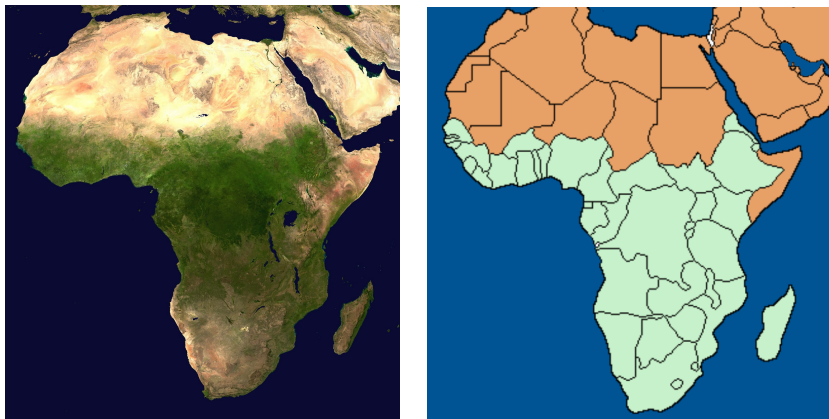


VI. Africa and the World We Live In

A. A Focus on *Sub-Saharan* Africa

1. Africa is a huge continent, larger than China, the United States, India, and Europe combined! It is also made up of dozens of countries. It's a "plethora," if we don't have a way of simplifying it.
2. The first step is to recognize that although Africa is one continent, it is divided into *two* cultural blocks.
3. Northern Africa, on the Mediterranean Sea, has long been part of Islamic culture, which spread from Arabia (c.622-32 \pm) in a great wave of jihad across to Iberia (c.711AD \pm).
4. The Sahara Desert, however, formed an almost impassable barrier for cultural change over the centuries. Far to the South, tribal Africa evolved on its own, detached from the history of world, in clusters of people sometimes organized into local kingdoms or "empires." Like South Asia, the cultures of the region never developed to the point of studying history. They were *a-historical*.
5. Then came the Europeans, seeking a way to navigate around the obstacle of **Triumphal Islam** to East Asia and the trading opportunities it represented. Contact with European civilization thus dominated the story of Africa as contact with Triumphal Islam dominated the story of northern Africa.



The physical geography (left) and cultural geography (right) are an almost perfect match. Northern Africa is part of Islamic Culture. Sub-Saharan Africa is its own distinct cultural block.

B. The Unique Challenge of African History

1. Because Africa was a tribal (politically un-integrated) and a-historical culture prior to the arrival of Europeans, it has no history of its own.
2. The story of Africa begins when the Europeans arrive, and thus its story is the story of a culture dominated by another.

- 4. The diagram for the story of Africa (in black lines below) only begins when the historical civilization of Europe (in green) begins to record its interactions with Africa.



- 5. The first period is the period of *European Domination*, followed by the *World Wars*, and then the modern struggle for independence, which has two parts: 1) *decolonization* (the withdrawal of European empires from Africa), followed by 2) the *struggle for identity*.
- 6. A labeled outline of African history is thus:

