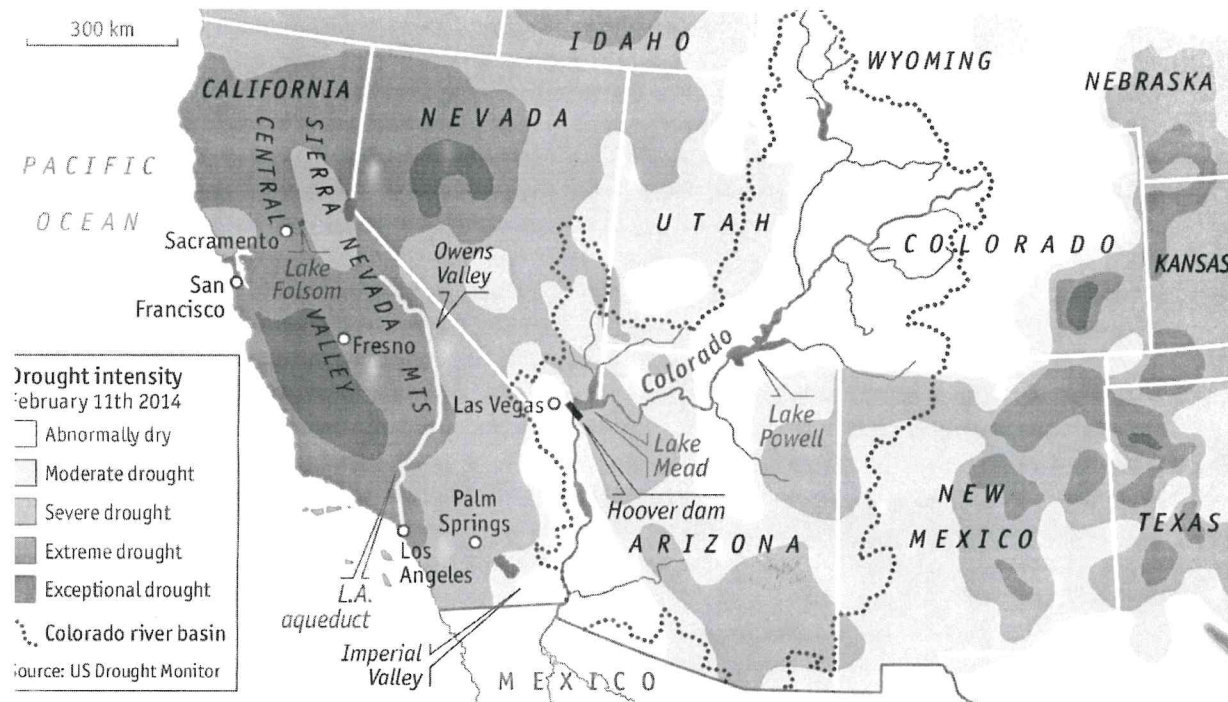


THE WATER PROBLEM IN SOUTH-WESTERN USA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Western States of America cover 60% of the land area with 40% of the country's population, yet receives only 25% of the nation's annual average precipitation. Regardless, the west continues to consume just as much water as the east. The south-west is most vulnerable to these water-shortages. This has caused the government to eminently invest in water transfer schemes, like aqueducts (watercourse carrying water from supplied areas to those of need), ameliorating agriculture, industry and settlement. This has caused the demand to be greater than the supply, making it difficult to keep up with the west's expansion.



THE COLORADO RIVER

The Colorado River flows 2333 km along the south-west, starting 4250m high in north Colorado's Rocky Mountains. In 1922, the Colorado River Compact divided the affected states into the Upper and Lower Basin, each group given 9.25 trillion liters of water, eventually including a further 1.85 liters to Mexico in 1944.

edit: The Economist

RECLAMATION

ACT: 1902

- funded irrigation projects for 20 states in the American West
- first covered only 13 of the states, the rest were added over time
- encouraged and resulted in the building of canals, dams and hydro-electric power systems
- water supply was thought to be the key to the economic development of America