

US GEOSTRATEGIC CONTROL OF SEAS AND OCEANS

Seas and oceans play a decisive role in today's economy and diplomacy

All the countries today depend on them for trade and geostrategic control

The USA puts the control of seas and oceans as a priority as it's a naval power

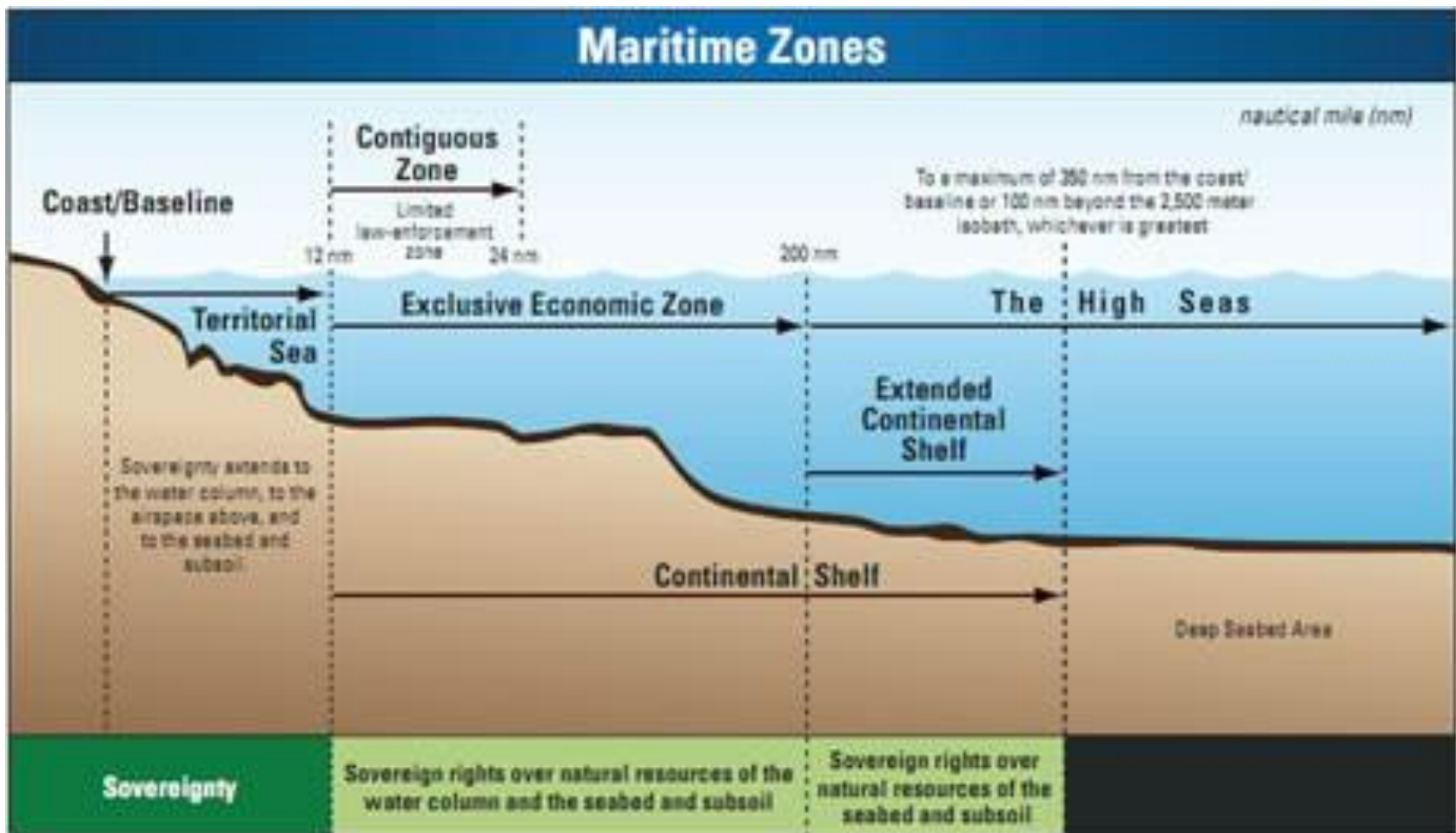
Oceans and seas are huge assets for trade but also for military deployment .

I/ US GLOBAL PRESENCE IN SEAS AND OCEANS

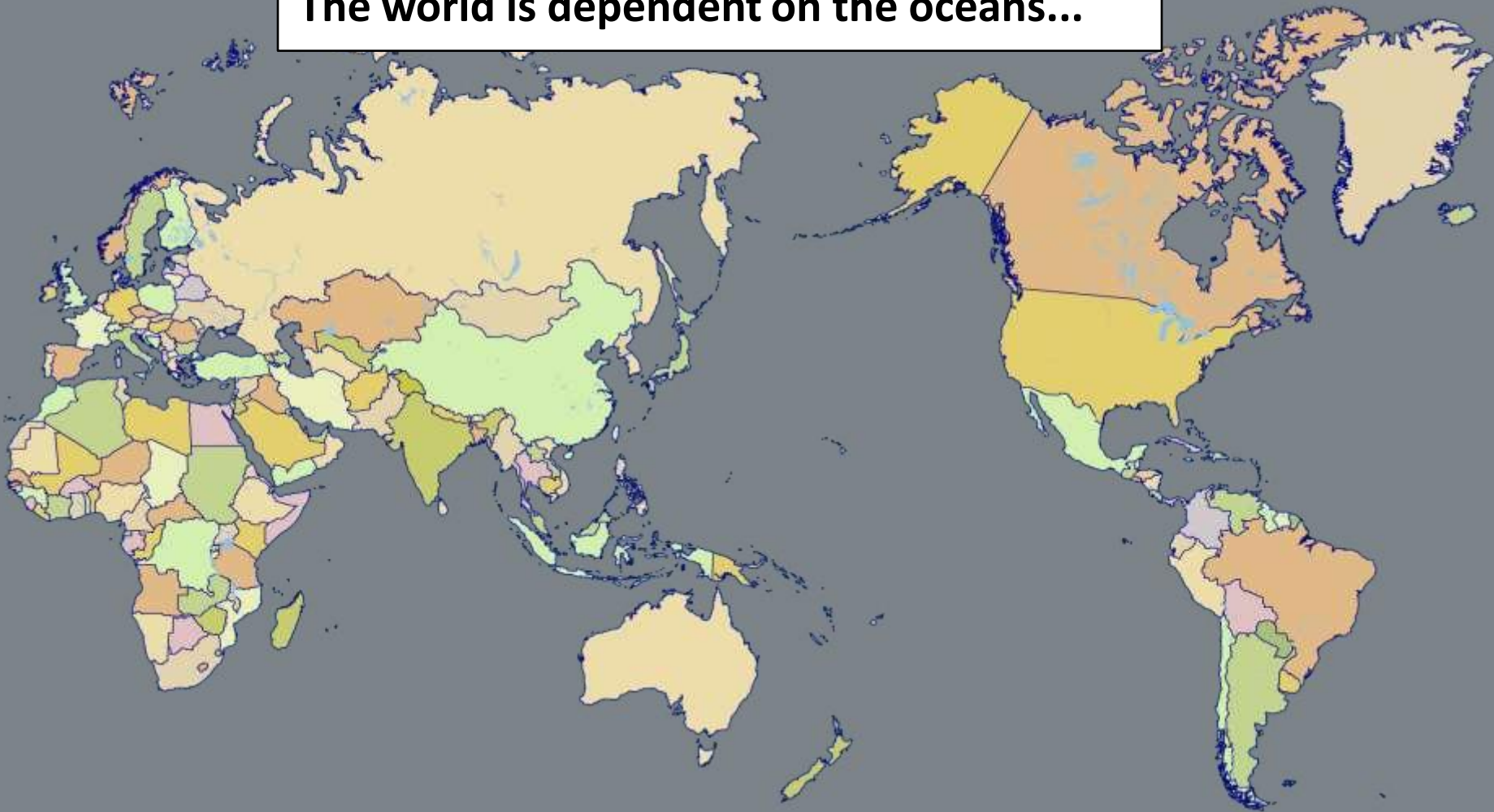
A-Importance of seas and oceans

keep in mind:

Since the 1982 Montego Bay convention (UN convention) , seas and oceans are shared as followed:



The world is dependent on the oceans...



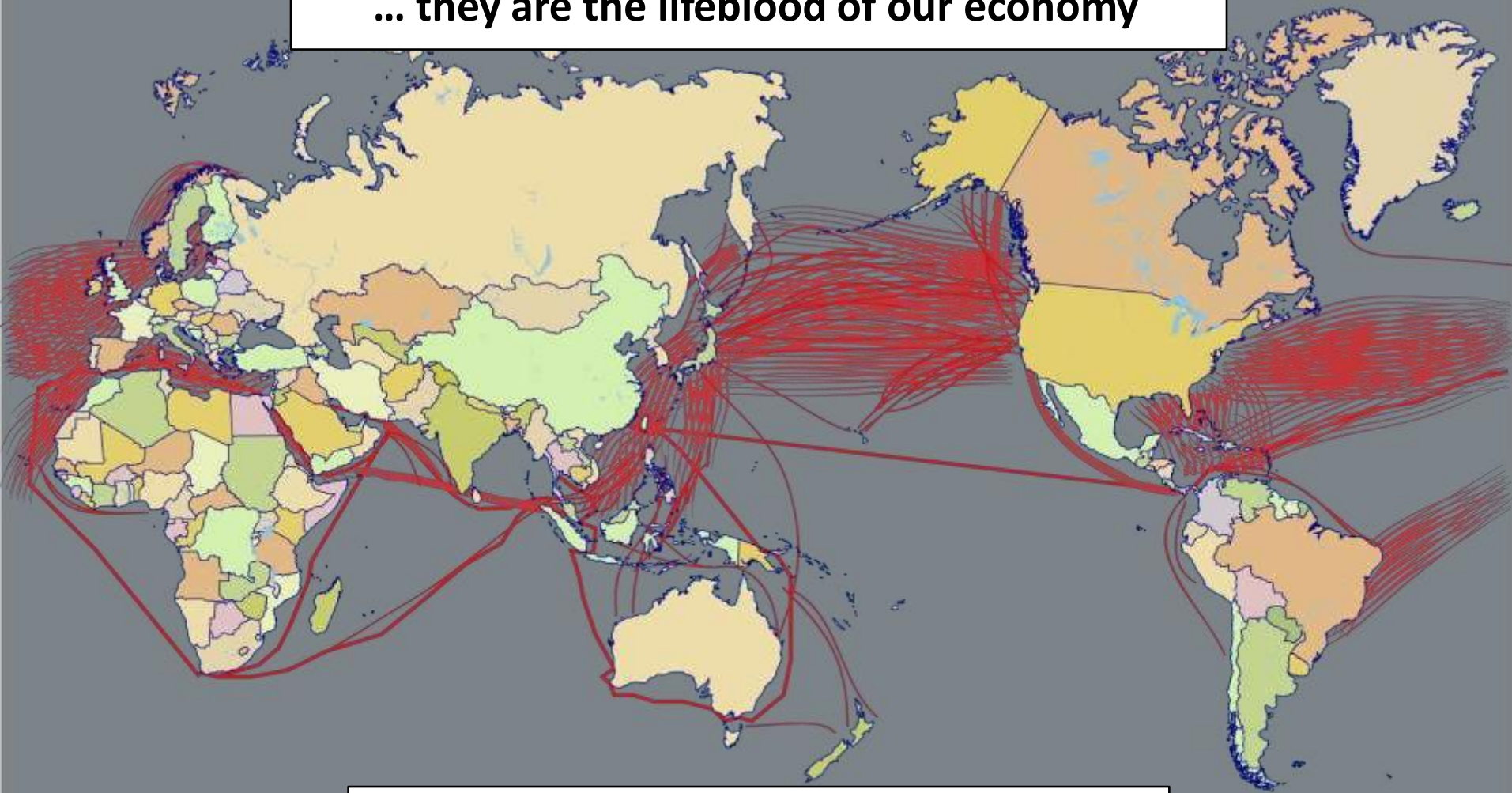
70% of the surface is water

**80% of the world's population lives
within 100 miles of the coast**

AMERICA'S
NAVY

OPERATE FORWARD:
Strategic Maritime Crossroads

... they are the lifeblood of our economy



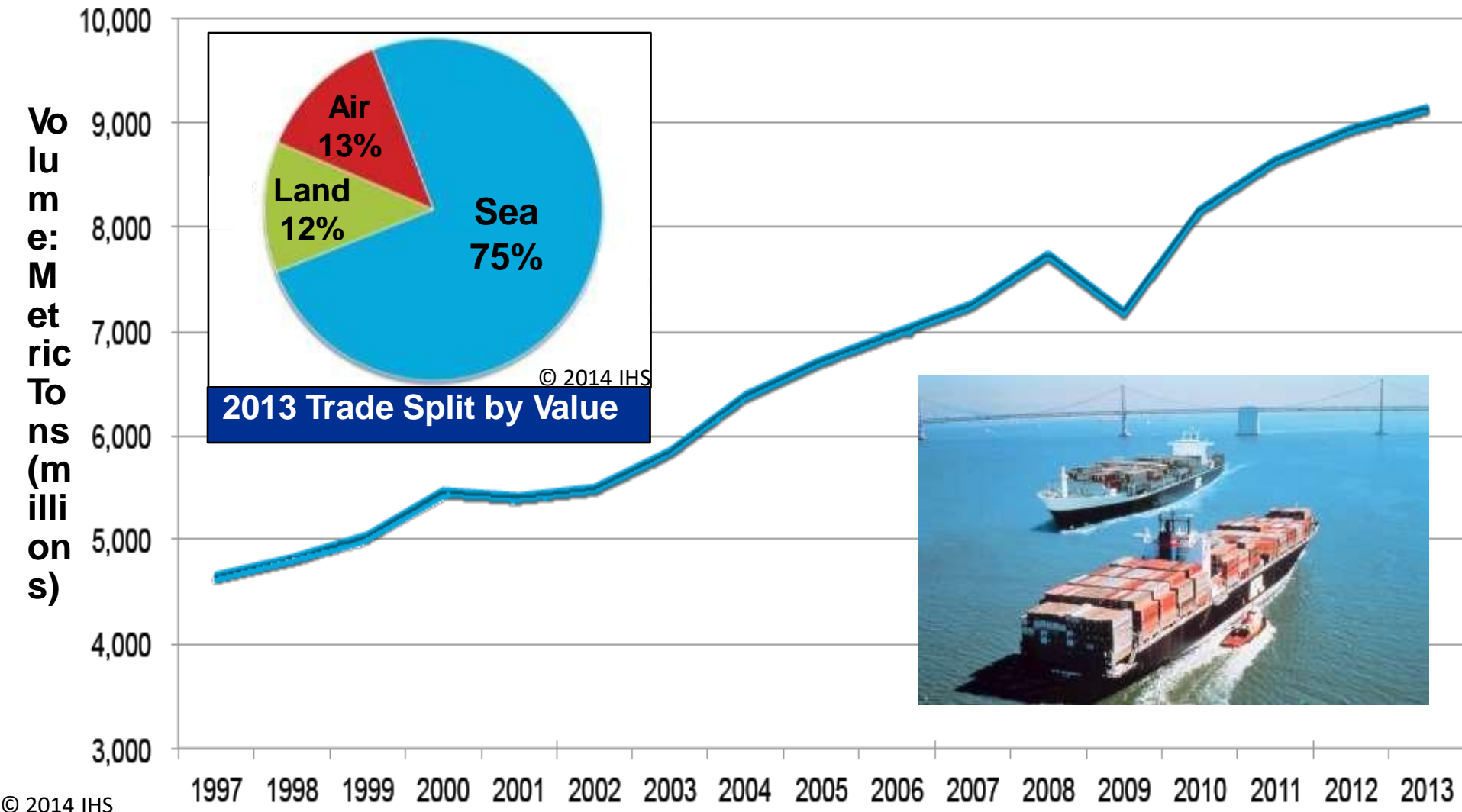
90% of global trade by volume travels by water

70% of global trade by value travels by water

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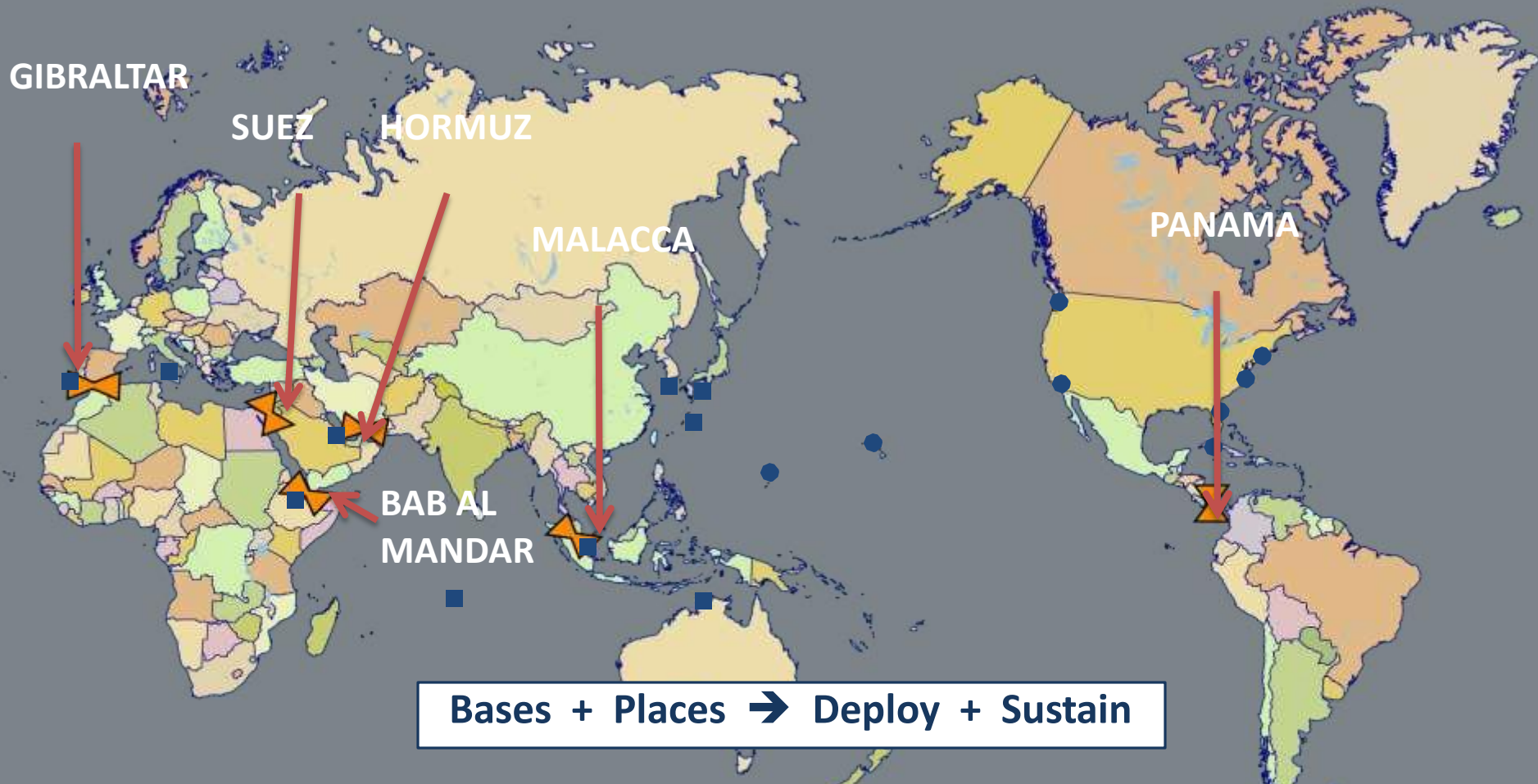
OPERATE FORWARD:
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Seaborn/maritime Trade Growth



**Seaborne trade on a steady rise through history.
Projected to more than double again by 2030.**

B-US naval presence

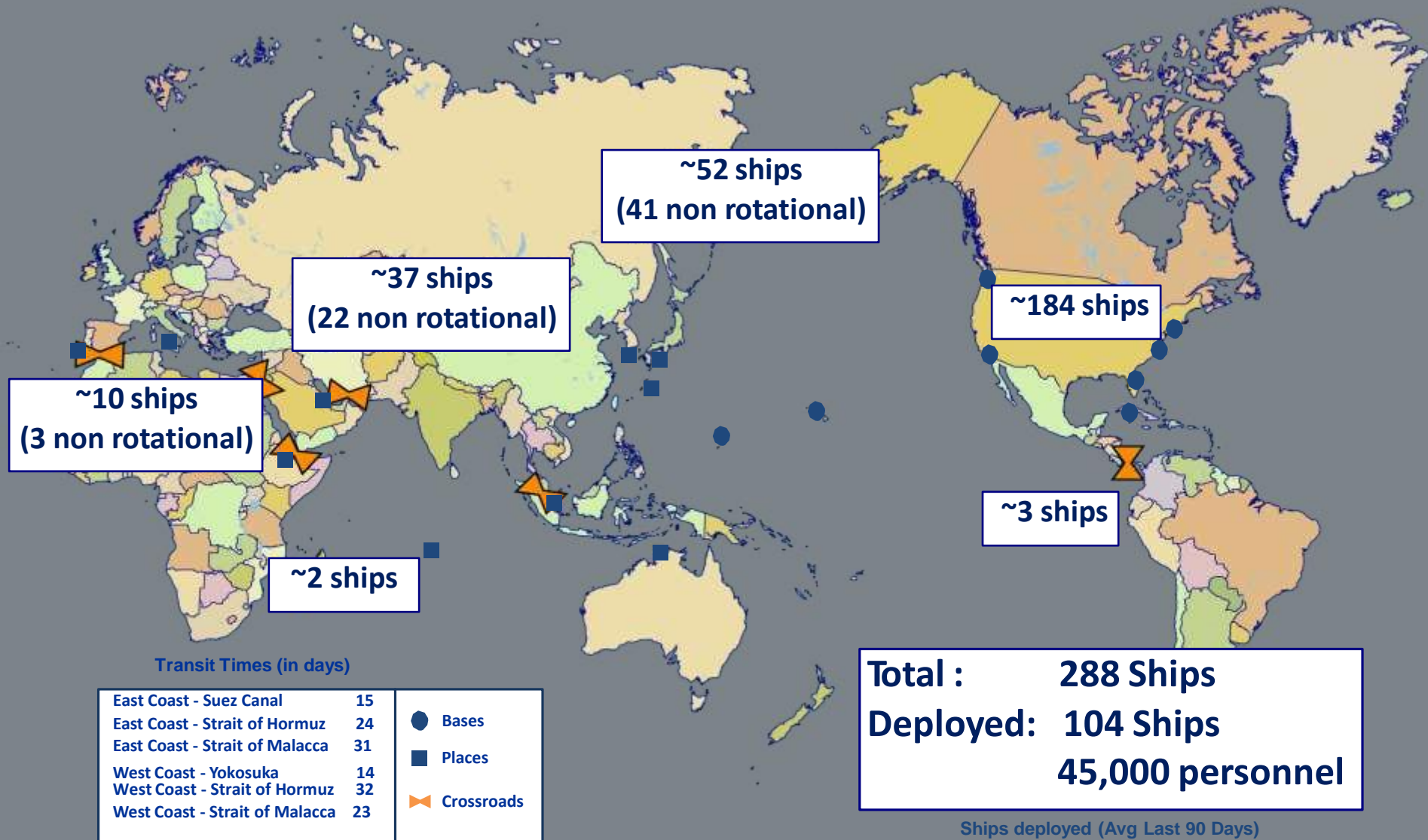


● **Bases:** Facilities under exclusive U.S. control

■ **Places:** Overseas facilities utilized by U.S. naval forces, subject to varying degrees of host nation control

AMERICA'S
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B-US naval presence

The USA uses a gunboat diplomacy(diplomatie de la canonnière):

the pursuit of foreign policy objectives with the aid of naval power

The US navy has 288 ships that can be deployed all over the world

104 are currently deployed, which involves 45 000 personnel

II/ US PRESENCE IN THE GULF

This presence is linked with the key role of the Hormuz strait



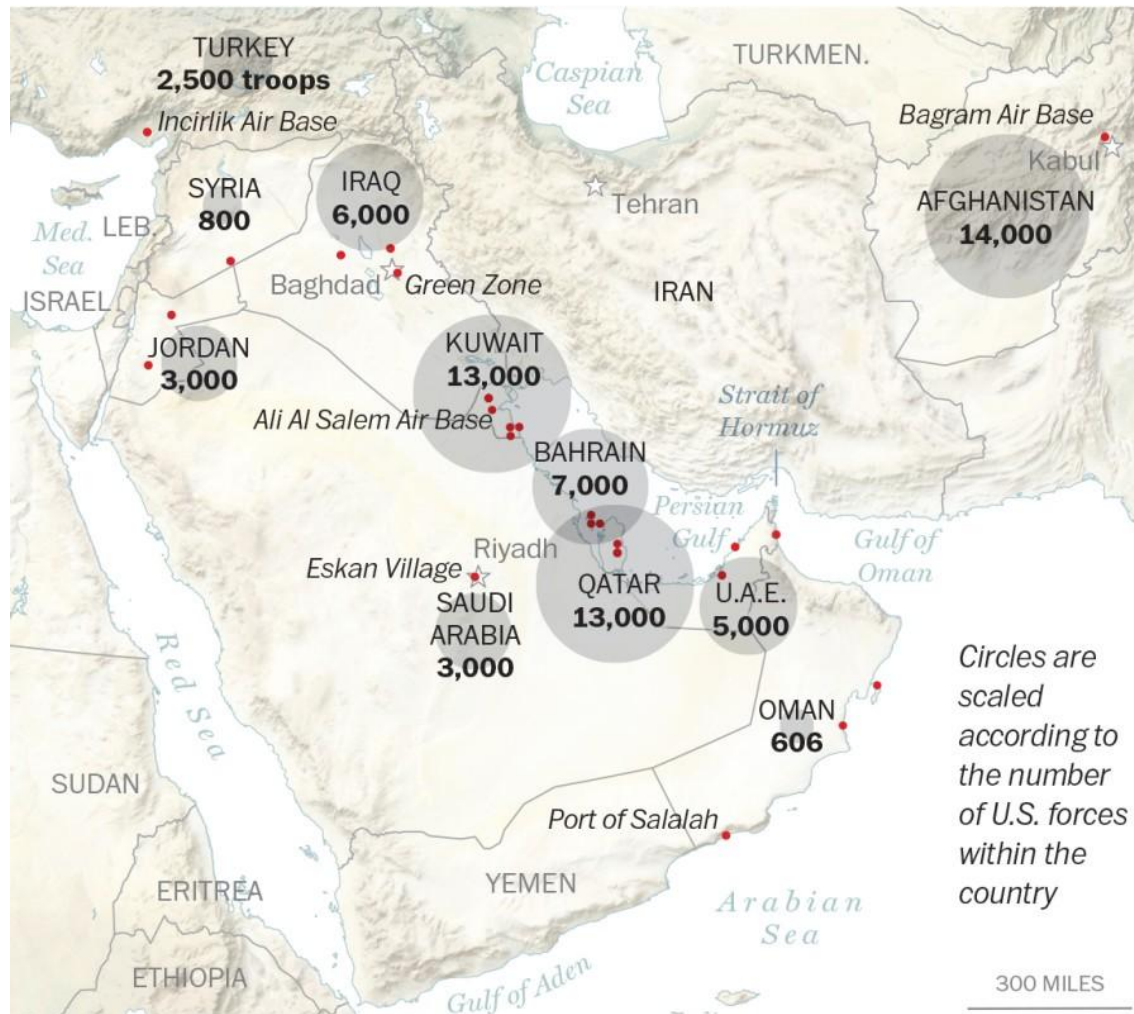
It plays a key role
in oil trade

So it needs to be
secured

The USA fears
Iran the most

The U.S. military footprint in the Middle East

- Bases, ports and other installations where U.S. troops are stationed or where U.S. military personnel pass through



Note: Troop numbers are approximate. They do not reflect deployments in recent days and may fluctuate.

Sources: Federation of American Scientists, International Crisis Group

AARON STECKELBERG/THE WASHINGTON POST

The US deploys troops in allied countries : EX

These troop come on top of the presence of the 5th fleet near the Gulf

America's Free-Rider Problem in the Strait of Hormuz www.theatlantic.com

It's a monthly magazine created in 1857. It covers international news.

It's known for its reliable sources and well-grounded arguments.

Its political bias would be center-left

A major part of the reason: to secure the world's oil supplies—about 20 percent of which [flow through](#) the strait. But the U.S. itself doesn't get most of its oil from the Gulf; most [Gulf oil](#) flows to Asia. So why, Trump [asked](#), was the U.S. footing the bill to keep the Chinese supplied? The U.S. has shouldered the burden for protecting the free flow of energy supplies in the region since the Carter administration, when America's chief adversary was the Soviet Union and the U.S. needed guaranteed access to oil so its military could fight a land war in Europe if needed.

But the world has changed. The Soviet Union no longer exists. The United States is producing substantial amounts of its own oil needs. Which does make it worth asking whether the assumption that dictated a U.S. military buildup in the region in the 1980s still holds.

- It doesn't really matter where Middle Eastern oil goes—if supply is disrupted, prices go up for everybody (...)

- The U.S. is also providing a global public good as the dominant military force in the region. The United States is the dominant military in the region

- With its mines and missiles, Iran could block part or all of the strait and then shoot at whatever ships try to clear it.

- The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the 1990s, which stopped oil exports from both countries, doubled the price of oil at the time and kept them elevated for a year.

“It's arguably still in our economic interests to protect Gulf oil,” Charles Glaser, the director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, told me. “It would be better if other countries were militarily able to do that—frankly most of them are not in a situation where they can ... If we don't do it, it's quite unclear that anyone will fill the gap.”

The article is divided INTO two parts:

A first part point ou the importance of this strait and the future of the US position

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A second part justifies the need to stay present in this area

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The importance of the strait and the US position in the future

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20% of oil supplies passes through this strait

The strait is used by Asian countries to stay supplied, particularly China

Question:

the USA was present in the gulf during the Cold War to keep the Soviets out the area, but the Cold War is over

So Is it worth staying as , securing the area, now serves the Chinese

- It doesn't really matter where Middle Eastern oil **goes—if supply is disrupted, prices go up for everybody (...)**
 - The U.S. is also providing a global public good as the dominant military force in the region. **The United States is the dominant military in the region**
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Securing the strait avoid an oil crisis

It shows the US hard power

It deters Iran FOR blocking the strait

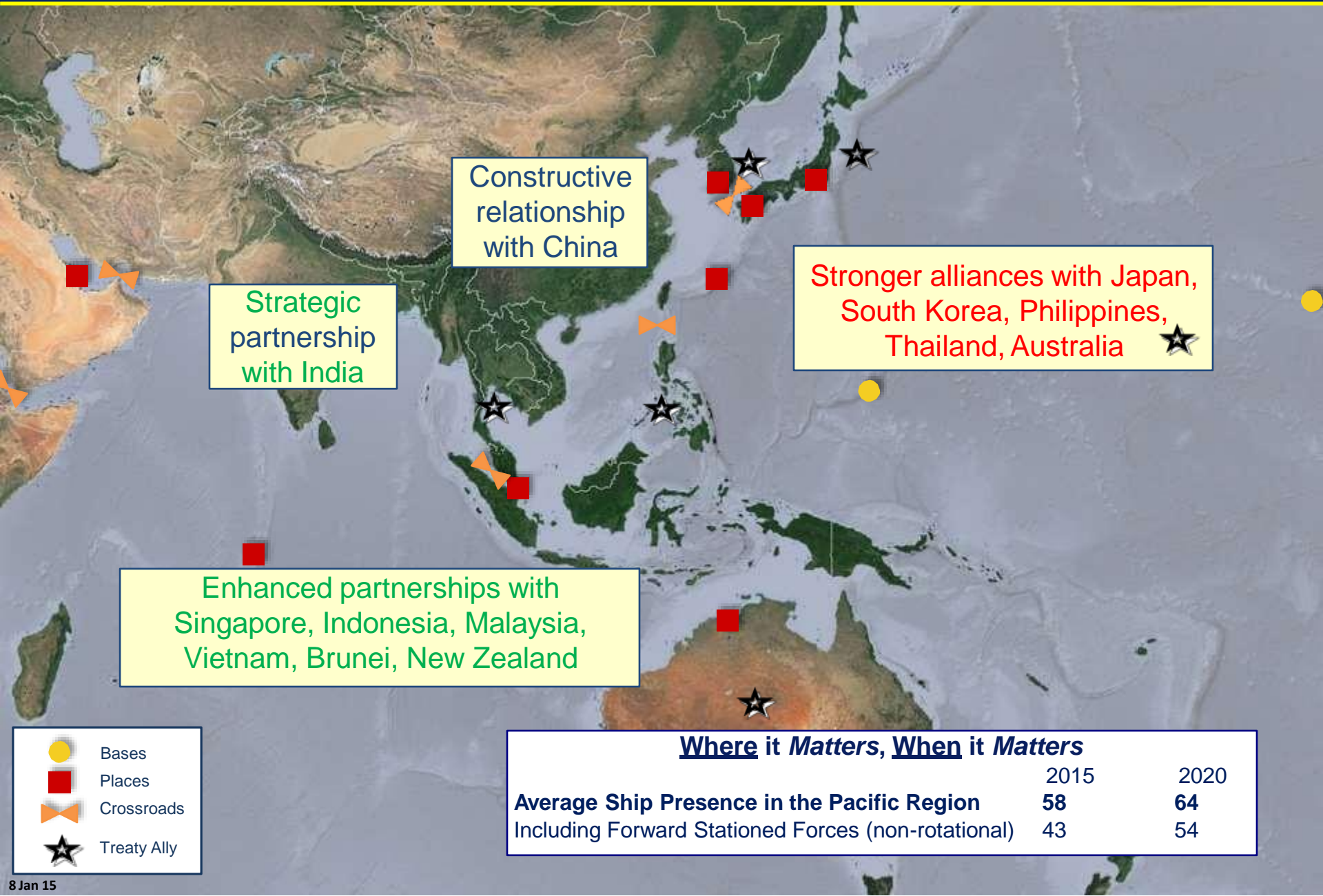
It’s an economic interest

It avoids having another power taking the control

III/ US PRESENCE IN ASIA

A/The key role of the Malacca strait





Constructive relationship with China

Strategic partnership with India

Stronger alliances with Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Australia

Enhanced partnerships with Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, New Zealand

 Bases

 Places

 Crossroads

 Treaty Ally

<u>Where it Matters, When it Matters</u>		
	2015	2020
Average Ship Presence in the Pacific Region	58	64
Including Forward Stationed Forces (non-rotational)	43	54

The US presence in Malacca has been increased

Average Ship Presence in the Pacific Region

2015	2020
58	64

It's a key strait when it comes to export oil to Asia

For example: 90 % of the Japanese oil transits through this strait

The 7th fleet is deployed there to maintain freedom of navigation

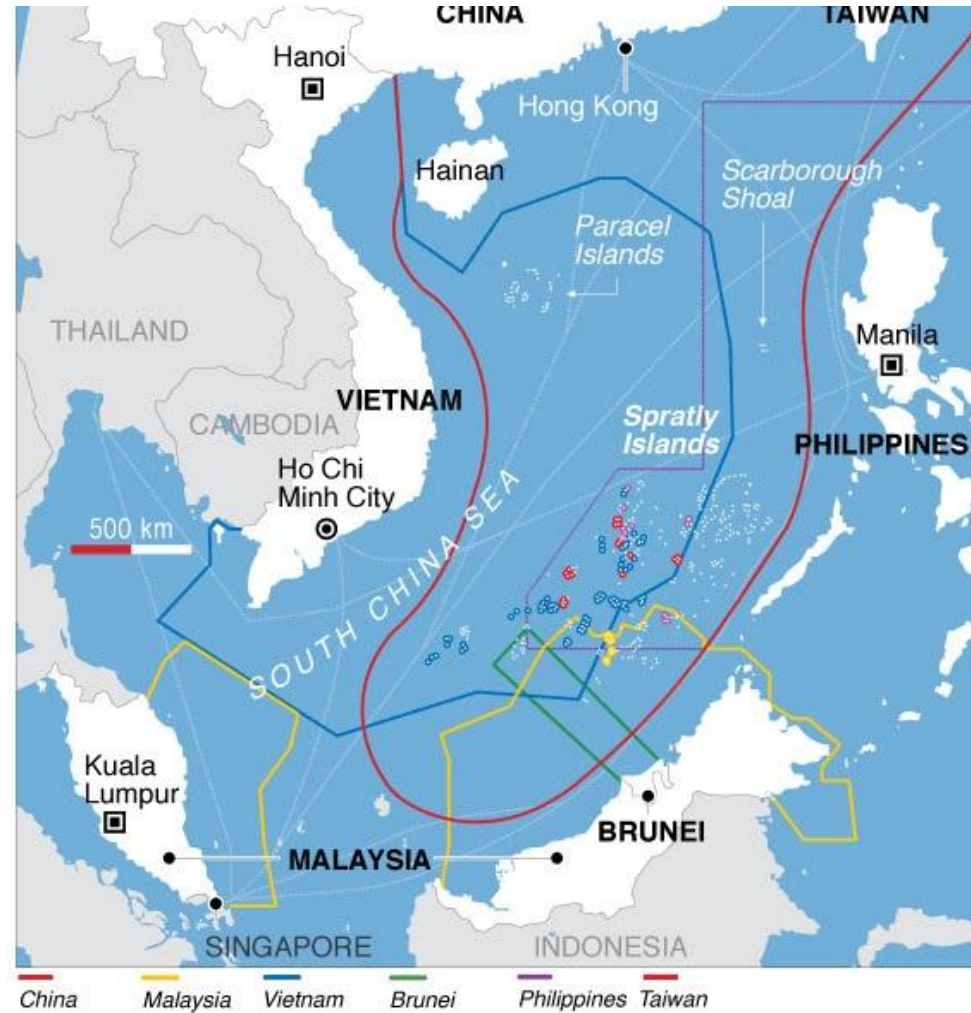
The US also has bases in allied countries (Philippines, Japan) and partners (Vietnam, Singapore or india)

B/ Tensions in South China sea

Location

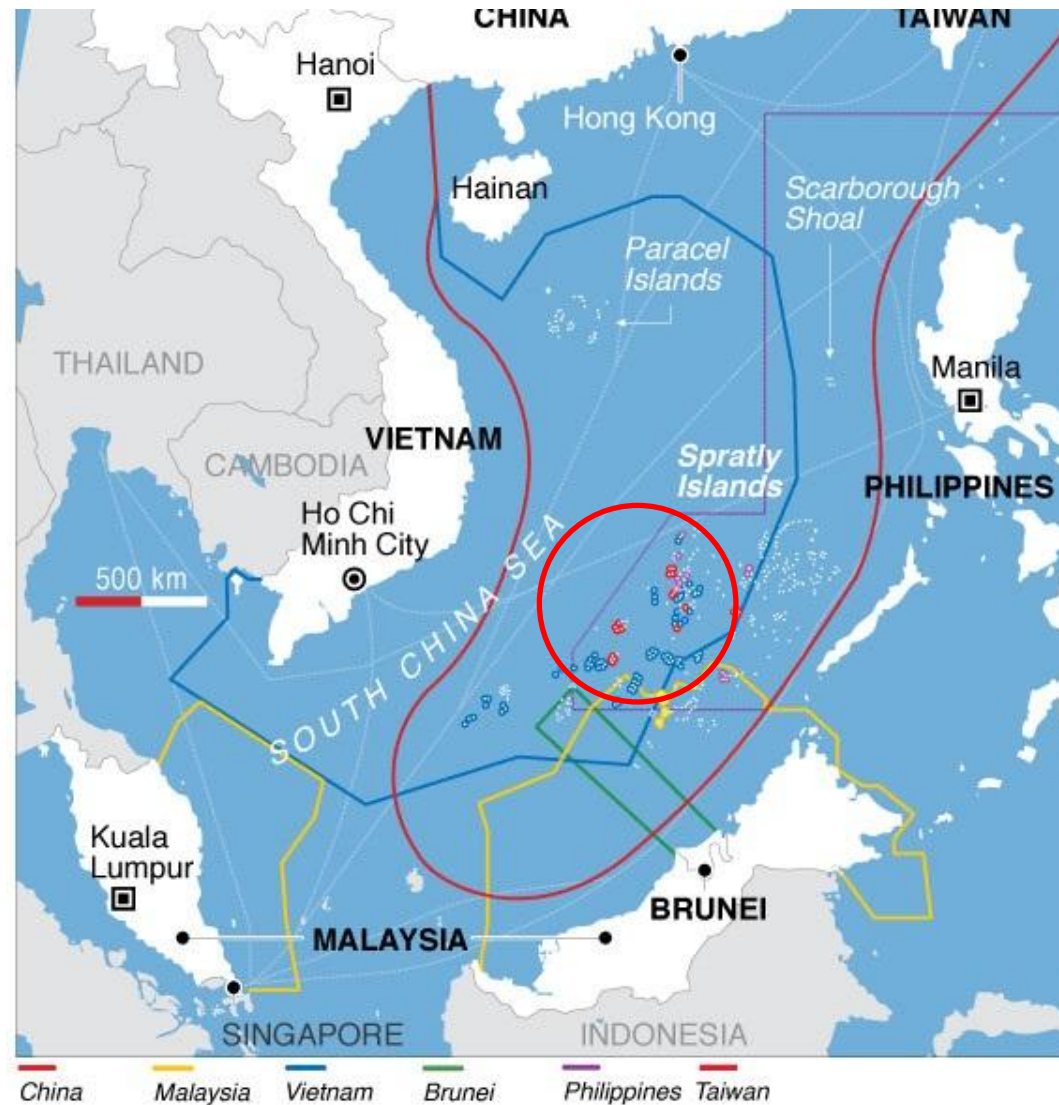
It's between
Indochina and Malaysia
Up North

it extends to China
Eastwards
it touches the Philippines



1) The Spratley Islands dispute

It is an ongoing territorial dispute between China, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, concerning "ownership" of the Spratly Islands located in the South China Sea (It's in their EEZ)



The Spratly Islands are important for economic and strategic reasons:

- The Spratly area holds reserves of [oil](#) and natural gas
- It is a productive area for world fishing
- It is located in one of the busiest areas of shipping traffic

Since 2015, China has been building artificial islands with military purpose in the area.



2) The OBOR Chinese program or BRI

China Belt and Road Initiative:

One Belt One Road

Or Belt and Road Initiative

It's a global development strategy adopted by China in 2013

China built infrastructure development and invested in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.

It is considered a centerpiece **of Xi Jinping's (since 2012)** foreign policy

Some observers see it as a plan for Chinese world domination for a China-centered global trading network

It is built on the old "Silk Routes"

**IS OBOR OR BRI ONLY A THREAT TO US POWER IN
SOUTH CHINA SEA?**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI or OBOR) illustrates the transformative geopolitical implications of China's rise. **This series of major infrastructure and development projects designed to connect Eurasian regions together is a coherent enterprise of unprecedented scale: \$4 trillion of promised investments in 65 countries representing 70 percent of the world's population, 55 percent of its GNP, and 75 percent of its energy reserves .**

Of course, the BRI's prospects of success are subject to many unknowns, including the possibility of foreign resistance, China's domestic economic travails (travaux) , political turbulence, aging population, and environmental issues . On the other hand, the U.S. still possesses enormous assets to maintain its predominance, including military primacy, multiple alliances, powerful Western-led international organizations, and an unmatched soft power.

WHY IS OBOR ALSO A MEANS TO COUNTER US HEGEMONY?

Yet over time the BRI **could threaten the very foundations of Washington's post-WWII hegemony.**

Beijing seeks to offset the United States' military primacy. Its buildup in maritime East Asia and the South China sea is worthy of attention but it is also **designed in response to the U.S. naval presence and to the alliances that American leaders have nurtured along China's southern flank since the early years of the Cold War.**

The Chinese aim to rival US presence in this area as well as the fact the US has many alliances there

To advance its interests, China exploits the cracks in U.S. post-Cold War hegemony. **Washington's interferences in Russia and Iran's respective spheres of influence, and its military interventionism in the Middle East, triggered a nationalist and Islamist backlash that significantly diminished its resources and credibility.**

China **has nurtured bilateral relations with Tehran** for decades, leveraging a common resentment toward Western dominance. This partnership has great geostrategic **importance to both nations.** **Thanks to its oil and gas reserves, Iran could help Beijing withstand a U.S. attack on its SLOCs (Sea Lines of Communication).**

The 2015 nuclear deal and Iran's partial reintegration into the international community benefited all parties by dramatically reducing the risk of regional war.

The USA is discredited in the Middle East and this has started some anti-American movements

So China uses this to get closer to US enemies like IRAN

According to this article, how should the US handle the growing Chinese presence in the region?

By contrast, Beijing took advantage of the nuclear deal to drastically increase its imports of oil and gas and to welcome Tehran in the AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank), a rival to the U.S.-led financial order. Most important, it now seeks to use Iran's potential as trade crossroads and as the cheapest route to export Caucasian and Central Asian natural .

Instead of remaining overwhelmingly fixated on the military balance of power in the Asia-Pacific, Washington should find effective ways to counter Beijing's geoeconomic offensive across the Eurasian continent and its growing leverage (power) among some of the United States' partners and allies themselves.

Furthermore, instead of perpetuating self-defeating interferences in Russia's and Iran's respective spheres of influence, which only push these countries into China's arms, **the United States should leverage (increase) their fears of Beijing's growing power to constrain its geopolitical progression.**

In parallel, U.S. leaders should engage **Beijing to try to shape the BRI's contours to their advantage, minimize the risk of war, and encourage cooperation in domains such as counter-terrorism and global environmental reforms.(...)**

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IV/ OTHER KEY PLACES FOR US PRESENCE

A/ THE AFRICOM PROGRAM



The United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM OR AFRICOM) is a unified combatant commands of the United States Department of Defense, headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany and started in 2006.

It is responsible for U.S. military operations and maintaining military relations with 53 African nations.

It aims to:

- strengthen US security cooperation with US partners in Africa.
- bring peace and promote common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa
- stop violent extremist organizations in the [Sahel](#) and [Maghreb](#) like AQMI or [Boko Haram](#) (Islamist State in West Africa: Cameroon, Nigeria)
- Interdict illicit activities in the [Gulf of Guinea](#)

B/US AND THE PANAMA CANAL



**A QUICKEST ROUTE TO THE INDIAN OCEAN: 30 DAYS
INSTEAD OF 42**

According to: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-panama>

The United States established diplomatic relations with Panama in 1903 following its declaration of independence from Colombia.

The Panama Canal opened in 1914.

Since December 31, 1999, Panama assumed full jurisdiction and operational control over the Canal

C/ FUTURE KEY ISSUES

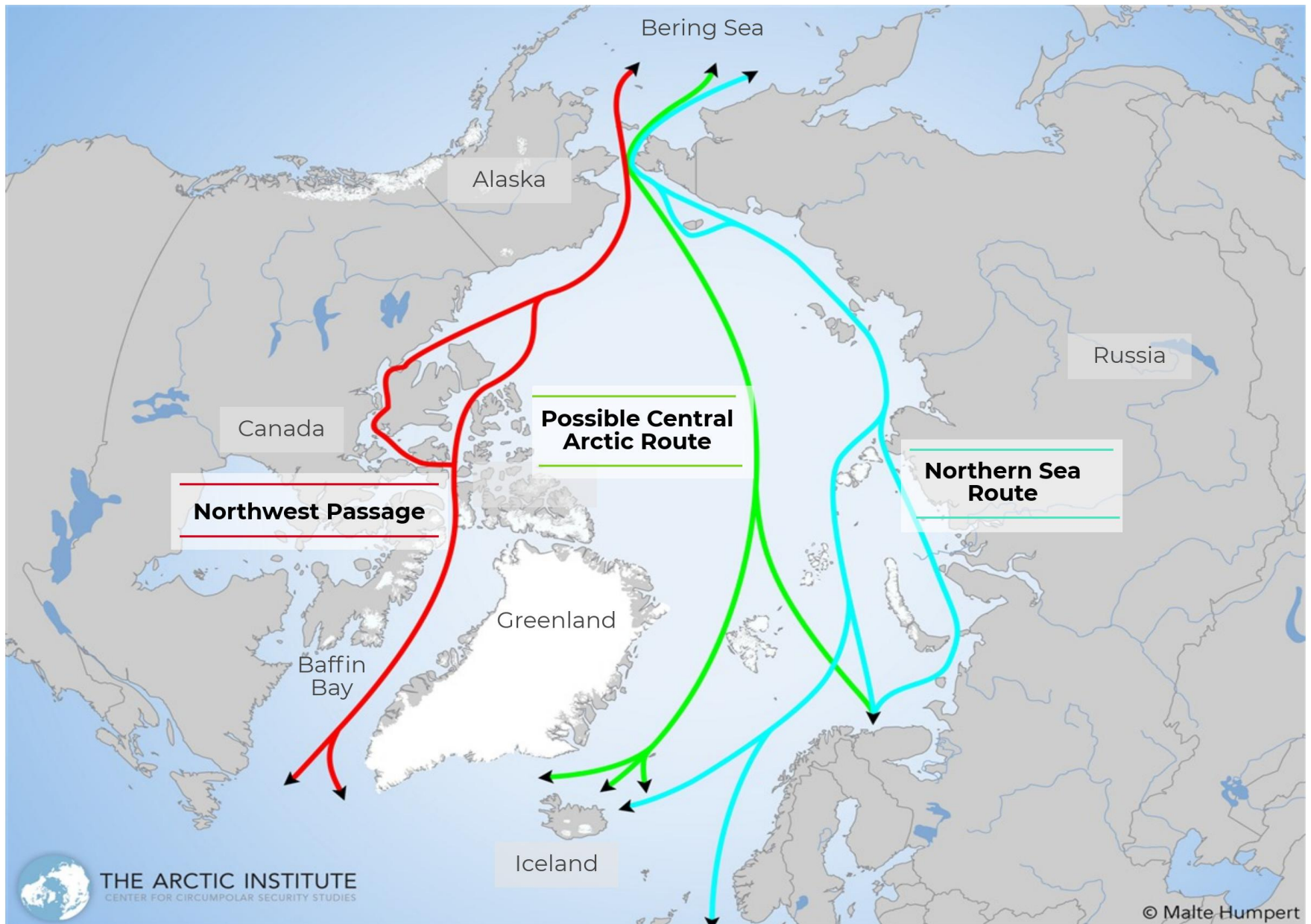
1-Routes to the Arctic

The melting of the arctic leads to the creation of new sea routes as well as opportunities of exploitation

- for oil

- for fishing

The USA plans to grab the opportunity to tighten its grip on this region but it faces long-lasting Russian presence.



Note: The author of this article added labels to Mr. Humpert's original map.

5- FUTURE KEY ISSUES

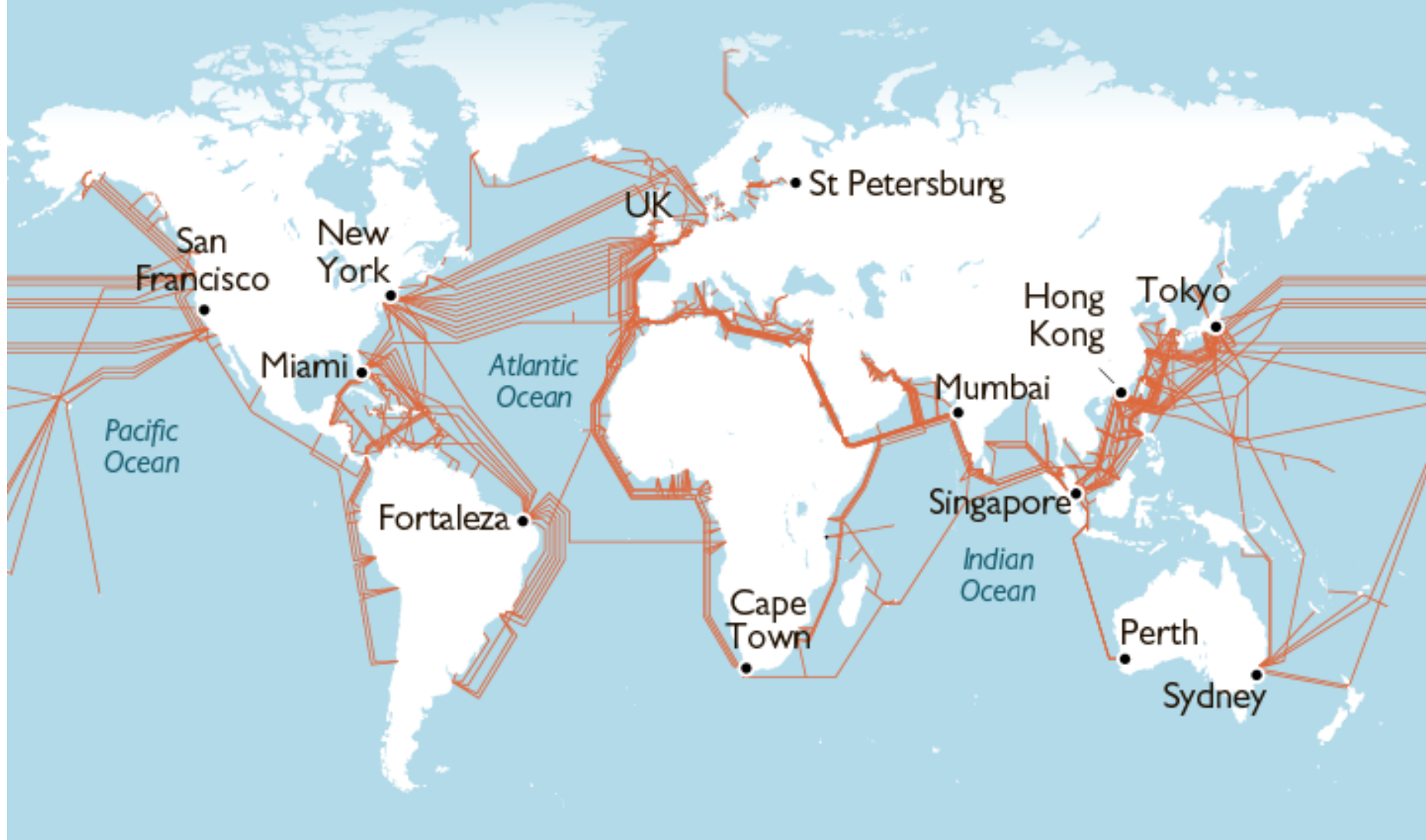
2- Seaborn/ maritime cables

The USA was recently accused in the news of spying on citizens through a program called PRISM

PRISM is a [code name](#) for a program under which the [United States National Security Agency](#) (NSA) collects [internet](#) communications from various U.S. internet companies

This system uses maritime cables through the Atlantic and the Pacific (underwater cables)

Main underwater cables



Under Trump, the US government vetoed the **PACIFIC LIGHT CABLE NETWORK** between LA and Hong Kong
The US government feared spying by China

But It was finally approved of by US Team Telecom
(U.S. Departments of Justice, Defense, and Homeland Security) and opened in 2020

The system has a length of 12 800 Kilometers and is owned and/or operated by a consortium consisting of Facebook, Google, Apple, Microsoft and Pacific Light Data Communication Co. Ltd.

Pacific Light Cable Network (PLCN) has landing points in Philippines, United States, Taiwan and Hong Kong