The Territorial Covenant:
International Society and
the Stabilization of Boundaries

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Abstract

Scholars and publicists often comment on the decreasing importance of international boundaries as a result of the growth of international economic and social exchanges, economic liberalization, and international regimes. They, however, generally fail to note that there has been a marked decrease in coercive territorial revisionism over the past half century -- a phenomenon that indicates that states attach significant, and perhaps greater, importance to these boundaries in our present era. This study first traces states' views and practices concerning the use of force to alter boundaries from the birth of Westphalian order in the seventeenth century through the end of World War II. It then focuses in greater detail on the strengthening of the norm against the use of force to alter boundaries and developments with regard to territorial wars since 1945. The decrease in territorial revisionism during this latter period in comparison to recent centuries is marked. The study finally analyzes those normative and instrumental factors that have influenced the strengthening of the norm against coercive territorial revisionism. Of central importance are the mutual regard exhibited by democratic peoples and the increasing cost of war. Growing economic interdependence and a decline in the value of land as a factor of production also have important impacts. Overall, the new territorial covenant must be regarded as one of the most important hallmarks of the international system in the late twentieth century.

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"Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark."
~ Deuteronomy 27: 17

"Good fences make good neighbors."
~ Robert Frost

I. Introduction

In the late twentieth century some international relations scholars have noted a marked decline in importance of interstate territorial boundaries. (Herz 1957; Ohmae 1990, 1995) Other scholars have discerned a world in which political authority is migrating away from states toward a condition that is reminiscent of the medieval era: the existence of overlapping political entities with effective control in many issue areas moving up to global and regional institutions and down to local organizations and nongovernmental networks. (Rosenau 1990; Ruggie 1993; Elkins 1994)

At the same time that academic and nonacademic writers have commented on the declining significance of the international territorial order, something very interesting has been happening in international relations that has not received the attention that it should have received. It is the stabilization and sanctification of the existing post-1945 political map of the world. While the roots of a decline in territorial revisionism by force certainly predate 1945, the dramatic consolidation of the territorial status quo really commences with that date. This fundamental change has received surprisingly little commentary by international relations scholars. Alan James observed several years ago that "one of the truly remarkable phenomena of the Cold War period has been the stability of international frontiers." (1992: 387) Edward Morse in the mid-1970s noted the dramatic decline in territorial revisionism and attributed it to the nuclear revolution and growing economic interdependence, but he did not elaborate on the development or investigate its roots. (1976: 91 and passim) In short, the post-1945 territorial order discloses a rather striking conservatism regarding international boundaries. It is probably the case that the close association of the stability of borders with the Cold War has prevented scholars from recognizing that the marked decline of territorial revisionism constitutes a change in the international order that is more fundamental than most international relations analysts have thought. In other terminology, it is a hallmark of world politics in the second half of the twentieth century. Our main purpose is to support that claim by tracing the dramatic change in states' views and practices relating to the stability and sanctity of territorial borders and exploring the factors involved in this historical change. Accordingly, the first section of the paper briefly outlines the attitudes and practices of states regarding territorial boundaries from the birth of the Westphalian order in the seventeenth century until the end of World War II. The second section analyzes the remarkable changes of attitudes and practices in the postwar years. The third section focuses on the variety of factors to which the change is attributable.

II. Historical Conceptualizations of International Boundaries

Political life has not always disclosed a clearly defined system of international boundaries: medieval Europe and precolonial Africa operated largely without them. (Clark 1961: ch. 10) The medieval world did not have international boundaries as we understand them. There were as yet no "exclusive sovereignties." (Clark 1960: 28) Authority over territorial spaces was dispersed, overlapping, and shifting. The map was not yet a patchwork of different colors. It was a world of multiple overlapping juridical identities. An individual was at one and the same time a subject of different authorities where jurisdictions were often not entirely clear: the medieval era was an age of legal uncertainty and legal disputation.

The political change from medieval to modern basically involved the construction of the consolidated, integrated, delimited territorial state. In the early modern international system, territory was unified and centralized under a sovereign government. The familiar patchwork map of the world was put in place. There were definite political utilitarian reasons for consolidation. Consolidated territory provided certain military, political and economic advantages over dispersed territory. It was easier to defend; it could be ruled more effectively; and it was easier to develop. "The more consolidated were fitter to survive in the struggle for existence, and they had a better chance of strengthening and

rationalizing their organization." (Clark 1960: 29) Even at that, precisely surveyed national borders only came into clear view in the eighteenth century. (Clark 1972: 144)

In the modern world international boundaries took on not only instrumental but also normative significance. They became legitimate in a certain way. Initially the legitimacy of borders was defined in dynastic terms: it was the exclusive property of ruling families. The boundary reflected their absolute right to rule their territories. But it did not reflect any absolute right to *particular* territory which could *legitimately* change hands by war and other means. During the seventeenth century, control of territory and by extension boundaries was a central issue of what can now unambiguously be termed "international politics." Internal sovereignty necessitated external sovereignty both conceptually and politically. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the institution of state sovereignty and its entailed practice of establishing international boundaries became in Hedley Bull's words "a basic rule of co-existence" or, in other words, a rationalist expression of equality and reciprocity among independent states. (Bull 1977: 34-37; Keohane 1995: 172ff)

As indicated, the central focus of the Westphalian rules concerning boundaries was the rights of princes and dynastic states, and not of peoples and national states. (Holsti 1991: 38) "Eighteenth-century Europe was a system of states whose frontiers were clearly delineated and whose rulers were absolute sovereigns within their own realms." (Howard 1976: 75) At Westphalia, and for a long time afterwards, control of territory was governed by rules of inheritance, marriage, war, conquest, colonization, purchase, and so forth which applied exclusively to sovereign rulers, most of whom were the heads of dynasties. Territory was the main thing that determined the security and wealth of their kingdoms, and thus the protection and acquisition of territory were the prime motivations of foreign policy. The populations of the early modern states were still culturally diverse and politically disorganized as they had been during medieval times. Most people were not collectively identified by state borders which moved back and forth without much regard for them. According to a leading historian of that period, in agreements concluded during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and in the treaties of Utrecht and Baden (1713 and 1714), "the inhabitants of the places annexed to France were given the right to choose whether they would stay where they were and become Frenchmen or pack up their possessions, move over the new line and remain Spanish subjects or Germans as they had been before." (Clark 1972: 143)

The practice of drawing boundaries in disregard of the people living in the territories was extended from Europe to the rest of the world during the age of Western imperialism and colonialism. All of this was carried out in almost complete disregard for the indigenous populations and the borders -- insofar as they existed -- of the non-European world. Territory was now defined in terms of the modern age; but most people were still living in an entirely different age that was not accustomed to consolidated, unified, and politically delimited territory. Yet it was the borders that were initially drawn and imposed by Western imperialists and colonialists that later became the usual, and indeed almost the sole, acceptable references for articulating anti-colonial demands for self-determination and independent statehood. In almost every case they defined the new states of the Third World. (Jackson and Rosberg 1982)

The nineteenth century was of course the age of nationalism, especially from the revolution of 1848 until the end of World War I. It was an era of tailoring state boundaries to fit the nation, as happened in the rise of Italy and Germany and culminated in the division of the Hapsburg, Hohenzollern and Ottoman empires into numerous ethnonational states. The twentieth century has been an era of tailoring the nation to fit state borders. The nation is, however, usually not an "ethnic nation." It is a "civic nation." The people have a "political nationality" which means that they are the citizens of the same state and the subjects of the same government. The population of the civic nation may be similar in ethnic terms, but they may also be diverse in ethnic terms. Many states have a majority population who share a common ethnicity who constitute the core of the nation. But most states in the world that have come into existence since decolonization are multiethnic. That does not affect the legtitimacy of their borders, however, which define the population as a political entity regardless of their cultural diversity. To change boundaries arbitrarily is to redefine the people, and indeed to injure them because it is an

interference with the sanctity of the bordered status quo that delineates who they are: their political nationality. That applies to all existing sovereign states without exception.

There is an assumption that if borders are "frozen," they cannot be changed at all. That is not so. It is clear that borders can be changed. But only if it is in accordance with a principle of consent by all affected states parties. Ethno-nations that lack states, including national minorities, have no say in border determination. That principle of state consent is at the normative heart of the territorial convenant. If a territorial change were imposed against the will of any affected state party, it would be illegitimate even if it made sense sociologically. Thus, once state consent becomes the basis of international boundaries, territorial war as a means of changing state boundaries to make them fit ethnonational borders is illegitimate.

In the twentieth century, popular legitimacy has taken a constitutionally specific form as national self-determination for the civic nation. It was normatively avowed in 1919, if not completely legalized, by the Versailles Peace Conference and the new League of Nations. It was reinforced by collective commitments of states to protect each other from territorial aggrandizement. American President Woodrow Wilson's famous "Fourteenth Point" spoke of "specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike." (Zimmern 1939: 199) The League of Nations also sanctioned the "territorial status quo" as a principle of international legitimacy and legality. The borders of the states on the map at that time would henceforth be protected and preserved: interfering with them would be a violation of the principle of national self-determination. "Small nations, many born from the dismantled former multinational empires of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, would live securely within clearly recognizable lines of nationality..." (Smith 1993: 16) That doctrine was reiterated by the Pact of Paris (Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928) which committed signatories to respect international boundaries and not to employ force to alter them. And it was reiterated again by the League's support for the Stimson Doctrine (1931) which denied the legitimacy and legality of territorial revisionism. (Bundy and Stimson 1948: 227-260) The intended effect of these pronouncements was to "freeze" the political map of the world in its existing pattern of state jurisdictions -- unless all affected parties agreed to change them; but the supportive political conditions were not as strong as many statesmen hoped during the interwar decades. This had profound implications for the conduct of international relations.

There were at least two major problems that made the maintenance of the territorial status quo extremely awkward as a general principle of international legitimacy after World War I. First, there was the problem of inconsistency and inequity. For entering war on the side of the allies the Italians were given a piece of formerly Austro-Hungarian territory where few Italians lived. That was an obvious throwback to the pre-national era. Far more significant was the fact the German nation was divided, leaving millions of Germans residing in the new or reborn states of Czechoslovakia and Poland. This obvious inconsistency and seeming "injustice" was later exploited by Hitler when he used force to relocate the eastern borders of an enlarged Germany.

Second, there was the anomaly of the European colonies overseas. They did not qualify for self-determination under the League of Nations. Colonies were still the property of imperial powers. Their inhabitants were imperial subjects, and under international law in effect at the time they had no right to claim political independence on the grounds of national self-determination -- although there was now an idea and institution of international trusteeship in the shape of the Mandates Commission of the League. That inequality later proved to be unsustainable, when Asian and African nationalists led successful rebellions against their colonial overlords and demanded independence on exactly those grounds.

In the aftermath of World War II states responded to these problems although not necessarily to the satisfaction of everyone involved. With a few important exceptions the new state jurisdictions in central and eastern Europe that had been formed at the end of World War I were restored along the same boundaries. The only exceptions were made to satisfy the Soviet Union which continued to operate with a classical view of borders as defensible frontiers. The Baltic states were integrated into the Soviet Union by Stalin against their wishes and without the recognition of major Western powers. The USSR also absorbed parts of Poland, Germany, Finland, Rumania, and -- on the other side of the Eurasian land mass

-- Japan's northern Kurile Islands. The territory of postwar Germany was realigned and reduced. The former German-Polish frontier was moved much farther west to accommodate a parallel westward movement of the Polish-Soviet border at the insistence of Stalin. Millions of Polish and German citizens were thus obliged to pack up and move west too if they still wished to live in the same country. That was clearly reminiscent of the result of wars in earlier centuries. It was the last major action to date which blatantly defied the consent principle in the determination of international boundaries. However, it is noteworthy that the new German-Polish border subsequently acquired legitimacy: the Oder and Neisse rivers which marked the border at the end of World War II became the only legitimate line of reference when Germany was re-united in 1990. That was made abundantly clear to Chancellor Helmut Kohl when he voiced a desire to relocate the border and was immediately put right on the issue by Germany's major Western partners. (Fritsch-Bournazel 1992: 102-111) Finally, World War II culminated in the writing of a new United Nations Charter that reiterated the doctrine of national self-determination within the context of the principle of the sanctity of existing borders.

Table 1. Interstate Territorial Wars, 1648–1996

Period	Territorial Conflicts	Conflicts Resulting in a Redistribution of Territory	Percentage of Conflicts in which Territory was Redistributed
1648–1712	28	23	82%
1713–1814	35	27	77%
1815–1917	24	20	83%
1918–1945	28	23	82%
1946–1996	34	7	23%

NOTE: Territorial wars are cases of interstate military conflict where at least one party sought to expand its territorial jurisdiction. The territorial wars for 1648–1945 and the delineation of major periods in the evolution of the Westphalian international system are derived from Holsti 1991. Additional information on these conflicts was derived from: Goertz and Diehl 1992; Goldstein 1992; McKay and Scott 1983; Randle 1973; and Taylor 1954. Information on the conflicts for 1946–1996 was compiled by the authors from a large number of sources. There are four conflicts between 1946–1996 that led to minor border alterations and are not included under 'Conflicts Resulting in a Redistribution of Territory.' For descriptions of the 1946-96 conflicts, see Table 2.

In reviewing territorial developments from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-twentieth century it is useful to look at Table 1, which outlines the number of international wars concerning territory, the number of these wars that resulted in territorial redistributions, and the percentage of wars that resulted in territorial redistributions during five periods of time. For all four historical periods in the years 1648-1945, about 80 percent of territorial wars led to territorial redistributions. In the last period since the end of World War II, the figure declined dramatically to 23 percent. Robert Gilpin has commented that "international political change has been primarily a matter of redistributing territory among groups of states following the great wars of history." (1981: 37) That well-founded centuries-old historical postulate changed fundamentally in the middle of the twentieth century: for half a century international political change has not been primarily about the redistribution of territory following major wars.

III. The Post-1945 Stabilization of Boundaries

General Normative Developments

The UN Charter of 1945 entrenched the territorial status quo. The principle of self-determination was affirmed, but it was set in a context of respect for existing territorial boundaries. Aggressive war was forbidden. The right of self-defense was now the right of existing UN member states to defend not only their territory but also their citizens and thus to preserve the inviolability of their nation-state. Collective security and self-defense were premised on the principle of respect for territorial boundaries.

The UN system also became involved in shaping Western decolonization. Articles 73 and 76 of the UN Charter clearly implied that the populations of existing trust territories and colonies were "peoples" that would be eligible for self-determination. The colonial territory, which was often artificial in terms of delimiting ethnic or self-conciously political nations, became the frame of reference for making and responding to claims for self-determination and political independence. The plebiscite was rarely resorted to for determining international borders. The 1960 UN Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Territories and Countries clearly stated that "any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity or territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations." In 1970 the UN General Assembly approved the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States that contained the following statement:

> Nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.... (UNGA res. 2625)

The "people" were thus defined as the population that resided within the borders of a colonial dependency regardless of their cultural heterogeneity: the colonial people were redesignated a political nationality. The people were not defined in ethno-cultural terms. And because the colonies were, if anything, far more ethno-culturally diverse than most other territorial jurisdictions, the borders that defined them and delimited them were even more emphatically juridical in character. In short, European imperialists, by drawing the colonial map, ironically were also instrumental in defining the new nation-states of the Third World. When colonial territories proved unworkable for self-determination and self-government, as in the cases of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, internal provincial or administrative boundaries that had also been defined by the occupyuing colonial powers were raised to the status of international boundaries. That practice of internationalizing internal borders was resorted to earlier in the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires. It was also resorted to later on the occasion of the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The same international legitimation of existing borders -- the legitimacy of the status quo -- was evident elsewhere. Perhaps of greatest import in the early 1970s was the movement toward the legitimization of boundaries among the states of Europe. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) of 1975 reiterated the same principle in the Helsinki Final Act: "frontiers can [only] be changed, in accordance with international law, by peaceful means and by agreement." Here, then, is an express statement of the all-important principle of consent. Separate bilateral treaties between West Germany and its major Communist neighbors (East Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union) that preceded and anticipated the Helsinki agreements committed the parties to "respect without restriction of the territorial integrity" of each state and sought to "reaffirm the inviolability of existing boundaries." (Maresca 1985: 86-87) That became one of the two foundation principles of the CSCE (succeeded by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE) which was formed to preside over the Helsinki accords. The other principle was respect for human rights. At the end of the Cold War the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) reiterated exactly the same principles, as have all subsequent

conferences concerning international boundaries including the Dayton peace treaty which settled (at least temporarily) the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The two key articles of the Dayton accords read:

> The parties shall conduct their relations in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act.... In particular, the parties shall fully respect the sovereign equality of one another...and shall refrain from any action, by threat or use of force or otherwise, against the territorial integrity or political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina or any other state. (Article I)

> The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina recognize each other as sovereign independent States within their international borders. (Article X)

The current normative practice with regard to interstate boundaries, which forms the central elements of the territorial covenant, could be summarized as follows: (i) only existing interstate borders are legitimate and legal; (ii) if borders are to be changed, all states affected by the change must give their consent; (iii) change of borders by force is illegitimate and illegal; (iv) the only recognized nation-state is the political nationality defined by state juridical boundaries; and (v) colonialism is illegitimate and illegal. There is also a norm relating to the breakup of states or secessions, which does not have the strength of those noted above, but does deserve mentioning: (vi) secessions are to be discouraged by members of the society of states, but if they seem inevitable, the society of states should assure that the international boundaries of the new states reflect the internal administrative boundaries of the state from which they seceded.

What are the main values which underpin this contemporary practice? They would appear to be the following: (i) international order: the stability and predictability that comes from having confident expectations about borders; (ii) international pluralism: a world politics based on the political freedom of existing independent countries; and (iii) the inviolability of existing nation-states. These states are presumed to be the places in which people build their political and social lives free from outside intervention. In short, international boundaries are based on an underlying international ethic of communitarianism rather than cosmopolitanism.

Territorial Revisionism Since 1945

It is one thing to document that states have endorsed a particular norm in many agreements and international organization resolutions, and it is another thing to show that they have observed the norm in their foreign policies. In order to show that there has, in fact, been a quite remarkable general decline in territorial wars and actual alterations in interstate boundaries as a result of force since 1945, we shall look at the main developments in the major geographic regions of the world (summarized in Table 2 below) -- moving from Europe to the Americas, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. After the analysis of interstate territorial wars, this section focuses on practices of boundary-making pertaining to the breakup of existing states into multiple states and the apparent emergence of a norm that successor states should accept former internal administrative boundaries as their new international boundaries. This represents another indication of the international community's conservatism regarding the post-1945 territorial order.

Table 2. International Wars over Territory, 1946–96

States Involved	Issue	Outcome	Change
Europe			
Yugoslavia-Slovenia 1991	Yugoslavia's armed forces attacked to try to reverse Slovenia's departure from the federation after Slovenia declared independence on June 25, 1991.	Yugoslavia ceased its attack after 8 days of fighting and withdrew from Slovenia.	No change
Yugoslavia-Croatia, 1991-95	Croatia declared independence in 1991. Yugoslavia (Serbia-Montenegro) sent troops to assist Serbs in Croatia (12% of pop.) who wanted to attach their areas to Yugoslavia. Most Serb troops defending Serb enclaves came from Croatia, but some (esp. officers) came from Yugoslavia.	UN called for withdrawal of foreign troops and ceasefire. Fighting killed 15,000. Main Serb force was defeated in 1995. Dayton accord in 1995 recognized former boundary. Yugo-slavia and Croatia recognized boun-dary in bilateral treaty in August 1996.	No change
Yugoslavia-Bosnia 1992-95	Bosinia declared independence in 1992. Serb population of Bosnia (assisted by varying numbers of Yugoslav military) fought against an alliance of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats. The Serb forces wanted to unite parts of Bosnia with Yugoslavia. The Croatian army intervened at times, and in a few instances it fought Muslim forces.	UN called for withdrawal of non-Bosnian troops and ceasefire. Fighting killed 200,000. The 1995 Dayton accord created a multi-ethnic government and recognized the original boundaries of Bosnia-Herzegovenia as the boundaries of the new state. Yugo-slavia and Bosnia recognized boundary in bilateral treaty in October 1996.	No change
The Americas			
Nicaragua–Honduras 1957	Nicaragua occupied a part of Honduras that it claimed.	Nicaragua withdrew and accepted ICJ arbitration because of OAS pressure. ICJ awarded territory to Honduras in 1959.	No change

Ecuador–Peru 1981	Ecuador sent troops into border region it lost in peace treaty at end of 1942 war. Peru had stronger force.	OAS backed efforts of four guarantor powers of 1942 treaty to secure settlement. They negotiated withdrawal to former border.	No change
Argentina–Britain 1982	Argentina occupied Malvinas/Falklands islands.	UN called for Argentinian withdrawal. Britain reoccupied islands.	No change
Ecuador–Peru 1995	Ecuador sent troops into border region it lost in peace treaty at end of 1942 war.	Four guarantor powers of 1942 treaty promoted withdrawal.	No change
Africa			
Egypt–Sudan 1958	Egypt occupied a small part of Sudanese territory.	Arab states pressured Egypt to withdraw.	No change
Ghana–Upper Volta 1963-65	Ghana occupied a small border area of Upper Volta in 1963.	In 1965 OAU supported original boundary. Ghana withdrew.	No change
Algeria–Morocco 1963	Morocco occupied a part of Algeria.	Arab League and OAU called for withdrawal. OAU established mediators. Morocco withdrew.	No change
Somalia–Ethiopia and Kenya 1964	Somalia provided troops to Somali rebels in eastern Ethiopia and northern Kenya seeking union with Somalia.	OAU supported original boundaries and estabilished mediator. Somalia withdrew .	No change
Libya–Chad 1973-87	Libya secretly occupied a border area of Chad called the Aouzou Strip. Other states did not know of the occupation for many years.	OAU mediated dispute in 1980s. Most members were sympathetic to Chad. Libya was driven out by Chad in 1987. ICJ arbitration was accepted in 1990. ICJ ruled in Chad's favor in 1994.	No change
Mali-Burkina Faso 1975	Dispute over a small strip of territory existed from time of independence in 1960. Mali occupied area in 1975.	OAU mediated a ceasefire and withdrawal by Mali.	No change

Uganda–Tanzania 1978	Uganda occupied a small part of Tanzania which it claimed, but also sought to destroy rebel bases.	Uganda withdrew due to Tanzanian military action. African states did not have to take action.	No change
Libya–Chad 1981-82	Libya pressured Chad to accept a political union in exchange for military assistance in its civil war.	OAU opposed union and provided some troops. Chad ended political union and Libya withdrew troops.	No change
Burkina Faso–Mali 1985	Dispute over a small strip of territory existed from time of independence and led to violence again.	In 1985 they accepted ICJ arbitration as a result of OAU mediation. In 1986 ICJ divided the area equally between the two states.	Minor change

Middle East

Arab states–Israel 1948	Britain accepted a UN recommendation to divide Palestine into Israeli and Arab states. Neighboring Arab states attacked Israel at time of independence in May 1948 since to support control of all of Palestine by Palestinian Arabs.	Israel gained territory in each stage of the war. At end of 1948 both sides accepted armistice lines. Arab Palestinians retained control of West Bank/Gaza Strip (administered by Jordan and Egypt).	Major change
Israel–Arab states 1967	Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai, and Golan Heights. It later annexed Syria's Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.	Security Council in Nov. 1967 called for withdrawal of Israel to 1948 arm-istice lines in ex-change for recogni-tion by Arab states of Israel. In 1978 Israel agreed to return the Sinai; in 1993 Israel accepted staged implementa-tion of self-rule for West Bank and Gaza.	Major change
Egypt and Syria–Israel 1973	Egypt and Syria sought to recapture the Sinai and Golan Heights.	Security Council called for ceasefire. Fighting ended after two weeks. Egypt allowed to keep a small enclave in the Sinai.	Minor change

Iraq–Iran 1980–1988	Iraq invaded to seize control of the Shatt al–Arab waterway and some other areas.	Security Council backed acceptance of former boundary in 1987. The two states accepted a ceasefire in 1988 and the former boundary in 1990.	No change
Iraq–Kuwait 1990–91	Iraq invaded Kuwait and annexed it.	Almost all members of the UN called for Iraq's withdrawal. Iraq was expelled by UN–sanctioned force.	No change
Asia			
Pakistan–India 1947-48	British India was partitioned and India and Pakistan became independent in 1947. Pakistan army joined Muslim rebels in Kashmir who were seeking union of Kashmir with Pakistan.	Pakistan secured control over a sparsely populated third of Kashmir by end of war. UN Security Council supported plebiscite during war, but India did not accept it.	Major change
North Korea–South Korea 1950–53	North Korea attempted to absorb South Korea.	Armistice line reflects very minor changes in former boundary.	Minor change
China-Burma 1956	China moved into a small border area of Burma.	The two states negotiated a new border that gave China a part of the area it occupied.	Minor change
Afghanistan–Pakistan 1961	Afghanistan sent irregular Afghan forces into Pathanistan to support local forces favoring union with Afghanistan.	Afghan incursions were defeated by Pakistan.	No change
India–Portugal 1961	India invaded and absorbed the Portuguese–controlled colony of Goa.	Most states accepted the legitimacy of India's action.	Major change
China–India 1962	China occupied Ladakh and part of Northeast Frontier Agency that it traditionally claimed.	China still occupies areas. There is not an accord on the boundaries.	Major change

North Vietnam-South Vietnam 1962-75	French colonial authorities administered the northern and southern parts of Vietnam separately. After gaining independence in 1954 South Vietnam refused to allow a referendum on unification as provided in the Paris peace accord. By 1962 North Vietnamese forces were fighting with the Vietcong to promote unification.	In 1975 North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces finally defeated the South Vietnamese army, and the country was reunified under the Hanoi regime.	Major change
Indonesia–Malaysia 1963–1965	Indonesia claimed North Borneo, and it introduced small military contingents that sought to expel Malaysian authorities.	Britain and Australia sent troops to help Malaysia. Indonesia was unsuccessful. Only communist states backed it.	No change
Pakistan–India April 1965	Pakistan sent a force into a part of Kashmir.	Britain negotiated a ceasefire and withdrawal to 1948 armistice line.	No change
Pakistan–India August 1965	Pakistan attacked India to secure control of the Indian–controlled part of Kashmir.	Pakistan was defeated. USSR and Western powers backed the 1948 armistice boundary.	No change
China-South Vietnam 1974	China expelled South Vietnam from the Paracell Islands which it had claimed for many years.	Very few states voiced views on action. China maintains control.	Major change
Indonesia–Portugal (East Timor) 1975	Indonesia invaded East Timor several months before it was to achieve independence from Portugal. It made it a province of Indonesia.	Indonesia still controls East Timor. UN demanded Indonesian withdrawal and self–determination through 1982.	Major change
Cambodia–Vietnam 1977–78	Cambodia attacked Vietnam to establish control over a small border region.	Cambodian forces were defeated. War was due more to political conflicts.	No change

NOTE: Of the 34 interstate territorial conflicts listed in this table eight (six in Asia) involved significant redistibutions of territory, and four of them involved minor alterations of borders. Armenia's small scale assistance to the autonomy/secessionist movement in Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan was not included because Armenia has not backed union of Nagorno-Kara-bakh with Armenia. The conflict over Spratly Islands, which involves China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei, is not included since there has never been any local or international consensus on jurisdictions. (Haller-Trost 1990; Lo 1989)

A "minor change" refers to small territorial adjustments such as the grant-
ing of a strip of border territory. The only change categorized as minor that
might be regarded as major is the 1986 border accord between Mali and
Burkina Faso which involved the transfer of a strip 10 by 45 miles.

Europe. It only seems fitting to begin this section by looking at territorial politics in Europe, not
only because the interstate order first developed there but also because that continent has witnessed some
of the most destructive territorial conflicts in modern history.[1] If pre-1945 history is our guide, we should
expect substantial coercive territorial revisionism in Europe. There have, in fact, been only three
interstate territorial wars in Europe, and they all involved unsuccessful attempts by the truncated
Yugoslav state (Serbia) to gain control over all or parts of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia between 1991
and 1995. The United States, the European powers and the United Nations supported the former internal
administrative boundaries of Yugoslavia that Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia declared as their interstate
boundaries in 1991 and 1992, and all the warring parties accepted them at the 1995 Dayton peace
conference. Finally, in 1996 Yugoslavia, under considerable U.S. and European pressure, signed bilateral
accords with Croatia and Bosnia accepting those boundaries. The basic position of most of the Western
powers was enunciated by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in a meeting with President Milosevic in
1991: "The United States and the rest of the international community will reject any Serbian claims to
territory beyond its borders. Serbia will become an international outcast within Europe for a generation
or more." (Baker 1995: 481; Owen 1995; Ullman 1996) To grasp the importance that the European states
attach to the entrenchment of existing boundaries, one should recall the Helsinki and Paris pacts'
provisions on territorial integrity and the present EU and NATO stipulations that no states can be
admitted as members that have any outstanding territorial disputes with neighboring states. (Blinken and
Moses 1996)

The Americas. The members of the Organization of American States have declared their
opposition to territorial revisionism by force. (Shaw 1986: 180) There have been very few territorial wars
between Western Hemisphere states, and to date all attempts to alter boundaries by force have failed. In
1957 Nicaragua invaded Honduras to obtain an area that it claimed. However, the OAS pressured
Nicaragua to withdraw and persuaded the two states to submit their dispute to the International Court of
Justice for settlement. (Zacher 1979: 232) In 1981 and 1995 there were clashes between Ecuador and
Peru over the former's claim to a border region that was awarded to the latter in the 1942 Protocol of Rio
de Janeiro. On each occasion the four guarantor powers of the 1942 treaty secured a restoration of the
status quo ante. (Day 1987: 424-425; Keesing's 41 (January 1995): 40356) Finally, there was the
Malvinas/Falklands war between Argentina and Britain in 1982 which eventuated in Britain's
reconquering the islands with the support of the majority of UN members. (Kacowicz 1994: 150-51;
Richardson 1996: 21, 121-22, 142)[2]

Africa. Most African states are composed of a variety of ethnic groups, and often some of these
groups straddle boundaries with neighboring states. There are consequently sociological pressures for
territorial revisionism in many parts of the continent. Yet, there have been no successful territorial
revisionist wars in Africa. (The ambiguous case of Morocco's absorption of the Western Sahara is
discussed below.) The first challenge to the territorial integrity norm was when Morocco occupied a part
of Algeria in October 1963. Within several months it was pressured to withdraw by African states and

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[1] In discussing territorial change in Europe it is important to comment briefly on the evolution of the European
Union which is gradually reducing states' control over transborder exchanges and domestic policy spheres. It
could eventually develop into a sovereign state -- less centralized than most states, but a sovereign state
nonetheless. Such a development would not challenge the thesis of this paper since such a political union would
be based on consent.

[2] Most Latin American states supported Argentina on the Malvinas since they viewed the war as a legitimate attempt
to expel a colonial power. There was also the possibility of a clash between Chile and Argentina over islands in
the Beagle Channel during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. In 1984, it was settled by arbitration by the
Vatican. (Day 1987: 385)

the newly constituted OAU. (Goldstein 1992: 173-174; Wild 1966) A similar development occurred in 1964 when Somalia sent troops into neighboring areas of Ethiopia and Kenya inhabited by ethnic Somalis. Somalia was subsequently pressured by the OAU to withdraw. On each occasion the OAU insisted that the conflict be settled in keeping with the OAU principle of state territorial integrity. (Day 1987: 129-131) Both the Western powers and the Soviet Union supported the settlement of these conflicts in accordance with the UN and OAU charters. In 1965 the OAU also successfully pressured Ghana to withdraw from a small part of neighboring Upper Volta. (Zacher 1979: 246-247) Within its first two years of operation (1963-65), the OAU succeeded in upholding its basic norm against territorial revisionism or what James Mayall has called the OAU's "unnegotiable acceptance of the status quo." (Mayall 1990: 56) That norm has been tested over the years by various territorial conflicts, but it has continued to be upheld. Most of these conflicts were relatively minor border disputes,[3] but at least one was quite significant. From 1976 to 1980 Somalia unsuccessfully tried to absorb the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, and the OAU, the USSR and the Western powers opposed the Somali military action. The African and Western opposition to the Somali action is quite significant since the Ethiopian government was Marxist and relied on Cuban troops. (Day 1987: 129-31)

The most blatant act of territorial revisionism in Africa to date is Morocco's absorption of the former Spanish Sahara (Western Sahara) in 1975. It is, however, not strictly speaking a case of interstate revisionism because Spain ceded the area to Morocco and Mauritania before it ended its colonial rule. (Mauritania withdrew in 1978.) Morocco's historic claim to the area was supported by France, the United States and Spain because they preferred that pro-Western Morocco, and not the radical nonaligned Polisario independence movement, control the area. The majority of OAU and UN members have repeatedly affirmed the inviolability of ex-colonial frontiers and have called for self-determination by the inhabitants of Western Sahara. (Layachi 1994; Von Hippel 1995: 72-79) After over 20 years of Moroccan control there is little chance of a reversal.

Apart from this previous ambiguous case African interstate boundaries have remained remarkably stable. This is significantly due to the collective efforts of the great majority of African states to sanctify the boundaries they possessed at independence.

The Middle East. Any discussion of territorial revisionism in this region since World War II must start with the United Nations' support in 1947 for the creation of independent Israeli and Arab Palestinian states out of the former British Palestine Mandate. This is a case of partition of a colonial territory which has been extremely rare in world politics since the end of the World War II. As with the only other noteworthy case of pre-independence partition, the British division of the Indian subcontinent into two states in 1947, the division of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state led to territorial wars on several occasions over the subsequent four decades. (Day 1987: 204-207)

In 1948 the Arab states viewed Palestine as part of the Arab world, and thus instead of accepting the partition, the neighboring Arab states attacked Israel. The Arab armies were defeated during 1948, and at the end of the hostilities the Arabs controlled only the West Bank and the Gaza strip. In 1949 King Abdullah of Transjordan (now Jordan) annexed the West Bank, but after strong protestations by other

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[3] An unusual case arose in 1981 when Libya pressured Chad to accept a political union in exchange for military backing for the Chadian government in the civil war. Other African states reacted strongly against this expansionist Libyan policy. The OAU offered a peacekeeping force to help the Chadian government, and called for the withdrawal of Libyan troops. (Nolutshungu 1996: 156–157) In the late 1980s the OAU was instrumental in persuading Libya to accept submission of a Libyan-Chadian border dispute over the Aouzou strip to the International Court of Justice. The border area, which had been occupied unbeknownst to the outside world in the 1970s, was awarded to Chad with the ICJ upholding the pre-1973 boundary. (Naldi 1995: 690) A border conflict between Mali and Burkina Faso (formerly Dahomey) was unique in that disputes over the strip of territory (approximately 10 by 90 miles) had been a matter of dispute from the time of independence in 1960. After many diplomatic failures to negotiate a settlement, the two sides agreed in 1983 to submit the conflict to the International Court of Justice. However, in 1985 fighting broke out along the border. Following a mediated settlement by neighboring states the ICJ hurried its proceedings and came down with a decision to divide the area evenly between the two states. (Copson 1994: 27)

Arab states he agreed that Transjordanian rule would last only until the Palestinians were in a position to establish control of a united Palestine. In the case of Gaza, Egypt always accepted that its administration was temporary. (Hurewitz 1950)

Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai desert, and the Golan Heights in the Six Day War in June 1967. A very important development in the wake of this war was the Security Council's passage of resolution 242 in November 1967. In essence, it stated that Israel should trade diplomatic recognition from the Arab states for the return of the Arab lands that it occupied. It clearly indicated that Israel did not possess a legal claim to the territories it had occupied in the war. (Kacowicz 1994: 129) Although there has been some wavering among Western states on the return of East Jerusalem, they have strongly supported the restoration of the pre-1967 boundaries. In 1978, the United States mediated the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt that restored all of the Sinai to Egypt, and in 1993 the Western powers were active in promoting the Oslo accord which anticipates eventual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. The only occupied territories that Israel has annexed are East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and it will probably return the latter to Syria at some point. The territorial integrity norm continues to have an important impact on developments with regard to these annexations which have not been internationally recognized. (Kacowicz 1994: 129; Makovsky 1996: 205-10; Whetten 1974)

Despite their opposition to the Israeli state for most of the post-1948 period the Arab countries have generally been supportive of the legitimacy of interstate boundaries. In 1958, they pressured Cairo into withdrawing from a small area of Sudanese territory that Egypt had occupied. (Zacher 1979: 199-200, 233) In 1961, the Arab League unanimously supported a resolution calling for respect for Kuwaiti sovereignty when Iraq first threatened to invade just after the independence of Kuwait from Britain. Six Arab states sent troops to Kuwait to show their diplomatic support. Then, with only three exceptions, the Arab states opposed Iraq's military absorption of Kuwait in 1990 within the context of the UN deliberations.[4] Another important stance in favor of territorial integrity occurred in 1963 when, following Morocco's occupation of a part of Algeria, the Arab League voted unanimously that Morocco should withdraw. (Zacher 1979: 198-200) A final noteworthy Middle Eastern conflict was the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988) which was initiated by Iraq in an attempt to gain possession of a border area rich in oil reserves. Outside powers were generally noncommittal on the merits of the conflict for most of the course of the war. However, in 1987 the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling on the parties to accept the former boundary, and that is what they eventually did. (MacDonald 1990: 214-215, 218; Keesing's 36 (August 1990): 37667)

Like most world regions since 1945, the Middle East has seen very little territorial revisionism apart from the unique area of the former Palestine mandate. Even here the boundaries that emerged from the 1948 war have taken on a certain sancrosanct character, and it is likely that future Arab-Israeli accords will make only minor alterations in these borders. (Fagan 1997)

Asia. The Asian continent has witnessed some unsuccessful attempts at territorial revisionism and also some successful cases of territorial revisionism -- most of which were related to the establishment of postcolonial boundaries. Turning first to the unsuccessful cases, in 1950 North Korea sought to absorb South Korea by military force, but after three years of fighting the two sides accepted a ceasefire line that was very close to the prewar boundary. In 1961, Afghanistan supported incursions of irregular troops into Pakistan in order to integrate the region of Pathanistan into Afghanistan. The Afghan incursions were easily defeated. (Day 1987: 263-277) Between 1963 and 1965 Indonesia launched intermittent attacks into North Borneo to wrest control of the area from Malaysia. With British and Australian military assistance Malaysia defeated the attacks. Apart from the communist powers, almost all UN members supported Malaysia. (Mackie 1974) In 1965, Pakistan tried to capture the two-thirds of Kashmir that it failed to conquer in 1948, but it eventually had to accept the status quo ante under pressure from the Western powers and the Soviet Union. (Korbel 1966: 337-346) Another Asian territorial war developed in 1977 when Cambodia launched attacks into Vietnam that concerned in part the demarcation of the border around the so-called Parrot's Beak; but nationalistic and ideological

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[4] Yemen, Libya and Jordan parted company with the other Arab states by supporting Iraq.

rivalries were more central to the conflict than territorial ambition. No alteration in the boundary resulted from the clashes. (Zacher 1979: 281)

There have been six cases of successful territorial aggression in Asia, and all originate in disputes that predate decolonization. Following Britain's division of the Indian subcontinent into two separate states in 1947, Pakistan entered the civil war in Kashmir on the side of Kashmiri Muslims who were fighting to secede from India and to link Kashmir to Pakistan. By the end of the war in 1948, Pakistan had secured control of about a third of Kashmir. The failure of the international community to take a strong position in support of the 1947 boundary disclosed serious reservations as to whether Kashmir's union with India in 1947 (accession by the Hindu ruler of Kashmir two months after independence) was legal or just. (Brecher 1953; Korbel 1966) Another decolonization conflict involving the Indian subcontinent that led to territorial revisionism was India's military expulsion of Portugal from the colonial enclave of Goa in 1961. Most countries accepted that India was justified in seizing the small colonial territory. (Zacher 1979: 243-244)

Among the cases of successful territorial revisionism in Asia an important conflict involved the Sino-India war of 1962 when China occupied two remote and sparsely populated parts of India that it had claimed since the British colonial era. The United States backed India in the war, but the Soviet Union wavered owing to its uncertain relations with China at that time. Because of the geographical remoteness of the areas and the lack of superpower unity, China was able to consolidate its occupation. (Foot 1996a: 60-62; Liu 1994: 47-48) The final conflict involving China is its driving the South Vietnamese out of the Paracell Islands in 1974. (Lo 1989) Recently China has settled about 99 percent of its border with Russia. This suggests that notwithstanding its border disputes, China, too, generally wishes to uphold existing borders and the principle of consent rather than to seek their alteration by force. (Foot 1996b: 10)[5]

The next Asian case was North Vietnam's support of the South Vienamese Vietcong's attempt to join the two countries from the early 1960s through 1975. The pro-Western South Vietnamese government avoided holding a national referendum on unification, as promised in the 1954 Paris peace accord which ended French colonial rule, since it feared it would lose the election. However, North Vietnam's military support for the Vietcong finally brought about unification by armed conquest in 1975. Most countries viewed the union of the two parts of Vietnam as a part of an aspect of the lengthy decolonization process in Indochina more than as a case of interstate territorial revisionism. (Turley 1986)

The only other significant case of territorial revisionism in Asia was the 1975 Indonesian invasion of the divided island of Portuguese East Timor when it was on the verge of gaining independence. Indonesia attacked and militarily subdued the pro-independence forces who were backed by a majority of the population. Most UN members voted for a resolution that called for Indonesia's withdrawal. At the time, however, Indonesia had the de facto backing of the United States and some other Western alliance members who wanted to prevent the coming to power of a Marxist regime in East Timor. Through 1982, the UN General Assembly called for a withdrawal of Indonesian forces and the holding of a plebiscite. It is unlikely now that East Timor, which is sorrounded by Indonesian territory and territorial seas, will ever gain its independence. (Bentley and Carey 1995; Day 1987: 332-336)

Six of the eight successful territorial aggressions occurred in Asia, and it important to recognize that that they all concerned differences over territorial jurisdictions that preceded the independence of the states concerned. They are the conflicts between India and Pakistan in 1948, India and Portugal in 1961, China and India in 1962, North and South Vietnam from the early 1960s through 1975, China and South Vietnam (Paracells) in 1974, and Indonesia and Portugal (East Timor) in 1975. It is, in fact, quite likely

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[5] An area where China has been involved in territorial revisionism with neighbouring states (Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Sabah, and Malaysia) is the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. The major reason for the jurisdictional conflict is the possibility that there are significant oil reserves on the continental shelves around the islands. The legitimacy of the various claims has always been in doubt. What is at stake is not so much revisionism regarding recognized jurisdictions but attempts to establish territorial jurisdictions. (Foot 1996b: 13-14)

that the present borders that emerged from the prolonged decolonization process in Asia will achieve the sanctity that other borders possess.

During the postwar era when the number of independent states has multiplied over threefold to close to 200 and international boundaries have lengthened correspondingly, there have been only eight instances of significant interstate territorial revisionism. In Asia there have been six cases: Pakistan-India, 1948; India-Portugal, 1961; India-China, 1962; North Vietnam-South Vietnam, 1962-75; China-South Vietnam, 1974; and Indonesia-Portugal (East Timor), 1975. In the Middle East there were Israel's gains at the expense of Arab Palestine in 1948 and its occupation of parts of three Arab states in 1967. The 1967 acts of Israeli territorial revisionism have, however, never been recognized, and Israel has withdrawn from Egypt and will probably withdraw eventually from almost all of the West Bank and the Golan Heights. With the exception of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, all of these cases of territorial change involved disputes over territory that originated from the colonial era; and even the latter war was linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict over the division of the Palestine Mandate. It is, of course, notable that there have not been any successful territorial wars in Europe, the Americas, and Africa.

Overall it is clear that there have been very few cases of interstate border change in the last half centry. Hence it is continuity in the territorial order rather than change of existing boundaries that has to be accounted for. Preexisting boundaries clearly constitute the one firm basis of legitimacy and legality on which the conflicting parties and outside countries can agree; and the outsiders in particular tend to have a long-term interest in legitimizing the status quo ante. It is useful at this point to recapitulate the figures in Table 1. Whereas in the three centuries leading up to 1946, about 80 percent of all interstate territorial wars led to territorial redistributions, for the period 1946-96 the figure is 23 percent (8 out of 34). Given the huge increase in the number of states in the international system in the past half century, the absolute numbers of 34 territorial wars and 8 cases of major boundary change are not very large by historical standards. During that same period war itself became increasingly civil war or what K.J. Holsti (1996) refers to as "wars of the third kind." That itself is an indication of the significance of the post-1945 norm that states cannot use force to alter interstate boundaries.

The above analysis has rested on the proposition that there is a norm against the revision of interstate boundaries by force. That is to say, states think that there is a standard of behavior against which they will be judged by other states and that these latter states will apply various sanctions to promote compliance with the standard. There is, however, another possible explanation for the remarkable reduction in coercive territorial revisionism, and it is that the stability rests on power considerations. One version of the power hypothesis is that the great powers (especially in the Cold War era) enforced stabilization of boundaries on other countries, and the other version is that in territorial wars the revisionist states tended to be weaker than the status quo states. There are a number of types of evidence against these two power-oriented arguments.

With regard to the argument that the great powers enforced the maintenance of boundaries for their particularistic reasons, it is firstly important to note that the great majority of member states within the United Nations as well as within European, Latin American, and African regional forums have come out strongly against the use of force to alter boundaries during and after the Cold War. There is simply no evidence that the great powers forced the weaker states to oppose territorial revisionism in votes on general declarations or on specific conflicts. The African states and the middle and smaller powers in Europe were adamant in their backing for the legitimization of existing borders in the OAU and CSCE respectively. Second, since the end of the Cold War, the two key international conflicts have been the Gulf War between Iraq and Kuwait and the Yugoslav (Serb) interventions in Bosnia and Croatia; and in both cases most smaller states as well as the great powers came down vehemently on behalf of the sanctity of the borders that states possessed at independence. In the Gulf War, the opposition to the Iraqi invasion from Thrid World states was overwhelming and was based on opposition to territorial aggrandizement; and with few exceptions the opposition did not depend on pressure by the United States or other great powers. In the case of Yugoslav (Serb) interventions in Bosnia and Croatia, the smaller European countries were certainly opponents of territorial revisionism although the great powers, and especially the United States, were crucial in securing the Dayton accord. Contrary to our general thesis,

Barry Buzan has noted that "the end of the Cold War is opening up boundary questions in a rather major way." (1991: 440) James Mayall has likewise voiced doubt that the sanctity of interstate boundaries is likely to endure. (1990: 56) It is definitely true that the end of the Cold War has encouraged secessionist movements, but there is no sign that states' support for the legitimacy of interstate boundaries has weakened.

Turning to the possible explanation that the defeat of the great majority of territorial revisionist states has rested on the military superiority of the attacked states, there is little indication that most revisionist states have generally been the weaker combatants. In the international wars that emerged from the breakup of former Yugoslavia, the new revisionist Serb-dominated state of Yugoslavia was certainly stronger than Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. In Latin America, Nicaragua was militarily stronger than Honduras in their 1957 war. In Africa, Egypt was militarily stronger than the Sudan, Ghana stronger than Upper Volta, Morocco stronger than Algeria, Mali stronger than Burkina Faso, Somalia generally stronger than Ethiopia in the Ogaden region, and Libya generally stronger than Chad. In the Middle East, Iraq was stronger than Kuwait. Finally, in Asia, Indonesia was certainly stronger than Malaysia. The key point concerning this brief survey is that a good number of the unsuccessful revisionist states were, in fact stronger. Overall, there is a strong evidence of a norm against coercive territorial revisionism which was backed by almost all states in the great majority of territorial wars.

Richard Rosecrance implies a central reason for the stabilization of boundaries when he observes that aggressive war is losing its "justification." (Rosecrance 1996: 58) The historical fact is that wars of territorial aggrandizement have been difficult to justify since 1945, and they are seldom tolerated. Aggression lost its justification formally in the adoption of the UN Charter, and the norm has been reinforced by other international treaties. This normative change is reflected in the marked decrease in the incidences and success of territorial revisionist wars. Statesmen do view the world through different moral lenses than they did in the past.

Boundaries of Secessionist States Since 1945

Although this article focuses on the stability of interstate territorial boundaries in the last half century, there is a related development that deserves noting. It is that in the case of the nine states that have broken up into two or more states, the new states have maintained the same boundaries that they had as constituent units of their previous states (Table 3). In other terminology, their former internal administrative boundaries have become interstate boundaries. This is another indication of the conservatism of members of international society concerning boundaries. With regard to spatial jurisdictional boundaries, states seem to flee from uncertainty. They not only do not like challenges to interstate boundaries; they also like to know what the boundaries of secessionist states will be. International conflict over jurisdictional boundaries is a Pandora's box that they want closed or at least opened so little that whatever change occurs is narrowly circumscribed. It is also interesting to note that of the nine cases of state dissolution, four seceding entities (Eritrea, Gambia, Syria, and Singapore) were politically separate units in the recent past, and another (Namibia) was always regarded by the United Nations as an ex-colonial entity that should be independent. The other three cases, of course, are the recent dissolutions of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Overall it is fair to say that secession has been an uncommon and unwelcome phenomenon.

Table 3. Secessions, 1946–96

Secessions	Key Developments
Europe	
14 republics from Russian-dominated USSR 1991	14 non–Russian republics rejected continued membership in USSR. Borders of republics were accepted as international borders.
4 republics from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia 1991–95	4 non–Serbian republics declared independence; wars in Croatia and Bosnia lasted until 1995. Borders of five states reflect former internal boundaries.
Slovakia (from Czechoslovakia) 1992	Czechs (now Czech Republic) acceded to desire of Slovaks to secede. Border between previous republics was accepted.
Asia	
Singapore (from Malaysia) 1965	Singapore joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963. In 1965 Singapore (which does not share a land boundary with Malaysia) seceded with approval of Malays.
Bangladesh (from Pakistan) 1971	East Pakistan (Bengalis) sought independence from West Pakistan (which was not contiguous). India provided military aid to Bengalis in civil war.
Middle East	
Syria (from UAR) 1961	In 1958 Egypt and Syria formed United Arab Republic. In 1961 Syria (which is not contiguous with Egypt) seceded.
Africa	
Gambia (from Senegambia) 1989	Senegal and Gambia formed Senegambia in 1982. In 1989 Gambia declared independence with its pre-1982 boundaries.
Namibia (from South Africa) 1990	Namibia was a League Mandate. South Africa refused to make it a UN Trust Territory. As a result of civil war and external pressure, South Africa finally granted independence to Namibia with the former internal and League Mandate boundary.
Eritrea (from Ethiopia) 1993	Eritrea, a UN trust territory, was joined to Ethiopia in 1952. In the 1960s, the Eritreans launched a secessionist war that lasted three decades. The pre-1952 boundary was accepted for Eritrea.

NOTE: Attempted secession of Turkish Repubic of Northern Cyprus (with Turkish military support) is not included because no state apart from Turkey has recognized it.

In Europe, the successful secessions all occurred in the early 1990s with the breakups of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia. In the case of Yugoslavia, the United States initially encouraged the constituent republics to maintain the political unity of the country, but when secession by some of them became inevitable, the United States and the European powers went to tremendous lengths to preserve the former internal administrative boundaries of Croatia and Bosnia as their new international boundaries. These boundaries were legitimated in the original recognitions of these states in 1992, the 1995 Dayton accord, and the 1996 accords between Yugoslavia (Serbia), on the one hand, and Croatia and Bosnia, on the other. (Weller 1992: 587, 602; Owen 1995; Ullman 1996) There were no serious disputes with regard to the acceptance of the former internal adminstrative boundaries for the new Czech and Slovak states; and in the case of the fifteen new states that emerged from the Soviet Union, they all accepted the former internal boundaries as interstate boundaries at the time of Soviet Union's breakup in 1990. Russia in particular took a strong position against any boundary changes despite the fact that 25 million Russians lived in the other fourteen states at the time of independence.

Since 1991 secessionist movements have arisen in Abkhazia and Ossetia in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, and Chechyna in Russia. And while they could lead to secessions (especially for Chechyna and Nagorno-Karabakh), the only possible change in an internal administrative boundary would involve Nagorno-Karabakh's union with Armenia (i.e., apart from Nagorno-Karabakh, a small border corridor of Azerbaijan could go to Armenia). It is noteworthy that the Western countries (particularly through the OSCE and the United Nations) are working for the maintenance of the traditional interstate boundaries. They would certainly prefer not to be confronted with the provocative issue of approving boundaries for secessionist states or regions. (Hunter 1994: 142–178; Walker, Schofield and Goldenberg 1996) It is also worthwhile noting that the international community has consistently refused to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which emerged eventually from the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus and Turkey's bringing together the ethnic Turks in the northern part of the island. The boundary imposed by Turkey is completely arbitrary, and no state apart from Turkey has recognized Northern Cyprus' declaration of independence in 1983. Also, the United Nations has supported the territorial integrity of Cyprus. (UN Security Council resolution 541 (November 1983); Keesing's 30 (January 1984): 32638-32640; Necatigil 1989)

Of the two secessions in Asia (Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 and Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971), there was no issue of boundaries since they were not geographically contiguous. (Young 1994; Goldstein 1992: 89-91) An absence of contiguity also existed with regard to the one case of secession in the Middle East -- the secession of Syria from the United Arab Republic in 1961 after a three-year union. In Africa, there were three cases (Gambia from Senegambia in 1989, Namibia from South Africa in 1990, and Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1993), and in all of them the seceding areas had been independent from the larger entity in the recent past, and there was no trouble with the acceptance of the former boundaries. (Iyob 1995: 29, 140; Gellar 1995: 92-93)

The international society of states has definitely discouraged the territorial disintegration of its own members. States have, however, acceded to secessions when they were consensual or no other option seemed feasible. Still they have seemed to group around a norm that the new states must accept their former internal administrative boundaries as their new international boundaries. This is what has happened in the nine secessionist cases that we reviewed above. It is impossible to declare that this is now an authoritative rule of international practice. It is, however, quite possible that this norm will become entrenched as a part of the new territorial order which flows from states' concern for order and certainty with regard to international jurisdictional issues. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that states and international commercial interests abhor uncertainty over what political entities have jurisdiction over particular geographical spaces. International conservatism, needless to say, flows from concerns for predictability and order.

IV.   Roots of the New Territorial Stability

The analysis strongly indicates that the stabilization of international boundaries involves a new territorial covenant in world politics which constitutes a break with the practice of earlier eras when borders were altered far more readily and arbitrarily at the will of powerful states, often at the end of great power wars. But how should we account for the existence of this normative change? There is obviously no single reason why territorial boundaries have obtained a greater stability in the international order. There is a modest number of principal reasons, and each one tends to apply more to certain groups of states or world regions than to others. The stability of borders is a global development, but many of the most plausible reasons do not apply to all states in the world. It is also important to emphasize that some reasons are *normative* in character -- i.e., they point to underlying standards of conduct of the post-1945 society of states, and some are *instrumental* in character -- i.e., they point to utilitarian calculations. In addition, there is also one major supportive condition: the absence of great power war. Accordingly, this section is organized with these categories in mind. Normative factors are considered first because they are fundamental to contemporary international society.

Four interrelated normative values are at the root of this remarkable international change: a democratic belief concerning peaceful dispute resolution; a general concern for international order; opposition to colonialism; and a belief in national self-determination for the civic nation. The significance and consequences of democracy for international relations has been highlighted in the burgeoning literature on "the democratic zone of peace" with its thesis that democracies do not fight democracies. (Doyle 1983,1986; Russett 1993; Brown 1996; Holsti 1996) A central argument is that *democratic states accept the same standards of mutual respect and the peaceful settlement of disputes* in relations with each other that they enforce in relations among individuals and government entities within their own borders. They are not prepared to violate the rights of citizens of other democracies. That creates a reciprocal self-restraint based on mutual regard rather than mutual fear. We should thus expect individual democracies to consider the borders of other democratic states as inviolable owing to the conception and value of such borders as belonging, by rights, to a nation or people and not merely to a state or government.

The democracy thesis obviously applies, although imperfectly of course, to that zone of world politics that can be summed up by the expression "the West" and more specifically by the states associated in the G-7, the EU, the OECD, the OSCE, and NATO's Partnership for Peace. Although democracy is making important inroads in parts of Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia, the thesis does not apply to the still numerous authoritarian countries outside North America and Europe. This fact makes any assertion that the territorial covenant rests on democracy problematic because respect for existing borders is generally high in both zones. Additional conjectures are thus called for to explain why the territorial covenant is sustained in relations between democratic and non-democratic states, and also in relations among authoritarian states themselves.

A norm that provides insights into answering this question relates to a central interest of states in preserving *international order* which encompasses the importance of rule-governed behavior in international relations and freedom from external coercion. (Bull 1977) The weight that states have attached to this norm has varied over time and among groups of countries, and in addition the reasons for states' attachment have varied. In the case of the advanced industrialized countries their attachment to democracy supports their attachment to the norm. Today in the case of many Third World states, and especially those from Africa, their strong attachment to international order is grounded in their own internal weakness. They do not generally possess military capabilties to defend themselves, and any external attack is likely to undermine their own tenuous control over their multiethnic domestic societies. African authoritarian regimes have agreed to respect the territorial covenant, as disclosed by their continuing and unwavering commitment to the principle of territorial integrity in article three of the OAU Charter, in full awareness that not to do so would be to take incalculable risks with regard to their own areas of political control. Since 1963 they have been following Benjamin Franklin's advice to John

Hancock at the signing of the Declaration of Independence: "We must indeed all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." It is safer for most of these regimes to have existing borders respected because, by eliminating the threat of foreign intervention, the problem of regime protection and survival is confined to the domestic system. (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Jackson 1990; Zacher 1979: ch. 5)

The decline of territorial revisionism in world politics and especially the Third World points to another norm that has been central to international relations in the last half of the twentieth century: *the illegitimacy of colonialism.* The consolidation of this norm in the 1940s and 1950s was undoubtedly supported by the democratic values of the West, but nationalism within the Third World and the Cold War also played roles. Without that basic normative change it is doubtful that decolonization would have occurred as soon or spread as fast and far as it did. (Jackson, 1993) The norm has also had definite implications for the post-colonial era. There have not been any subsequent attempts by Western democracies to reestablish legal possession of Third World territories after they terminated their colonial rule. If it were attempted, there would be no generally accepted normative justification for it. On the contrary, there would be almost universal condemnation. Territorial aggrandizement against developing countries has become illegitimate. The post-1945 and post-colonial normative order has provided the developing states of the Third World with far more protection from military intervention than most people would have dreamt was possible prior to World War II. (Jackson 1990; Nadelman 1990) Respect for the borders of even the weakest and most deeply divided of those states is a deeply ingrained characteristic of contemporary world politics.

Behind this general reluctance to violate the territorial integrity of the weak is a new international ethos which has roots in the nineteenth century and has become very prominent in the second half of the twentieth century: the moral idea that states everywhere belong to their populations whether or not they are democracies. That is the above-mentioned *norm of self-determination for the civic nation* which does not specify a requirement for a particular form of government -- but only that it exists and must be respected. International boundaries are today not only the markers of a state's legal jurisdiction and political control; they are lines that define separate and distinctive nations and peoples which are assumed to have inherent moral value. To interfere with such boundaries without the consent of the peoples involved is to violate the normative doctrine of self-determination based on the civic nation defined by existing state jurisdictions. As noted above, states flirted with the notion of national self-determination based on the ethnic nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and while they now accept the occasional breakup of multiethnic states into two or more states, the overriding consensus now is in favor of the civic nation with its present juridical boundaries. (Mayall 1990)

Instrumental considerations also enter states' support for the territorial covenant, and a key consideration concerns the *destructiveness of war in the nuclear era.* With the advent of nuclear weapons, territorial wars between hostile great powers are likely to bring massive losses of life and property to *all* states involved in such conflicts (as well as many non-combatant states) if such weapons are used. In the late 1960s, John Herz (1969) pointed out that one of the ironies of the new military permeability of the state is the strengthening of territorial states. The fear of nuclear war is largely responsible for the emergence of what he termed the era of "neoterritoriality" in which states cooperate to protect each other's territorial integrity because territorial wars could lead to military holocausts. While this development in nuclear weaponry influences particularly territorial revisionism by the great powers, it affects many other states as well because those states often follow the leadership of the great powers. Also, they are generally interested in preventing great power wars that could have destructive side-effects for them. (Jervis 1989; Waltz 1990)

The character of conventional wars nowadays can also discourage territorial revisionism by threatening the *disruption of international commerce and national development programs.* Although this line of liberal thinking has a long pedigree (Zacher and Matthew 1995: 124-126), it is strikingly evident in our era of interdependent "trading states" which eschew warfare because of its profoundly negative economic effects. (Rosecrance 1986; 1996) States' willingness to refrain from territorial wars is influenced by their ability to secure resources and goods through trade and investment, and such

accessibility is dependent on the existence of an open trading system such as we have known in the later twentieth century. (Kaysen 1990: 57) This proviso is an important point since a breakdown in the liberal economic order could reverse the more pacific policies that states are pursuing. This instrumental explanation for the stability of borders particularly applies to the advanced industrialized countries, but it also applies signficantly to the modernizing countries of Asia and Latin America which are generally loathe to see wars disrupt their economic development programs.

Related to the previous point, territorial revisionist wars would also be costly for international firms and for the welfare of many peoples because such *wars would destabilize, if not destroy, states' development of international economic regimes* that protect property rights, facilitate openness, and promote order. (North and Thomas 1973; Kapstein 1994; Zacher with Sutton 1996) Such regimes are increasingly central to global economic prosperity. The interest of transnational economic firms in supporting the territorial order has been pinpointed by Robert Cox when he remarked that "the globalizing economy requires the backing of territorially based state power to enforce its rules." (1996: 278) International economic regimes require that rules be applied by efficient stable states within their own territories; and territorial wars undermine states' ability to be effective implementers of these regimes. Politically effective states, such as those of the OECD, are pillars of international regimes that facilitate economic globalization. States' reluctance to see the disruption of international economic relations from warfare is in part influenced by a growth of "consumerism" or the increased weight that people in modern and modernizing societies assign to material welfare. Francis Fukuyama has called this development "the gradual victory of the desiring part of the soul." (1992: 185)

It remains the case, however, that many states in some Third World peripheries, have not participated significantly in global economic growth as major beneficiaries; and the above economic considerations do not signficantly influence them. For Third World governments the economic penalties of warfare may not be so great, and in fact some of them have been beset by civil wars for long periods. (Holsti 1996) In some cases local internal wars may even take place without disrupting the small modern trading enclaves that exist, as happened in Nigeria's civil war with regard to the insulated modern oil sector of the economy. In those cases war and trade are not in such sharp conflict, and thus economic costs are not so helpful for explaining the stability of borders.

It would be erroneous to think that all local internal wars have been confined to the Third World, for that definitely has not been the case since the breakup of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia. In the cases of the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, economic consumerism was subordinated to ethnonationalism. However, what is most interesting about these wars for our purposes is their failure to alter the inherited internal administrative borders of former Yugoslavia which were reconstituted as the new international borders of that part of Europe. As indicated, in the Dayton Accords the great powers insisted that those inherited borders be accepted and respected by all former warring parties.

While the costs of territorial revisionism have increased for major military powers and economically successful states, the benefits of territorial acquisition have actually decreased owing to *the reduced capacity of occupiers to obtain the cooperation of conquered populations* (Deutsch 1953; Lieberman 1996) and *the declining economic value of land* vis-à-vis other factors of production. Gilpin has noted a marked decrease in the value of land as an economic resource and has written that a state can now gain more "through specialization and international trade" than it can "through territorial expansion and conquests." (1981: 125, 132; Kaysen 1990: 54) Again, it should be emphasized that this argument applies more to developed, industrialized economies and less to agrarian or even resource-based economies for whom land is still an important resource. These countries however, as noted above, have their own reasons for supporting the territorial order -- in particular, their own weakness in controlling internal as well as external threats.

Having surveyed these normative and instrumental considerations that have supported the territorial covenant, the question arises as to which ones have been and are particularly crucial. Some interesting insights into this question are offered by Peter Lieberman's recent study *Does Conquest Pay?* (1996) His conclusion is that the conquest of industrial societies has provided economic and military gains as long as the aggressor did not meet strong military resistance and was willing to use strong

repressive measures against the local population. He states, however, that the fact that wars can produce material gains does not mean that wars will regularly occur as they have in the past. He remarks that "grounds for optimism can be found in the fact that democracies are unlikley to fight each other or to make conquest pay. Their continued stability and increasing numbers provides much reassurance. So does deterrence, especially nuclear deterrence, by increasing the costs of war beyond any imaginable gain." (154)

Lieberman's analysis correctly points to democracy and nuclear deterrence as the key factors in sustaining peace, and the demise of territorial revisionist wars more specifically. In the case of democracy, not only does it undergird the norm of mutual regard and the peaceful settlement of disputes, but its value structure penetrates the norms of anti-colonialism, self-determination for the civic nation, and even international order. These previously-discussed norms are parts of a seamless web of political supports for the territorial covenant. The nuclear revolution is also tremendously important in that it has had a major impact on the great powers' reluctance to engage in mortal combat. As Gilpin has noted, it is great power wars that have been responsible for the major historical incidences of territorial revisionism (Gilpin 1981: 37); and the absence of great power wars since 1945 has, of course, had an important influence on the decline in territorial exchanges. The economic developments supporting the territorial covenant are still very important, but they do not seem to occupy as central roles as the normative components of democracy and the military technology revolution.

V. Conclusion

In the twentieth century, and especially since 1945, states have not only come to a judgment that they should not murder each other; they have adopted the position that they should not maim each other -- that is to say, they should not cut off pieces of other states' territory. That judgment is based not only on the expedience of self-interest but also and more fundamentally on the norm of mutual recognition and regard. There has always been at least a minimal understanding that interstate boundaries are for the benefit of all sovereign states and are not simply products of instrumental accords by adjacent or more distant polities. What distinguishes the post-1945 era from previous eras in that respect is the legitimation not merely of existing sovereign states but also their particular borders and the populations contained by them. Today states are more respectful of each other's territory and identity, or in a different terminology, they are more normatively committed to the territorial covenant than they have ever been.

If the foregoing explanations about international boundaries are valid, why is there so much talk nowadays about the growing irrelevance of boundaries in a world where goods, information and peoples are crossing state lines in growing volumes and where international regimes govern an increasing number of international issue areas? The puzzle is dissolved once we realize that international boundaries not only separate states but also bind and even unite them. International boundaries and international transactions are not in fundamental contradiction to each other. States with mutually accepted borders are best able to cooperate with each other in order to assure security and welfare for their populations, and international economic transactions cannot successfully operate without state political and legal support. It is crucial that there are political units that can apply norms and rules that make productive economic relations and stable social relations possible on the international plane. States are those units, and for the foreseeable future it is difficult to imagine any alternative to states in that regard. (Hirst and Thompson 1995: 432)

The puzzle is also easier to understand once we recognize that international boundaries disclose contemporary world politics as not only a utilitarian sphere but also a normative sphere. In the twentieth century territorial states have come to be understood as the homes of separate political peoples, or civic nations, who are still defined by international boundaries even when they trade, communicate and travel at ever increasing rates and in ever increasing numbers across them. That norm of mutual respect among self-governing civic nations is most clearly evident in regard to democratic states. But even non-

democratic states are considered to be expressions of popular self-determination. If that is the normative conception of sovereign states today, and we believe it is, there is no place for territorial aggrandizement. However, there is still ample room for international transactions and regimes that constrain states' policy autonomy in a host of issue areas. The contemporary reality is that states are increasingly protected by the society of states in certain ways while they are becoming ever more dependent on international transactions and institutions.

As the twenty-first century dawns, there is little possibility that the world of states will evolve into one universal political entity any time soon. A global neighborhood may be arising in which humans everywhere, both as individuals and as members of various non-state groups, are rapidly expanding their interactions and transactions in spite of international boundaries. (Report of the Commission on Global Governance 1995). It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that that global transformation is the death knell of territorially defined sovereign states. If anything, the growth of global commerce confirms the sanctity and utility of such states. That conclusion reflects two closely-related theoretical perspectives which for us are clearly the most cogent for shedding light on the territorial covenant. The first is the Grotian perspective which emphasizes international society as a constitutional arrangement based on procedural and prudential norms. (Bull, Kingsbury, Roberts 1990; Jackson 1990) The second is the Westphalian liberal perspective which emphasizes international regimes to promote order, welfare, and moral propriety among -- and not above -- sovereign states. (Zacher and Matthew 1995; Zacher 1992)

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