

# The Girl Gap

Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the girls of Afghanistan are still fighting for an education. Here's what they need to get ahead in school

By **ARYN BAKER** / KAROKH DISTRICT, HERAT

**N**OTHING GIVES PRINCIPAL SURAYA SARWARY more pleasure than the sound of her second-grade girls reciting a new lesson out loud. Six years ago, that sound could have gotten her executed. The Taliban had outlawed education

for girls, but a few brave teachers taught them in secret. Sarwary, now the principal of Karokh District Girls High School in Afghanistan's Herat province, recalls gathering students secretly in her home and imparting lessons in whispers for fear that her neighbors might report her to the Taliban.

Karokh District Girls High School is one of the most successful in Herat. And in terms of girls' education, Herat is the most successful province in Afghanistan. Even so, conditions are far from ideal. Sarwary's tiny school doesn't have enough classrooms: second-graders huddle in a ragged tent in the courtyard, where a torn strip of khaki canvas hangs between rusting metal struts, blocking many of the girls' view of the blackboard. The fierce desert wind howls through the holes and threatens to tear the class's one textbook from the students' hands as they pass it around for reading lessons. There is no playground or running water. The toilet, a pit latrine located at the far corner of the school compound, serves 1,500 students. Only two of the 23 female teachers have graduated from high school. Half the second-grade students, ranging in age from 7 to 12, can read; the rest just recite from memory.

The shaky status of girls' education belies one of the greatest hopes raised when the Taliban was toppled by U.S.-led forces in 2001: the liberation of Afghanistan's women. Yes, they can now vote, they have a quarter of

the seats in parliament, and they are legally allowed to find jobs outside the home. Foreign donors and nongovernmental organizations have expended a great deal of energy and capital on building women's centers and conducting gender-awareness workshops. But more than six years since the fall of the Taliban, fewer than 30% of eligible girls are enrolled in schools, and

the infrastructure is so poor that only a tiny fraction are likely to get the education they need to enjoy the fruits of emancipation.

The stakes for Afghan society are high. Every social and economic index shows that countries with a higher percentage of women with a high school education also have better overall health, a more functional democracy and increased economic performance.

**More than six years since the fall of the Taliban, fewer than 30% of eligible girls are enrolled in schools.**

There's another payoff that is especially important to Afghanistan: educated women are a strong defense against the extremism that still plagues Afghanistan, underscored by the January 14 bombing of a luxury hotel in Kabul, which killed eight. "Education is the factory that turns animals into human beings," says Ghulam Hazrat Tanha, Herat's director of education. "If women are educated, that means their children will be too. If the people of the world want to solve the hard problems in Afghanistan—kidnapping, beheadings, crime and even al-Qaeda—they should invest in [our] education."

For girls in much of the country, education remains a dream no more attainable now than it was under the Taliban. In the past six years, 3,500 new schools have been built across the country, but fewer than half of them have buildings. Most are in tents, in the shade of trees or wherever open space can be made available. This has a direct bearing on the number of

girls enrolled: most Afghan families won't allow their daughters to be where they may be seen by men. "Girls in this society have certain needs," says Education Minister Hanif Atmar. "They cannot be in a tented school or in an open space with no sanitation facilities, so they simply do not go." Competing demands for government money and more obvious problems such as a raging insurgency, poppy cultivation and widespread corruption leave education to nibble from the crumbs. Though Atmar has a five-year plan to improve education in Afghanistan, he can't find enough money for his most pressing needs. He got only \$282 million this year, \$216 million short of his bare-bones operating budget.

The first step to take in helping educate more girls, says Atmar, is to remove all other obstacles to girls' going to school. That means constructing new buildings so classes aren't held in the open. In the meantime, unconventional inducements can help. In a successful program in some rural areas, girls are given a free ration of oil and flour at the end of every month. This encourages their poor families to keep sending them to school. Increasing teachers' salaries would convince more parents that their daughters should take up the profession. Teachers with high school diplomas earn \$50 to \$75 a month, a tiny return on investment for families whose daughters could be spending those 12 years at home weaving carpets, tending the fields or taking care of the household.

While struggling to build the new infrastructure, educators must also contend with Afghanistan's old demons: the Taliban is making a comeback in several provinces and reimposing its rules. In little over a year, 130 schools have been burned, 105 students and teachers killed and 307 schools closed down because of security concerns. Many of those schools were for girls, and most of them were in the southern provinces, where a Taliban-driven insurgency has made it nearly impossible to secure the schools. And in June 2007, two gunmen on a motorcycle shot dead three female students coming out of high school in the central province of Logar, a 1½-hour drive from Kabul.

But if Afghanistan has any reason for hope, it is the sheer determination of the girls who do have a chance to go to school. Lida Ahmadyar, 12, whose sister was one of the girls killed in the Logar shooting, has started going back to school. Every day she walks past the spot where her sister died, but she clings to her dream of becoming a doctor. "I am afraid," she says. "But I like school because I am learning something, and that will make me important. With education, I can save my country." If enough of Afghanistan's girls get the chance, they may do just that. ■

#### Questions

1. What are some ways in which a higher rate of high-school education for women benefits society?
2. Why is having a school housed in a tent or in the open under a tree a problem for girls in Afghanistan?



# When Eat Meets West

Can a Kentucky fast-food company bring Chinese food to China—and tacos to Mexico? Call it to the “glocalization” of cuisine

By **LISA TAKEUCHI CULLEN**

**W**ITH ITS CHINESE LETTERING AND UNREMARKABLE name, the fast-food outlet in a Shanghai shopping mall looks like many others selling local fare. East Dawning is crowded with customers on this winter evening, and they're sampling a menu that includes pork fried rice, marinated egg and plum juice. Stanley Yao, a restaurateur from Hong Kong who is opening a sushi joint nearby, dines here once a month. The food is “a little too oily,” he says, but he likes the soy-milk drinks, and “the prices, of course, are very reasonable.” (A meal of noodles, tea and custard dessert costs \$4.) With eight storefronts around Shanghai, East Dawning could soon give China's biggest fast feeder, KFC, a run for its money. Good thing for them they're playing on the same team.

Starbucks has the gall to sling its lattes for coffee connoisseurs in Vienna, and Budweiser peddles its brew in Belgium. So why shouldn't Yum Brands—the Louisville, Kentucky-based company that owns KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and more—sell dumplings in a fast-growing market where Chinese food is just called food? Yum's iconoclastic CEO, David Novak, likens it to how Ray Kroc of McDonald's brought hamburgers to America. “I asked, What's the hamburger in China?” He says, “Obviously, it's Chinese food.” Except Kroc was an American selling American food to Americans. Is this brilliant, or is Novak half-Kroc-ed?

Since it was spun off from PepsiCo in 1997, Yum has radically transformed its overseas business. With Americans stuffed on fast-food options and domestic sales growth a skinny 2% annually, companies like Yum must go global to give Wall Street what it craves. Ten

years ago, Colonel Sanders was losing the global fast-food war to the Golden Arches. PepsiCo had spread its restaurant division too thin, planting capital-consuming, company-owned-and-operated stores in 32 countries instead of franchising them as it does in the U.S. A decade ago, stores overseas brought in less than 20% of profits; today it's 50%. In 2006 the company earned \$824 million in net income on total revenue of \$9.6 billion.

**“I asked, ‘What's the hamburger in China? Obviously, it's Chinese food.’”**

—David Novak,  
CEO of Yum Brands

KFC and Pizza Hut restaurants now number more than 12,000 in 110 countries outside China, says Graham Allan, president of Yum Restaurants International (YRI). And then there's China, where Yum is so big that it has reported earnings separately since 2005. Profits from Yum's restaurants in China, Thailand and Taiwan popped 37% in 2006,

while all other international profits grew 11%, domestic a mere 3%. A KFC opened nearly every day in China last year, and KFCs and Pizza Huts now number more than 2,300. (McDonald's has about 1,000 restaurants, not that Yum keeps track.) Sam Su, who runs Yum in China, projects 20,000 stores someday. “We're nowhere close to saturation at all,” he says. “The sky is the limit.”

As millions of Chinese find their wealth swelling and their time shrinking, sit-down meals involving several generations no longer fit the needs of a hurried and harried middle class. “The lifestyle is changing,” says Su. “People are getting more urbanized and busy, with less time to cook at home.” KFC's grab-and-go menu items were a novel solution, while Pizza Hut launched the concept of eating out at a casual restaurant with the whole family. KFC opened its first drive-through in 2002 just as China was becoming a car-owning culture. In 2001 Pizza Hut Home Service began introducing the idea of hot meals delivered to the door. That concept

may seem ironic to Americans, for whom Chinese food is the ultimate delivery meal.

Pizza and fried chicken are tasty treats, but they're not staples in China like, say, noodles and dumplings—and that's where Yum thinks it can really score. And if a Yank selling egg rolls to the Chinese seems a bit impractical, then Novak, 55, is the right man for the job. The CEO of Yum since 2000, he's a plain-talking, cheerleading executive who boasts of never having attended business school. He's given to goofy team-building tactics like passing out rubber chickens (and \$100) to KFC managers whose stores are performing well. A former \$7,200-a-year advertising copywriter, Novak took his marketing chops to PepsiCo in 1987. Though he suffered his biggest failure there—Crystal Pepsi, which he still contends was the right idea at the wrong time—he was handed the reins to the KFC and Pizza Hut units in 1996. He chronicled a childhood spent in 32 trailer parks and an otherwise unconventional path to the corner office in a 2007 book titled *The Education of an Accidental CEO*.

This time, Novak's idea might be the right one at the right time. The menus at East Dawning restaurants don't offer overtly American fare but still attract Chinese consumers because of the quality and service associated with an American brand. The formula developed by Yum's other banners overseas—cheap food delivered in cheerful surroundings—has provided a welcome mat for the company. Diner Frank Li, a project engineer on a trip from Suzhou, says the restaurant's link to KFC and Pizza Hut is a draw, not a drawback. "Those places are good quality," he says. "You know what you're going to get. They are a very professional company that must know what it's doing, and I think the quality here shows that."

The success of Yum in China hasn't come without some controversy, however. Fast foods—even those that mimic local cuisines—represent a dramatic change in

diet for many cultures. "When you offer high-calorie food to a thin population, they go from small to large very quickly and begin to develop signs of heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure at much lower weights," says Marion Nestle, a New York University professor and the author of *Food Politics*. "You can expect to see these problems in India and China in very short order."

For its part, Yum argues that it's not exporting fatty foods so much as offering tasty options to the global public. "The answer to the nutrition issue is balance and exercise," says Novak, pointing to a basketball tournament sponsored by KFC in China and a menu there that includes healthier alternatives like roasted chicken. In fact, the roasted menu items are such a hit in China that Yum executives are testing them out in the U.S. It's an interesting twist: Yum is looking to the soaring international business to expand its appeal at home. What about bringing its Chinese-food chain to the U.S.? "Now that," says Novak, "would be a Class A opportunity." To put it another way, that's thinking outside the sticky bun. ■

**Questions**

1. Why is China's middle class now finding fast food outlets appealing?
2. What are some drawbacks to covering China with fast-food outlets?

**QUICK SERVICE**

**East Dawning's menu features local favorites on the cheap:**

- Sweet-and-sour pork ribs .....19 yuan (\$2.60)**
- Fried eel .....20 yuan (\$2.75)**
- Ground meat and chicken wings ....19 yuan (\$2.60)**
- Spicy beef with noodles .....20 yuan (\$2.75)**
- Crispy wok-fried chicken .....19 yuan (\$2.60)**

# Who Owns History?

Nations want their looted art returned. Great museums want to keep the treasures they have amassed. Is there a right way to divide the past?

By **RICHARD LACAYO**

**T**WO YEARS AGO, FRANCESCO RUTELLI, NEWLY appointed as Italy's Culture Minister, embarked on a campaign to demand the return of dozens of objects held by U.S. museums, ancient works that he said had been looted from archaeological digs in his country and smuggled out. In the months that followed, one museum after another went through something like the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross stages of accepting death. They resented, they denied, they negotiated. Finally, they came to terms.

Don't think for a moment this is a problem just for a few museums in the U.S. either. Last fall Rutelli told *TIME* that he planned to turn next "to European institutions, starting with Denmark, as well as Japan and other parts of the world. And it goes for [Italy] too. We have returned hundreds of stolen archaeological artifacts from Pakistan, Iran and Iraq."

In this climate, the question of ownership of the past has taken on a real edge. "Source nations" like Italy, Greece, Egypt, Turkey and China—homes to the world's ancient civilizations—think of antiquities as national property, essential to the construction of the modern nations' identity. Which in part they are. The problem is whether that idea can accommodate the no less believable notion that the products of ancient civilizations are also the heritage of all humanity.

Today it's the source nations that have the whip hand. Nearly all of them have so-called cultural-property laws that lay claim to any ancient objects found in the ground on their territory after a particular year—the

cutoff year varies from one nation to the next—and make it a crime to export such material without a permit. A 1970 UNESCO convention has given those laws force in the courts of other nations, like the U.S., that have accepted it. Cultural-property claims by foreign nations are also enforceable in the U.S. under the ordinary law governing stolen property.

Unsurprisingly, having endured the Rutelli campaign, even museums that may have once played fast and loose have tightened their practices. But curators and museum directors complain that cultural-property laws prevent virtually anything from being exported lawfully, guaranteeing a continued black market even if museums don't take part in it. And they're exasperated by demands to return objects that entered their collections many years before the adoption of laws that bar their export.

Naturally, there's a good measure of international payback here. For source nations, the idea of cultural property is a way to

assert their sovereignty against those great powers that once picked through their treasures. It's also a defense against the suction of the present-day free market, which could easily vacuum up whatever the colonial powers haven't carted away.

Museum professionals have counterarguments. Some places—think of the Met, the Louvre or the National Gallery in London—are "universal museums," worth cherishing precisely because they permanently display the works of many cultures side by side. Dimitrios Pandermalis knows all about the idea of the universal museum. He doesn't think much of it. "A translation of the imperialism of the 19th century to the globalization

**"Source nations" like Italy, Greece, Egypt, Turkey and China—homes to the world's ancient civilizations—think of antiquities as national property, essential to the construction of the modern nations' identity.**

of the 20th century” is what he calls the concept, and his view counts. Pandermalis is president of the organization behind the New Acropolis Museum in Athens, conceived as a standing rebuke to the British Museum’s continued possession of the most passionately disputed cultural property of them all, the 5th century B.C. Elgin Marbles. Those are carvings taken from the Parthenon in the early 19th century at the direction of Lord Elgin, who was then British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Together the Elgins constitute roughly half of the surviving figures from the Parthenon. Most of the rest remain in Athens.

The New Acropolis Museum is an ingenious part of the Greeks’ lengthy campaign to retrieve the marbles. It will display the Greek portions of the Parthenon frieze side by side with pale plaster copies of the portions in London, like empty chairs at a banquet table. Meanwhile, the Greeks have also proposed that the British Museum might simply lend them the Elgin Marbles for the official opening of the museum later this year. There’s just one problem. The British Museum

insists that Greece must first recognize, formally, that the marbles are its property.

It isn’t just source nations like Greece that have it in for the museums. So do archaeologists, who complain that simply by providing a commercial market for ancient objects, museums and private collectors encourage looters who vandalize archaeological digs, removing the artifacts from surroundings that hold clues about the culture that made them. To most people, a Mesopotamian cult figure or a Maya stela, before it’s anything else, is a work of art. To an archaeologist, it’s first a crucial piece of a much larger puzzle, the puzzle that is history itself. Site destruction—and the consequent loss of knowledge—is a cultural disaster for everyone. But is prohibiting almost any lawful export the best way to protect sites?

Michael Kremer, a Harvard economics professor, and Tom Wilkening, a grad student at MIT, have an idea for a possible solution. They published a paper last year suggesting that source countries might, in effect, “lease” their treasures to the museums of richer nations on a temporary basis while retaining title to them. The cash produced by such a scheme could be used to beef up site security.

Meanwhile, Italy is demanding that the Getty Villa in Malibu, a museum devoted to the ancient Greeks, Etruscans and Romans, return one of the key works in its collection, an ancient Greek bronze, Victorious Youth. Stately and supple-looking, with his right hand upraised to place on his own brow a laurel wreath that disappeared long ago, he was discovered at sea by Italian fishermen in 1964 and purchased by the museum 13 years later for a reported \$3.95 million. The Italians say the bronze was smuggled out of Italy. The Getty insists it was discovered in international waters before being taken to Italian soil. For good measure, the boy was never Italian to begin with. He was probably at sea, perhaps 2,000 years ago, because he was being carted away by the Romans from Greece. Has he found a permanent home at last? Perhaps, but it’s hard to look at his upraised hand without wondering if he’s getting ready to wave goodbye. ■

**Questions**

1. Why are nations with ancient cultures insisting that their historical artifacts be returned to them?
2. What counterarguments are museum directors putting forth so that they can keep looted artifacts?



# Fight for the Top of the World

As global warming melts the Arctic ice, dreams of a short sea passage to Asia—and of the vast riches that lie beneath the surface of the ice—have been revived. Who will win the world's new Great Game?

By JAMES GRAFF

**A**T THE END OF AUGUST, A WISP of flame suddenly appeared in the Arctic twilight over the Barents Sea, bathing the low clouds over the Norwegian port of Hammerfest in a spectral orange glow. The first flare-off of natural gas from the Snohvit (Snow White in Norwegian) gas field, some 90 miles offshore, was a beacon of promise: After 25 years of false starts, planning and construction, the first Arctic industrial oil-and-gas operation outside of Alaska was up and running. Norway's state-owned petroleum firm Statoil could finally exploit once unreachable reserves, expected to deliver an estimated \$1.4 billion worth of liquefied natural gas each year for the next 25 years.

But in a place where the aurora borealis normally provides celestial beauty, Snow White's luminous apparition also signals caution. What will a new era of exploitation bring to the Arctic, one of the earth's last great uncharted regions? The vast area has long fascinated explorers, but it has just as long been the site of folly and exaggerated expectations. Over centuries, hundreds died in the doomed search for an ice-free Northwest Passage between Asia and Europe, many of them victims of ill-fated stabs at national and personal glory.

This summer, however, saw something new: for the first time in recorded history, the Northwest Passage was ice-free all the way from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The Arctic ice cap's loss through melting this year was 10 times the recent annual average, amounting to an area greater than that of Texas and New Mexico combined (see graphic on pages 26 and 27). The Arctic has never been immune from politics; during the Cold War, U.S. and Soviet submarines navigated its frigid waters. But now that global



warming has rendered the Arctic more accessible than ever—and yet at the same time more fragile—a new frenzy has broken out for control of the trade routes at the top of the world and the riches that nations hope and believe may lie beneath the ice. Just as 150 years ago, when Russia and Britain fought for control of central Asia, it is tempting to think that—not on the steppe or dusty mountains but in the icy wastes of the frozen north—a new Great Game is afoot.

## Gas and Global Warming

Russia is at the thick of the new game. In an expedition that lacked nothing in patriotic bluster, a Russian-led team descended to the seabed on August 2 and planted a titanium Russian flag directly on the North Pole. In early September, Russian bombers launched cruise missiles during Arctic exercises. But it isn't only the Russians who are staking their claims. On August 10, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper flew to Resolute, a hamlet of 250 souls on Cornwallis Island in the northern territory of Nunavut, and announced plans for an Arctic military training facility and a refurbished deep-water port on the Northwest Passage. Then Danish scientists set sail on an expedition to map the seabed north of Greenland, a Danish dependency, and—not to be outdone—the U.S. Coast Guard dispatched the cutter *Healy* on a similar mission north of Alaska. The flurry of activity has prompted the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to schedule hearings to push for U.S. ratification of the international treaty on the Law of the Sea, which came into force in 1994. Ratification of the treaty has long been opposed by conservatives, who consider it a shackle on U.S. sovereignty, but it now has the support of the Bush Administration, largely because its terms would allow Washington

to weigh in with its own claims in northern waters.

The current interest in the Arctic, in short, is a perfect storm seeded with political opportunism, national pride, military muscle flexing, high energy prices and the specialized details of international law. But the tale begins with global warming, which is transforming the Arctic. The ice cap, which floats atop much of the Arctic Ocean, is at least 25% smaller than it was 30 years ago. As the heat-reflecting ice that has made the Arctic the most inaccessible and uncharted part of the earth turns into water—which absorbs heat—the shrinkage is accelerating faster than climate models ever predicted. On August 28, satellite images analyzed by the University of Colorado's National Snow and Ice Data Center revealed that the Arctic ice cap was already 10% smaller than at its previous record minimum, in September 2005—and it still had about a month of further melting to go. "If that's not a tipping point, I'd hate to see what a tipping point is," says Mark Serreze, the center's senior research scientist. Trausti

Valsson, a professor of environmental planning at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik, says Arctic warming has become a "self-propelling" process that could leave the Arctic Ocean ice-free in summers by 2040. Even in winter, says Valsson, ice coverage would amount only to what could form in a single season, meaning that "Arctic shipping, with specially built ships, will be easy in all areas during the whole year."

While shippers will find it easy to adjust, the polar bears may not be able to. A recent study by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) predicts that shrinking sea ice will mean a two-thirds reduction in their population by midcentury. Not even strict adherence to the Kyoto accord on limiting greenhouse gases would stop an Arctic meltdown, which means the Arctic, like nowhere else on Earth, is a place where efforts to mitigate global warming have yielded to full-bore adaptation to its impact. That process is freighted with irony. With gas and oil prices near historic highs and with scant prospect of any decrease in world demand for energy, it is only prudent to get a sense of what resources lie below the newly accessible sea. But there is something paradoxical about seeking in the Arctic the very carbon

fuels that are melting the northern ice. "The rush to exploit Arctic resources can only perpetuate the vicious cycle of human-induced climate change," says Mike Townsley of Greenpeace International.

## Whose Ice Is It?

With all the other Arctic nations making their plays, it would be too much to expect the U.S.—an Arctic state itself, thanks to Alaska—to stand idly by. The Coast Guard icebreaker now on its way back from plying the waters of the Chukchi Cap, north of the Bering

Strait, has charted the sea floor with a multibeam echo sounder to delineate where Alaska's continental shelf ends and the depths of the Arctic Ocean begin. But to press its case for extended territorial waters, as the other Arctic nations are doing, the U.S. needs to sign the convention. Some conservatives have always depicted the treaty as a no-win give-away of U.S. sovereignty that would cast the evil shadow of "world government" over the high seas and that

might, for example, bar the U.S. from stopping ships suspected of terrorist ties.

Given the Senate's rules, opponents of the treaty have plenty of chances to use procedural dodges to kill it. But at hearings on the convention, Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Joseph Biden will be able to muster support for ratification not only from the Bush Administration and the military but also from groups as different as the American Petroleum Institute, whose members would like to exploit the Arctic, and the World Wildlife Fund, whose supporters would like to stop them from doing so. With such backing, supporters of the treaty are guardedly optimistic that this time it will be ratified. The convention is "critical to our national interests as a maritime power and as the world's leading economy," Biden told TIME. "Its ratification is long overdue." ■

### Questions

1. What happened last summer in the Arctic for the first time in recorded history?
2. Why is the shrinkage of Arctic ice accelerating faster than climate models ever predicted?

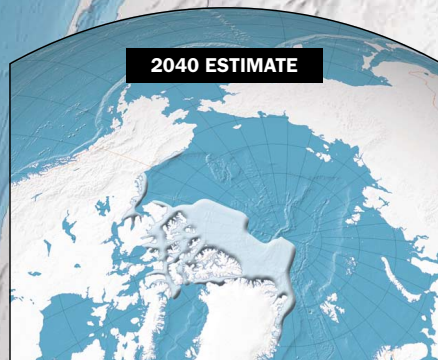
**The ice cap, which floats atop much of the Arctic Ocean, is at least 25% smaller than it was 30 years ago.**



# Redrawing the Map. As the ice melts, countries race to claim potential riches

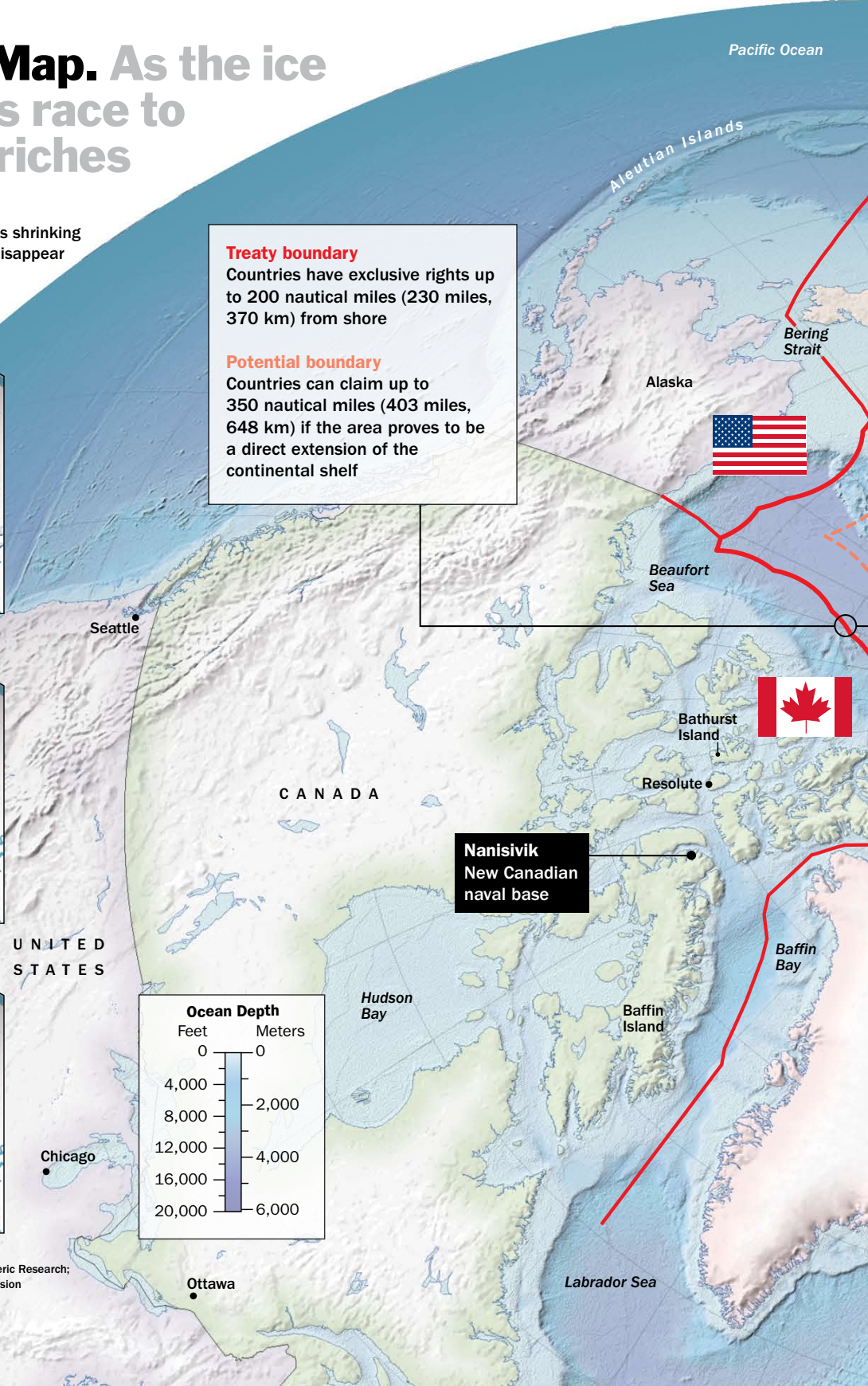
**GOING, GOING ... GONE?** The Arctic ice cap is shrinking faster than ever measured before and could disappear entirely by the middle of this century

Minimum extent of Arctic sea ice:



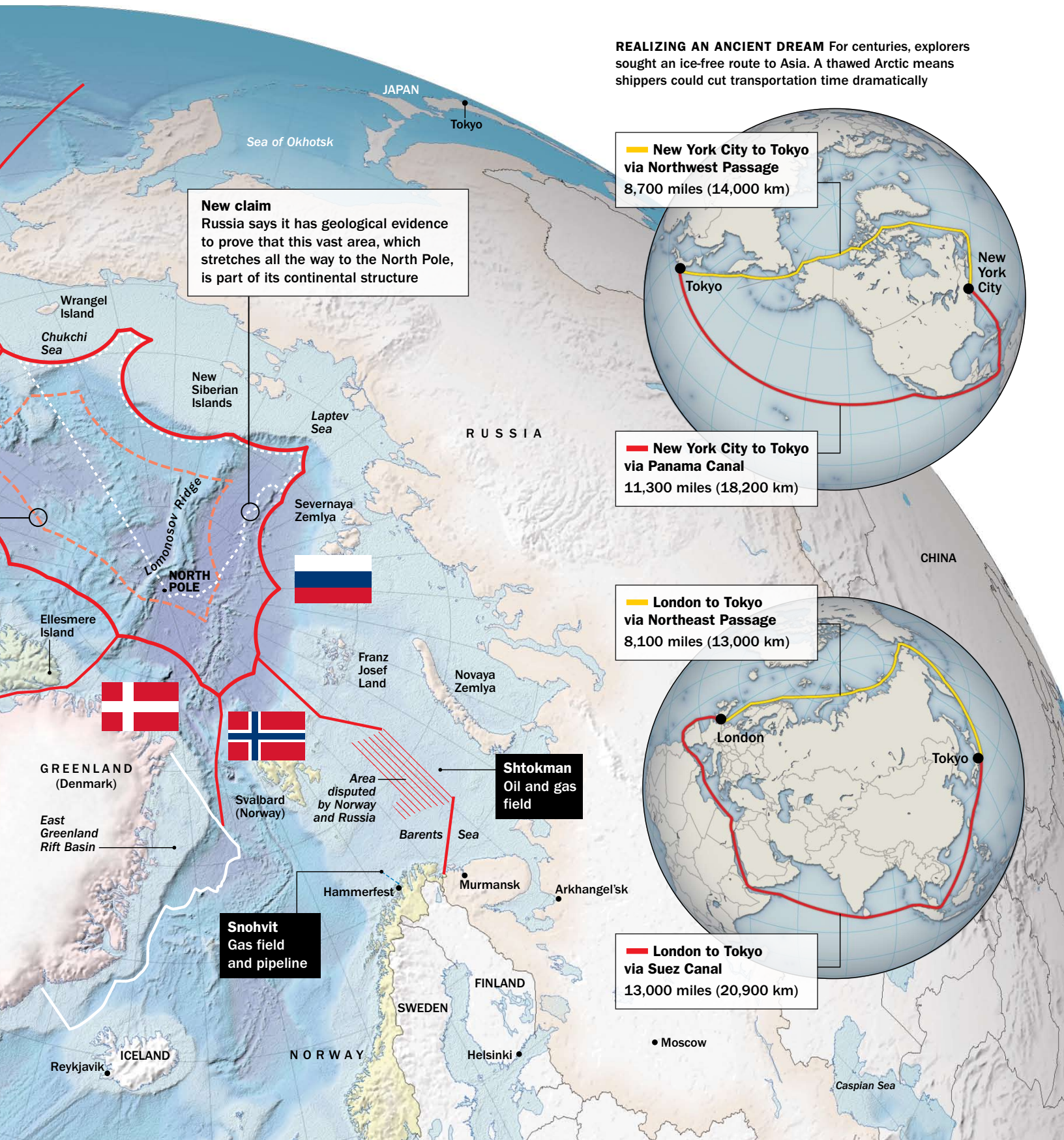
**Treaty boundary**  
Countries have exclusive rights up to 200 nautical miles (230 miles, 370 km) from shore

**Potential boundary**  
Countries can claim up to 350 nautical miles (403 miles, 648 km) if the area proves to be a direct extension of the continental shelf



Sources: NOAA; USGS; NASA; University Corporation for Atmospheric Research; National Snow and Ice Data Center; U.S. Arctic Research Commission  
TIME Graphic by Joe Lertola and Jackson Dykman

# GLOBAL WARMING



**REALIZING AN ANCIENT DREAM** For centuries, explorers sought an ice-free route to Asia. A thawed Arctic means shippers could cut transportation time dramatically



# Interpreting Maps and Graphics

The maps and graphics accompanying **The Fire This Time** on pages 14 to 17 and **Fight for the Top of the World** on pages 24 to 27 are packed with information. But what does it all mean? Use the questions below to sharpen your skills in reading and interpreting graphics.

## The Fire This Time

1. How do wildfires start?

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2. In the context of a wildfire, define "fuel."

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3. True or false: Wildfires slow down when they come to mountainsides.

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5. Why is Southern California so susceptible to wildfires?

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6. What allows embers from wildfires to jump natural barriers such as rivers and valleys?

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## Fight for the Top of the World

7. Countries can claim exclusive rights for how many nautical miles from their shoreline?

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8. True or false: It is 2,600 fewer miles to travel from New York City to Tokyo by way of the Northwest Passage.

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9. Name three countries that border the Arctic.

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10. What is the name of the gas field and pipeline owned by Norway?

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11. What country established Nanisivik Naval Base?

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12. True or false: By the year 2040, there will be less than half the ice in the Arctic than there was in 2005.

# A Taste of Liberty In Troubled Gaza

A border wall with Egypt is breached, giving many Palestinians a brief taste of life without the Israeli blockade

By **TIM MCGIRK**

**A**MRAN LUBBAD LAY SLEEPLESS IN GAZA EARLY IN the morning of January 23. Lubbad, a darkly handsome Palestinian, was going to be united with Hiba, his fiancé in Egypt. He had treated himself to a sharp new haircut. The pair have been engaged for two years, but Israel and Egypt sealed off the border with Gaza in early 2006, and Hiba was trapped on the other side. At last, Lubbad had scraped together \$1,500 to smuggle her through a sandy tunnel under the border fence.

It was a huge risk: tunnels at the Rafah crossing often cave in. At other times, Israel bombs the tunnels, which Hamas militants use for smuggling weapons into Gaza. So when Lubbad's cell phone rang at 5 a.m., he feared the worst. But the news couldn't have been better. "No need for the tunnel or your money," a friend told him. "The wall is down. Exploded. Now your fiancé can walk across. Gaza is free."

Free for now, that is. Gaza militants did breach the wall—and Lubbad met up with his fiancé, who returned with him to Gaza. But Egypt has begun repairing the holes in the wall, and the wild exodus from Gaza, which included more than one-fifth of the territory's 1.5 million people, was just a brief respite from life under Israel's blockade, which had been tightened on January 17 in response to rocket attacks from Gaza soil.

Still, the breach was a chance to complete all manner of desperate errands. A Gaza waiter named Maher Sheikha carried his 12-year-old son Femeh through

the mob, balanced across the destroyed metal fence and then climbed through barbed-wire tangles. Femeh was dying of a blood disease, and the only chance of recovery was rushing him to a Cairo hospital.

The boy made it to Cairo; the family had friends who led them along Bedouin trails across the Sinai desert, past the roadblocks of Egyptian police, whose orders were to turn back any Palestinians fleeing Gaza. Others weren't so lucky. Egyptian authorities stopped dozens of ailing Palestinians at the town of el-Arish because they lacked the proper visas. The patients remain there, camped in mosques and in the doorways of el-Arish, tended by relatives who are pleading with Egyptian riot police to let them pass.

For most Gazans, though, shopping was the key. I saw a poor woman haggle over a single bulb of garlic as though it were a Manhattan town house. Goats and camels, prized for their meat, were on many shopping lists. So were commercial goods. On the Gaza side, an unemployed mason with nine kids was hoisting bags of cement off an Egyptian flatbed truck. The Israelis had banned the import of cement, so all construction had stopped. But with the opening, the price of a sack of cement fell from \$60 to \$12, he told me, so he was happily back at work.

A shopping spree may have lessened Gaza's crisis, but many say the long-term solution rests with Israel. Chris Gunness, a spokesman for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which feeds as many as 850,000 impoverished Gazans, says, "A few holes in the wall don't relieve Israel of its obligations. We can't have a situation where Gaza continues to hover on the brink of catastrophe." Israel, for its

part, continues to blame Hamas—and the constant threat of rocket attacks against Israeli civilians—for the blockade. ■



## Questions

1. How many people left Gaza following the breach of the border wall?
2. How does Israel explain its decision to enact the Gaza blockade?