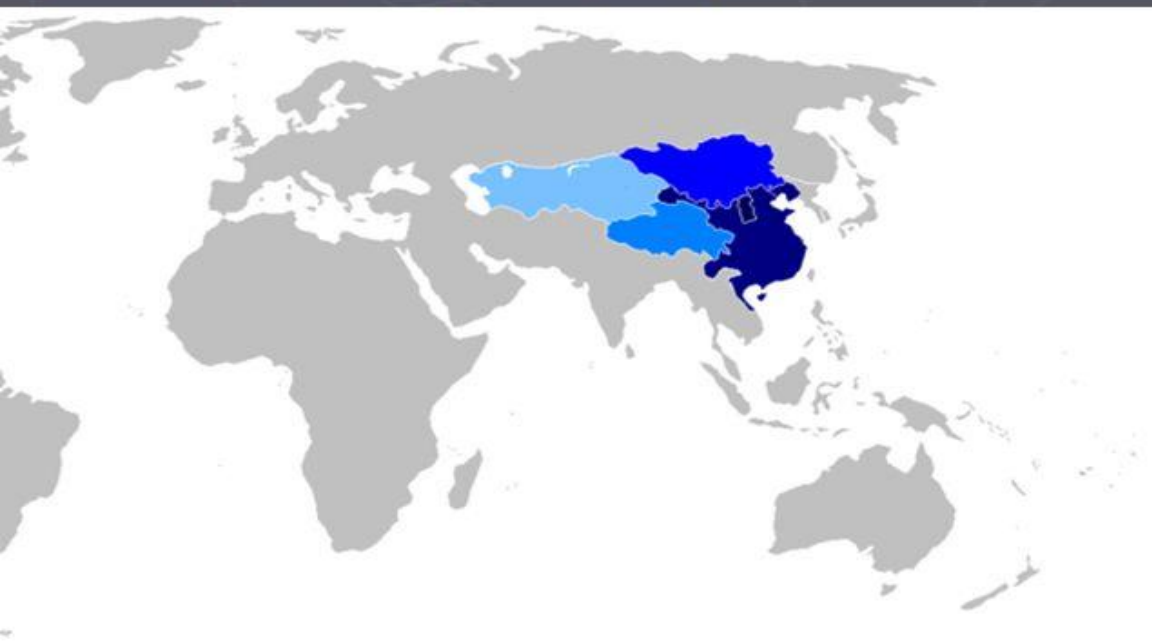
- ✘ In 751 CE, the Abbasid Dynasty defeated a Chinese army at the Battle of Talas River
- ✘ This ended expansion of Tang Dynasty into Central Asia and allowed the spread of Islam among Turkish peoples
- ✘ Borrowed compass from the Chinese
- ✘ Silk Road trade flourished
- ✘ Silk and ceramics from China



... more strategic consequences ...



Arabic language map of SE Asia

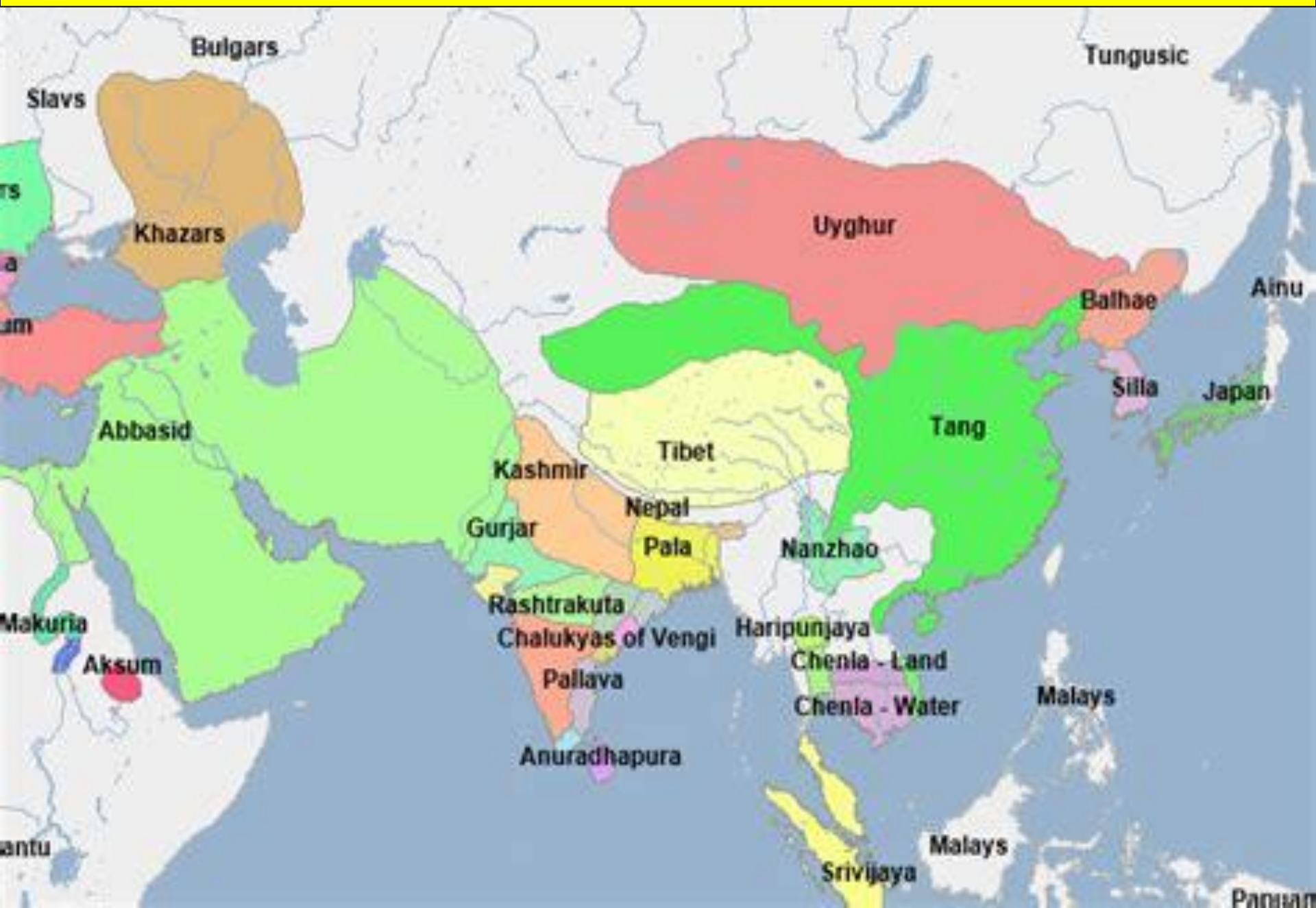


Expansion during Tang Dynasty

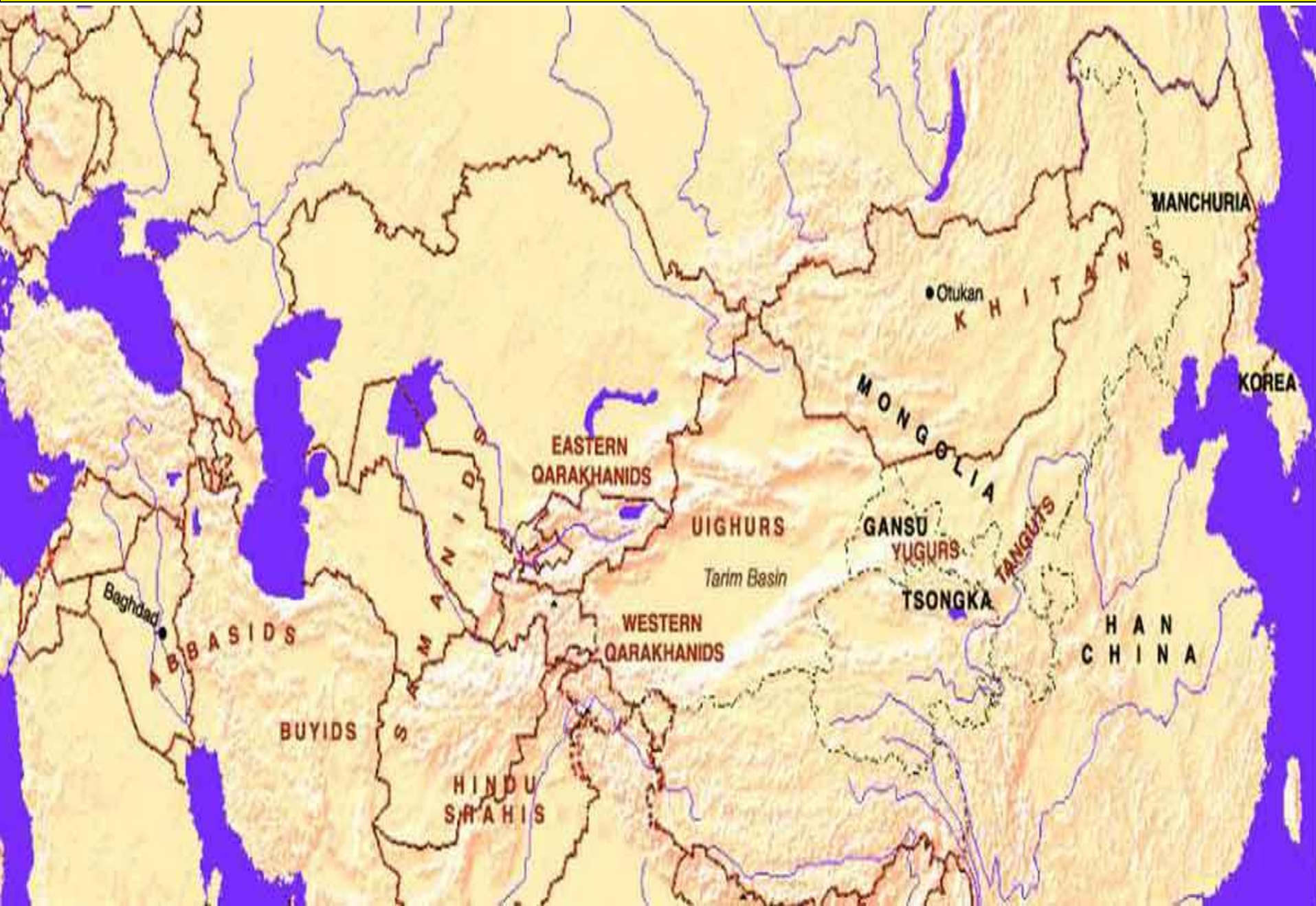
Main Powers: The Greeks...The Persians...The Chinese



... plus, other peoples ...



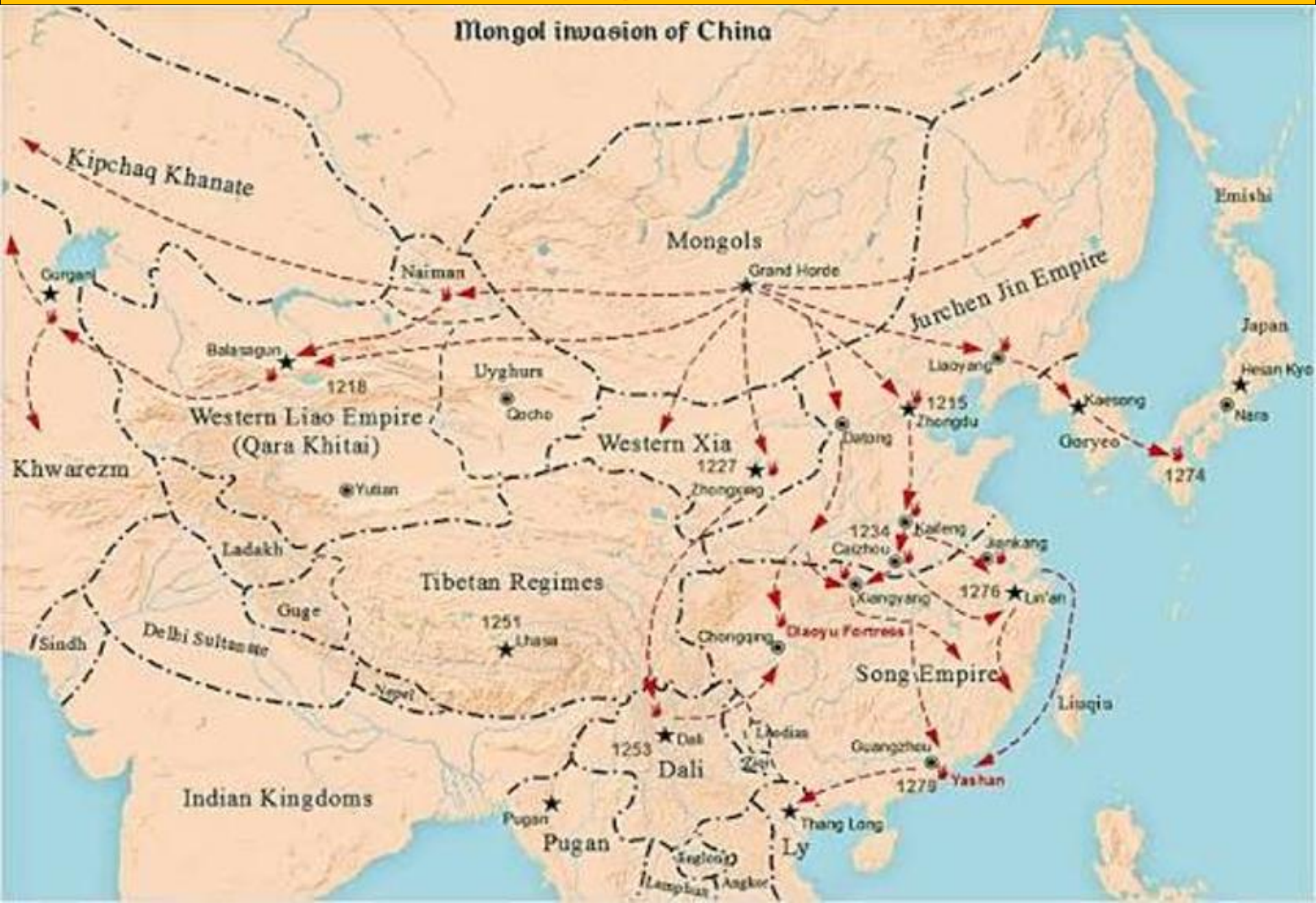
... Central Asia dynamics ...



The Islamic Turanian challenge again during 13th Century



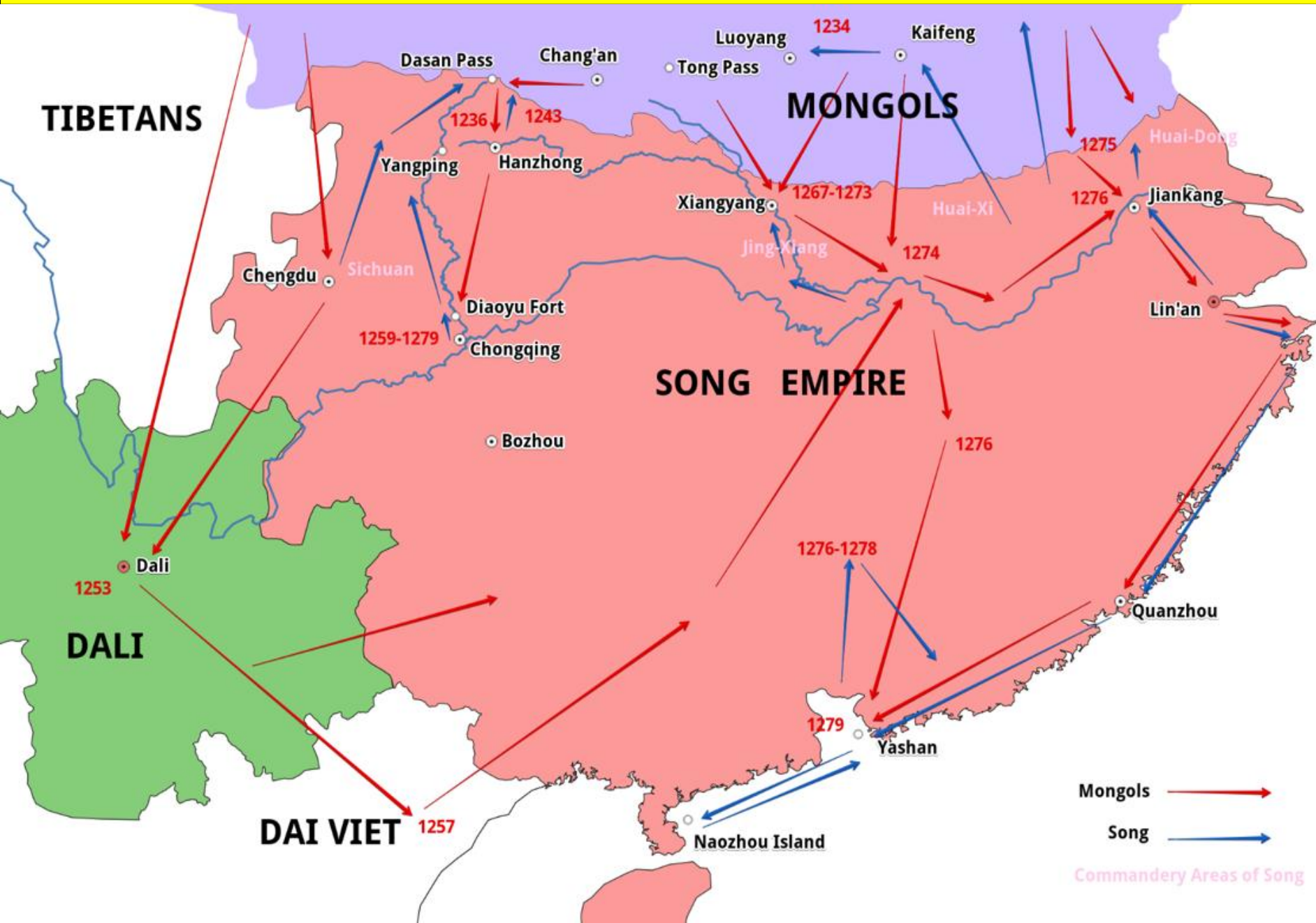
Battling Mongols



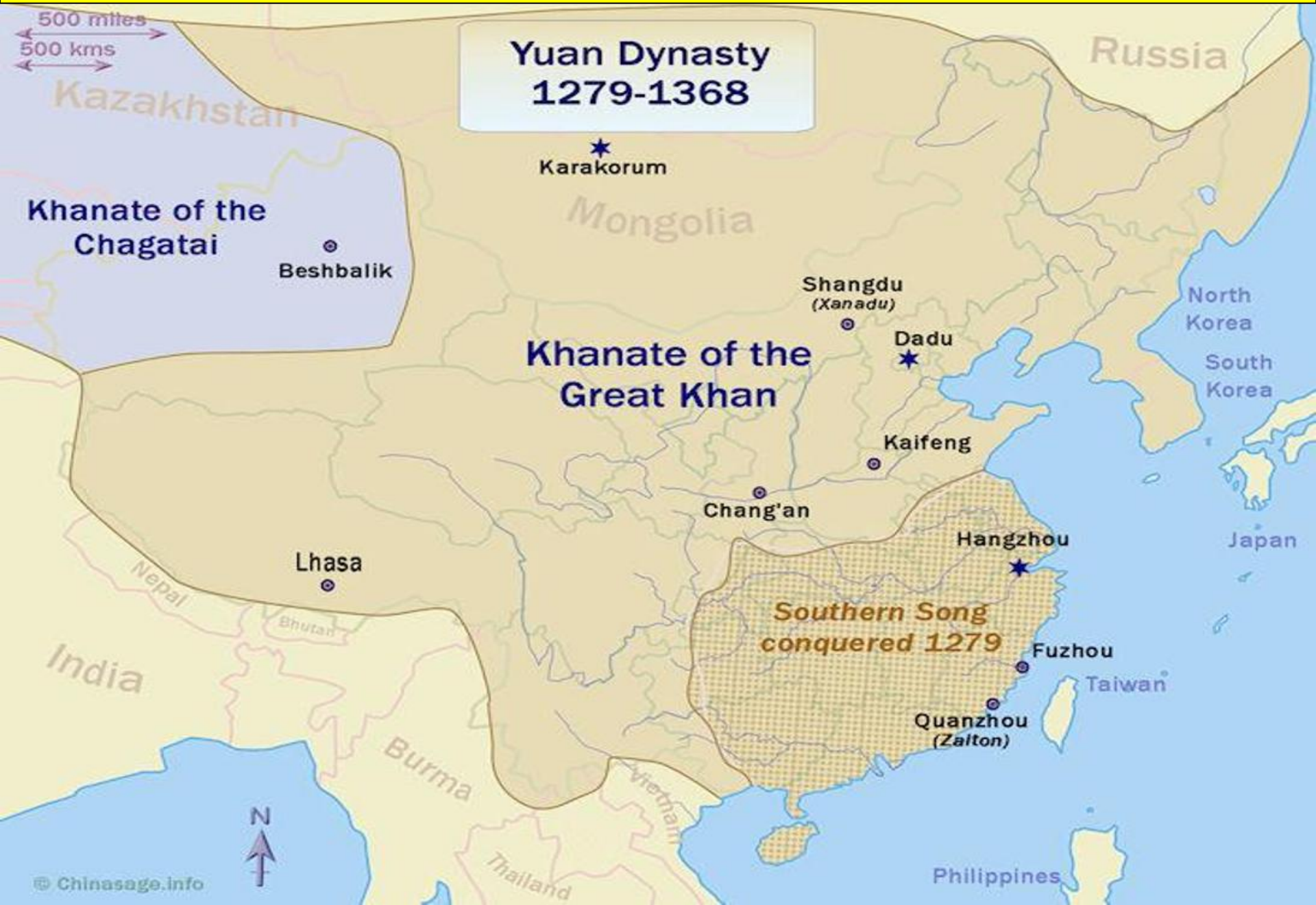
Song Dynasty was destroyed by Kublai Khan



Mongols occupy most of China and establish their own Dynasty



Yuan or Mongol Dynasty 1279 – 1368



Chinese regain control of their country



Battling Europeans



Battling European Imperialism (19th Century)

Spheres of Influence

	British		Occupied by Russia, 1897–1905
	French		Occupied by Japan by 1905
	German		Main area of Taiping Rebellion
	Japanese		
	Russian		

Miller Projection
0 500 1000 mi
0 500 1000 km



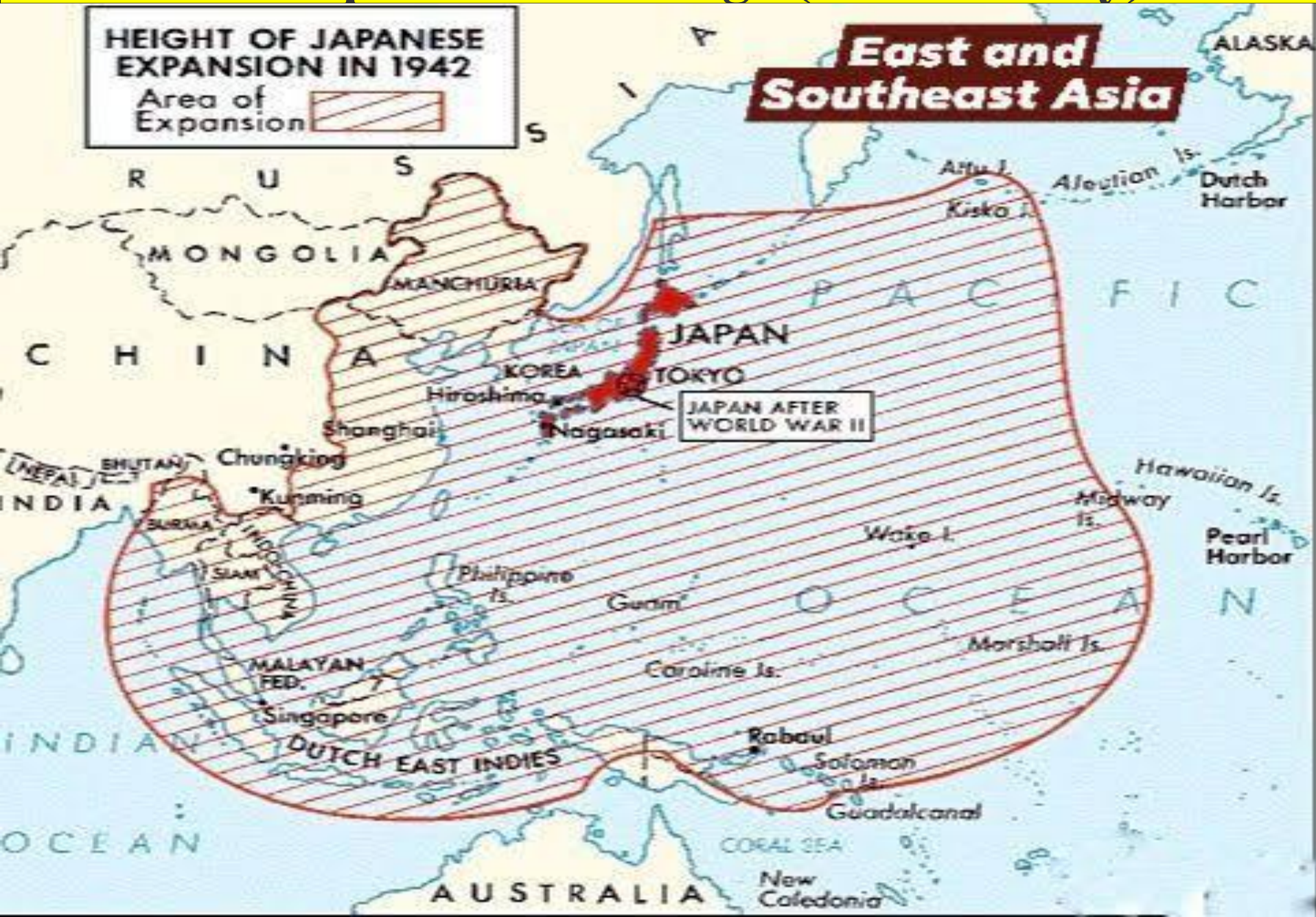
Foreign Influence (1850-1911)



Battling Japan



The Japanese Challenge (20th Century)



Current THREATS

(Real & Perceived)

Land Strategic Threats to China

Aim: Protect the Heartland: North China Plain

- *Land between Yangtze & Yellow Rivers*
- *Grand Canal & Great Wall*

1. Tibet Plateau

- *Source of Yangtze/Yellow/Mekong Rivers*
- *Himalayas*
- *Karakorum highlands control (Great Wall of India)*
- *Safe – Buffer Zone from populous and threatening India*

2. Xinjiang Province

- *Passage of the Road & Silk Road (access to Gwadar port – Baluchistan, Pakistan)*
- *Nuclear development & testing ground*
- *Western buffer zone*

3. Mongolia-Manchuria

- *Gobi Desert*
- *Historically winning enemy (Mongols- Kublai Han) came via here*



Sea Strategic Threats to China

Aim: Protect the Heartland: North China Plain

1. Yellow Sea

- *Europeans controlled (Port Arthur)*
- *Japan & Korea*
- *Access to Northern Sea Route*
 - *La Perouse Strait (Japan & Russia)*
 - *Kuril Islands chock point (Russia)*
 - *Bering Straits (USA & Russia)*
 - *Northwest passage (Canada)*
 - *Greenland (Canada & Denmark)*

2. East China Sea

- *Taiwan (USA)*
- *Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (Japan)*
- *Okinawa (Japan & USA)*
- *Guam (USA)*

3. South China Sea

- *Spratly Islands...(Mischief Islands)*
 - *Philippines*
 - *Vietnam*
 - *Malaysia*
 - *Indonesia*
- *Four straits – Chock points*
 - *Singapore*
 - *Malacca Straits (Malaysia & Indonesia)*
 - *Lombok Straits*
 - *Sunda Straits*

...Land & Sea troubled areas...



Chinese Solutions to Challenges

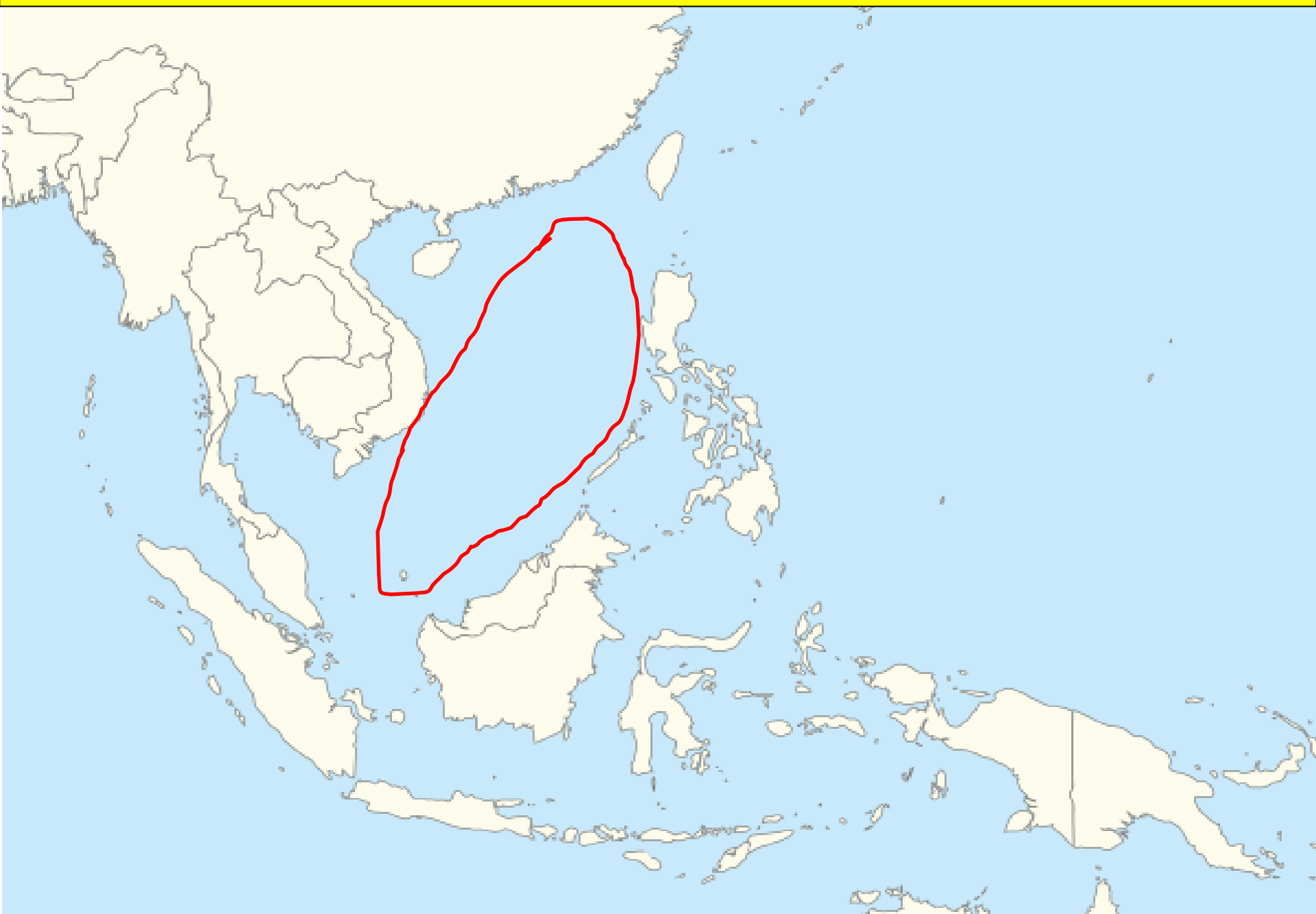
CHINA's Immediate Sea "Defensive" Expansion



South China Sea Geography



CHINA's Southern Sea Defensive Challenges

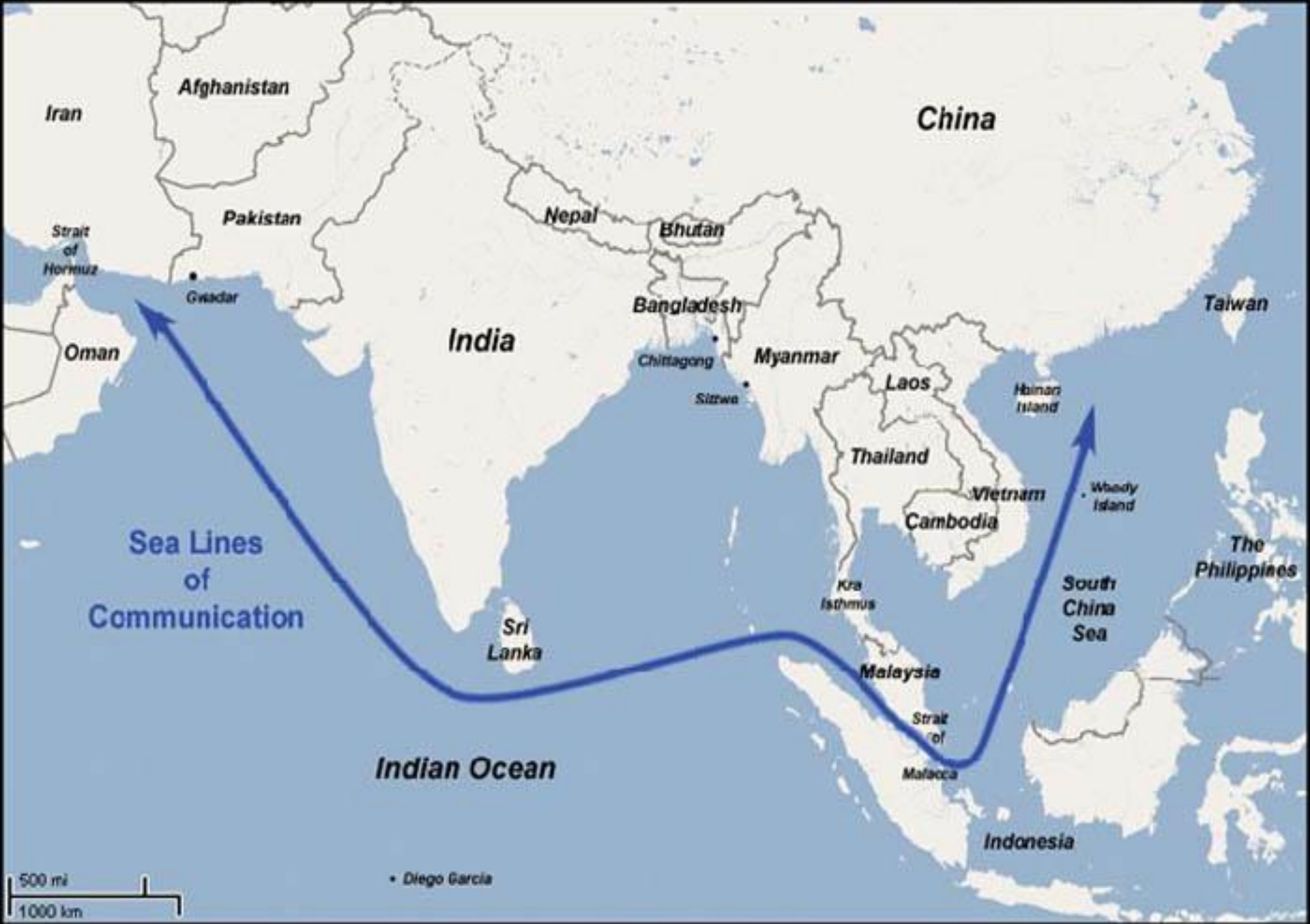


A) Southern Sea Defensive Expansion



B) Singapore - Malacca Straits





Sea Lines of Communication

Finding alternative route



C) Indonesia – Lombok & Sunda Straits



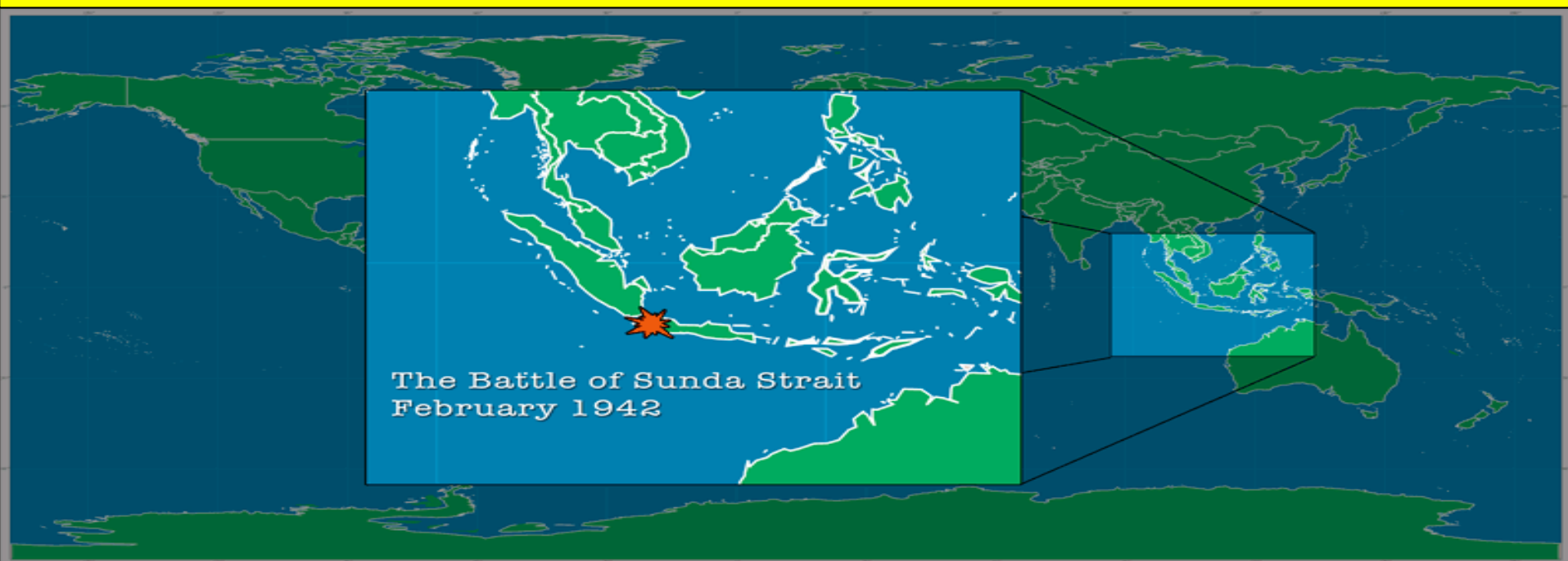
Indonesian Alternative Sea Routes



China has more choices



Even the Japanese tried to have Sunda Straits



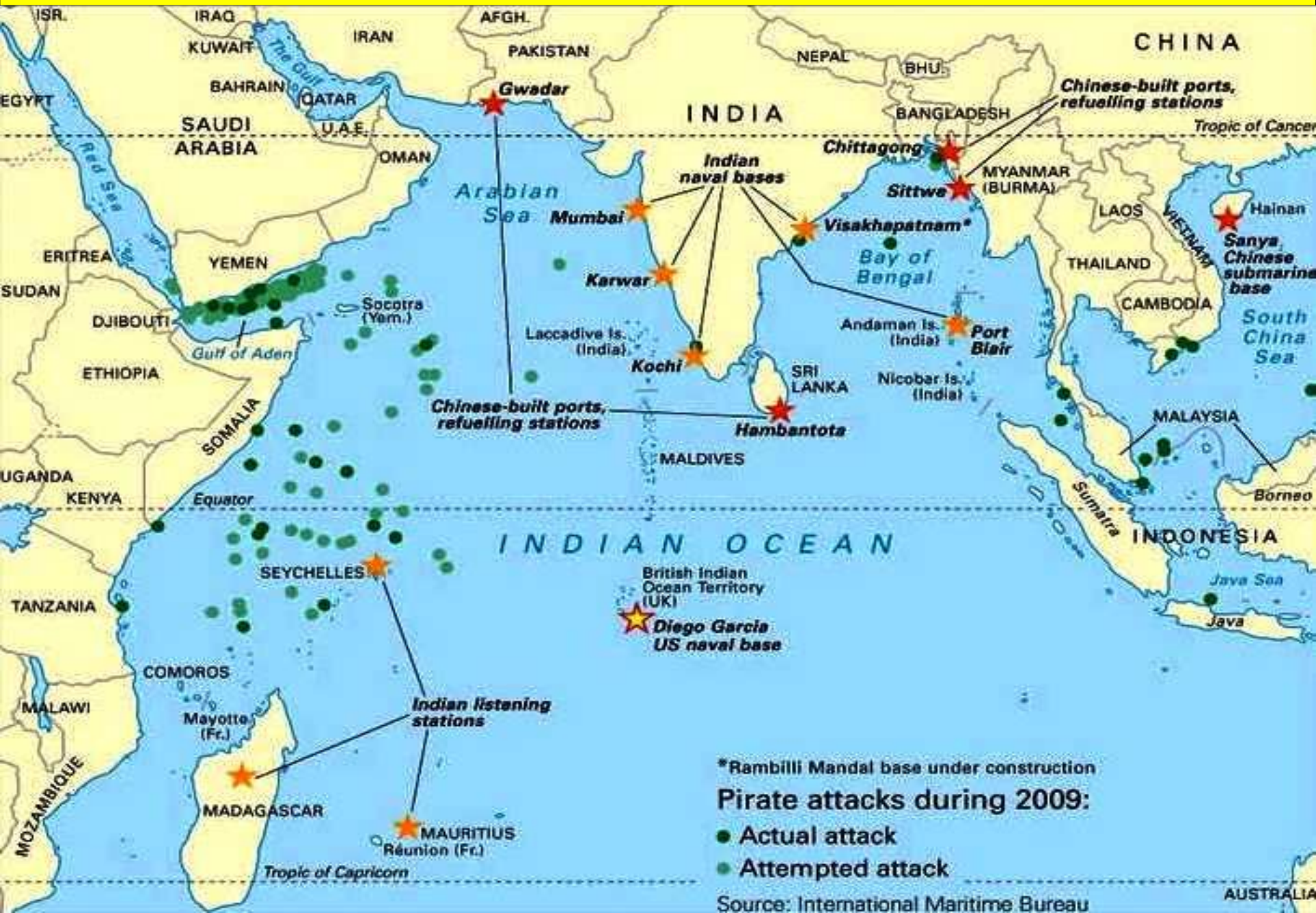
Geographic morphology of the Sunda Straits



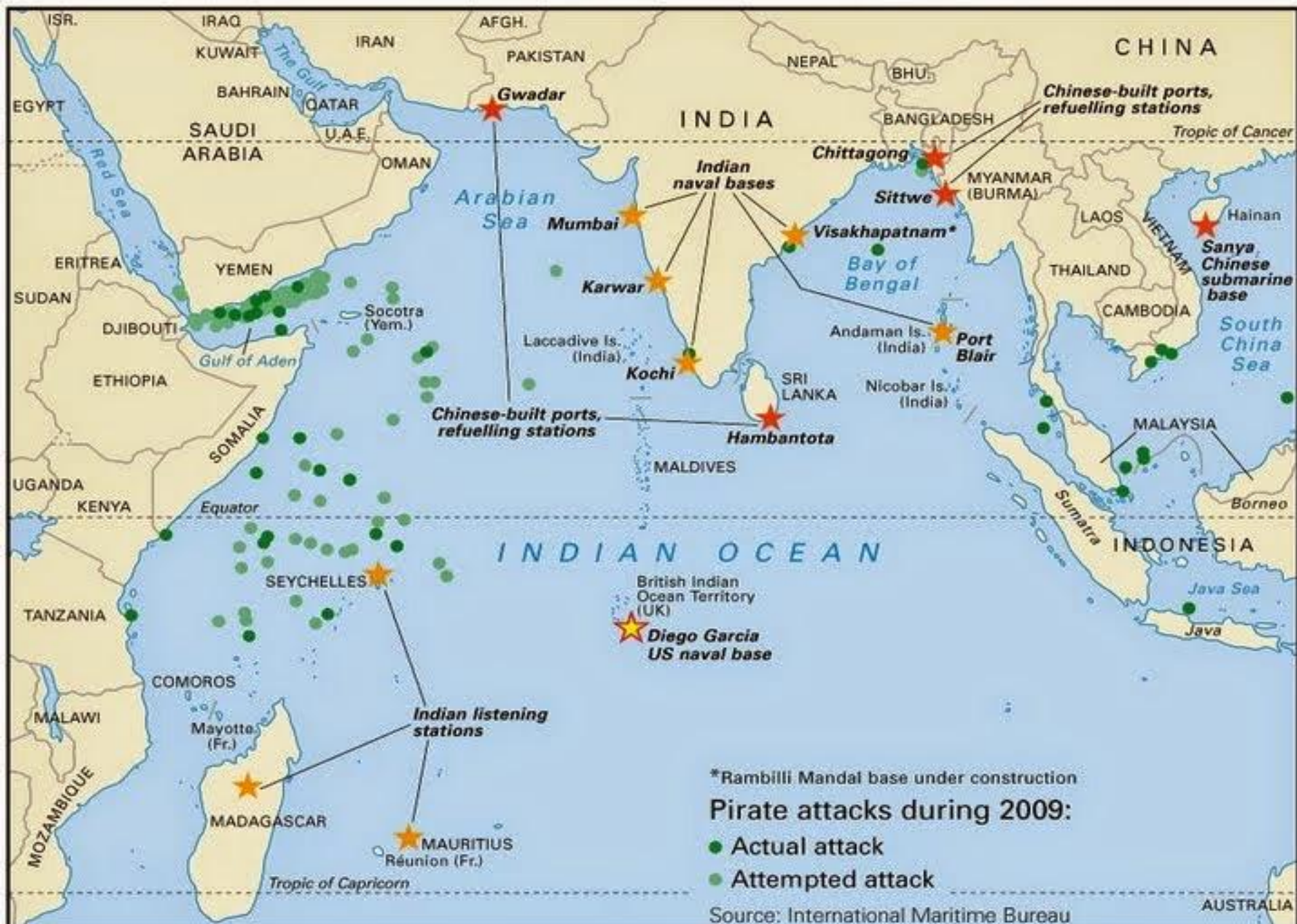
C) Northern Sea Defensive Expansion

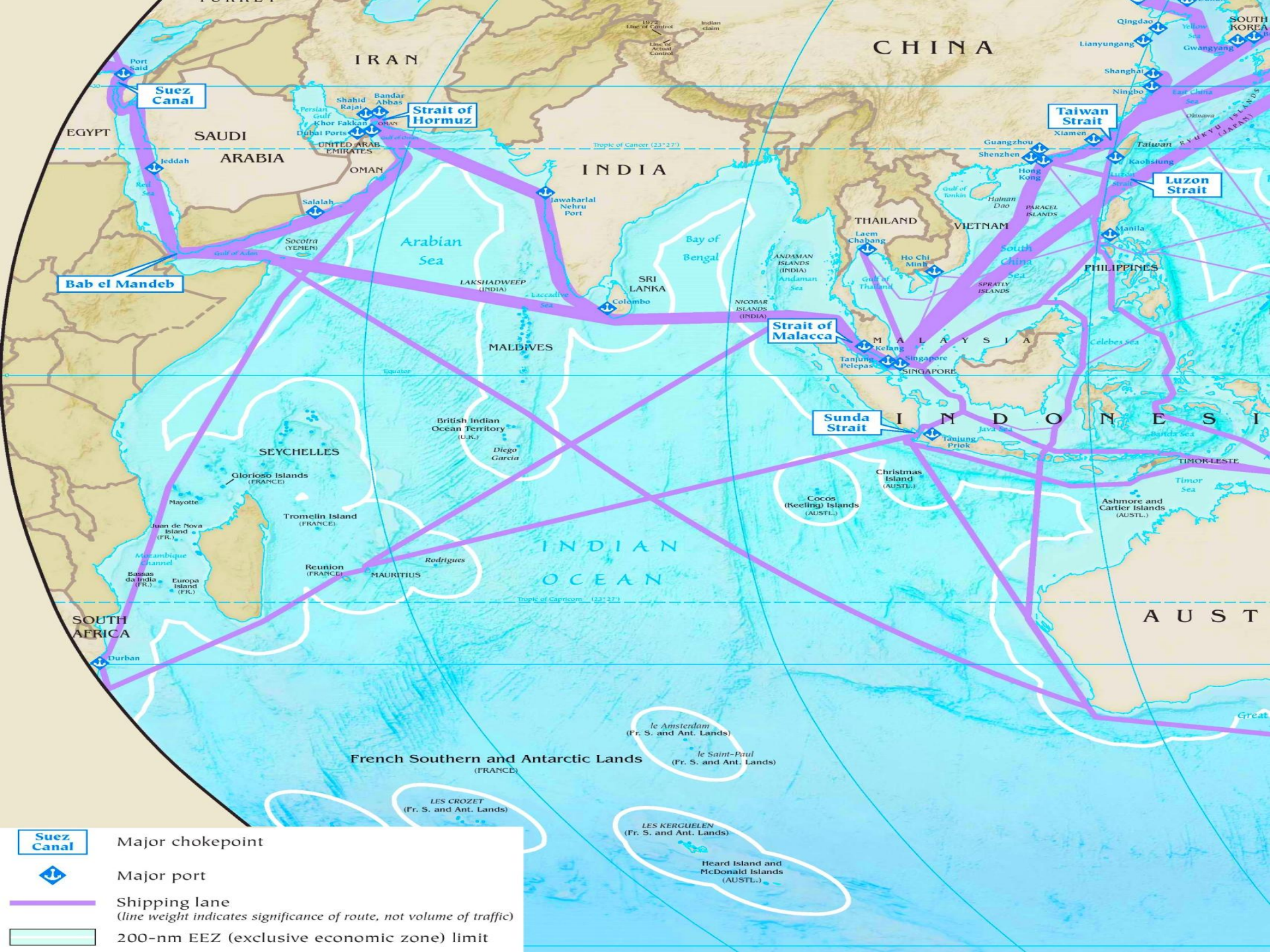


D) Eastern (Indian) Sea Defensive Expansion



GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN





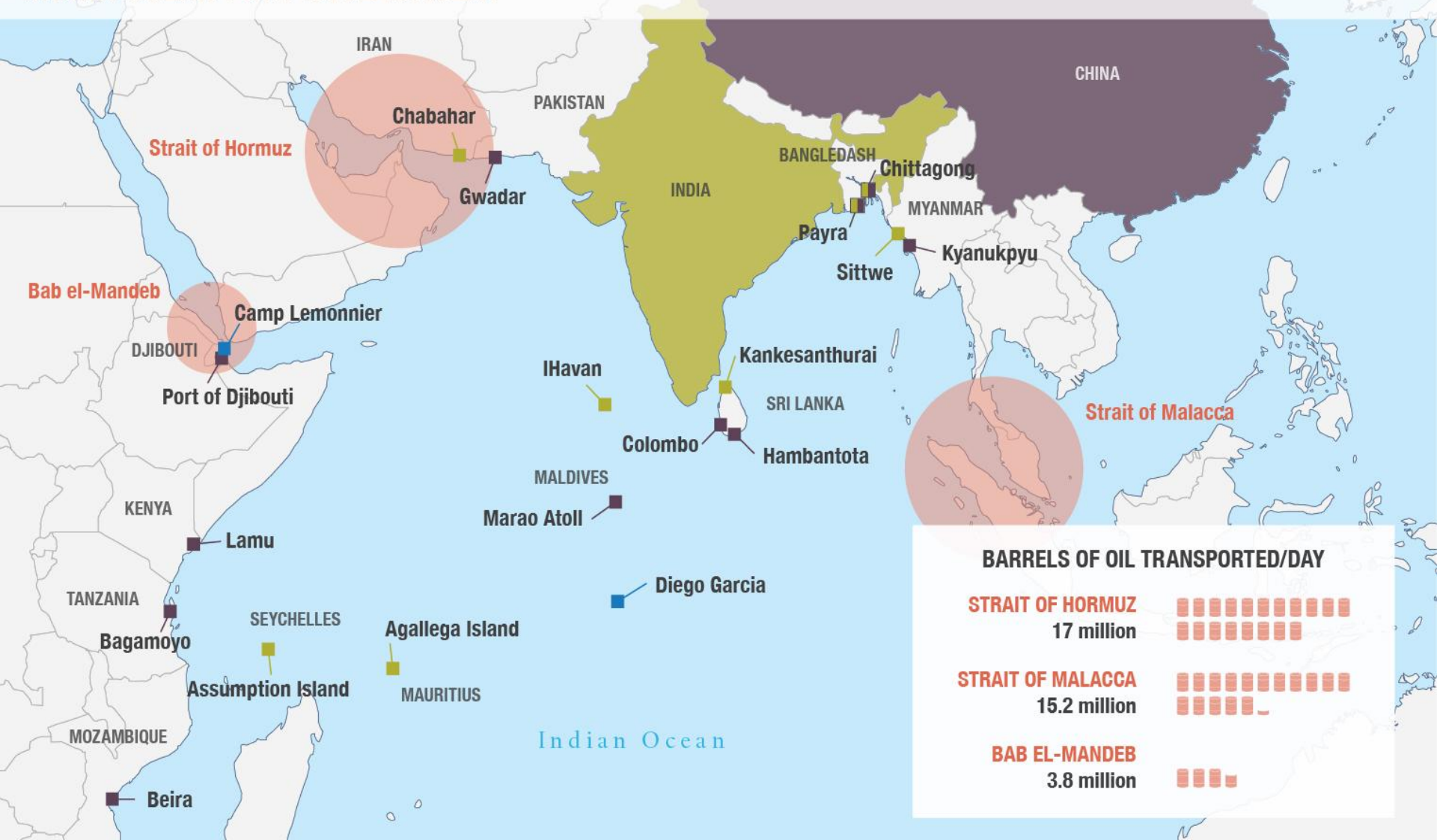
**Suez Canal**

**Major port**

**Shipping lane**
(line weight indicates significance of route, not volume of traffic)

**200-nm EEZ (exclusive economic zone) limit**

INDIAN OCEAN PORT DEVELOPMENT



COUNCIL on
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

Sources: Indian Development Cooperation Research (IDCR), Centre for Policy Research; EIA

Credits: Eleanor Albert, Julia Ro





Bab el Mandeb straits





Alexandria
الأسكندرية

Cairo
القاهرة

Gaza
إسرائيل

Jordan

Basrah
البصرة

Kuwait

Egypt

SUMED pipeline

Saudi East-West pipeline

Medina
المدينة المنورة

Riyadh
الرياض

Saudi Arabia

Jeddah
جدة

Mecca
مكة

Red Sea

Sudan oil pipeline

Port Sudan
بورت سوڤان

Sudan

Khartoum
الخرطوم

Eritrea

Sana'a
صنعاء

Yemen

Aden

**Narrowest point
(18 miles wide)**

Gulf of Aden







Strait of Bab el-Mandeb



Eritrea

Red Sea

Yemen

Bab-el-Mandeb

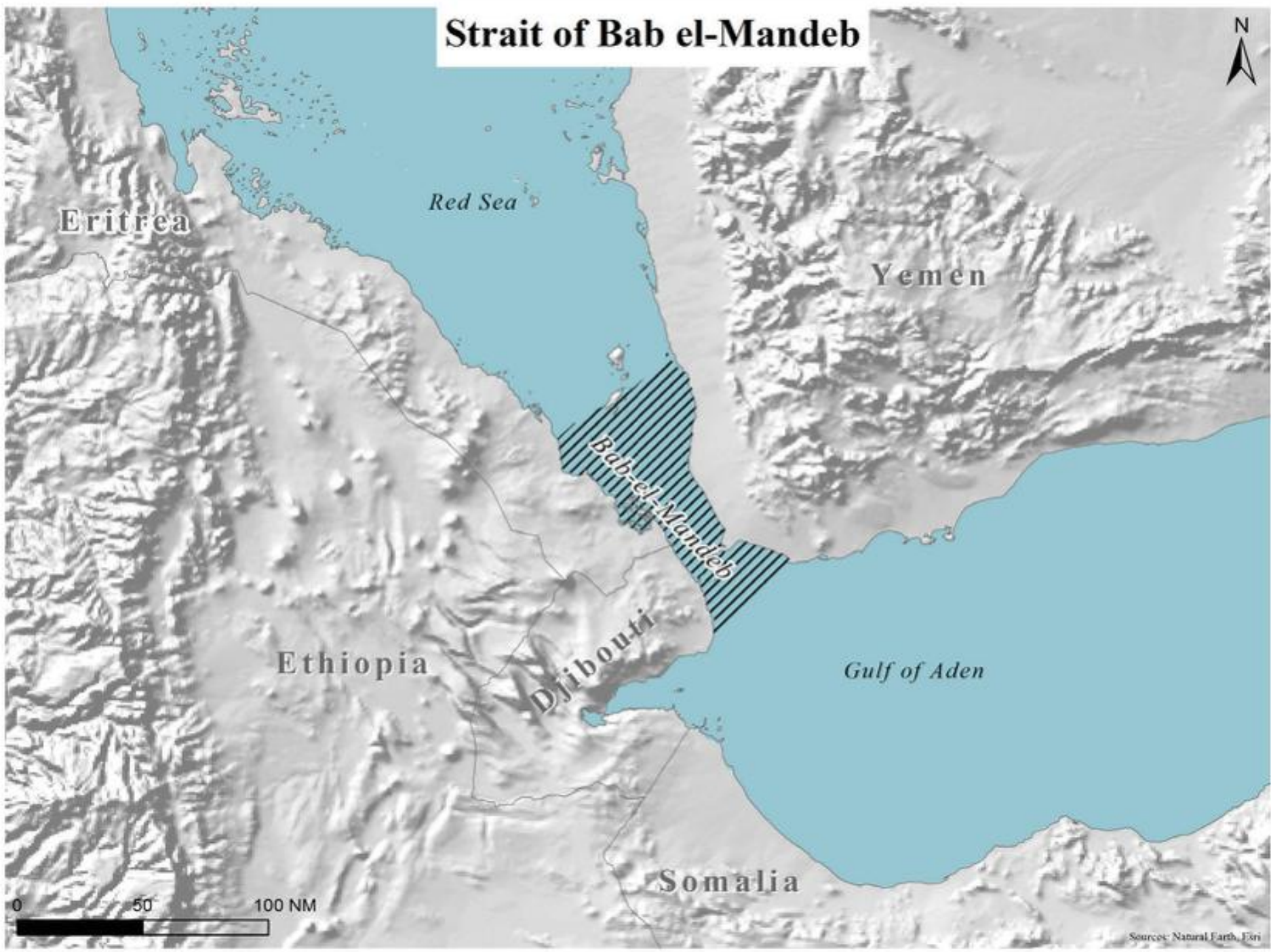
Ethiopia

Djibouti

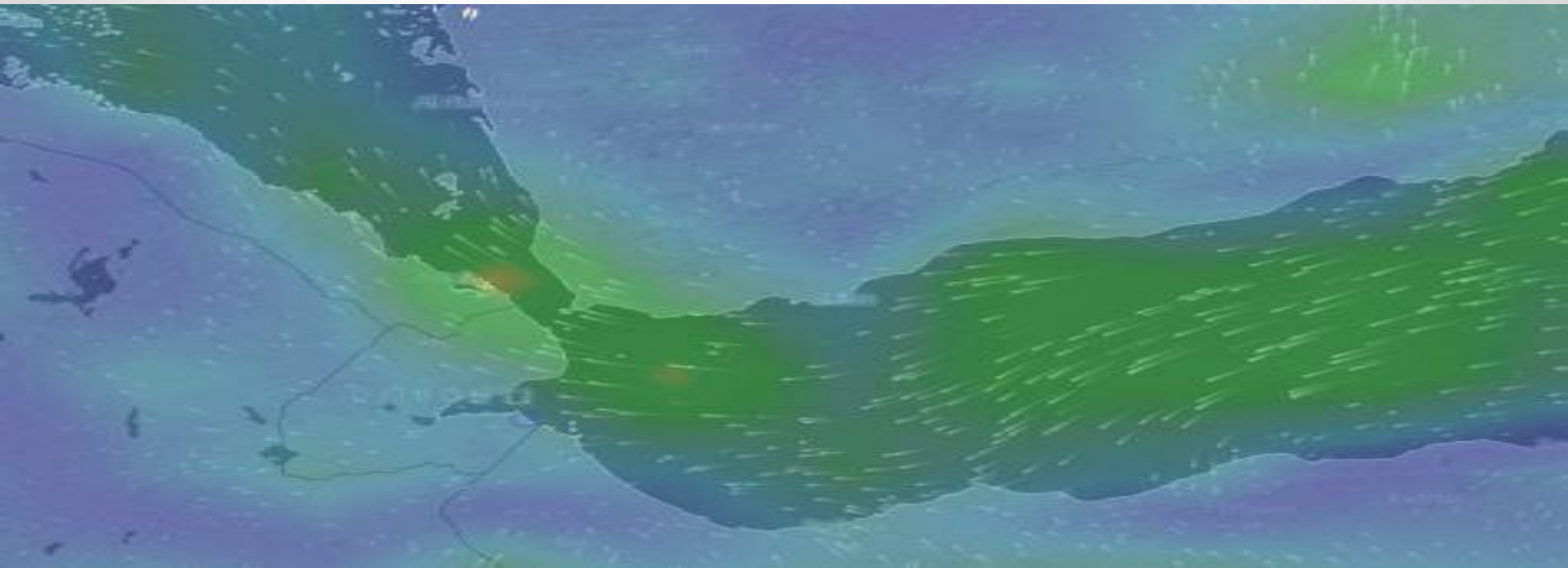
Gulf of Aden

Somalia

0 50 100 NM



- The Bab el Mandeb is also called the Gate of Tears because its waters are dangerous. The strong winds agitate the water which makes it a rough ride.
- The current flows south-east from May-October and north-west from November-April

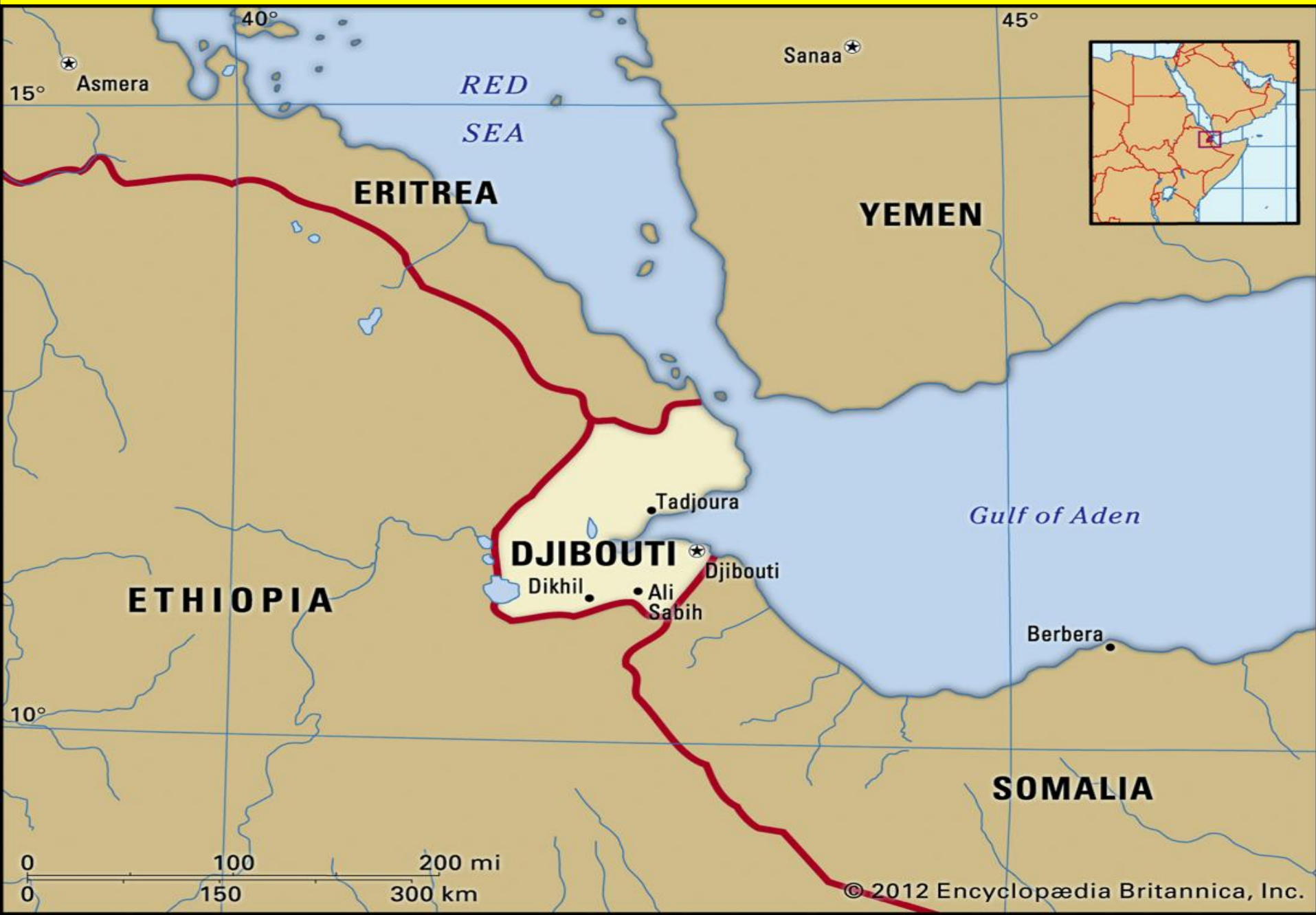




ERITREA

Bab al-Mandab

Related Intended Consequences....Djibouti

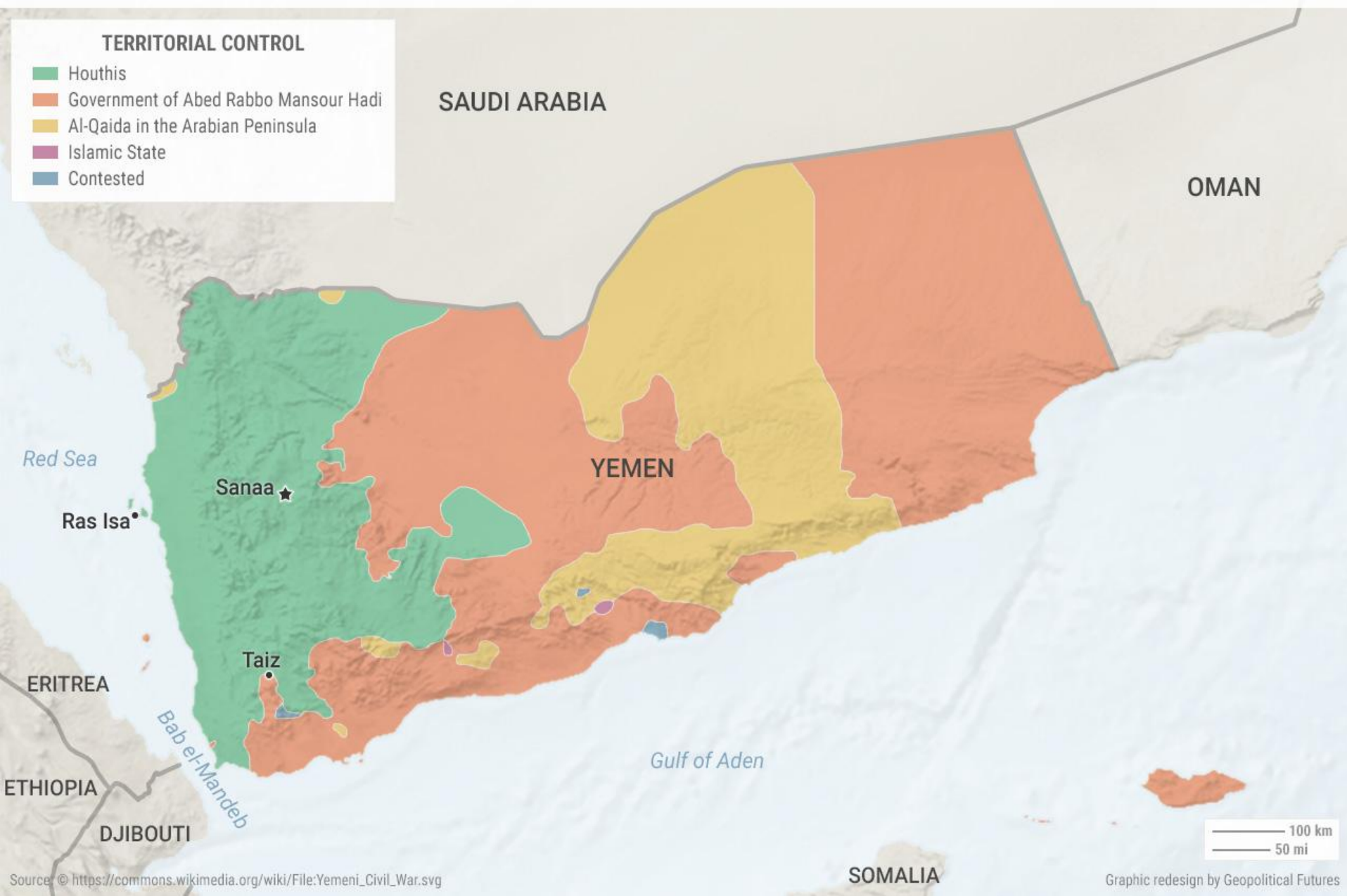


Related Intended Consequences...Eritrea



Related Intended Consequences....YEMEN

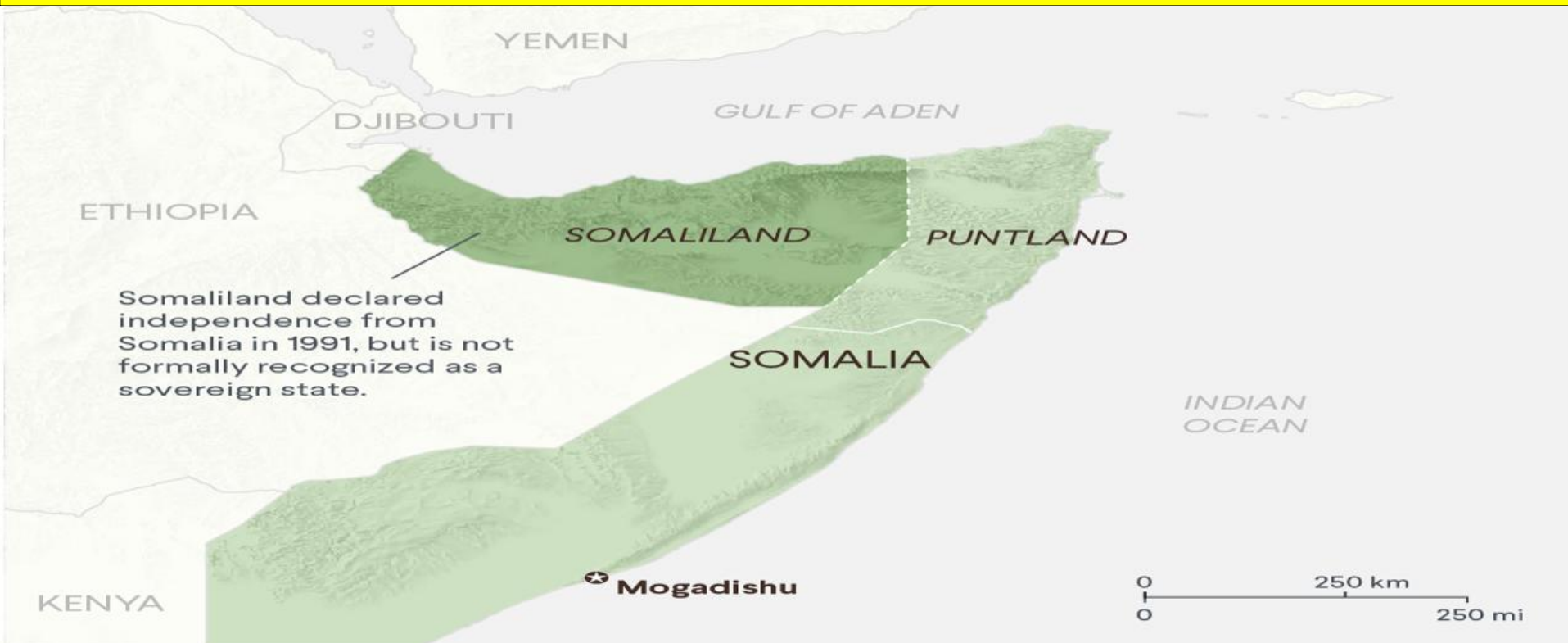
YEMEN'S CIVIL WAR



Related Intended Consequences....Somaliland



Related Intended Consequences....Somaliland



SOMALILAND AT A GLANCE

Area

176,119 square km (about the size of Missouri)

Population

4.3 million (2014)

Religions

Islam

Primary languages

Somali, Arabic, English

Form of government

Elected president and legislature;
appointed judiciary

Gross domestic product (GDP)

\$3.3 billion (2021)

GDP per capita

\$775 (2021)

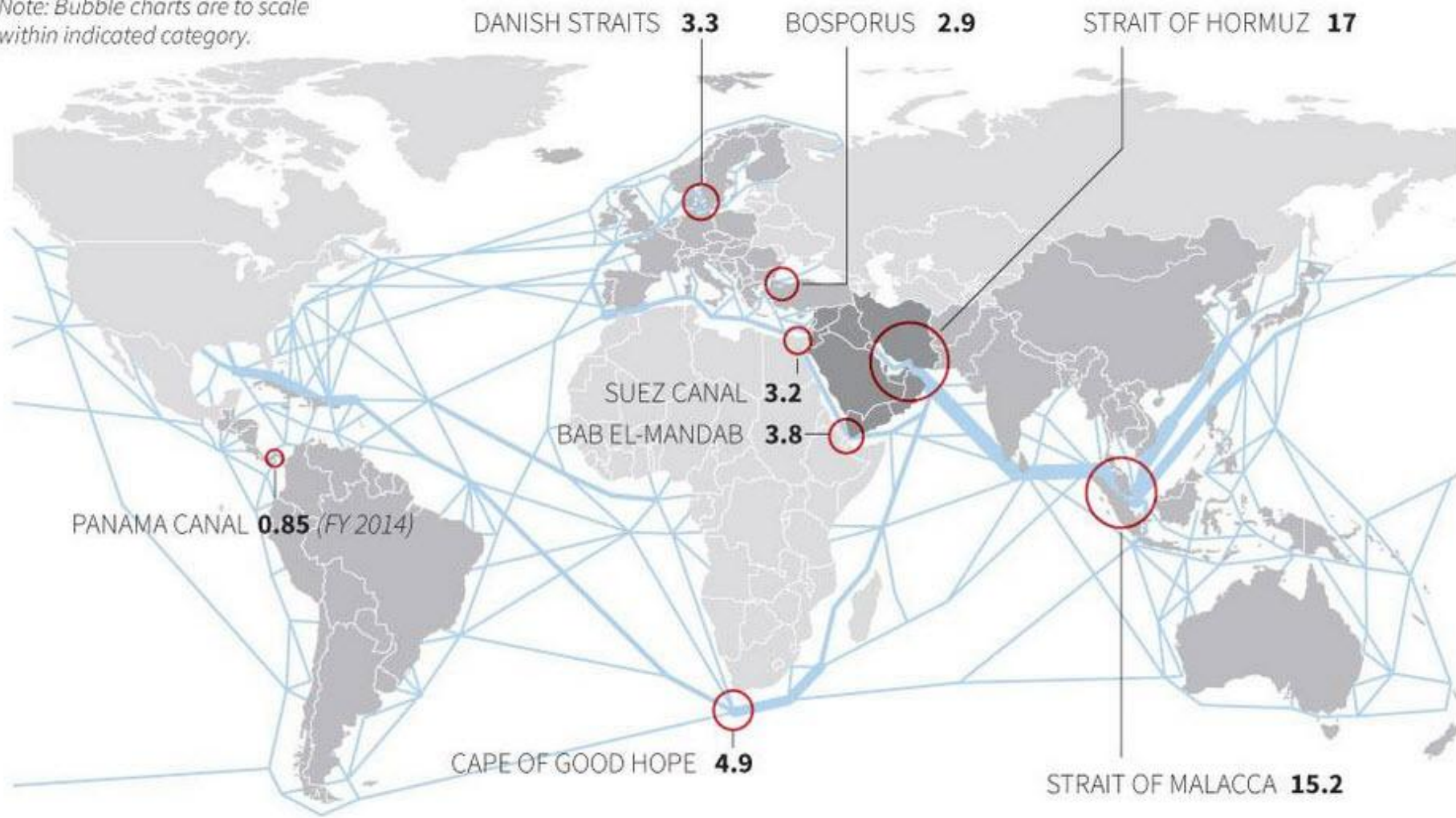
Sources: World Bank; Somaliland Ministry of Planning and National Development.

Oil Chock Points

Oil transit chokepoints

OIL TRANSIT CHOKEPOINTS
Million of barrels of oil moved per day, 2013 (unless otherwise indicated)

Note: Bubble charts are to scale within indicated category.



MAJOR OIL MOVEMENT – IN 2005, IN MILLION TONNES:

Line Thickness	Range (Million tonnes)
Thin blue line	1-100
Medium blue line	101-200
Thick blue line	201-300
Very thick blue line	> 300

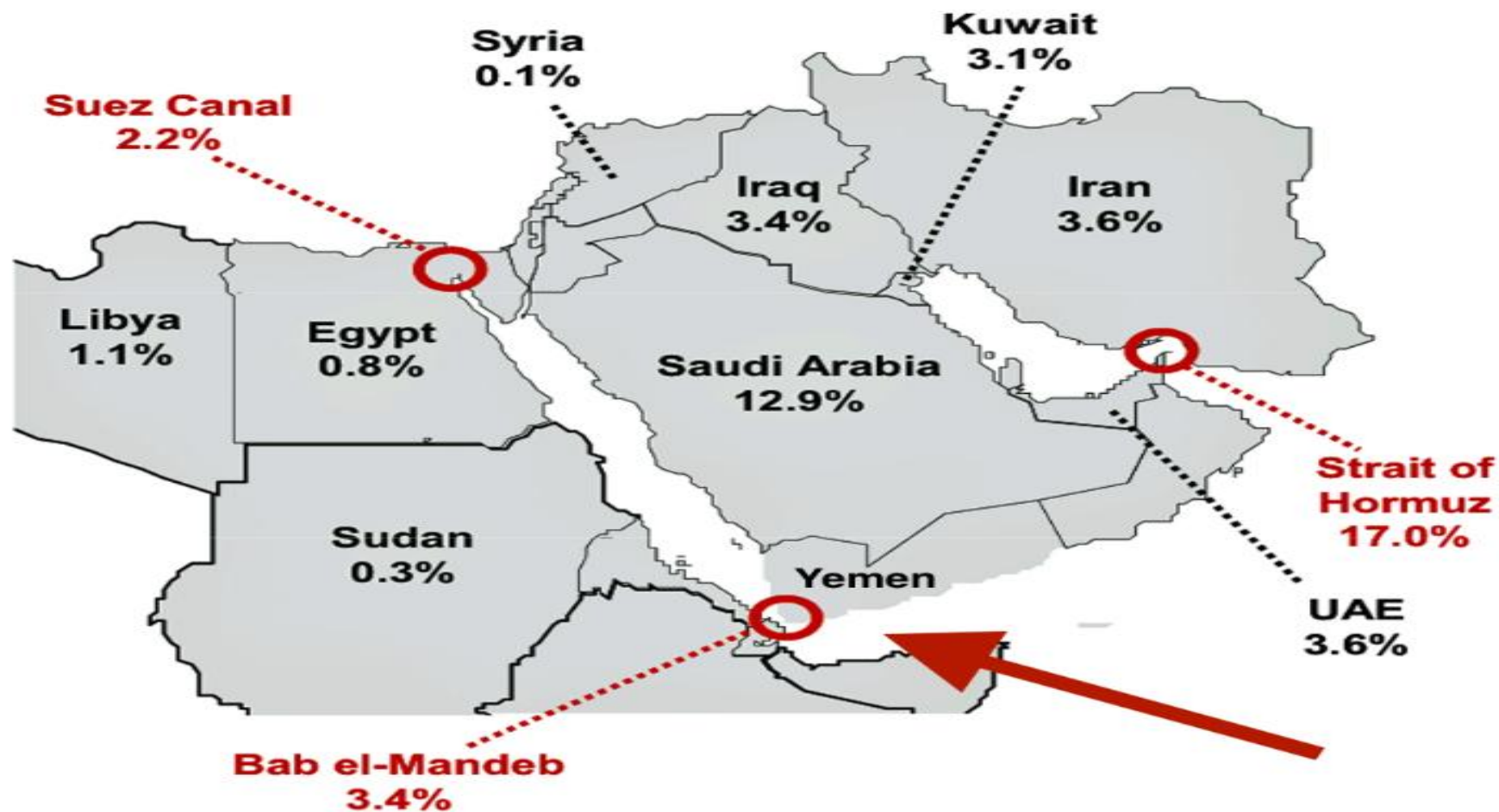
Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation

Staff, W. Foo, 26/3/2015

REUTERS

Middle East Energy Production & Chokepoints

Percent of global petroleum production, 2013*



Major Producers

Percent of global total, 2013

United States	14%	China	5%
Saudi Arabia	13%	Canada	5%
Russia	12%	Iran	4%

Major Consumers

Percent of global total, 2013

United States	21%	India	4%
China	11%	Russia	4%
Japan	5%	Saudi Arabia	3%

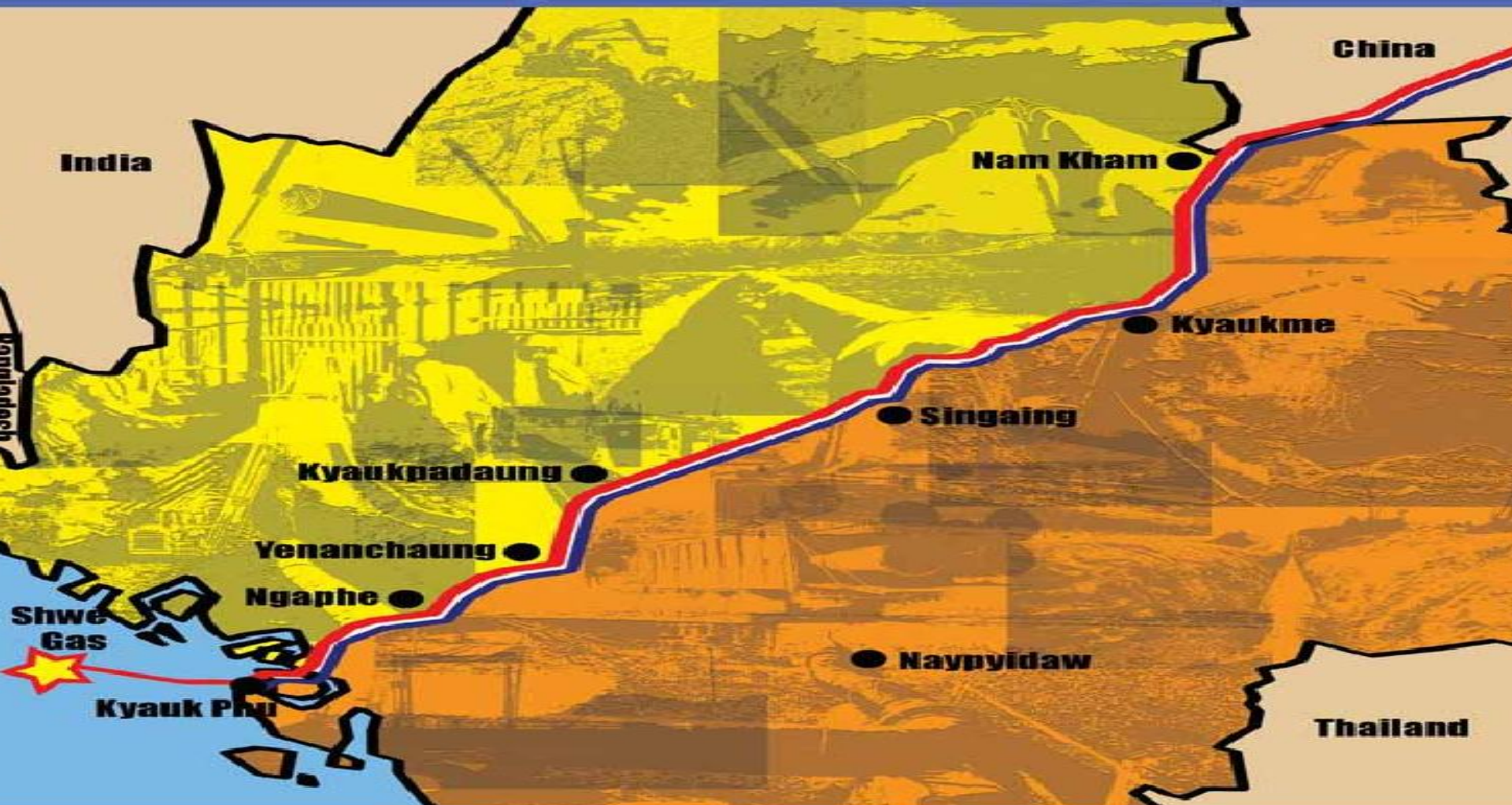
More ... Solutions

Myanmar Land Route



KyauKphyu (Made Island) Myanmar - Kunming (Yunnan province)

In Search Of Social Justice Along The Myanmar-China Oil and Gas Pipeline

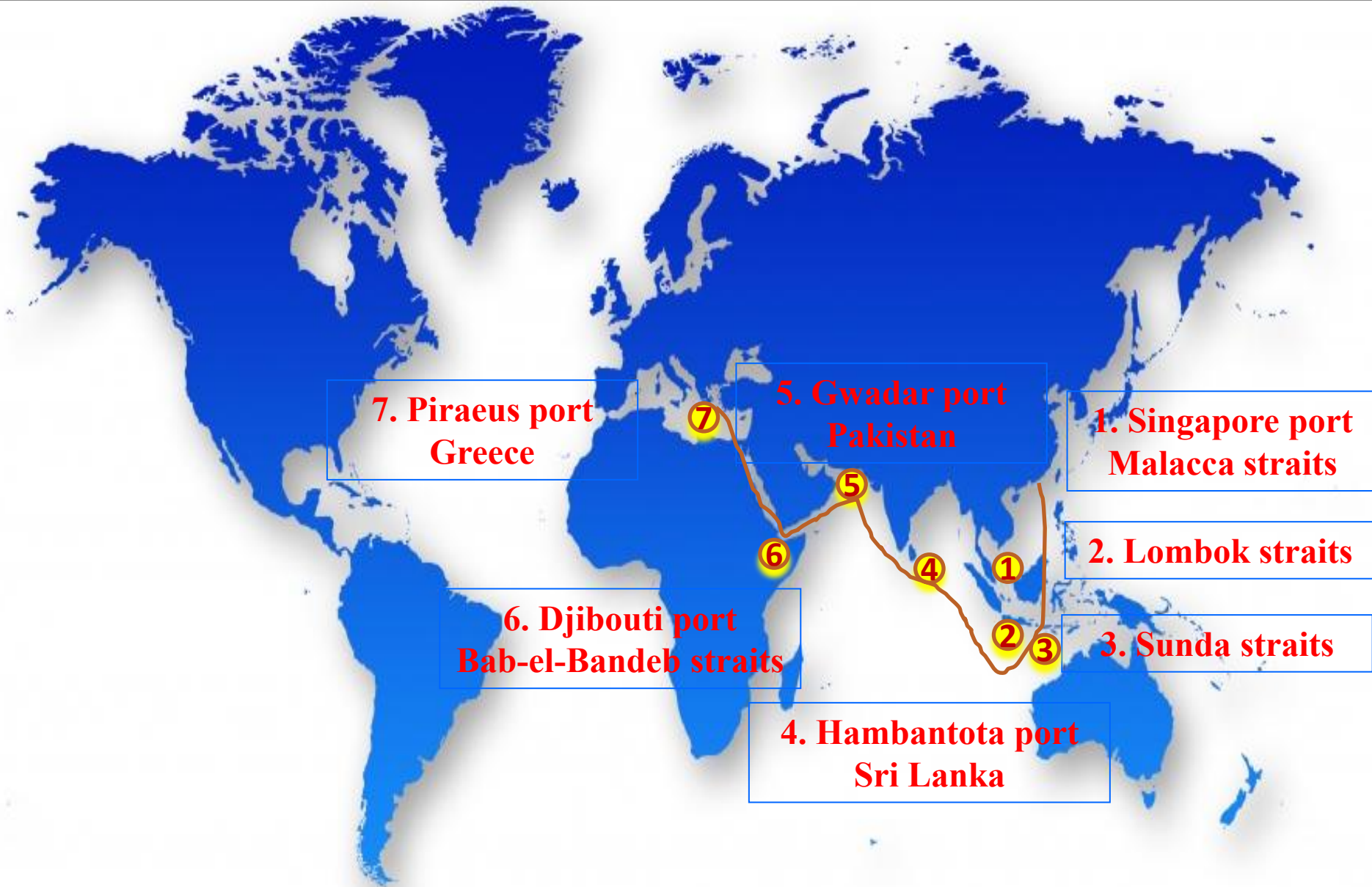


Pakistan Land Route



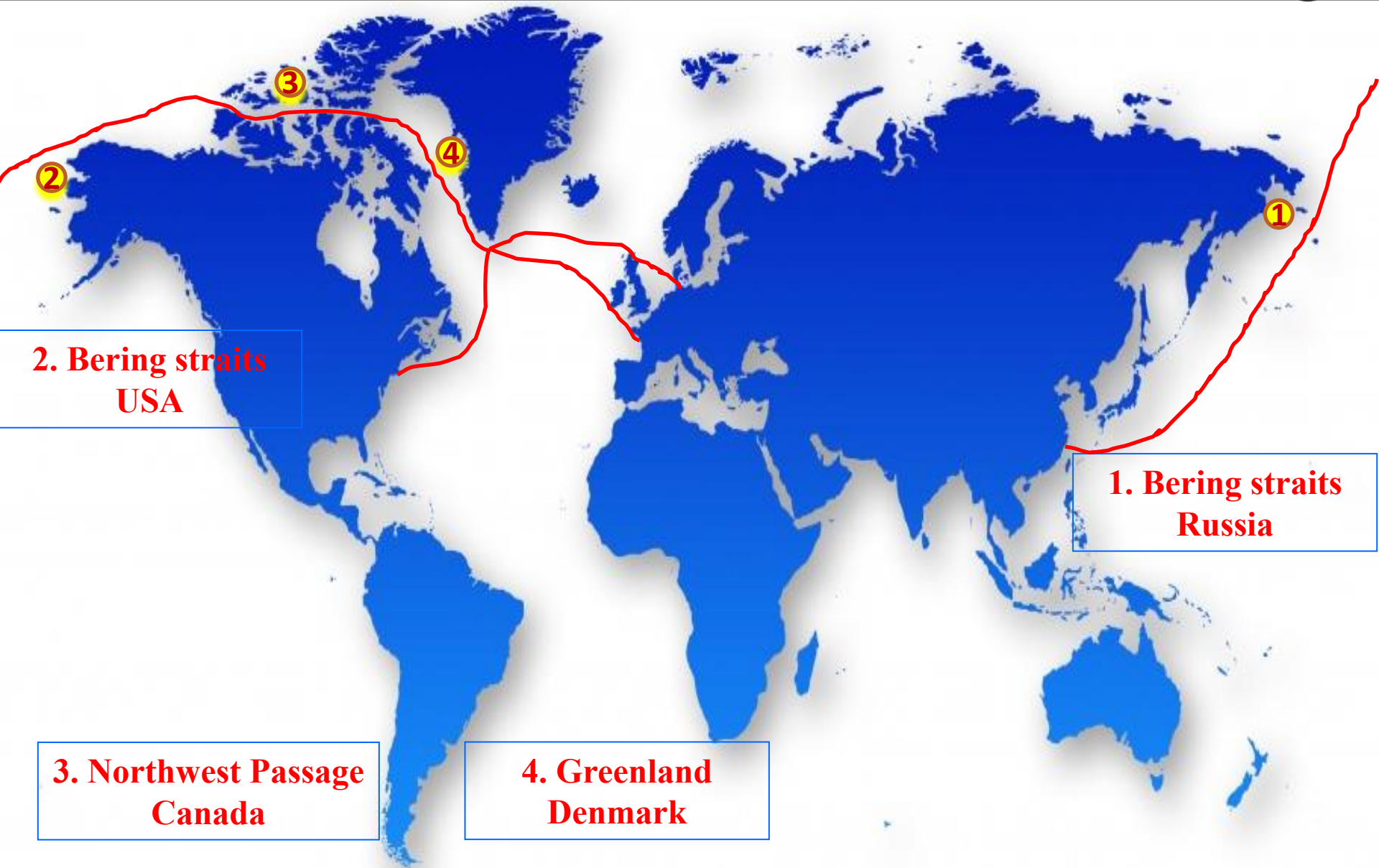
Encircling India - Avoiding Indian ocean routes

Indian Ocean Sea Route



Pacific-Indian ocean sea route to Europe

Arctic Sea Route via Canadian Northwest Passage



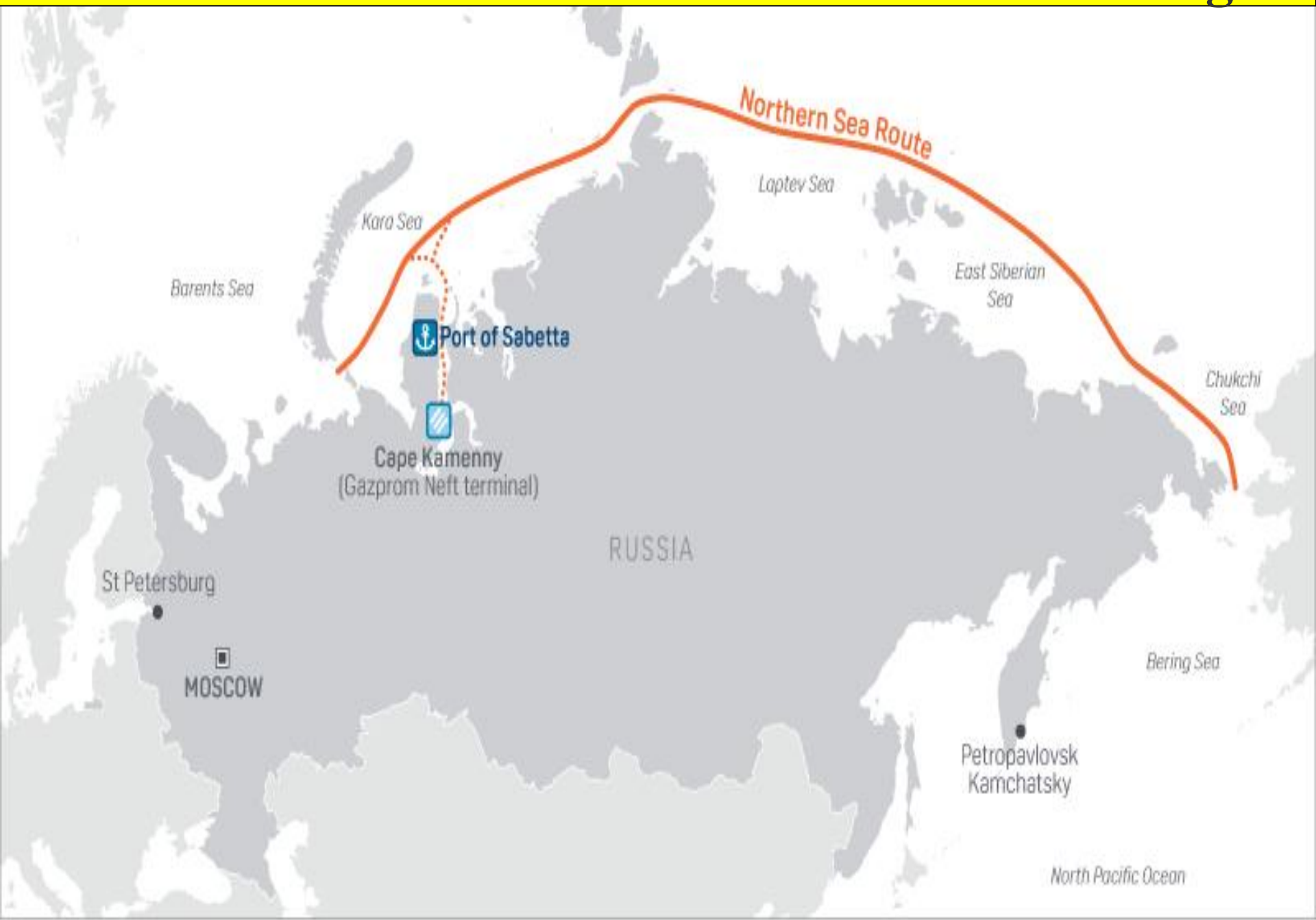
Northwest Passage



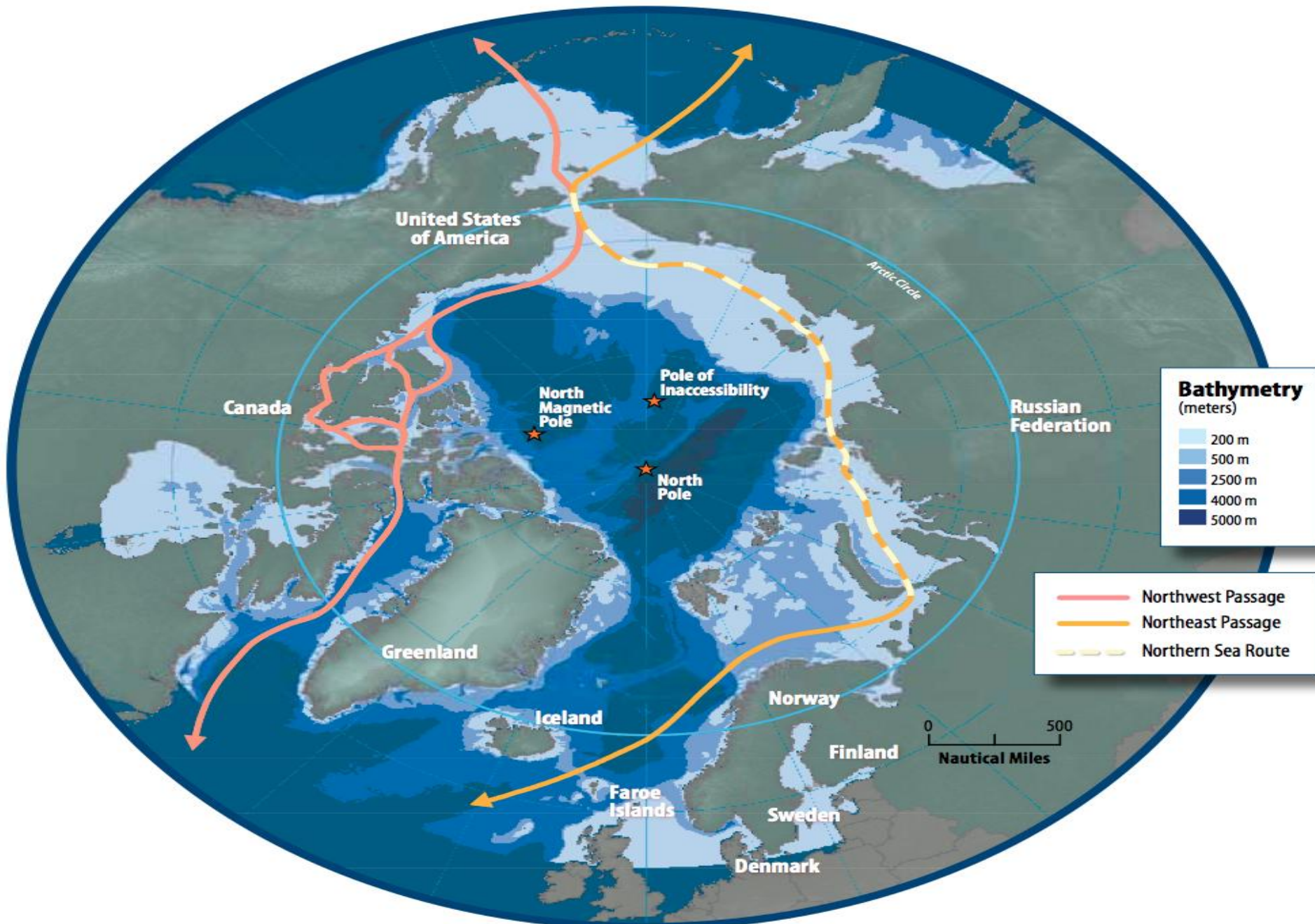
Pacific to Northwest Passage sea route



Arctic Sea Route via Russian Northeast Passage



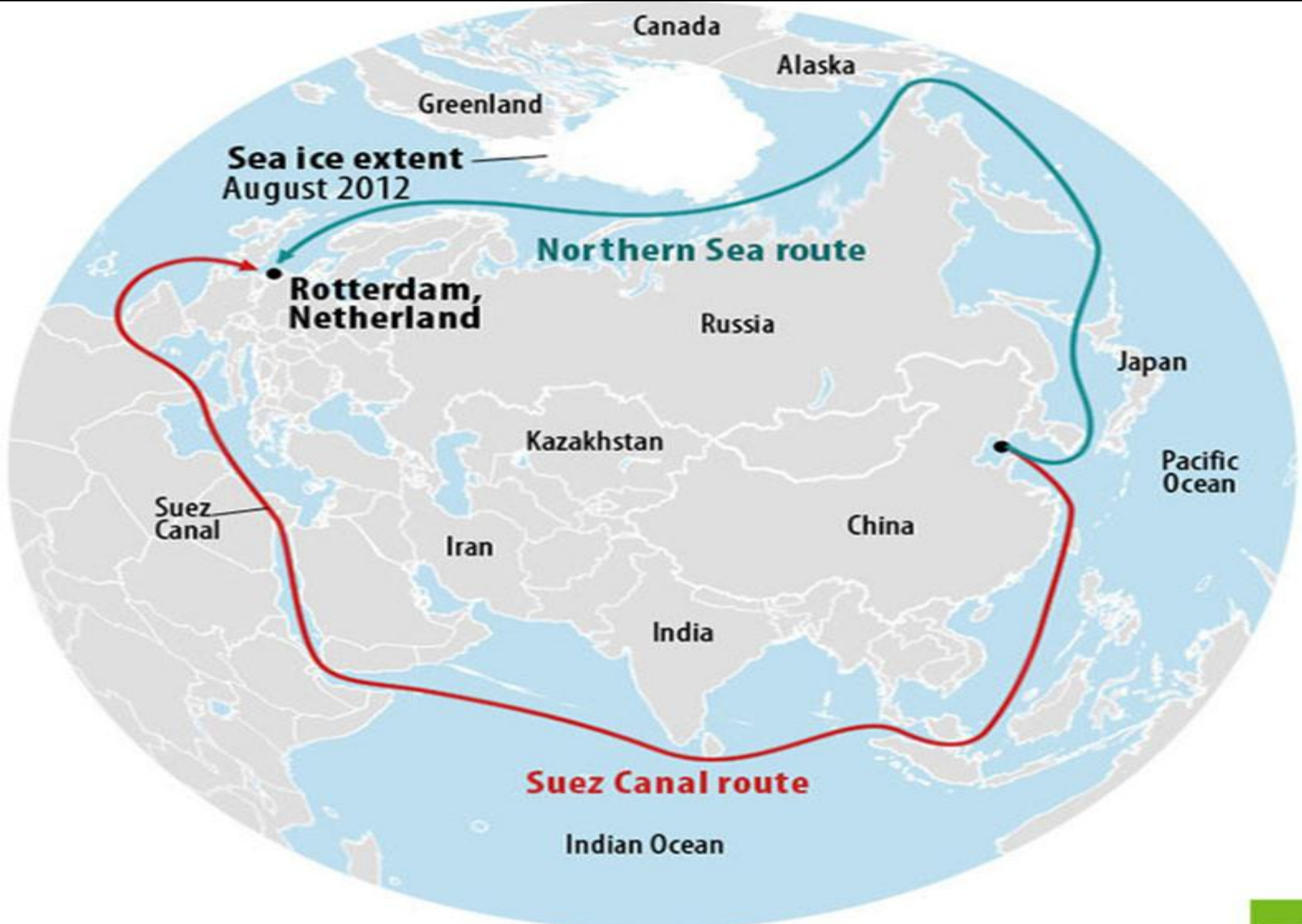
Northwest & Northeast Arctic Sea Routes



Northwest & Northeast Arctic Sea Routes



The Russians promote years now the Northeast Arctic Sea Route



The Northeast Arctic Sea Route is faster by 13 days ...

China's New Shipping Frontier

How the new Northern Sea route compares to the traditional Suez Canal route

NORTHERN SEA ROUTE

Travel time

35 days

Dangers

Icebergs

Travel window

July to November

Container-carrying vessels

One this year

SUEZ CANAL ROUTE

Travel time

48 days

Dangers

Access to Suez Canal under question with upheaval in Egypt

Travel window

Year-round

Container-carrying vessels

17,000 last year



Arctic Sea Routes will become faster ...

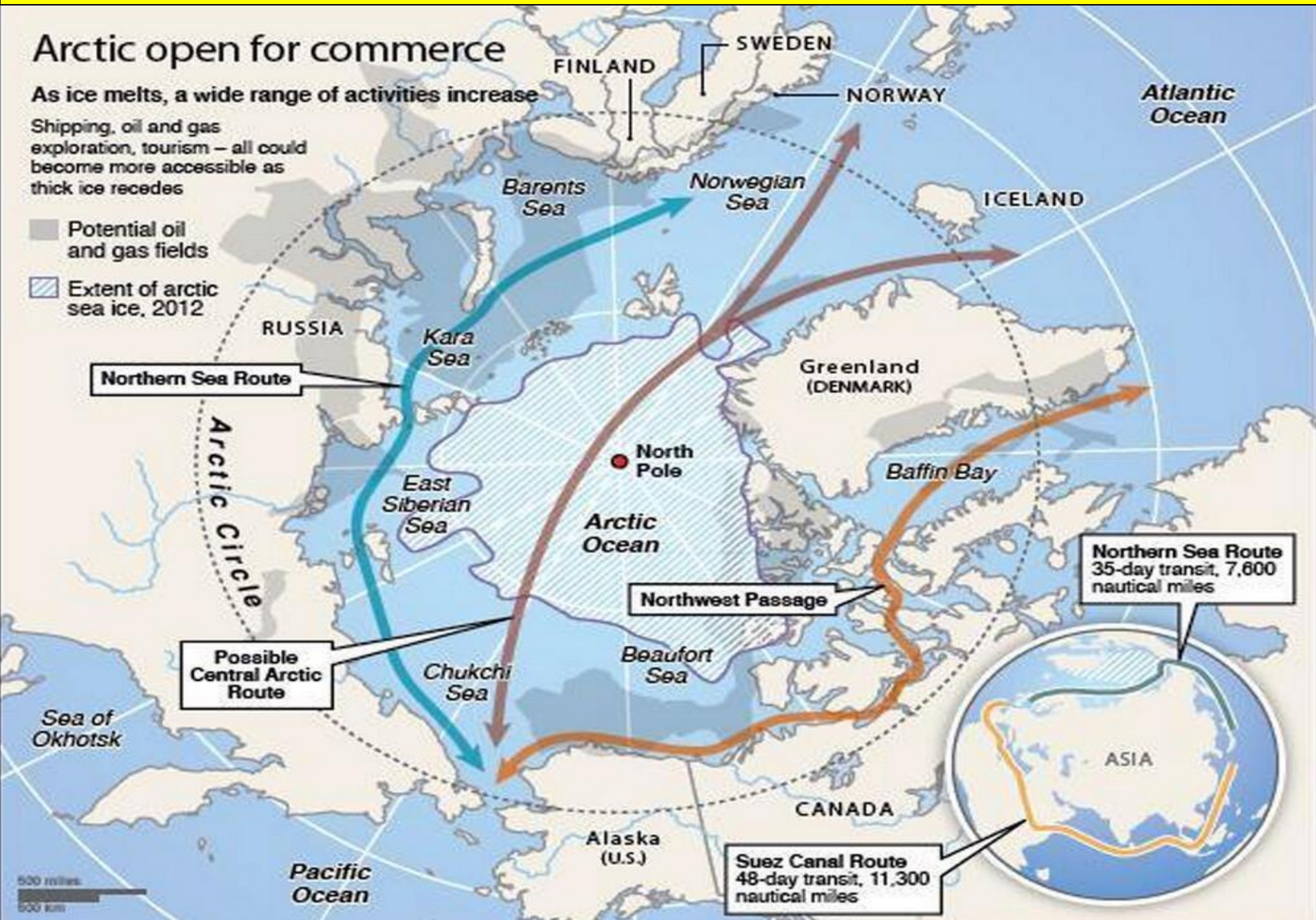
Arctic open for commerce

As ice melts, a wide range of activities increase

Shipping, oil and gas exploration, tourism – all could become more accessible as thick ice recedes

■ Potential oil and gas fields

▨ Extent of arctic sea ice, 2012



Challenges - Potential Chock Points

- **Bering straits (USA & Russia)**
- **Canada (USA ally & NATO member)**
- **Greenland (Denmark)**

Foreseeable moves - Greenland

- *China would like Greenland to be independent*
- *China will increase investments in Greenland*
- *China will try to interfere in the politics*

Around Africa Sea Route



1. One Chock Point
Lombok or Sunda straits

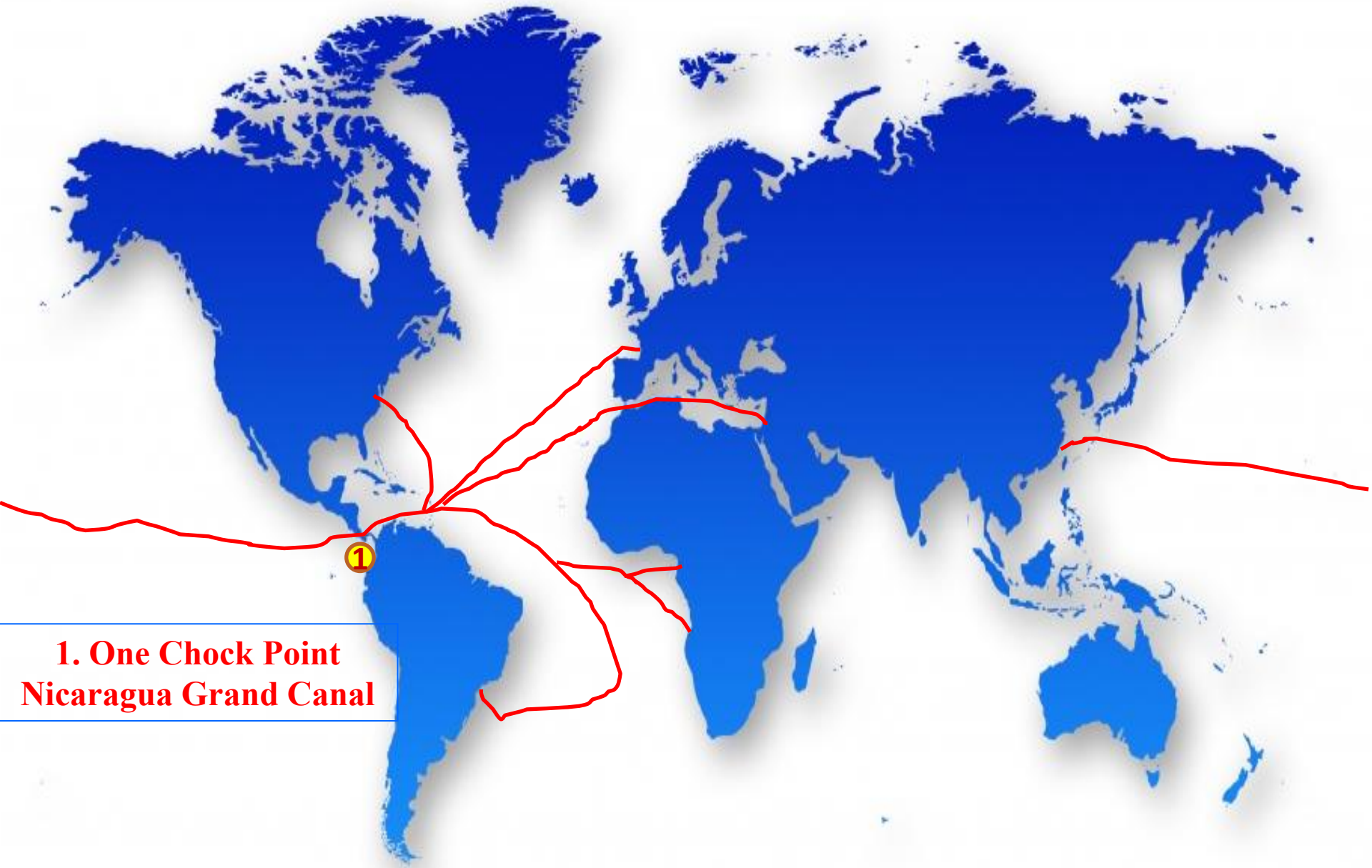
Indian ocean-Atlantic route to eastern North America

Pacific Sea Route



Pacific sea route to western North America

Mesoamerican Sea Route



1. One Chock Point
Nicaragua Grand Canal

Pacific to Atlantic ocean via **Nicaragua Canal**

The Chinese build the new Panaca Canal in Nicaragua



CENTRAL
AMERICA

NICARAGUA

Caribbean
Sea

Pacific
Ocean

Lake
Xolotlan

Cerro Silva
Nature Reserve

Lake
Cocibolca

San Miguelito
wetlands

Lake
Atlanta

Punta Gorda

Brito

Canal Route

Brito
Lock

Indio Maiz
Biosphere Reserve

Camilo
Lock

Nicaragua Canal vs Panama Canal



Thank You