

PRACTICE EXAM 39 — NEW YORK REGENTS GLOBAL HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY II

1. The 19th-century English philosopher John Stuart Mill is best known for
 - A. founding the modern conservative tradition through his defense of inherited social tradition
 - B. defending individual liberty and arguing against the "tyranny of the majority" in society
 - C. publishing the first economic theory of mercantilism in the early modern European period
 - D. organizing the Communist International against the rising democratic socialism of European workers

2. Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) argued that
 - A. the French Revolution should be supported by all of Europe as a model for democratic reform
 - B. monarchy was inherently illegitimate and would inevitably collapse across most of Europe within decades
 - C. all of European society should be reorganized under a single revolutionary parliament in Paris
 - D. abrupt, abstract revolutionary change destroys the inherited institutions that hold organic societies together

3. In *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), Thomas Malthus argued that

- A. population grows geometrically while food supply grows arithmetically, producing chronic inevitable scarcity
- B. industrialization will permanently end hunger and create universal abundance in modern Europe
- C. only mass migration to the colonies can permanently resolve European population growth problems
- D. government welfare programs reliably reduce population growth and increase the national prosperity

4. The French utopian socialist Charles Fourier proposed that society be reorganized into

- A. small armed cells of professional revolutionaries to overthrow the existing capitalist system
- B. centralized factories operated under strict military discipline by the national government
- C. self-sufficient cooperative communities called "phalansteries" where labor would be made attractive
- D. religious monasteries devoted to prayer, manual labor, and rejection of all worldly goods

5. Giuseppe Mazzini's "Young Italy" movement, founded in 1831, called for

- A. the restoration of the Holy Roman Empire under the leadership of the Habsburg dynasty
- B. the creation of a unified, independent Italian republic free of foreign and papal rule
- C. the union of Italy with Austria-Hungary to balance French power in southern Europe
- D. the political division of Italy into several monarchies under different European royal houses

6. The Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) in China

- A. was led by Hong Xiuquan, who claimed to be Jesus' brother, and killed roughly 20 million

- B. successfully overthrew the Qing dynasty and replaced it with a republican government in central Beijing
- C. was a peaceful religious reform movement that received strong financial support from European missionaries
- D. ended Western influence in China by expelling all foreign traders and missionaries from coastal ports

7. The Hundred Days' Reform of 1898 in Qing China

- A. successfully modernized the Chinese army and navy after the loss of the First Sino-Japanese War
- B. produced a strong constitutional monarchy in China modeled directly on the British parliamentary system
- C. forced the immediate abdication of the Qing dynasty and the formation of the Republic of China
- D. was a sweeping reform program by Emperor Guangxu that was crushed by the conservative Empress Dowager Cixi

8. Bismarck's Kulturkampf, launched in the 1870s, was a campaign

- A. to suppress the rapidly growing German socialist movement led by Karl Marx and his followers
- B. to forcibly assimilate the large Polish population into the German Empire after unification
- C. to limit the political influence of the Catholic Church in the newly unified German Empire
- D. to expand German colonial holdings in Africa through the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885

9. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement was

- A. a public treaty in which the Ottoman Empire surrendered formally to the Allied powers in WWI

- B. a secret agreement between Britain and France to divide Ottoman Arab territories into spheres of influence
- C. a peace settlement that established the modern borders of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the small Gulf states
- D. an international agreement that recognized the new Soviet government as the legitimate ruler of Russia

10. The Locarno Treaties of 1925

- A. confirmed Germany's western borders with France and Belgium and led to Germany's admission to the League of Nations
- B. created a permanent military alliance between Germany, Italy, and Japan against the Soviet Union
- C. ended the Treaty of Versailles and abolished German war reparations imposed at the Paris Peace Conference
- D. transferred former Habsburg territories from Hungary back to the new Republic of Austria after 1919

11. The Dawes Plan of 1924

- A. dramatically increased the reparations payments demanded from Germany after the First World War
- B. transferred German industrial assets directly to French and Belgian control as wartime compensation
- C. restructured German war reparations and provided American loans to stabilize the Weimar economy
- D. forced Germany to dismantle the Ruhr industrial region permanently under French military supervision

12. The Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923 was

- A. a successful military coup that brought the Nazi Party to power in the German state of Bavaria
- B. a Communist uprising in Berlin that briefly overthrew the Weimar Republic's democratic national government
- C. a peaceful political demonstration in support of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany
- D. a failed Nazi attempt to seize power in Munich that led to Hitler's imprisonment and Mein Kampf

13. The Russian Revolution of 1905 began with the "Bloody Sunday" massacre and resulted in

- A. Tsar Nicholas II's October Manifesto, which granted civil liberties and created the elected Duma
- B. the immediate abdication of the Tsar and the founding of the world's first communist government
- C. Russia's victory over Japan in the war that had been raging in Manchuria and Korea since 1904
- D. the dissolution of the Romanov dynasty and the rise of Vladimir Lenin to power in Saint Petersburg

14. Emmeline Pankhurst and the Women's Social and Political Union, founded in 1903, were known for

- A. peaceful petition campaigns that quickly persuaded Parliament to grant women the right to vote
- B. militant tactics, including hunger strikes and property destruction, to demand women's suffrage in Britain
- C. forming a successful women's political party that won parliamentary seats in the elections of 1906
- D. organizing the British labor movement and founding the modern British Labour Party in the early 1900s

15. The Atlantic Charter, issued by Roosevelt and Churchill in August 1941, set out

- A. detailed military plans for the Allied invasion of German-occupied Western Europe by 1943

- B. the formal U.S. declaration of war against Germany following the attack on Pearl Harbor that year
- C. broad principles for the postwar order, including national self-determination and freer international trade
- D. specific reparations to be paid by Germany and Japan after their eventual unconditional surrender

16. At the Tehran Conference of November–December 1943, the "Big Three" Allied leaders

- A. issued the final ultimatum demanding the immediate unconditional surrender of the imperial Japanese government
- B. drafted the United Nations Charter that would be formally signed in San Francisco in mid-1945
- C. agreed to divide postwar Germany into four separate occupation zones administered by Allied powers
- D. coordinated the timing of the cross-Channel invasion of France with a Soviet offensive in the east

17. The Vichy regime in France from 1940 to 1944

- A. led the French Resistance from the unoccupied southern zone against Nazi German occupation forces
- B. was an authoritarian government under Marshal Philippe Pétain that collaborated with Nazi Germany
- C. operated as a Soviet-aligned communist government opposing the Western Allies in Europe
- D. continued the Third Republic's parliamentary democracy with full British and American backing

18. The Second Battle of El Alamein in late 1942 was significant because

- A. British forces under Montgomery defeated Rommel's Afrika Korps, halting the Axis advance toward Egypt

B. American troops first landed in continental Europe by way of the southern French Mediterranean coast

C. the Soviet army successfully encircled and destroyed an entire German army group in North Africa

D. it forced Italy to surrender to the Allies and switch sides in the war against Nazi Germany

19. The Yom Kippur War of October 1973

A. ended in a sweeping Israeli victory that immediately produced lasting peace across the Middle East

B. was started by Israel through a surprise attack on Egyptian and Syrian forces in disputed territories

C. began with a surprise Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel and triggered the OPEC oil embargo against the West

D. resulted in the rapid Soviet military occupation of Israel and the dissolution of the State of Israel

20. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat was assassinated in October 1981 by

A. an Israeli intelligence operative angered by Sadat's continued military support for Palestinian groups

B. Islamist soldiers angered by his peace treaty with Israel and his domestic policies of liberalization

C. a Soviet-backed agent retaliating for Egypt's expulsion of Soviet military advisors during the 1970s

D. the Egyptian army high command in a coordinated coup against his economic reform programs

21. During Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the Sabra and Shatila massacre involved

A. Israeli army units directly executing Palestinian civilians inside the two refugee camps near Beirut

B. Syrian-backed Hezbollah fighters carrying out reprisals against the larger Lebanese Christian community

- C. United Nations peacekeepers firing on Palestinian protesters at the order of the Security Council
- D. Lebanese Phalangist Christian militias killing Palestinian civilians while Israeli forces controlled the area

22. The First Intifada (1987–1993) in the Palestinian territories was characterized by

- A. mass civil disobedience, strikes, and stone-throwing by Palestinians against the Israeli occupation
- B. coordinated large-scale conventional military attacks by Arab states against the Israeli army
- C. the use of large-scale suicide bombings as the primary tactic in major Israeli urban centers
- D. peaceful diplomatic negotiations that quickly produced a recognized independent Palestinian state

23. The 1953 coup that overthrew Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh was

- A. organized by the Soviet KGB to install a friendly communist government in Tehran during the Cold War
- B. a spontaneous popular uprising by Iranian clerics opposed to Mosaddegh's secular reform policies
- C. orchestrated by U.S. and British intelligence after Mosaddegh nationalized Iran's oil industry in 1951
- D. a peaceful constitutional transfer of power following Mosaddegh's defeat in regular elections

24. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975

- A. ended the Cold War and produced the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe
- B. was a Cold War agreement in which signatories accepted European borders and pledged to respect human rights

C. created a permanent military alliance between Western European nations and the Warsaw Pact bloc nations

D. partitioned Berlin into Soviet and Western zones for the first time since the Second World War

25. Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika in the late 1980s referred to

A. military buildup against NATO and the rapid construction of new Soviet nuclear missile programs

B. the forced collectivization of Soviet agriculture and the suppression of all religious institutions

C. the closure of Soviet borders and a return to strict Stalinist economic central planning principles

D. greater openness in public life and restructuring of the Soviet economy and political institutions

26. Under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore after independence in 1965

A. transformed from a poor port city into a wealthy, highly developed economy through state-led growth

B. became a Soviet-aligned communist state and a base for North Vietnamese forces in the Vietnam War

C. retained its formal status as a British colony until the early 1980s under continued direct rule

D. was rapidly absorbed by Malaysia and ceased to exist as an independent country by the 1970s

27. In 1987, South Korea

A. invaded North Korea in an attempt to reunify the Korean Peninsula under southern leadership

B. became formally part of the United States as the 51st state through a referendum of the population

C. transitioned from authoritarian military rule to democracy through mass street protests and direct elections

D. was officially admitted to the Warsaw Pact and ended its long defense partnership with the United States

28. Hugo Chávez, elected president of Venezuela in 1998, promoted

A. a sweeping privatization program that dismantled Venezuela's state-owned oil and gas companies

B. a "Bolivarian Revolution" that nationalized industries and built strong ties with Cuba and other leftist states

C. closer political and military alliances with the United States and the Organization of American States

D. the conservative restoration of pre-1948 economic policies and traditional Catholic social institutions across Venezuela

29. The May 1968 protests in France

A. quickly overthrew President Charles de Gaulle and led to the founding of the Fifth French Republic

B. were a small isolated student demonstration that produced no significant social or political effects

C. successfully forced France to immediately withdraw from NATO and the European Economic Community framework

D. brought together students and millions of striking workers in protests that nearly paralyzed the country

30. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), opened for signature in 1968

A. abolished all existing nuclear weapons stockpiles held by the major recognized nuclear powers

B. legalized the transfer of nuclear weapons technology to non-nuclear states for civilian use

C. recognized five nuclear-weapon states and required other signatories not to acquire nuclear weapons

D. created an automatic military alliance against any state developing nuclear weapons in secret

31. Lake Baikal in southern Siberia is geographically remarkable because it is

A. the world's deepest freshwater lake and contains roughly one-fifth of the world's unfrozen fresh water

B. the largest saltwater lake in the world and the source of the longest river in the Russian Federation

C. an artificial reservoir created by Soviet hydroelectric dam construction in the 1950s and 1960s

D. located entirely above the Arctic Circle and remains completely frozen throughout the entire year

32. The Aral Sea in Central Asia is best known in modern environmental history because

A. it is the largest inland body of water in the world and a key hub of long-distance shipping

B. it has provided a stable supply of irrigation water that transformed Central Asia into a major rice exporter

C. it was successfully restored to its full original size by joint Soviet and post-Soviet conservation efforts

D. it has largely dried up as Soviet-era irrigation diversions left toxic dust and ruined the local fishing economy

33. The Bay of Bengal, a major arm of the Indian Ocean, lies between

A. East Africa and the western coast of the Indian subcontinent and contains many small island nations

B. the eastern coast of India and the western coast of Myanmar and includes Bangladesh's coastal regions

C. mainland China and the islands of the Philippines along the eastern edge of mainland Southeast Asia

D. the Arabian Peninsula and the eastern coast of Africa near the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea

34. The Sinai Peninsula has been historically significant because it

A. forms the boundary between mainland Europe and the continent of Africa across the Mediterranean Sea

B. is the largest source of the world's commercially exploited copper, gold, and platinum deposits

C. links Africa and Asia and was the focus of repeated Arab-Israeli conflicts from 1948 through 1973

D. contains the deepest oceanic trench in the eastern hemisphere and shapes regional ocean currents

35. The Ural Mountains in Russia are geographically important because they

A. are traditionally regarded as the natural boundary between the continents of Europe and Asia

B. form the highest mountain range on Earth and contain Mount Everest and the major peaks of K2

C. mark the southern boundary of the Sahara Desert across the entire breadth of North Africa

D. divide the Korean Peninsula from mainland China along the long border with North Korea

ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS (Questions 1–35)

1. B — Mill's classic essay *On Liberty* (1859) argued that the only legitimate reason for power to be exercised over an individual against their will is to prevent harm to others (the "harm principle"). He worried that democratic majorities could oppress dissenting minorities just as kings had once oppressed subjects, and he extended his liberalism to women's rights in *The Subjection of Women* (1869).

2. D — Burke argued that beneficial reform must grow out of a society's accumulated traditions, customs, and institutions rather than being imposed from abstract universal principles. Writing in 1790, well before the Terror, he predicted that the French Revolution's break with the past would end in disorder and military

dictatorship — a prediction that helped found modern conservatism and shaped the British response to the Revolution.

3. A — Malthus argued that human population, left unchecked, doubles roughly every generation, while food production can only grow by adding fixed increments such as new fields, so the two curves must eventually diverge. He concluded that "positive checks" like famine, disease, and war, or "preventive checks" like delayed marriage, would always hold population back to subsistence — a pessimistic insight that influenced both Darwin and 19th-century debates over poor relief.

4. C — Fourier envisioned communities of about 1,600 people living in a large communal building called a *phalanstère*, where work would be rotated, matched to individual passions, and made pleasurable rather than alienating. His ideas inspired roughly 30 short-lived experimental communities in 19th-century France and the United States, including Brook Farm in Massachusetts.

5. B — A republican and ardent nationalist, Mazzini founded Young Italy among exiles in Marseille to spread his vision of a single, democratic Italian nation in which sovereignty would come from the people rather than from monarchs, Austrian rulers, or the Pope. Although his uprisings repeatedly failed, his propaganda inspired the generation of patriots — including Garibaldi — who would actually achieve Italian unification by 1861.

6. A — Hong Xiuquan, a failed civil-service candidate from southern China, fused Christian missionary writings with anti-Manchu nationalism and founded a "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace" that controlled much of the lower Yangtze for over a decade. Suppressed only with the help of regional Chinese armies and small Western contingents, the war killed somewhere between 20 and 30 million people — among the deadliest civil conflicts in human history.

7. D — Influenced by reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, the young Emperor Guangxu issued a flurry of edicts in summer 1898 aiming to modernize the civil service, education, and military along Japanese Meiji lines. The Empress Dowager Cixi, backed by conservative officials, staged a palace coup, placed Guangxu under house arrest, executed leading reformers, and reversed nearly all of the measures.

8. C — Worried that the new German Empire's large Catholic minority owed greater loyalty to Rome than to Berlin — especially after Pius IX's 1870 declaration of papal infallibility — Bismarck expelled the Jesuits, brought church appointments under state oversight, and arrested resistant bishops. The campaign produced a Catholic political backlash that strengthened the Center Party, and Bismarck quietly abandoned most of the measures by the early 1880s.

9. B — Negotiated by Mark Sykes of Britain and François Georges-Picot of France (with Russian assent) while Britain was simultaneously promising Arab leaders an independent Arab kingdom, the agreement carved the Arab Middle East into French and British zones running roughly from the Mediterranean to Persia. Its disclosure by the Bolsheviks in 1917 fueled lasting Arab grievances about Western betrayal and largely shaped the boundaries of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan.

10. A — Negotiated at the Swiss resort of Locarno among Germany, France, Belgium, Britain, and Italy, the treaties had Germany freely accept its postwar frontiers with France and Belgium and provided British

and Italian guarantees of those borders. The resulting "spirit of Locarno" allowed Germany to join the League of Nations in 1926 and gave Europe a brief sense of stability before the Depression destroyed it.

11. C — Drafted by an American committee chaired by banker Charles G. Dawes after French troops occupied the Ruhr to extract payment, the plan reduced annual German reparations, restructured the Reichsbank under foreign oversight, and arranged for substantial U.S. loans to flow into Germany. The resulting circular flow — U.S. loans to Germany, German reparations to Britain and France, Allied war-debt payments back to the United States — propped up the late-1920s European economy until the 1929 crash.

12. D — On November 8–9, 1923, Hitler and General Erich Ludendorff tried to seize the Bavarian government from a Munich beer hall and march on Berlin, but Bavarian police shot down marchers and arrested the leaders. Hitler used his subsequent trial as a propaganda platform, served only about nine months in Landsberg prison, and used that time to dictate *Mein Kampf*, after which the Nazis pursued power through elections rather than coups.

13. A — Defeat by Japan and the army's massacre of peaceful petitioners at the Winter Palace in January 1905 ignited strikes, peasant uprisings, and the formation of soviets across Russia. To quiet the revolution, Nicholas II issued the October Manifesto promising civil liberties and an elected legislature, the Duma — a limited constitutional concession he later worked to undermine but that survived in altered form until 1917.

14. B — Frustrated by decades of fruitless petitioning, the WSPU adopted the motto "Deeds, not words" and pursued window-smashing, arson of empty buildings, and hunger strikes when imprisoned — to which authorities responded with force-feeding and, eventually, the "Cat and Mouse Act" of 1913. British women over 30 won the vote in 1918 partly in recognition of women's wartime contributions, with equal voting rights following in 1928.

15. C — Drafted aboard warships off Newfoundland, the eight-point declaration committed the two leaders to seek no territorial gain, to respect peoples' right to choose their own governments, to lower trade barriers, and to work for a permanent system of general security after "the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny." Its principles were later embedded in the United Nations Charter and the postwar Bretton Woods economic system.

16. D — Meeting in the Iranian capital, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin agreed that the cross-Channel landing (Operation Overlord) would take place in May or June 1944 and that Stalin would launch a major Eastern Front offensive at the same time to prevent German reinforcement of France. They also tentatively endorsed the future Polish-Soviet border along the Curzon Line and Stalin's pledge to declare war on Japan once Germany was defeated.

17. B — After the rapid German victory in 1940, the National Assembly granted Marshal Pétain full powers from the spa town of Vichy in the unoccupied zone, replacing "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" with "Work, Family, Fatherland." The regime passed antisemitic statutes, set up a paramilitary *Milice*, and helped deport tens of thousands of Jews to Nazi camps before being swept away after the Allied liberation in 1944.

18. A — Following Rommel's drive across North Africa to within 100 km of Alexandria, the British Eighth Army under Bernard Montgomery launched a carefully prepared offensive at El Alamein in October–November 1942, broke through Axis lines, and pushed the Afrika Korps back across Libya. Churchill called it "the end of the beginning," and combined with the U.S.-British "Torch" landings in Morocco and Algeria, it ended the Axis threat to Egypt and the Suez Canal.

19. C — Choosing the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur and the Muslim month of Ramadan, Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal and Syrian forces stormed the Golan Heights in a coordinated surprise attack on October 6, 1973. Israel recovered with U.S. resupply and pushed both armies back, but Arab oil producers retaliated against Western supporters of Israel with an embargo that quadrupled the world oil price and shook the global economy.

20. B — Members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad infiltrated a military parade marking the anniversary of the 1973 war and gunned down Sadat for signing the 1979 peace treaty with Israel, recognizing the Camp David Accords, and cracking down on Islamist opposition. His successor, Hosni Mubarak, would rule Egypt under emergency law for nearly 30 years before being toppled in the 2011 Arab Spring.

21. D — In September 1982, after the assassination of Lebanese president-elect Bashir Gemayel, the Israel Defense Forces allowed allied Christian Phalangist militias into the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut, where over two or three days they killed an estimated 800 to 3,500 Palestinian and Lebanese Shia civilians. An Israeli inquiry (the Kahan Commission) found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon "personally responsible" for not preventing the massacre.

22. A — Sparked in December 1987 in the Jabalia camp in Gaza, the Intifada featured general strikes, tax revolts, mass demonstrations, and the iconic image of stone-throwing youths confronting Israeli soldiers, with armed attacks playing a comparatively limited role. The uprising broke Israeli assumptions that occupation could continue indefinitely without political cost and helped open the path to the Madrid Conference and the Oslo Accords.

23. C — Mosaddegh's 1951 nationalization of the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company triggered a British-led international boycott of Iranian oil; when economic pressure failed, Britain's MI6 persuaded the CIA under President Eisenhower to mount Operation Ajax in August 1953. The coup restored Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to absolute power and produced lasting Iranian resentment that fueled the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

24. B — Signed in Helsinki by the United States, Canada, the Soviet Union, and 32 European states, the Final Act formally accepted the post-1945 borders of Europe — a major Soviet aim — in exchange for commitments on human rights, freedom of movement, and freer flow of information. The human-rights "Basket III" provisions gave Eastern European dissidents such as Charter 77 and the Helsinki Watch groups a powerful legal lever against their own governments.

25. D — *Glasnost* ("openness") allowed unprecedented public discussion of Soviet failures and history, including Stalin's crimes, while *perestroika* ("restructuring") attempted to introduce limited markets, cooperatives, and elected legislatures into the rigid Soviet system. Together they exposed the regime's weaknesses faster than reform could remedy them, contributing to the collapse of Eastern European communism in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself in 1991.

26. A — Following expulsion from the Malaysian federation in 1965, Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party government built a Singapore economy on export manufacturing, an English-speaking bureaucracy, public housing, sovereign-wealth investment, and tight political controls. Per capita income rose from about US\$500 in 1965 to among the highest in the world by the early 2000s, making Singapore one of the most studied development success stories of the 20th century.

27. C — Massive student-led protests against President Chun Doo-hwan's plan to hand power to another general forced the ruling party to accept the "June 29 Declaration," opening the way for direct presidential elections and broad civil-liberty reforms. The transition is regarded as one of East Asia's clearest democratic breakthroughs and helped consolidate the export-driven South Korean economic miracle.

28. B — Drawing on the legacy of independence hero Simón Bolívar, Chávez rewrote the constitution, nationalized the oil industry's foreign joint ventures, expanded social spending ("misiones") on health, education, and food, and built close ties with Castro's Cuba, Iran, and other states opposed to U.S. influence. His policies polarized Venezuelan society and laid the groundwork for the deep economic and humanitarian crisis that emerged under his successor, Nicolás Maduro.

29. D — Beginning with student protests at the Nanterre and Sorbonne campuses against university conditions, the movement spread rapidly into a wildcat general strike that by mid-May involved roughly 10 million workers — the largest in French history. President de Gaulle briefly fled to a French military base in Germany before reasserting control, dissolving the National Assembly, and winning a sweeping conservative victory in the June elections.

30. C — The treaty designates the United States, Soviet Union (now Russia), United Kingdom, France, and China — the WWII victors — as the only legally recognized nuclear-weapon states; all other signatories pledge not to build or acquire nuclear weapons in exchange for access to peaceful nuclear technology and a vague promise of eventual disarmament by the nuclear powers. India, Pakistan, and Israel never signed, and North Korea withdrew in 2003.

31. A — Lying in a Siberian rift valley about 1,642 meters (5,387 feet) deep, Baikal holds roughly 23,000 cubic kilometers of water — about one-fifth of all unfrozen freshwater on the planet — and harbors thousands of endemic species, including the Baikal seal. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996, though pollution from a paper mill and proposed pipelines have raised serious environmental concerns.

32. D — Once the world's fourth-largest inland lake, the Aral shrank by roughly 90% after Soviet planners in the 1960s diverted the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers to irrigate cotton fields in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Salt- and pesticide-laden dust now blows from the exposed seabed across surrounding regions, raising cancer and respiratory disease rates and devastating fishing communities such as Muynak, formerly a thriving port.

33. B — The triangular bay covers about 2.2 million square kilometers, washing the eastern coast of India, the entire coast of Bangladesh, and the western coast of Myanmar before opening south toward the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Sri Lanka. It is the site of intense seasonal monsoons and devastating tropical cyclones, including the 1970 Bhola cyclone that killed roughly half a million people in what is now Bangladesh.

34. C — A triangular wedge of desert linking the African landmass to the Asian Middle East, the Sinai was crossed by Israeli forces in 1956, again in 1967 (when Israel occupied it), and saw heavy fighting along the Suez Canal in 1973. It was returned to Egypt under the Camp David Accords by 1982 and now hosts a multinational peacekeeping force monitoring the demilitarized arrangements.

35. A — Running roughly 2,500 km from the Arctic Ocean south to Kazakhstan, the Urals are commonly treated as the conventional dividing line between Europe and Asia and are rich in iron, copper, gold, and platinum that fueled Russian industrialization from Peter the Great onward. Soviet planners relocated key war industries east of the Urals after 1941, beyond the reach of advancing German armies, helping the USSR survive the German invasion.