

Chapter 8: The World's Failed States

Foreign Policy magazine ranks the world's failed states - http://pkpolitik.blogspot.com/2012/07/10-reasons-countries-fall-apart-by_02.html

Read the articles "8 Geographical Pivot Points" and "10 Reasons Countries Fall Apart" to answer the following questions.

Physical Geography (climate, landforms, terrain, natural resources, etc)

1. What effect does resource wealth have on the stability of a state? Cite 2 specific examples.
2. What effect does trade have on the economic growth of a state? Cite 2 specific examples.
3. How do clearly enforceable borders help a country maintain control? Cite 1 specific example.
4. How does relative location affect connectivity? Cite 2 specific examples.
5. Explain why the population of country which lives in the coastal region has an economic advantage. Cite 2 specific examples.

Political Reasons (shape of state, type of borders, colonization, type of gov't, etc.)

6. The introduction of "10 Reasons" explains countries "failure is by design." Explain the statement.
7. How does a lack of incentives for personal wealth hurt a country's stability? Cite 2 specific examples.
8. How does the earnings gap hurt a country's development? Cite 2 specific examples.
9. What effect does political stability have on building a sound economy? Cite 2 specific examples.

10. How do policies of "extraction" negatively affect the well-being of the country? Cite 2 specific examples.

Demographic Data: Choose any 3 countries from the articles to investigate Demographics Data.

Demographics			
TFR			
IMR			
% Urban			
Overall Life Expectancy			
Literacy Rate			
Dependency Ratio			

Development Data: Choose any 3 of the countries from the articles to investigate Development Data

Indicator			
GDP per capita			
HDI			
GEM			
% employed in Primary Sector			
Export Partner			

Cultural Reasons: Choose 1 country from the article to investigate.

Does the country have centripetal or centrifugal cultural features (ethnicity, religion, language)?

Mapping: Label each country from the articles on the map. Write a GIST (30 words or less) in a textbox or thought bubble and point to the states you researched

Resources: 1. CIA Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/> (It may help to read the overview and the transnational issues);
2. Population Reference Bureau Data Finder: <http://www.prb.org/DataFinder.aspx>

Mapping the World's Failed States

Label and color the countries from the articles you read on the map. Please summarize the issues facing each country.



8 Geographical Pivot Points: From Angola to Yemen, eight countries whose futures are tied up in the land they occupy.

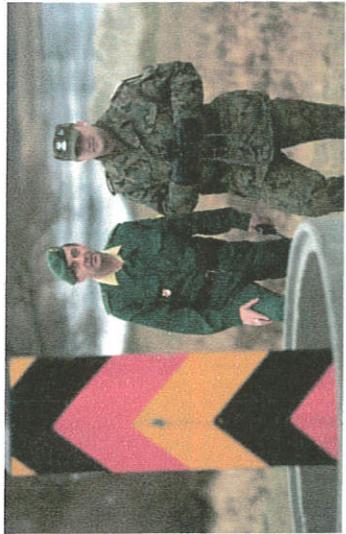
POLAND

Will it become the next pivot state in Eastern Europe?

BY Margaret Slattery
JUNE 18, 2012

In Foreign Policy's July/August issue, Robert D. Kaplan writes that the present and future of Pakistan -- perpetually among the top countries on the Failed States Index -- "are still best understood through its geography." But the troubled Southwest Asian country, precariously situated between India and Central Asia, is not the only region whose prospects for growth and security are affected by natural resources and cartographic positioning. In an interview, Kaplan, chief geopolitical analyst for Stratfor and author of the forthcoming book *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*, pinpointed eight countries where vital challenges hinge on questions of geography.

Squeezed between major European powers Germany and Russia, Poland has long been the "plaything of geography," as Kaplan puts it. The Baltic Sea and Carpathian Mountains make for natural borders in the north and south, but the country's eastern and western edges are relatively undifferentiated flatlands. As a result, Poland's borders have shifted back and forth and even disappeared altogether at various points throughout history. Now, Poland stands to assume the role of a major pivot state between Western and Eastern Europe, especially if Ukraine slips into the Russian orbit. Not only has Poland strengthened ties with Germany since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but if it can capitalize on possibly significant shale-gas deposits, it could become an energy producer in its own right -- potentially giving it more political leverage than ever, particularly in dealing with gas giant Russia.



MYANMAR

The key question: Will it connect India to East Asia through invigorated trade routes?

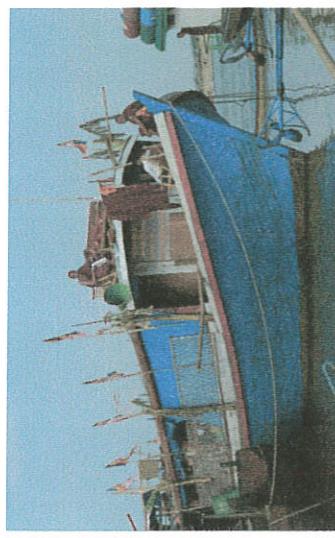
Rich in timber, hydropower, natural gas, diamonds, and even uranium, Myanmar has suffered from decades of economic stasis under repressive military rule. But if the country can continue to open up politically, as it has done over the past year, it could in turn fashion itself into a crucial

throughway connecting China with the Bay of Bengal. At the moment, China relies heavily on the Strait of Malacca, a roundabout route farther south, to ship exports out from the South China Sea, while oil and natural gas from the Middle East reach China only after traveling across the Indian Ocean and through the strait. China and India are both developing offshore natural gas fields and building ports in the region; if these two economic superpowers are permitted to build pipelines across Myanmar, the newly resurgent country could unite the subcontinent with East Asia, allowing, Kaplan says, "a real Indo-Pacific region to take hold."

VENEZUELA

Can it improve relations with the United States and develop its Orinoco oil fields?

Harnessing vast crude reserves primarily in the northwestern Maracaibo region, Venezuela is among the world's top oil producers, with about half of its oil exports going to the United States as of 2010, despite tension between the two countries. Although we tend to think of Venezuela as a South American country, "in reality, it's a Caribbean country," Kaplan explains, considering that most of its 29 million people are concentrated along the northern coast. As a result, Venezuela has few options but to ship its crude across the Caribbean Sea, up toward the Gulf of Mexico, and ultimately to the United States. Kaplan predicts U.S.-Venezuela relations will gradually improve once cancer-ridden President Hugo Chávez expires. In turn, Venezuela might be able to increase exports to the United States, and also might get U.S. help to tap into heavy crude deposits in the Orinoco oil sands, which require more advanced and expensive drilling techniques.



GREECE

Will the "cradle of Western civilization" see its loyalties drift east?



Despite unending discussion of Greece's status in the

European Union, Kaplan notes that the country's geography and identity are also tied closely with the East. Not only does Greece straddle Europe and the Middle East geographically, but because the largest religious group in the country is made up of East Orthodox Christians, it is also culturally close to Russia. Not to mention the fact that Athens is nearly as close to Moscow as it is to Brussels, the de facto capital of the EU. Although Greece is considered the birthplace of Western civilization, its legacy as a backwater of the Ottoman Empire means it has suffered for centuries from severe underdevelopment, while political parties until recently have been poorly organized and large numbers of Greek businesses are still family-owned. All this is to say that, heading forward, Western Europe "cannot take Greece for granted," Kaplan says. China, for instance, is upgrading the port of Piraeus near Athens, and if a regime change in Syria forces Russia to abandon its naval base there, the Russian navy could end up turning to Greece in the future.

YEMEN

Can it overcome the perfect storm of geographic pressures?



For the most part, Yemen's geography is working against it. Although it is about a third as large as Saudi Arabia, the country has only about 2 million fewer people, contributing to overpopulation and severe poverty. With a rapidly diminishing water table, Yemen is also internally divided by mountains, such that it has been near impossible to establish a point of central authority since ancient times. Poor governance in turn leaves Yemen vulnerable to the spillover of piracy in Somalia, which sits just across the Gulf of Aden. If political development in Yemen continues to falter, Kaplan warns, the country could end up more like Somalia — an unquestionably failed state with a virtually nonfunctional government. "Since antiquity, Yemen has often been defined by a multiplicity of political power centers within it," Kaplan says.

MONGOLIA

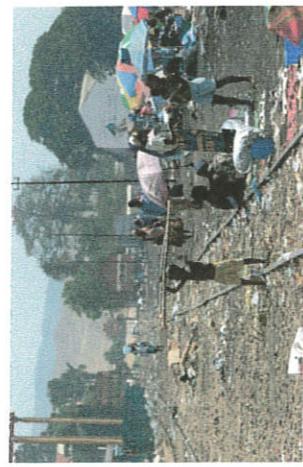
Can it keep from becoming a de facto colony of China?

For most of the 20th century, Mongolia was a satellite of the Soviet Union, but today it fears China, which has more than a billion people to Mongolia's 3 million. Despite its sparse population — the country's

landscape is "kind of like Mars with oxygen," Kaplan says — Mongolia has abundant resources, including oil, coal, and grasslands. The crucial question is whether the country, which was ruled by the Chinese during the Qing dynasty, can now prevent China from exploiting its rich natural resources. To do so, Mongolia has encouraged investment from other countries, including Australia, South Korea, and the United States, but its neighbor to the south still looms large.

ANGOLA

Can its oil wealth spread to the interior?



In many ways, Angola's geography makes sense, unlike that of many of its African neighbors. Thick forests in the north serve as a logical border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while the Kalahari Desert offers a natural frontier with Namibia and Botswana to the south. To the east, a gradually rising plateau abuts Zambia, and the South Atlantic Ocean is off to the west. Although the country has both the geographical makeup and the resources — chiefly oil — to be prosperous and self-contained, Angolan society is plagued by inequality. The capital, Luanda, which is perched on the oil-rich northwestern coast, is ranked the second-most expensive city in the world, but some 40 percent of the country's population is estimated to live below the poverty line. The pivotal question for Angola is whether the wealth from offshore oil deposits can trickle down into the country's infrastructure.

BANGLADESH

Can it host trade routes connecting China and India?



More than 160 million people — greater than the population of Russia — populate Bangladesh's sea-level, semi-aquatic landscape. While the northern part of the country is prone to drought due to China and India's damming of the Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers, the flatlands of southern Bangladesh are threatened by rising sea levels, which deplete soil with the addition of salt. In other words, as Kaplan puts it, the country is "squeezed by water problems from both directions." What's more, the country's rough terrain has hindered both internal economic development and trade. That could change if China, India, and Myanmar open trade routes through Bangladesh. "Geography has been a curse to Bangladesh, threatened as it is by both drought and rising sea levels," Kaplan says. "But geography could become a blessing in an era that might see routes and pipelines operating in many directions, organically connecting the Indian subcontinent with Tibet and China."

