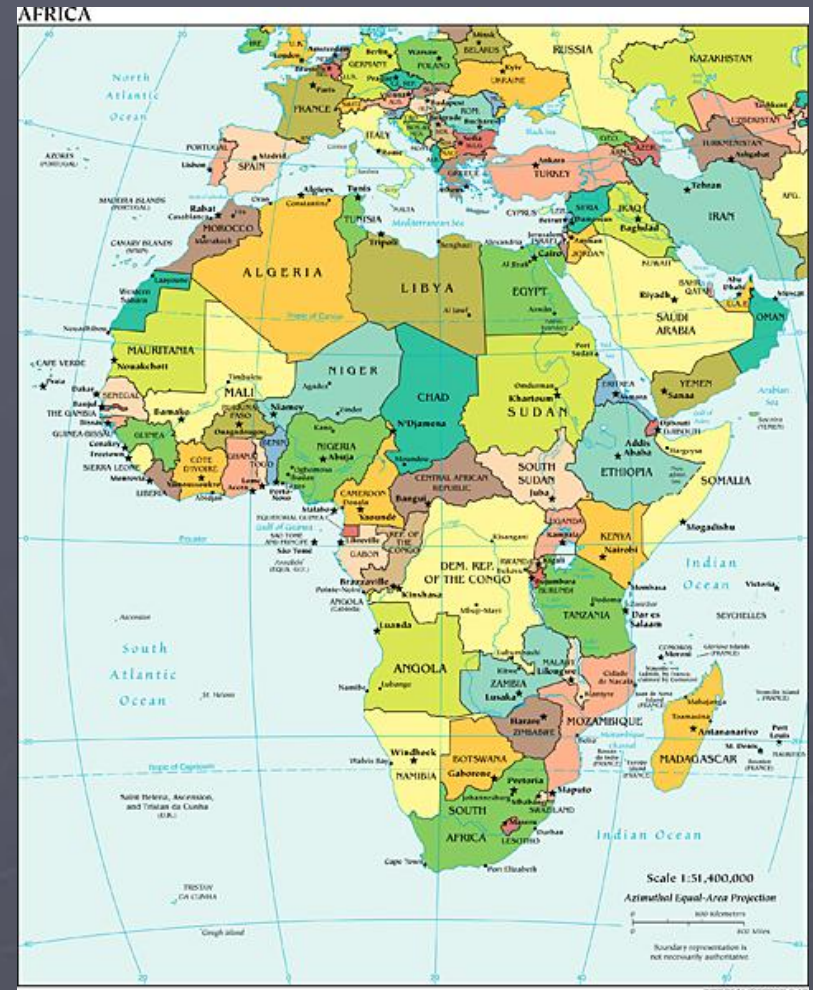# Introduction to Political Geography

Terms and concepts

Introduction to Political Geography

- Political Geography is the study of the patterns and methods humans have used to organize claims to portions of the Earth's surface

State

- Basic organization of a group of people into a sovereign state with defined borders
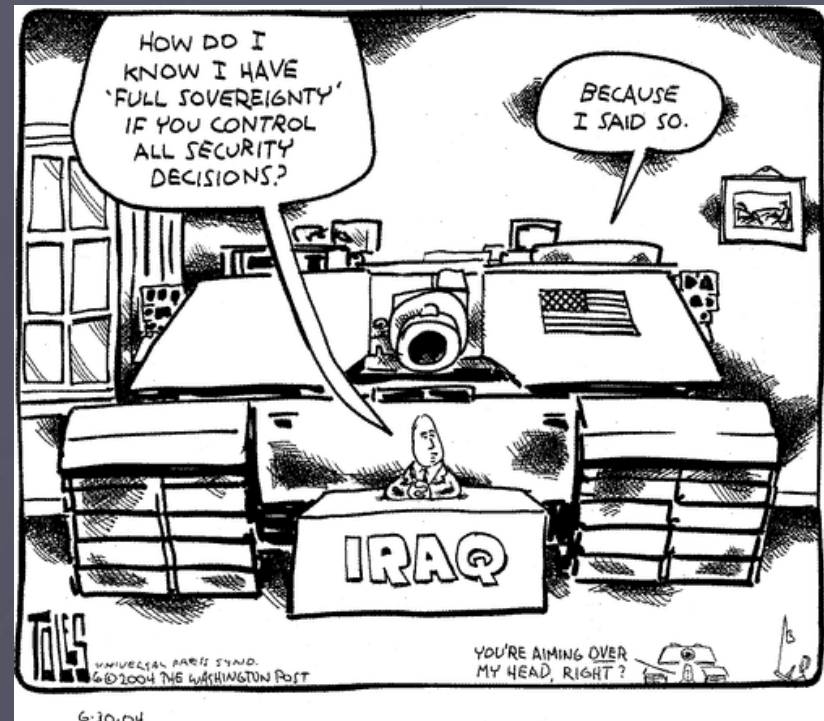   - Synonymously a country

Gaining Statehood

- Have a defined territory with permanent population and functional government

- Declare and effectively gain independence

- Gain recognition from established states as sovereign state

- Join the United Nations General Assembly

Sovereignty

- Ultimate authority for decisions pertaining to government, defense, and foreign politics
  - Simply put: Complete control of decision making without outside interference

Sovereignty Disputes

- When two or more states claim and area which often result in diplomatic tension
  - Often requiring mediation or intervention by the United Nations

Case Study: Falklands War 1982

- Disputed claims over the Islands reaching as far back as 18th Century

- British and Argentinian claims resulted in brief bitter war

- Islands remain disputed with both sides claiming rights

Nation

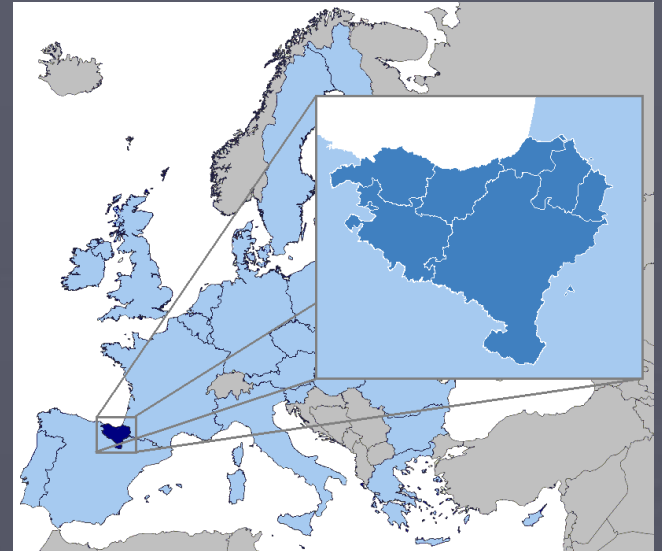- A group of people in a given geographical area with common heritage, and culture

Nation-State

- A mostly ethnically homogenous state with a sovereign government with clearly defined borders
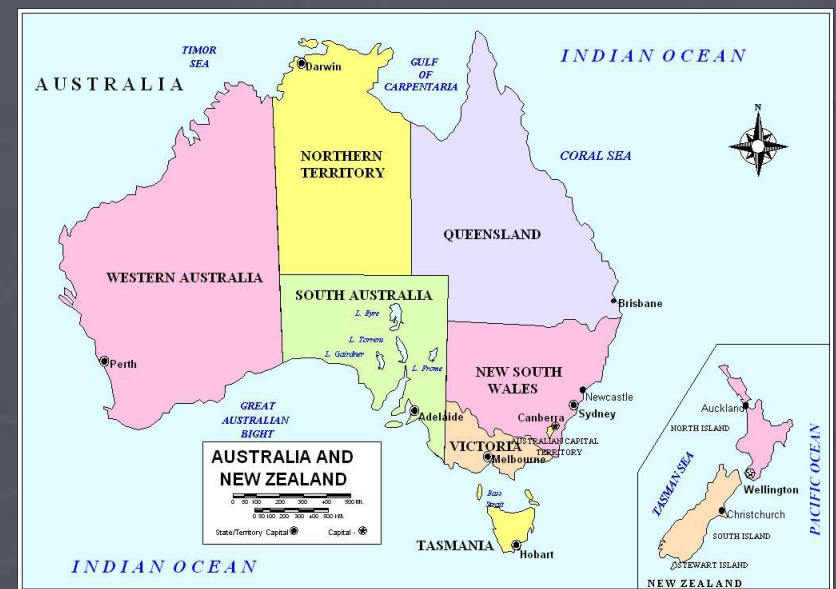 - Often nations will push for independence citing differing nationality

Case Study: Basque

- Region of Northern Spain and southwest France almost entirely comprised of people declaring Basque, not Spanish, nationality
  - Basque has unique cultural heritage not linked to that of either Spain or France
  - Attempts to gain independence

Territory

- An area of land under the jurisdiction of a state but has not yet gained full rights of being part of the state
  - Ex. Voting rights, representation, etc..

Frontier

- Zone where no state exercises political control
  - Referred to as *Terra Nullius* or "Land belonging to no one"