

Most current colonies are islands in the Pacific Ocean or Caribbean Sea. The most populous is Puerto Rico, a Commonwealth of the United States, with 4 million residents on an island of 8,870 square kilometers (3,500 square miles). Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, but do not participate in U.S. elections, nor have a voting member of Congress.

One of the world's least populated colonies is Pitcairn Island, a 47-square-kilometer (18-square-mile) possession of the United Kingdom. The island in the South Pacific was settled in 1790 by British mutineers from the ship *Bounty*, commanded by Captain William Bligh. Its 48 islanders survive by selling fish, as well as postage stamps to collectors.

The State Department list does not include several inhabited islands considered by other sources to be colonies, including Australia's Lord Howe Island, Britain's Ascension Island, and Chile's Easter Island. On the other hand, the State Department list includes several entities that others do not classify as colonies, including Greenland, Hong Kong, and Macao. Greenland regards the Queen of Denmark as its head of state. But it has a high degree of autonomy and self-rule and makes even foreign policy decisions independently of Denmark. Hong Kong and Macao, attached to the mainland of China, were colonies of the United Kingdom and Portugal, respectively. The British returned Hong Kong to China in 1997 and the Portuguese returned Macao to China 2 years later. These two areas are classified as Special Administrative Regions with autonomy from the rest of China in economic matters but not in foreign and military affairs.

KEY ISSUE 2

Why Do Boundaries Between States Cause Problems?

- Shapes of States
- Types of Boundaries
- Boundaries Inside States

A state is separated from its neighbors by a **boundary**, an invisible line marking the extent of a state's territory. Boundaries completely surround an individual state to mark the outer limits of its territorial control and to give it a distinctive shape. Boundaries interest geographers because the process of selecting their location is frequently difficult. ■

Shapes of States

The shape of a state controls the length of its boundaries with other states. The shape therefore affects the potential for communication and conflict with neighbors. The shape also, as in the outline of the United States or Canada, is part of its unique identity. Beyond its value as a centripetal force, the shape of a

state can influence the ease or difficulty of internal administration and can affect social unity.

Five Basic Shapes

Countries have one of five basic shapes—compact, prorupted, elongated, fragmented, or perforated—examples of each can be seen in southern Africa (Figure 8-10). Each shape displays distinctive characteristics and challenges.

COMPACT STATES: EFFICIENT. In a **compact state**, the distance from the center to any boundary does not vary significantly. The ideal theoretical compact state would be shaped like a circle, with the capital at the center and with the shortest possible boundaries to defend.

Compactness can be a beneficial characteristic for smaller states, because good communications can be more easily established to all regions, especially if the capital is located near the center. However, compactness does not necessarily mean peacefulness, as compact states are just as likely as others to experience civil wars and ethnic rivalries.

ELONGATED STATES: POTENTIAL ISOLATION. A handful of **elongated states** have a long and narrow shape. Examples include:

- Malawi, which measures about 850 kilometers (530 miles) north–south but only 100 kilometers (60 miles) east–west (refer to Figure 8–9).
- Chile, which stretches north–south for more than 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles) but rarely exceeds an east–west distance of 150 kilometers (90 miles); Chile is wedged between the Pacific Coast of South America and the rugged Andes Mountains, which rise more than 6,700 meters (20,000 feet).
- Italy, which extends more than 1,100 kilometers (700 miles) from northwest to southeast but is only approximately 200 kilometers (120 miles) wide in most places.
- Gambia, which extends along the banks of the Gambia River about 500 kilometers (300 miles) east–west but is only about 25 kilometers (15 miles) north–south.

Elongated states may suffer from poor internal communications. A region located at an extreme end of the elongation might be isolated from the capital, which is usually placed near the center.

PRORUPTED STATES: ACCESS OR DISRUPTION. An otherwise compact state with a large projecting extension is a **prorupted state**. Prorptions are created for two principal reasons:

1. **To provide a state with access to a resource, such as water.** For example, in southern Africa, Congo has a 500-kilometer (300-mile) prorruption to the west along the Zaire (Congo) River. The Belgians created the prorruption to give their colony access to the Atlantic.
2. **To separate two states that otherwise would share a boundary.** For example, in southern Africa, Namibia has a 500-kilometer (300-mile) prorruption to the east

called the Caprivi Strip. When Namibia was a colony of Germany, the prurruption disrupted communications among the British colonies of southern Africa. It also provided the Germans with access to the Zambezi, one of Africa's most important rivers.

Elsewhere in the world, the otherwise compact state of Afghanistan has a prurruption approximately 300 kilometers (200 miles) long and as narrow as 20 kilometers (12 miles) wide. The British created the prurruption to prevent Russia from sharing a border with Pakistan (refer ahead to Figure 8-25 later in this chapter).

PERFORATED STATES: SOUTH AFRICA. A state that completely surrounds another one is a **perforated state**. The one good example of a perforated state is South Africa, which completely surrounds the state of Lesotho. Lesotho must depend almost entirely on South Africa for the import and export of goods. Dependency on South Africa was especially difficult for Lesotho when South Africa had a government controlled by whites who discriminated against the black majority population.

Gambia, described above as an elongated state, is completely surrounded by Senegal except for a short coastline along the Atlantic Ocean. The shapes of Gambia and Senegal are a legacy of competition among European countries to establish colonies during the nineteenth century. Gambia became a British colony, whereas Senegal was French. The border between the two countries divided families and ethnic groups but was never precisely delineated, so people trade and move across the border with little concern for its location.

FRAGMENTED STATES: PROBLEMATIC. A **fragmented state** includes several discontinuous pieces of territory. Technically, all states that have offshore islands as part of their territory are fragmented. However, fragmentation is particularly significant for some states. There are two kinds of fragmented states:

1. Fragmented states separated by water. Examples include:

- Tanzania, which was created in 1964 as a union of the island of Zanzibar with the mainland territory of Tanganyika. Although home to different ethnic groups, the two entities agreed to join together because they shared common development goals and political priorities.
- Indonesia, which comprises 13,677 islands that extend more than 5,000 kilometers (3,000 miles) between the Indian Ocean and Pacific oceans. Although more than 80 percent of the country's population live on two of the islands—Java and Sumatra—the fragmentation hinders communications and makes integration of people living on remote islands nearly impossible. To foster national integration, the Indonesian government has encouraged migration from the more densely populated islands to some of the sparsely inhabited ones.

Not all of the fragments joined Indonesia voluntarily. A few days after Timor-Leste (East Timor) gained its independence from Portugal in 1975, Indonesia invaded. A long struggle



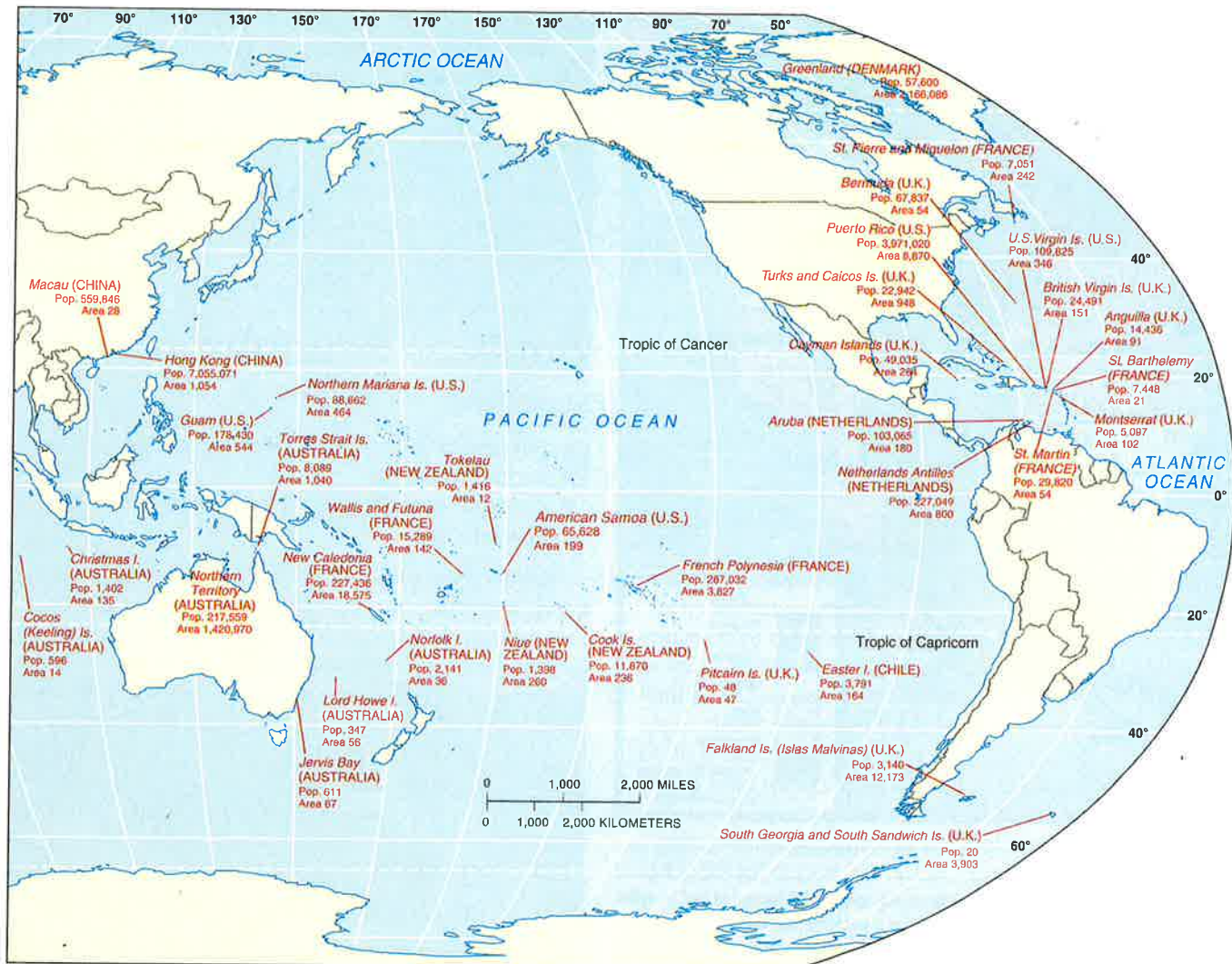
FIGURE 8-9 Colonial possessions, 2006. Most remaining colonies are tiny specks in the Pacific Ocean or the Caribbean Sea, too small to appear on the map. Svalbard, which belongs to Norway, is the only remaining colony with a land area greater than 10,000 square kilometers.

against Indonesia culminated in independence in 2002. West Papua, another fragment of Indonesia (the western portion of the island shared with Papua New Guinea), also claims that it should be an independent country. However, West Papua's attempt to break away from Indonesia gained less support from the international community.

2. Fragmented states separated by an intervening state.

Examples include:

- Angola, which is divided into two fragments by the Congo prurruption described above. An independence movement is trying to detach Cabinda as a separate state from Angola, with the justification that its population belongs to distinct ethnic groups.
- Russia, which has a fragment called Kaliningrad (Konigsberg), a 16,000-square-kilometer (6,000-square-mile) entity 400 kilometers (250 miles) west of the remainder of Russia, separated by the states of Lithuania and Belarus (refer to Figure 7-17). The area was part of



Germany until the end of World War II when the Soviet Union seized it after the German defeat. The German population fled westward after the war, and virtually all of the area's 430,000 residents are Russians. Russia wants Kaliningrad because it has the country's largest naval base on the Baltic Sea.

- Panama, which was a fragmented state for most of the twentieth century, divided in two parts by the canal, built in 1914 by the United States. After the United States withdrew from the Canal Zone in 1999, Panama became an elongated state, 700 kilometers (450 miles) long and 80 kilometers (50 miles) wide.
- India's Tin Bigha corridor, which is a tiny strip of land only 178 meters (about 600 feet) by 85 meters (about 300 feet). It fragments Dahagram and Angarpota from the rest of Bangladesh (Figure 8-11). It is a legacy of the late 1940s when the British divided the region according to religion, allocating predominantly Hindu enclaves to India and predominantly Muslim ones to Bangladesh (see Figure 7-26).

India and Bangladesh reached a novel agreement that opens the Tin Bigha to citizens of both countries every day between dawn and dusk. Bangladeshis may

travel between Dahagram and Angarpota and the rest of Bangladesh, and Indians may travel between Cooch Behar and the rest of India without submitting to passport inspection, customs declarations, and other international border controls.

Landlocked States

A **landlocked state** lacks a direct outlet to the sea because it is completely surrounded by several other countries (only one country in the case of Lesotho). Landlocked states are most common in Africa, where 14 of the continent's 54 states have no direct ocean access. The prevalence of landlocked states in Africa is a remnant of the colonial era, when Britain and France controlled extensive regions. The European powers built railroads, mostly in the early twentieth century, to connect the interior of Africa with the sea. Railroads moved minerals from interior mines to seaports, and in the opposite direction, rail lines carried mining equipment and supplies from seaports to the interior.

Now that the British and French empires are gone, and former colonies have become independent states, some important colonial railroad lines pass through several independent

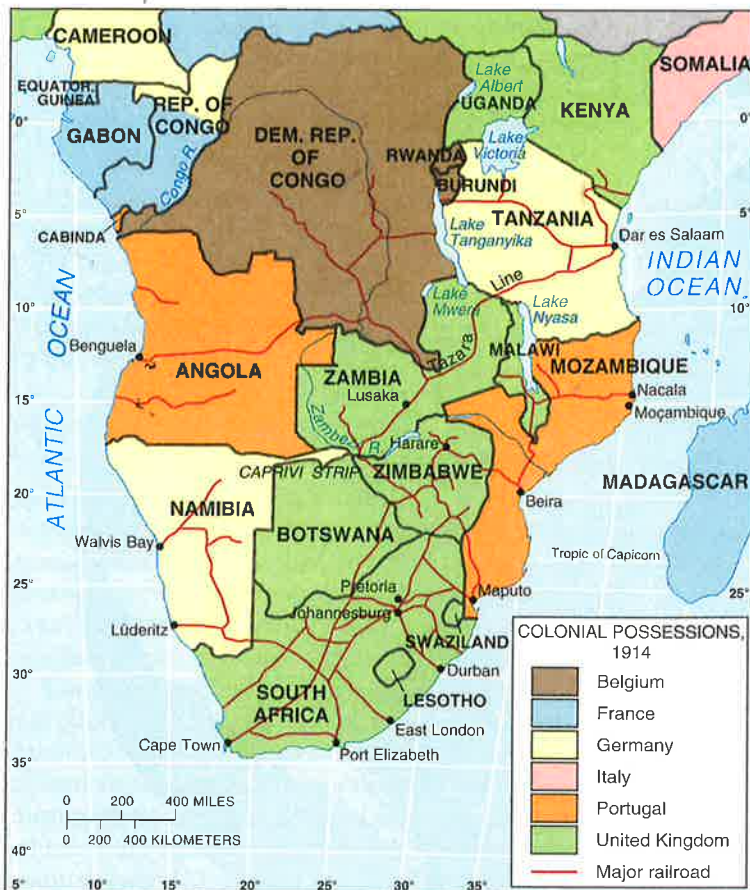


FIGURE 8-10 Shapes of states in Southern Africa, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda are examples of compact states. Malawi and Mozambique are elongated states. Namibia and the Democratic Republic of Congo are prorupted states. Angola and Tanzania are fragmented states. South Africa is a perforated state. Also shown are landlocked African states, which must import and export goods by land-based transportation, primarily rail lines, to reach ocean ports in cooperating neighbor states. Colors show the European colonial rulers in 1914.

countries. This has created new landlocked states, which must cooperate with neighboring states that have seaports. Direct access to an ocean is critical to states because it facilitates international trade. Bulky goods, such as petroleum, grain, ore, and vehicles, are normally transported long distances by ship. This means that a country needs a seaport where goods can be transferred between land and sea. To send and receive goods by sea, a landlocked state must arrange to use another country's seaport.

Types of Boundaries

Boundaries are of two types:

- *Physical boundaries* coincide with significant features of the natural landscape.
- *Cultural boundaries* follow the distribution of cultural characteristics.

Neither type of boundary is better or more “natural,” and many boundaries are a combination of both types.

Boundary locations can generate conflict, both within a country and with its neighbors. The boundary line, which must be shared by more than one state, is the only location where direct physical contact must take place between two neighboring states. Therefore, the boundary has the potential to become the focal point of conflict between them. The best boundaries are those to which all affected states agree, regardless of the rationale used to draw the line.

Physical Boundaries

Important physical features on Earth's surface can make good boundaries because they are easily seen, both on a map and on the ground. Three types of physical elements serve as boundaries between states—deserts, mountains, and water.

DESERT BOUNDARIES. A boundary drawn in a desert can effectively divide two states. Like mountains, deserts are hard to cross and sparsely inhabited. Desert boundaries are common in Africa and Asia. In North Africa, the Sahara has generally proved to be a stable boundary separating Algeria, Libya, and Egypt on the north from Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and the Sudan on the south.

MOUNTAIN BOUNDARIES. Mountains can be effective boundaries if they are difficult to cross (Figure 8-12). Contact between nationalities living on opposite sides may be limited, or completely impossible if passes are closed by winter storms. Mountains are also useful boundaries because they are rather permanent and are usually sparsely inhabited.

Mountains do not always provide for the amicable separation of neighbors. Argentina and Chile agreed to be divided by the crest of the Andes Mountains but could not decide on the precise location of the crest. Was the crest a jagged line, connecting mountain peak to mountain peak? Or was it a curving line following the continental divide (the continuous ridge that divides rainfall and snowmelt between flow toward the

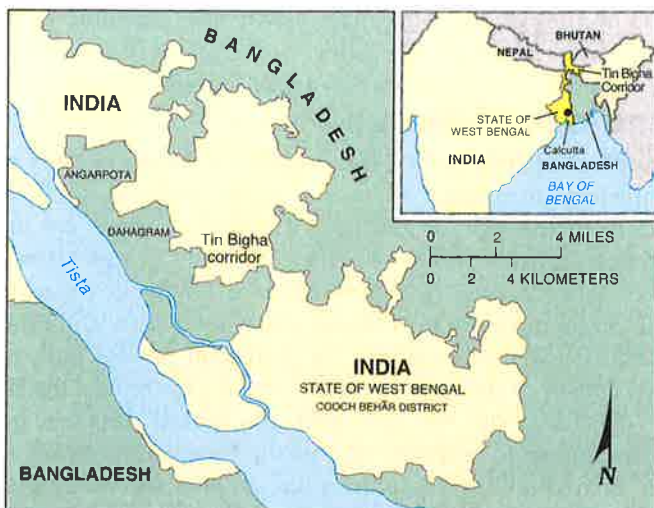


FIGURE 8-11 The Tin Bigha corridor. Less than 300 meters (900 feet), the Tin Bigha corridor is a part of India that fragments Dahagram and Angarpota from the rest of Bangladesh.



FIGURE 8-12 Mountain boundary: Andes Mountains. The Andes serve as the boundary between Chile and Argentina.

Atlantic or Pacific)? The two countries almost fought a war over the boundary line. But with the help of U.S. mediators, they finally decided on the line connecting adjacent mountain peaks.

WATER BOUNDARIES. Rivers, lakes, and oceans are the physical features most commonly used as boundaries. Water boundaries are readily visible on maps and aerial imagery. Historically, water boundaries offered good protection against attack from another state, because an invading state had to transport its troops by air or ship and secure a landing spot in the country being attacked. The state being invaded could concentrate its defense at the landing point.

Water boundaries are especially common in East Africa:

- The boundary between Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda runs through Lake Albert.
- The boundary separating Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda runs through Lake Victoria (Figure 8-13).

- The boundary separating Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Zambia runs through Lake Tanganyika.
- The boundary between Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia runs through Lake Mweru.
- The boundary between Malawi and Mozambique runs through Lake Malawi (Lake Nyasa).

Water boundaries may seem to be set permanently, but the precise position of the water may change over time. Rivers, in particular, can slowly change their course. The Rio Grande, the river separating the United States and Mexico, has frequently meandered from its previous course since it became part of the boundary in 1848. Land that had once been on the U.S. side of the boundary came to be on the Mexican side, and vice versa. The United States and Mexico have concluded treaties that restore land affected by the shifting course of the river to the country in control at the time of the original nineteenth-century delineation. The International Boundary and Water Commission, jointly staffed by the United States and Mexico, oversees the border treaties and settles differences.

Ocean boundaries also cause problems because states generally claim that the boundary lies not at the coastline but out at sea. The reasons are for defense and for control of valuable fishing industries. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, some states recognized a boundary, known as the territorial limit, which extended 3 nautical miles (about 5.5 kilometers or 3.5 land miles) from the shore into the ocean. Some states claimed more extensive territorial limits, and others identified a contiguous zone of influence that extended beyond the territorial limits.

The Law of the Sea, signed by 158 countries, has standardized the territorial limits for most countries at 12 nautical miles (about 22 kilometers or 14 land miles). Under the Law of the Sea, states also have exclusive rights to the fish and other marine life within 200 miles (320 kilometers). Countries separated by less than 400 miles of sea must negotiate the location of the boundary between exclusive fishing rights. Disputes can be taken to a Tribunal for the Law of the Sea or to the International Court of Justice.

Cultural Boundaries

Two types of cultural boundaries are common—geometric and ethnic. Geometric boundaries are simply straight lines drawn on a map. Other boundaries between states coincide with differences in ethnicity, especially language and religion.

GEOMETRIC BOUNDARIES. Part of the northern U.S. boundary with Canada is a 2,100-kilometer (1,300-mile) straight line (more precisely, an arc) along 49° north latitude, running from Lake of the Woods, between Minnesota and Manitoba to the Strait of Georgia between Washington State and British Columbia. This boundary was established in 1846 by a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, which still controlled Canada. The two countries share an additional 1,100-kilometer (700-mile) geometric boundary between Alaska and the Yukon Territory along the north-south arc of 141° west longitude.



FIGURE 8-13 Water boundary: Lake Victoria. The boundary between Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda runs through Lake Victoria.

The 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) boundary between Chad and Libya is a straight line drawn across the desert in 1899 by the French and British to set the northern limit of French colonies in Africa (Figure 8-14). Libya claimed that the straight line should be 100 kilometers (60 miles) to the south. Citing an agreement between France and Italy in 1935, Libya seized the territory in 1973. In 1987, Chad expelled the Libyan army with the help of French forces and regained control of the strip.

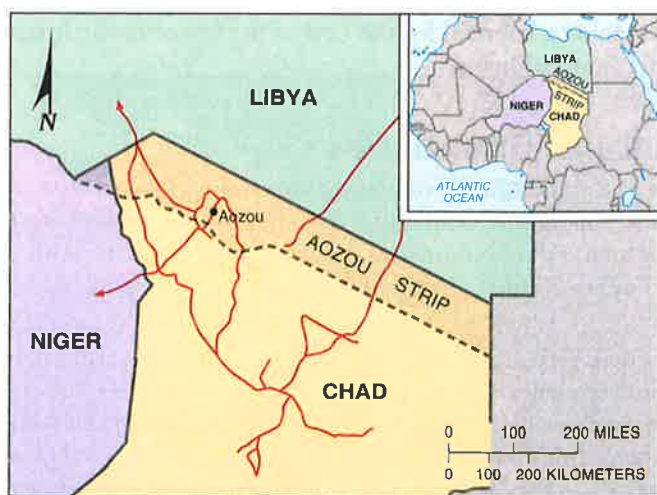


FIGURE 8-14 Geometric boundary: Aozou Strip. The boundary between Libya and Chad is a straight line, drawn by European countries early in the twentieth century when the area comprised a series of colonies. Libya, however, claims that the boundary should be located 100 kilometers to the south and that it should have sovereignty over the Aozou Strip.

RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES. Boundaries between countries have been placed where possible to separate speakers of different languages or followers of different religions. Religious differences often coincide with boundaries between states, but in only a few cases has religion been used to select the actual boundary line.

The most notable example was in South Asia, when the British partitioned India into two states on the basis of religion. The predominantly Muslim portions were allocated to Pakistan, whereas the predominantly Hindu portions became the independent state of India (see Figure 7-26). Religion was also used to some extent to draw the boundary between two states on the island of Eire (Ireland). Most of the island became an independent country, but the northeast—now known as Northern Ireland—remained part of the United Kingdom. Roman Catholics comprise approximately 95 percent of the population in the 26 counties that joined the Republic

of Ireland, whereas Protestants constitute the majority in the six counties of Northern Ireland (see Figure 6-23).

LANGUAGE BOUNDARIES. Language is an important cultural characteristic for drawing boundaries, especially in Europe. England, France, Portugal, and Spain are examples of European states that coalesced around distinctive languages before the nineteenth century. Germany and Italy emerged in the nineteenth century as states unified by language.

The movement to identify nationalities on the basis of language spread elsewhere in Europe during the twentieth century. After World War I, leaders of the victorious countries met at the Versailles Peace Conference to redraw the map of Europe. One of the chief advisers to President Woodrow Wilson, the geographer Isaiah Bowman, played a major role in the decisions. Language was the most important criterion the allied leaders used to create new states in Europe and to adjust the boundaries of existing ones.

The Versailles conference was particularly concerned with Eastern and Southern Europe, regions long troubled by political instability and conflict. Boundaries were drawn around the states of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Romania to conform closely to the distribution of Bulgarian, Hungarian (Magyar), Polish, and Romanian speakers. Speakers of several similar South Slavic languages were placed together in the new country of Yugoslavia. Czechoslovakia was created by combining the speakers of Czech and Slovak, mutually intelligible West Slavic languages (refer to Figure 7-30).

The nation-states created by the Versailles conference on the basis of language lasted with minor adjustment through most of the twentieth century. As discussed in Chapter 7, a nation-state exists when the boundaries of a state match the boundaries of

the territory inhabited by an ethnic group. Problems exist when the boundaries do not match. However, during the 1990s, the boundaries on the map of Europe drawn at Versailles in 1919 collapsed. Despite speaking similar languages, Czechs and Slovaks found that they could no longer live together peacefully in the same state. Croats, Macedonians, Serbs, and Slovenes realized the same.

Cyprus's "Green Line" Boundary

Cyprus, the third-largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, contains two nationalities—Greek and Turkish (Figure 8-15). Although the island is physically closer to Turkey, Turks comprise only 18 percent of the country's population, whereas Greeks account for 78 percent. When Cyprus gained independence from Britain in 1960, its constitution guaranteed the Turkish minority a substantial share of elected offices and control over its own education, religion, and culture. But Cyprus has never peacefully integrated the Greek and Turkish nationalities.

Several Greek Cypriot military officers who favored unification of Cyprus with Greece seized control of the government in 1974. Shortly after the coup, Turkey invaded Cyprus to protect the Turkish, Cypriot minority. The Greek coup leaders were removed within a few months, and an elected government was restored, but the Turkish army remained on Cyprus. The northern 36 percent of the island controlled by Turkey declared itself the independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983, but only Turkey recognizes it as a separate state.

A wall was constructed between the two areas, and a buffer zone patrolled by the United Nations was delineated across the entire island. Traditionally, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots had mingled, but after the wall and buffer zone were established, the two nationalities became geographically isolated. The northern part of the island is now overwhelmingly Turkish, whereas the southern part is overwhelmingly Greek. Approximately one-third of the island's Greeks were forced to move from the region controlled by the Turkish army, whereas nearly one-fourth of the Turks moved from the region now considered to be the Greek side.

The two sides have been brought closer in recent years. A portion of the wall was demolished, and after three decades the two nationalities could again cross to the other side. The European Union accepted the entire island of Cyprus as a member in 2004. A UN Peace Plan for reunification was accepted by the Turkish side but rejected by the Greek side.

Frontiers

Historically, frontiers rather than boundaries separated states (Figure 8-16). A **frontier** is a zone where no state exercises complete political control. It is a tangible geographic area, whereas a boundary is an infinitely thin, invisible, imaginary line. A frontier provides an area of separation, often kilometers in width, but a boundary brings two neighboring states into direct contact, increasing the potential for violent face-to-face meetings. A frontier area is either uninhabited or sparsely



FIGURE 8-15 Cultural boundary: Cyprus. Since 1974, Cyprus has been divided into Greek and Turkish areas, separated by a United Nations Buffer Zone. The photo shows a crossing between the Greek side (foreground) and Turkish side (background), through the UN Buffer Zone (middle).