March 29, 2010

COLONIAL CARTOGRAPHIES AND POSTCOLONIAL BORDERS: THE UNENDING WAR IN AND AROUND AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Many of today’s pervasive and intractable security and nation-building dilemmas issue from the dissonance between the prescribed model of territorially bounded nation-states and the imprisonment of postcolonial polities in territorial straitjackets bequeathed by colonial cartographies. With a focus on the Durand Line, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the epicenter of the prolonged war in the region, this article explores the enduring ramifications of the mutually constitutive role of colonialism and modern law. The global reach of colonial rule reordered subjects and reconfigured space. Fixed territorial demarcations of colonial possessions played a pivotal role in this process. Nineteenth century constructs of international law, geography, geopolitics, and the frontier, fashioned in the age of empire, were interwoven in the enabling frame that made the drawing of colonial borders like the Durand Line possible. Imperatives of colonial rule and compulsions of imperial rivalries positioned these demarcations that often cut across age-old cultural and historical social units. Postcolonial states inherited these demarcations and, with them, a host of endemic political and security afflictions. Modern international law, which in its incipient stage lent license to colonial rule, today legitimates colonial cartographies, thereby accentuating postcolonial dilemmas of nation-building and territorial integrity. By freeze-framing inherited colonial borders, international law forces disparate people to circumscribe their political aspirations within predetermined territorial bounds, precluding political and territorial arrangements in tune with their aspirations. To silence the questions that rise from colonial territorial demarcations, international law raises the specter of disorder. It seeks to preserve order, even an unjust and dysfunctional one. In the process, international law betrays a deeper affliction that plagues it - its refusal to squarely face its complicity in colonial domination accentuates its inability to resolve today’s international disputes procreated by colonial cartographies.

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Frontiers are indeed the razor’s edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death of nations.  

We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man’s foot has ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were.

Three degrees of latitude upset the whole jurisprudence and one meridian determines what is true. It is a funny sort of justice whose limits are marked by a river; true on this side of the Pyrenees, false on the other.

A place on the map is also a place in history.

I. Introduction

When the U.S. decided to inject another 30,000 troops into the current Afghan war, now in its ninth year, *The New York Times* told us that “[i]t’s not about Afghanistan. It’s about a people straddling a border.” It went on to explain:

The land is not on any map, but it’s where leaders of Al Qaeda and the Taliban both hide. It straddles 1000 miles of the 1600-mile Afghan-Pakistani border. It is inhabited by the ethnic Pashtun, a fiercely independent people that number 12 million on the Afghan side and 27 million on the Pakistani side. They have a language (Pashto), an elaborate traditional code of legal and moral conduct (*Pashtunwali*), a habit of crossing the largely unmarked border at will, and a centuries-long history of foreign interventions that ended badly for the foreigners.

The report adds: “[T]he Pashtun themselves have never paid the boundary much regard since it was drawn by a British diplomat, Mortimer Durand, in 1893. ‘They don’t recognize the border.

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5. Scott Shane, *The War in Pashtunistan*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 6, 2009, at WR 1. There exists a remarkable historical parallel to the 2009 “surge or withdraw” debate in the US. Faced with escalating resistance during their two year presence in Afghanistan during what Eurocentric history styles the First Afghan War (1839-41), the British agonized between the choice to remain in the country for “many years to come” with an increased force, or to get out altogether, convinced that they had “no middle course to pursue with safety and with honor.” OLAF CAROE, THE PATHANS: 550 B.C. – A.D. 1957, at 23 (1965). See also Eric Schmitt, *Cables Detail Envoy’s Worry on Karzai Role*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 26, 2010, at A1.
They never have. They never will.” An American military officer complains: “The only ones who recognized the border were us, with our G.P.S.” Some describe the Durand Line as one “drawn on water.” Perhaps, but it has been on fire for over a hundred years.

Fig. 1. The Durand Line and the Pashtun Areas. For over a century, the Durand Line and the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been the epicenter of political and military conflicts in the region and beyond. As the current cycle of wars in and around Afghanistan, which started with the Soviet invasion in 1979, enters its thirty-first year, this line continues to both create and aggravate security challenges. The U.S. Army’s official history of the war in Afghanistan, covering the period from 2001 to 2005, observes that “the single greatest obstacle to conceptualizing … [this war] in a holistic sense was ambivalence about …nation-building…[in] Afghanistan [that] remained a failed state.” It bemoans that

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7 Id. quoting Shuja Nawaz, director of the South Asia Center at the Atlantic Council, Washington, D.C. Pashtun, Pakhtun, Pashtoon, and Pathan are among the various designations used for this ethnic group. I will use the term Pashtun, unless quoting from or citing other materials.
8 Id. at WR 4.
while “the need for a plan that …offered a clear vision for this transition should have been obvious,” … instructions were to “avoid being enmeshed in nation building.” It concludes that:

The Afghan experience reinforces the critical point that regardless of the nature of the Army’s future campaigns, U.S. soldiers will almost inevitably interact with foreign cultures. If these campaigns are focused on nation building, cultural awareness will become not just a necessary but perhaps a critical skill like marksmanship or land navigation.

All this raises many questions about the relationship between contested borders, nation-building, failed states, cultural difference, and foreign interventions. In particular, it puts into contention the elusive search for the “nation-state,” a term absent in any English language dictionary before 1950. In response to these vexing questions, we are offered a “bifurcated world … inhabited by Hegel’s and Fujkuyama’s Last Man … [and] Hobbes’ First Man.”

Binary geographies of danger and safety are deployed that see “bloody boundaries” between a “functioning core” and a “non-integrating gap,” with the “disconnectedness” between the two designated as the “ultimate enemy.” An inverted map of the world is unfolded to offer prescriptions for “[g]eostategic success,” namely, “prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, … keep tributaries pliant and protected, and …keep the barbarians from coming together.” A “new paradigm” is enunciated for a war of “uncertain

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12 Id. at 327, emphasis added.
13 Id. at 336, emphasis added.
duration” against “the enemies of civilization.”\textsuperscript{18} One that “renders obsolete [and]… quaint” established rules of war.\textsuperscript{19} This article argues that the Afghan war, like many of today’s international conflicts, is rooted in contested borders that have not stood the test of time. Contested borders require that we “rethink the lazy separations between past, present, and future.”\textsuperscript{20} Conflicts that appear as new iterations of the binary-divides between civilized versus uncivilized, reason versus faith, and modernity versus fundamentalism, only confirm the “presence of the past.”\textsuperscript{21} Disruptions of the triumphal march of civilization, reason, and modernity necessitate that we shift our focus from “present futures to present pasts.”\textsuperscript{22} However, any effort to look back and bring into relief the history that animates the present confronts “a privilege of power too often unseen: the luxury of not having had to know, a parochialism and insularity that those on the margins can neither enjoy nor afford.”\textsuperscript{23} Often, contemporary ills have their roots in past policies and actions. When faced with intractable conflicts, it is useful to heed to the admonition: “Always historicize!”\textsuperscript{24} Those interested in understanding why the escalating Afghan war remains intractable may benefit from insights into when, why, and how borders, nations, and states took shape in that region. They can also gain from understanding how modern international law, both in its incipient and mature stages, is implicated in designs that set the region into its current, unhappy course.

\textsuperscript{20} Derek Gregory, \textit{The Colonial Present} 7 (2008).
\textsuperscript{21} Etienne Balibar, \textit{Racism and Nationalism, in Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities} 38, 38 (Etienne Balibar & Immanuel Wallerstein eds., 1991).
\textsuperscript{24} Frederick Jameson, \textit{The Political Unconscious: Narrative as A Socially Symbolic Act} 9 (1981).
This article addresses questions of borders, cultures, nations, states, and foreign interventions underscored by the current war in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region by exploring the genealogy of the Durand Line, its conflict-ridden career, and the attendant role of the law. In this frame, this article interrogates modern law’s subscription to a “territorialist epistemology.” Part II inventories nineteenth century constructs of international law, geography, geopolitics, and borders that formed the scaffolding that made the drawing of the Durand Line possible. It shows that drawing lines, both actual and metaphoric, constitutes modern legal orders, particularly international law. Part III narrates the story of the demarcation of this line in the midst of imperial rivalries and the role it has played in colonial and postcolonial operations of power. It focuses on nation-building and security dilemmas of postcolonial states that are imprisoned in territorial straitjackets bequeathed by colonial cartographies. Part IV examines how international law preserves contested borders bequeathed by colonialism, and thereby precludes imaginative flowerings of self-determination in tune with identities and aspirations of communities located within and beyond received colonial boundaries. Part V draws conclusions about the mutually constitutive role of colonialism and international law in ordering spaces and subjects. It posits that conceptual and doctrinal frames of international law remain tangled in its colonial lineage, and thus accentuate postcolonial dilemmas and conflicts.

II. Scaffoldings of Colonial Cartographies

25Willem Van Schendel, The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State And Nation In South Asia 5 (2005). This entails a “transportation of the historically unique territorial structure of the modern interstate system into a generalized model of sociospatial organization, whether with reference to political, societal, economic, or cultural processes.” Nein Brenner, Beyond State-Centralism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies, 28 Theory & Society 39, 48 (1999). In this schema, “[a] nation can be imagined without a word or other symbol or color on a map, but this is impossible if boundary lines, the symbol which forms the entity of a map or a nation, are excluded.” Thongchai Winichakul, Siam Mapped: A History Of The Geo-Body Of A Nation 56 (1994).
Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about form, about images and imaginings.  

Drawing boundaries is the inaugural gesture of the law, while policing boundaries is its routine function. The genesis of law signals that “[t]he primordial scene of the nomos opens with a drawing of a line in the soil … to mark the space of one’s own.” Modern law’s insistent claims of its universality notwithstanding, lines of demarcation that separate legality from illegality often create zones where bodies and spaces are placed on the other side of universality, a “moral and legal no man’s land, where universality finds its spatial limit.” Material and discursive orders that enjoy hegemony in any setting fashion and enable instruments to draw these lines and carve out such zones. The story of the Durand Line testifies to this phenomenon.

The Durand Line was drawn by a colonial power in the nineteenth century, which was a defining phase in the consolidation of modern regimes of knowledge, along with the suturing of epistemology with the state. Therefore, it is critical to identify the conceptual ensemble that

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26 EDWARD SAID, CULTURE AND IMPERIALISM 7 (1993).
27 Cornelia Vishmann, Starting from Scratch; Concepts of Order in No Man’s Land, in WAR, VIOLENCE AND THE MODERN CONDITION 46 (Bernd Huppauf ed., 1997).
29 For the mutually constitutive roles of knowledge and power, see MICHEL FOUCAULT, POWER/KNOWLEDGE: SELECTED INTERVIEWS AND OTHER WRITINGS, 1972-1977 (Colin Gordon et al., trans., 1980). Thomas Richards argues that

The thread uniting the thought of … [leading nineteenth century intellectuals] was the idea that knowledge is inconceivable without the state: that the question of the state is a question of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge; that the classing of knowledge must be underwritten and directed by the state in its various capacities; that all epistemology became and must remain state epistemology in an economy of controlled information.

THOMAS RICHARDS, THE IMPERIAL ARCHIVE: KNOWLEDGE AND THE FANTASY OF EMPIRE 74 (1993). Here, I am also guided by the work of critical geographers regarding space and scale as actively produced through practices that are simultaneously material and meaningful. Of particular significance in this work is the mutually constitutive role of time and space. See generally HENRY LEBEVBRE, THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE N (1991); EDWARD SOJA, POSTMODERN GEOGRAPHIES: THE REASSERTION OF SPACE IN CRITICAL
furnished the scaffolding for such a venture. My position is that the conceptual and discursive apparatus of international law, modern geography, geopolitics, and borders are interwoven in the enabling frame that made the drawing of this conflict-ridden dividing line possible.

A. International Law and Differentiated Sovereignty

No sooner was a new world “discovered,” than a line, \textit{partition del mar oceano}, was drawn by the Treaty of Thordessillas on June 7, 1494.\textsuperscript{30} This line divided the world beyond Europe between Portugal and Spain, and supplemented Pope Alexander VI’s edict \textit{Inter caetera divinae} of May 4, 1494, with an agreement between sovereigns.\textsuperscript{31} The right of two royal houses of Europe over the division of the non-European world as “lords with full, free, and every kind of power, authority and jurisdiction”\textsuperscript{32} now stood grounded both in divine sanction and sovereign will and consent. This inaugural act of the incipient global order injected colonialism into the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textsuperscript{30} The line ran from the North Pole to the South Pole, approximately through the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Portugal and Spain agreed that all newly discovered territories west of the line would belong to Spain and those east of the line to Portugal. Frances Gardiner Davenport, \textit{European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648}, in Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917/1967, at 85, 171. Carl Schmitt, \textit{The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum} 89 (G. L. Ulmen trans., 2006). This treaty was invoked in recent year by Argentina and Chili to press their claims over Falkland/Malvinas Islands and an Antarctic sector, respectively. Subsequently, the Treaty of Saragossa (1526), drew the Molucca Line through the Pacific Ocean along the 135\textsuperscript{th} meridian. \textit{Id. See also, Anthony Pagden, Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination} (1990).
  \item \textsuperscript{32} Tr. Dominos cum plena libera et omnimoda potestate, auctoritate et jurisdictione. The Papal edict besides seeking expansion of \textit{fides catholica} and \textit{Christiana lex}, and conversion of barbarian peoples, expressly effected \textit{donatio} of territories, as in classic feudal law. \textit{See Schmitt, supra note \textsuperscript{30} at 91, f.n. 7.}
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genetic code of modern international law. The “amity lines” initiated by a secret clause of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis of 1559, institutionalized a differentiation between the European “sphere of peace and the law of nations from an overseas sphere in which there was neither peace nor law.” These “amity lines,” that mandated peaceful cooperation within these lines, and gave license to unbridled conflict without, gave rise to the maxim: “Beyond the equator there are no sins.” In the new global order, “[e]verything that occurred ‘beyond the line’ remained outside the legal, moral, and political values recognized on this side of the line.” In this zone, “beyond the line” and “beyond the equator,” doctrines of “discovery,” “terra nullius,” and “anima nullius” flourished. The career of modern international law is the story of making, maintaining, and managing this enduring line.

33 Modern international law, therefore “is a world-historic result of the early colonial experience of transatlantic and eastern trade … it is the dialectical result of the very process of conflictual, expanding inter-polity interaction in an age of early state forms and mercantile colonialism.… [I]nternational law is colonialism.” CHINA MIEVILLE, BETWEEN EQUAL RIGHTS: A MARXIST THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 168-9 (2005).
34 A. Claire Cutler, Towards a Radical Political Economy Critique of Transnational Economic Law, in INT’L LAW ON THE LEFT: RE-EXAMINING MARXIST LEGACIES 204 (Susan Marks ed., 2008), internal citation omitted. For details of the amity lines, see SCHMITT, supra note, at 92-99.
35 Quoted in SCHMITT, supra note, at 90. See also, Boaventura de Souza Santos, supra note __ at 30, f.n. 10. One can trace the emergence of spheres of influence in the nineteenth century to the sixteenth century amity lines. For the status of such spheres of influence, see O. KEAL, UNSPOKEN RULES AND SUPERPOWER DOMINANCE 179-192 (1983); SCHMITT, supra note __ at 281-294.
37 Santos finds the idea of anima nullius, colonized people as empty receptacles, embedded in Pope Paul III’s bull Sublimis Deus of 1537, that declared that indigenous people of the colonies “were ‘truly men …[but] they are not capable of understanding the Catholic Faith but … desire exceedingly to receive it.’” Santos, supra note __ at 30, f.n. 12. See also, JAMES ANAYA, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW (2004). Pope Paul III reading of these “empty receptacles” is more optimistic than that of Lord Coke, who said in the landmark Calvin Case of 1602, that “if a Christian King should conquer a kingdom of an infidel, and bring them under submission, there ipso facto the laws of the infidel are abrogated, for that they be not only against Christianity, but against the law of God and of nature, contained in the Decalogue.” Calvin v. Smith, 7 Coke Rep. 1a, 77 Eng. Rep. 377, 397-8 (K. B. 1608). See also, Robert A. Williams, The Algebra of Federal Indian Law: The Hard Trial of Decolonizing and Americanizing the White Man’s Indian Jurisprudence, 1986 WIS. L. REV. 219 (1986). On the doctrine of territium res nullius, see PAUL KEAL, EUROPEAN CONQUEST AND THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (2003); BOYCE RICHARDSON, PEOPLE OF TERRA NULLIUS: BETRAYAL AND REBIRTH IN ABORIGINAL CANADA (1993).

This zone “beyond the line” also furnished the constitutive grounds for the founding canon of liberalism, modern law, and the identity of Europe. See MYTHOLOGY OF MODERN LAW, supra note __; PETER FITZPATRICK, MODERNISM AND THE GROUNDS OF LAW (2001); DIPESH CHAKRABARTY,
In the nineteenth century, colonialism animated a decisive turn in the evolution of modern international law, even though “international law consistently attempts to obscure its colonial origins, [and] its connections with the inequalities and exploitation inherent in the colonial encounter.”

The taken for granted universality of international law “was principally a consequence of the imperial expansion.” The development of modern conceptions of sovereignty and the international subject, which are bedrock constructs of modern international law, has little to do with the professed foundational concern of international law, i.e., stability of the relations between sovereign states. Rather, these were fashioned to manage the colonial relations of domination and difference.

Expansion of colonialism triggered a search for a legal framework that could legitimate the securing of a range of rights and privileges from colonized and dominated polities. Recognition of some measure of sovereignty of the dominated polities was warranted by the need to ensure that the terms of colonial treaties would be honored, even though the terms of these treaties betrayed a lack of sovereignty and equality. This tension raised anew the question of what entities were eligible to be regarded proper subjects of international law.

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41 The dilemma was that African and Asian social formations “could neither be ignored as States nor treated quite on the same footing of ordinary States.” T. Baty, Protectorates and Mandates, 2 BRIT. Y.B. OF INT’L L. 109, 112 (1921). See also, Antony Carty, The Decay of International Law 65-78 (1986).
42 International lawyers were emphatic that “the public law … has always been, and still is, limited to the civilized and Christian people of Europe and to those of European origin.” H. Wheaton, Elements of International Law 15-16 (A. Boyd ed. 2nd ed., 1880), emphasis added. Furthermore, “[t]he area in which the law of nations operates is supposed to coincide with the area of civilization. To be received within it is
law’s response was to jettison classical natural law postulates of sovereign equality, which now came to be considered “pseudo-metaphysical notions of what the essential qualities of Statehood ought to be,” and to turn to positivism based on actual practice of states. Frames of jus gentium, or principles of law common to all peoples, yielded to positivist ontology of law and sovereignty. This sharp turn yielded quick results. By the mid-nineteenth century, a new construct of differential sovereignty was entrenched in international law – sovereigns and international subjects were not alike in terms of rights, eligibilities, and competencies. Sovereignty was now to be seen as a differentially distributed bundle of rights. Several classes of sovereign states were constituted – some fully sovereign, others partly so; some part of the “family of nations,” some outside it; some entitled to domination, others with minimal legal competence. A sliding-scale of sovereignty emerged, stretching from “Great Powers” to colonies, with suzerains, protected states, and protectorates positioned in between. Given that “the founding conception of late nineteenth-century international law was not sovereignty but a collective (European) conscience,” it is no surprise that this sliding scale of sovereignty mirrored the Eurocentric scale of “civilization” attendant to colonialism. “[P]ositivism’s triumphant suppression of the non-European world” rested on the premise that “of uncivilized natives international law t[ook]

to obtain a kind of international testimony of good conduct and respectability.” T. LAWRENCE, THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 59 (3rd ed. 1905).

46 THE GENTLE CIVILIZER OF NATIONS, supra note __ at 51.
48 Finding the Peripheries, supra note __ at 7.
no account.”49 No wonder then that “[t]o characterize any conduct whatever towards a barbarous people as a violation of the laws of nations, only shows that he who so speaks has never considered the subject.”50 This muscular and positive international law at the service of “states with good breeding”51 produced a confluence of people and territory in the category “backward,” and legitimated colonial acquisition of “backward territory.”52 Note that in yet another deployment of the enduring civilized/uncivilized binary, the constituent statute of the

49 John Westlake, John Westlake on the Title to Sovereignty, in IMPERIALISM 45, 47 (Philip D. Curtin ed., 1971).
50 J. S. MILL, ESSAYS ON POLITICS AND CULTURE 406 (1962). Antony Anghie captures the relationship between international law’s turn to positivism and a particular characterization of colonized people well:

The violence of positivist language in relation to non-European peoples is hard to overlook. Positivists developed an elaborate vocabulary for denigrating these people, presenting them as suitable objects of conquest, and legitimizing the most extreme violence against them, all in the furtherance of the civilizing mission – the discharge of the white man’s burden.

Anghie, Finding the Periphery, supra note __ at 7. When confronted with some agreement between colonizers and the colonized, international law to this day remains at a loss to classify their nature much less their validity. For example, in Aloëboetoe v. Suriname, Judgment of Sep. 10, 1993, the Inter-American Court was confronted with a 1762 agreement between the Dutch and the Saramakas, a tribe that lives in Surinamese territory and was formed by African slaves fleeing from their Dutch owners, that recognized, among other things, the local authority of the Saramakas over their territory. The question was whether the obligations of the treaty are applicable, by succession, upon Suriname. The Court did “not deem it necessary to investigate whether or not that agreement is an international treaty.” Id. para 57. It simply noted that “the Commission has pointed out that it does not seek to portray the Saramakas as a community that enjoys international status. The autonomy it claims for the tribe is one governed by domestic public law.” Id. at para 58. It then indulged in a hypothetical to say that even if the agreement was an international treaty, it “would be null and void because it contracts the norms of jus cogens superveniens,” on account of providing for the capture and sale of slaves. Id. at 57.
51 J. WESTLAKE, COLLECTED PAPERS ON INTERNATIONAL LAW 6 (L. Oppenheim ed., 1914).
52 M. F. LINDSAY, THE ACQUISITION AND GOVERNMENT OF BACKWARD TERRITORIES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW: BEING A TREATISE ON THE LAW AND PRACTICE RELATING TO COLONIAL EXPANSION (1969 [1926]). This was, of course, in tune with what the courts of “civilized” states had held. For example, Johnson v. M’Intosh, the canonical American case about the legal import of discovery, had enunciated a positivist theory of law by holding that:

Conquest gives a title which Courts of the conqueror cannot deny…However extravagant the pretension of converting discovery of an inhabited country into conquest may appear; if the principle has been asserted in the first instance, and afterwards sustained; if a country has been acquired and held under it; if the property of the great mass of the community originates in it, it becomes the law of the land, and cannot be questioned.

Johnson v. M’Intosh 21 U.S. 543, 587-591 (1823). Of course, Europeans had to enforce their claims to lands occupied by “fierce savages … by the sword.” Id. at 590. See also, Robert A. Williams, Jr., THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN WESTERN LEGAL THOUGHT: DISCOURSES OF CONQUEST (1990).
International Court of Justice (ICJ) mandates that judges for this institution are to be selected with due regard to “the main forms of civilizations … of the world,” and the Court is required to apply “the general principles of law recognized by civilized nations.” The ICJ has lived up to this mandate by, for example, reaching out to “geographical Hegelianism” to resolve territorial disputes in Africa.

While imperatives of colonialism shaped positivist doctrines of modern international law, by the late nineteenth century they also ushered in a new global order where mutual rivalries among colonial powers gave way when concerted action in the service of maintaining colonial domination was warranted. The first concrete step in this direction was containment of the “scramble for Africa” at the Berlin Conference on the Congo (1884-85), which aimed “to bring the natives of Africa within the pale of civilization by opening up the interior of the continent to commerce.” This Conference, from which Africans were completely excluded, institutionalized the “right” of “Great Powers” to colonial dominion. The logic of nineteenth century international law could not have had it any other way:


54 See James Thuo Gathii, Geographical Hegelianism in Territorial Disputes Involving Non-European Land Relations: An Analysis of the Case Concerning Kasikili/Sedudu Island (Botswana/Namibia), in THE THIRD WORLD AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER: LAW, POLITICS AND GLOBALIZATION 75 (Antony Anghie et al., eds., 2003).


International law has to treat natives as uncivilized. It regulates, for the mutual benefit of the civilized states, the claims which they make to sovereignty over the region and leaves the treatment of the natives to the conscience of the state to which sovereignty is awarded.\textsuperscript{57}

Consider that the Berlin Conference took place in the midst of Europe’s agrarian crisis and the Great Depression of 1873-86, which had “shaken confidence in economic self-healing” and gave colonial expansion further impetus.\textsuperscript{58} This was also the time when a “specter of ‘overcivilization’” was breeding “militarism” and a longing for “imperial adventure” in the U.S.\textsuperscript{59} Great Power’s right to colonize now secure, collective military interventions to protect colonial orders were the next step in this progression. The coordinated military action in China by Western powers to put down the Boxer Uprising of 1900 was “the dramatic beginning of the contemporary phase of international history.”\textsuperscript{60} It was also in 1885, the year of the Berlin Conference, that British foreign policy and intelligence officials first developed blueprints for a “pan-Islamic” alliance between Egypt, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan against czarist Russia.\textsuperscript{61} This sowed a poison seed, the bitter fruits of which sour many a palate today. The Durand Line was drawn in this milieu.

\textsuperscript{57} John Weslake, International Law 142-3 (1894).
\textsuperscript{59} Jackson Lears, Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920 28-32 (2009).
This global framework animated instrumental deployment of the law to reorder colonized spaces and bodies. Law in the colony aimed to “reduce them to civility;” those who had “no skill of submission.” Violence was deemed a vital instrument of colonial progress, with law furnishing “the cutting edge of colonialism.” Violence in general and the violence of law in particular were seen as playing “the leading part in the creation of civilization.” Colonial rule deemed “our law … a compulsory gospel which admits of no dissent and no disobedience.” This overt concert of law and violence has been aptly characterized “lawfare: the effort to conquer and control indigenous peoples by the coercive use of legal means.” The geo-legal space of colonialism brings into sharp relief “the blood that has dried on the codes of law.”

In the colony, law congealed epistemic, structural, and physical violence. The colonized other, deemed an error of arrested evolution, was prescribed corrective norms of a higher rational order. This “soul making” colonial project entailed entrenchment of a layered legal order. First, the colony was inserted into the global legal system of hierarchically differentiated sovereignties. Second, metropolitan law was transplanted in the colony supplemented by exceptions that ensured that coercion displaced hegemony as

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its animating force,\textsuperscript{71} thereby ordering a “rule of difference” that mandated performance of nonidentity between the colonizer and the colonized.\textsuperscript{72} Third, through selective recognition, malleable norms of the colonized were truncated and reconstituted as fixed “customary law.”\textsuperscript{73} In the career of the Durand Line all these legal machinations of the colonial project came into play.

B. Modern Geography and the Colonial Encounter

Edward Said alerted us to “imaginative geographies” that fold distance into difference by multiplying partitions and enclosures that serve to demarcate “the same” from the “other” and by “designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is ‘ours’ and an unfamiliar space beyond ‘ours’ which is ‘theirs.’”\textsuperscript{74} Besides, “geography legitimates, excuses, rationalizes, in its very act of origination.”\textsuperscript{75} Examination of the role of geography within the matrix of modern regimes of knowledge production in general, and in colonialism in particular, is sorely needed. Modern social theory, while privileging time, has tended to treat space as “dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile.”\textsuperscript{76} The point of departure of this article, however, is that the spatial and the temporal are mutually constitutive, “in that each shapes and is simultaneously shaped by the other in a

\textsuperscript{71} See Ranajit Guha, Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India (1998).
\textsuperscript{72} Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and Its Fragments 16-24 (1993).
\textsuperscript{74} Edward Said, Orientalism 54 (1978); see also, Derek Gregory, Imaginative Geographies, 19 Progress in Human Geography 447 (1995).
\textsuperscript{75} Richard Peet, Modern Geographic Thought 12 (1998).
complex interrelationship which may vary in different social formations and at different
historical conjunctures.”\

Modern geography is “amongst the advance-guard of a wider ‘western’ epistemology,
deeply implicated in colonial-imperial power.” Not surprisingly, “geography is inescapably
marked (both philosophically and institutionally) by its location and development as a western-
colonial science.” From its very inception, modern geography formed part of the knowledge
production and application attendant to colonialism that aimed to get a grasp on colonized
territories and bodies by deploying an impulse to chart, count, and map. As a critical
component of the Enlightenment’s project of knowledge production, geography helped constitute
the “other” against which modernity itself was interpolated. Geography adopted the confident
regime of reason that “there can be nothing so remote that we cannot reach to it, nor so recondite
that we cannot discover it.” Geography was in the vanguard of this enterprise to reach,
discover, and grasp, and underwrote Europe’s “planetary consciousness.” Of course, what was
“discovered” was unavoidably constituted by the “discovery,” such that “[g]eography was not

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79 Id.
81 See GEOGRAPHY AND ENLIGHTENMENT (David N. Livingstone & Charles W. J. Withers eds., 1999). As
Fitzpatrick articulates:

Enlightenment creates the very monsters against which it so assiduously sets itself. These
monsters of race and nature mark the outer limits, the intractable ‘other’ against which
Enlightenment pits the vacuity of the universal and in this opposition gives its own
project a palatable content. Enlightened being is what the other is not. Modern law is
created in this disjunction.

PETER FITZPATRICK, THE MYTHOLOGY OF MODERN LAW 45 (1993). Modern law, then, “is imbued with this
negative transcendence … imperiously set against certain ‘others’ who concentrate the qualities it
opposes.” Id. at 10.
82 RENE DESCARTES, THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS DESCARTES 92 (Elizabeth Haldane & G. R. T. Ross
trans., 1967).
merely engaged in *discovering* the world; it was *making* it." Given the spatial imperatives of empire, modern geography developed “to serve the interests of imperialism in its various aspects including territorial acquisition, economic exploitation, militarism and the practice of class and race domination.” Geographers were “among the front ranks of explorers, surveyors, technologists, and ideologues of empire,” and often “the most vociferous imperialists.”

Geography played a critical role in colonial technologies of governance that produced territorially coherent units such as “India.” Colonizers were “anxious to inaugurate some system for … correcting and revising received geography of [the now colony].” To govern a territory, one must know it. Because supposedly, “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia,” the colonists tried “to graft the science of the West on to an Eastern stem.” They settled upon “a technological solution – ‘triangulation’- which promised to perfect geographical knowledge.” The survey of Bengal, initiated in 1763, and the resulting *Bengal Atlas* (1779) and the *Map of Hindoostan* (1782), were

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84 DAVID N. LIVINGSTONE, *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise* 168 (1992). This is in line with the mutually constitutive role of knowledge and power, whereby “[t]he Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be ‘Oriental’ in all those ways considered common-place by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it could be … made Oriental.” EDWARD SAID, *Orientalism* 5-6 (1979).


86 Neil Smith, *Geography, Empire and Social Theory*, 18 PROGRESS IN HUM. GEOGRAPHY 550 (1994).


88 Colonial administrators realized early that “existing maps were very inaccurate … only of service while India was an unknown region … but these ceased to be tolerable when that vast country became a British imperial possession, requiring to be administered.” CLEMENTS MARKHAM, *A Memoir on Indian Surveys* 399 (1895).


deemed works of “the first importance both for strategic and administrative purposes.”\textsuperscript{93}

Theoretical debates of geographers and geologists of Britain and continental Europe during the nineteenth century drew extensively on this work.\textsuperscript{94} The Great Trignometrical Survey of India (1878), guided by the “flawed … certainty and correctness granted by the Enlightenment’s epistemology” finally helped colonizers produce “their India.”\textsuperscript{95} This process furnished the grounds for the colonial production of India, that had “hardly ever been a single, integrated political entity,”\textsuperscript{96} as a bounded political unit, and substantiated that “an imagined epistemology could intervene to shape the political definition of actual territory.”\textsuperscript{97}

The late nineteenth century is by most accounts a unique moment in the history of modern geography. As colonialism spread across the globe, the “discipline [of geography] found itself embroiled in a world of contracting spaces and expanding ambitions.”\textsuperscript{98} This is when geography shifted its conceptual grounds from naturalistic theology to evolutionary biology, and geographers became part of the “stratum of organic intellectuals of empire.”\textsuperscript{99} Darwin’s theory of evolution through natural selection, Spencer’s theory of environmental determination, and Lamarck’s theory of inheritance left formative imprints on the discipline.\textsuperscript{100} As a result, modern

\textsuperscript{93} SCIENCE OF EMPIRE, supra note ___ at 142.
\textsuperscript{94} See Id., 143-146.
\textsuperscript{95} MAPPING AN EMPIRE, supra note ___ at 2, 16-17.
\textsuperscript{100} See David N. Livingstone, Natural Theology and Neo-Lamarckism: The Changing Context of Nineteenth-Century Geography in the United States and great Britain, 74 ANNALS OF THE ASS’N OF AM.
geography played a critical role in the modern constructions of race that enabled and sustained colonial domination. These constructions of racial difference and hierarchy helped reconcile colonial domination with liberal ideals of liberty and equality. Most important for this article, modern geography produced classifications of bodies and spaces that enabled colonial powers to draw “lines on a map which had little relation to underlying cultural or economic patterns … These designations continue to haunt these regions to this day.” The story of the Durand Line substantiates these charges.

C. Geopolitics and Imperial Designs

The late nineteenth century also saw the rise of the discipline of geopolitics – knowledge claims about the relationship between space and power, and particularly about the impact of geography and the conduct of foreign policy. A geopolitical vision is “any idea concerning the relation between one’s own and other places, involving feelings of (in)security or (dis)advantage (and/or) invoking ideas about a collective mission or foreign polity [which] requires at least a Them-and-Us distinction.” From its birth, this discipline bore the marks of the temporal and spatial context of its emergence, i.e., the

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The discipline’s professed claims to objectivity and neutrality notwithstanding, geopolitics “was always a highly ideological and deeply politicized form of analysis” that furnished “pseudo-scientific justifications for colonial expansionism....” Incipient geopolitics sutured colonialism with theories of biological and social evolution to predict the decline and even the demise of “inferior” races. In 1899, a military surveyor and future President of the Royal Geographical society made an evocative statement:

Truly, this period in our history has been well defined as the boundary-making era. ...such endless vista of political geography arises before us, ... such a vision of great burdens for the white man to take up in far-off regions, dim and indefinite as yet.

The founding canon of geopolitics is directly relevant to the story of the Durand Line. Haldor John Mackinder’s “Heartland” thesis foresaw a reassertion of Central Asia as swinging the global balance of power to the Asian heartland, which could become the base of a global


108 See, e.g., WALKER FITZGERALD, AFRICA: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ITS MAJOR REGIONS 137 (3rd ed. 1940). (“It is agreed that Negro and European civilizations cannot remain mutually exclusive while existing side by side in the same continent. .... It seems inevitable that the infinitely weaker civilization of the Negro should ultimately pass away.”) Emphasis added.

Alfred Mahan saw the territorial arc running from Turkey to China as a geopolitical “no man’s land,” one “destined” to be a disputed area between Russia and maritime powers. Nicholas John Spykman gathered these conceptual threads to weave the “Rimland” thesis which posits that the real power potential of Eurasia lay not in its heartland but in its littoral rim which was thickly populated, rich with resources, and strategically located. Consequently, “[w]ho controls the rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world.”

Mackinder had a specific recipe particularly relevant to the Durand Line: “In all the British Empire there is but one land frontier on which war-like preparation must ever be ready. It is the north-west frontier of India.” Later geopolitical enunciations about the region remain little more than worked-up permutations of the Makinder-Mahan-Spykman combine.

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110 See Halford Mackinder, The Physical Basis of Political Geography, 6 SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE 78 (1890); Chaturvedi, supra note__ at 7-8; ANITA SENGUPTA, HEARTLANDS OF EURASIA: THE GEOPOLITICS OF POLITICAL SPACE (2009). Mackinder was quite alert to the imperatives of financial capital to expand globally. He pointed out at the turn of the century in a speech delivered to a group of London bankers that power “will always be where there is the greatest ownership of capital … we are essentially the people who have capital, and those who have capital always share in the activity of brains and muscles of other countries.” Quoted in PETER J. Hugill, WORLD TRADE SINCE 1431: GEOGRAPHY, TECHNOLOGY, AND CAPITALISM 125 (1968).


112 See NICHOLAS JOHN SPYKMAN, AMERICA’S STRATEGY IN WORLD POLITICS: THE UNITED STATES AND THE BALANCE OF POWER (1943), and Chaturvedi, supra note, at 8-9.


115 See, e.g., THE GRAND CHESSBOARD, supra note ; THE PENTAGON’S NEW MAP, supra note; RALPH PETERS, NEW GLORY: EXPANDING AMERICA’S GLOBAL SUPREMACY (2005); RALPH PETERS, WARS OF BLOOD AND FAITH: THE CONFLICTS THAT WILL SHAPE THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2009); See also EMPIRE’S LAW: THE AMERICAN IMPERIAL PROJECT AND THE ‘WAR TO REMAKE THE WORLD,’ (Amy Bartholomew ed, 2006). The genesis of these related and lasting geopolitical enunciations is captured well by P. J. Taylor:

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century Britain and Russia had been rivals in much of Asia. While Britain was consolidating its hold on India and the route to India, Russia had been expanding eastwards and southwards producing many zones of potential conflict from Turkey through Persia and Afghanistan to Tibet. But instead of war, this became an arena of intrigue, of bluff and counter-bluff, know as the ‘Great Game’…Put simply, the heartland model is a codification and globalization of the Great Game; it brings a relatively obscure imperial contest on to the center stage.
D. Frontiers, Boundaries, and Borders:

Borders are human constructs built through an amalgamation of geography, cartography, theories of sovereignty, and prevailing constellations of power. In the process, “maps make reality as much as they represent it.” Any examination of borders often confronts an official politics of forgetting, an elaborate attempt to obliterate the contested origins and nature of the border. Borders take different forms in different historical and political circumstances. Usually traced back to the Roman Empire that marked out discrete territories to distinguish centers of population density and uninhabited surroundings, the history of borders and frontiers is ancient and varied. Romans extended this practice to Gaul and Britain. In the Middle Ages, newly discovered long-distance trade routes were loosely divided into zones as clear assertions of political control to allocate responsibility for protection of trade caravans and the right to levy transit charges. Consolidation of centralized monarchies in Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries ushered in the phase of defined political borders. The Renaissance made cartography popular; maps became an instrument of centralizing control. With colonialism, maps became a weapon of statecraft when imperial powers used topographical features on maps as bargaining chips among themselves. Boundaries were drawn to manipulate distribution of power among colonial

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powers, thereby creating a direct connection between colonialism and borders later inherited by postcolonial states. In this progression, a European practice of demarcated borders was imposed upon, and subsequently internalized by, postcolonial formations.

Borders just as often join what is different as divide what is similar. Here, it is important to distinguish *frontiers* from *boundaries*. A boundary denotes a line while a frontier is a zone. In effect, a boundary girds a frontier. Frontiers -- zones at the periphery of political orders -- have over the last few centuries been replaced by defined lines of political control, the borders of the state. The idea of the frontier had a particular valance in the colonial imaginary. Discourses of “discovery,” “terra nullius” and the “frontier” commingled to furnish license to occupy and subjugate coveted spaces that were represented as being “empty.” Indeed, for colonial settler-states, territorial expansion into and settlement of “empty” areas furnished the constitutive grounds of their identity.

During the phase of decolonization, borders became a crucial issue for postcolonial states. In most cases, the inherited borders were in large measure determined by geopolitical, economic, and administrative policies of colonial powers that had occupied these territories.

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121 See A. O. CUKWURAH, *The Settlement of Boundary Disputes in International Law* 11-16 (1967). By one account, “frontiers are real, boundaries are linear .... The former may be correctly described as natural .... The latter are artificial.” A. E. MOODIE, *Geography Beyond Politics* 73-4 (1947).


Colonial claims were often carved up with little regard to the coherence of historic, cultural, and ethnic zones. As a result, historical cultural units were split, and different cultures, religions, languages, identities, and affiliations found themselves enclosed in individual demarcated territorial units. The connection between a people and their territory, assumed and prescribed by Eurocentric theories of the “nation-state,” found no room in these configurations. These inherited colonial demarcations, reinforced by postcolonial states, often provoke challenge and resistance from below by assertions of identity and difference. Power-blocs of postcolonial formations, in an effort to legitimize their new-found hegemony, impose a firm control over the inherited borders to draw “sharper lines between citizens, invested with certain rights and duties, and ‘aliens’ or ‘foreigners.’” The result is territorial disputes with adjacent polities and suppression of difference within, that quickly become the primary preoccupations of the postcolonial states. The career of the Durand Line is an evocative story of these intractable conflicts and the inability of existing legal regimes to resolve them.

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III. Imperial Great Games and Drawing of Lines

What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.126

A. Great Game I: The Genesis of the “Buffer to a Buffer”

The Durand Line emerged as an instrumentality in the so-called Great Game,127 the contest between British colonial expansion in India and eastward colonial expansion of Czarist Russia, one that turned the intermediate region into “a cockpit of international rivalry.”128 During the nineteenth century, issues of frontiers, boundaries, and borders within the Persian Plateau as a geographical unit were contentious.129 Imperial efforts to fix boundaries of control that conflicted with the practices and lived experience of native populations for whom frontiers were essentially mobile and porous, compounded these contentions. This mobility and porosity stemmed from the region’s location at the junction of historic trade routes between China, India, Central Asia, Persia, and the Arab world.130 The Great Game was a contest, both overt and shadowy, over territory where different imperial orders came into volatile proximity. The conflicts turned on questions of territory, zones of influence, and spatial buffers.

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129 The term “Persian plateau” denotes the physical geography of a single plateau that today includes Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Iran. See GRAHAM P. CHAPMAN, THE GEOPOLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA: FROM EARLY EMPIRES TO THE NUCLEAR AGE 89 (3rd ed. 2009).
The British were unequivocal about their empire’s need to have “scientific frontiers” that had to be demarcated under “European pressure and by the intervention of European agents.”¹³¹ Lord Curzon, the arch-imperialist and Viceroy of India, proposed a specific recipe for colonial India - a “three-fold Frontier.”¹³² British imperial strategists were mindful of the simultaneous expansion of British and Russian empires in the heartland of Asia. A “frontier of separation” rather than a “frontier of contact” was to be the solution which led to the creation of protectorates, neutral zones, and buffers in between.¹³³ This policy of a “three-fold frontier” was choreographed and implemented in the northwest of colonial India. The first frontier, at the edge of directly controlled territory, enabled the colonial regime to exercise full authority and impose its legal and political order. The second frontier, just beyond the first, was a zone of indirect rule where colonial domination proceeded through existing institutions of social control. The third frontier was a string of buffer states which, while maintaining formal political autonomy and trappings of statehood, aligned foreign relations with the interests of the British.

¹³¹ CURZON, supra note__ at 7. Emphasis added.
¹³² Id. at 4.
Fig. 2: Contemplated Northwest Frontier of Colonial India\textsuperscript{134}

1- River Oxus
2- Hindu Kush
3- Current Frontier, Suliman Mountains
4- Suliman Mountain Foothills (Selected Territories)
5- Indus River

The story of the Durand Line shows that colonial map-making simultaneously exhibits “both delusions of grandeur and delusions of engulfment.”\textsuperscript{135} Historically, the river Indus was seen as the western boundary of India.\textsuperscript{136} The region west of the Indus and south of the Oxus

\textsuperscript{134} Bijan Omrani, \textit{The Durant Line: History and Problems of the Afghan-Pakistan Border}, XL (II) ASIAN AFFAIRS 177, 179 (2009).
\textsuperscript{135} Anne McClintock, \textit{Maidens, Maps and Mines}, 87 SOUTH ATLANTIC QUARTERLY 147, 151 (1988).
river, was home to the dominant ethnic group of the region, the Pashtun, who have a recorded history going well before 2000 B.C. Located at the southern edge of Central Asia and flanking the Chinese, Persian, and Indian empires, the Pashtun saw different phases of unity and fragmentation, along with Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim cultural influences. Regional geopolitical maneuverings shaped the formation of the modern state of Afghanistan out of shards of rival tribal fiefdoms, ethnic loyalties, and shifting alliances and allegiances. In 1747, as the Mughal and Persian empires were imploding, Ahmad Khan Durrani, a Pashtun military commander, took control of the region and created an Afghan tribal confederacy dominated by the Pashtuns, as a distinct political entity in the region - giving birth to what came to be called Afghanistan. Given the circumstances of its emergence, Lord Curzon was to call the state

137 See THE PATHANS, supra note, and JAMES W. SPAIN, THE PEOPLE OF THE KHYBER: THE PATHANS OF PAKISTAN (1962). With nearly 40 million members, the Pashtun are one of the largest tribal groups in the world. They have about 350 sub-tribes and five major groupings: the Durrani, the Ghurghusht, the Ghilzai, the Sarbani and the Karlani. Perhaps the most highly segmented ethnic group in the world, the approximately 350 sub-tribes have a large number of clans that are, in turn, divided into large extended family groups. Relations amongst the groups dating back to more than a millennium are complex and marked by feuds, alliances, and compromises. Among these fault lines is the 300-year-old conflict between the Ghilzai and Durrani tribes; one that animates the struggle between the Taliban and the Karzai government in Afghanistan. Thomas H. Johnson & M. Chris Mason, Understanding the Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan, 51:1 ORBS 71-89 (2007). A Pathan’s identity is constituted through concentric rings consisting of family, extended family, clan, tribe, confederacy, and linguistic group. The hierarchy of personal loyalties tracks these circles and become accentuated as the circle gets smaller. This segmentation and locus of loyalties are the primary reason that no foreign entity – whether Alexander, the British, the Pakistanis, the Soviets, or the Americans – has been able to reconcile the Pathans to external rule. As British colonial rule in India moved westward from Bengal, the East India Company officials began to probe the region in the late eighteenth century. There followed generations of explorers, administrators, and soldiers who remained unable to penetrate and subdue it. This gave rise to the weaving of a complex mythology around the Pathans, portraying them as warlike, brave, savage, and stoic. One elderly Pashtun tribesman told a visiting British official in 1809, “We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood …[but] we will never be content with a master.” Quoted in STEPHEN TANNER, AFGHANISTAN: A MILITARY HISTORY FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO THE FALL OF THE TALIBAN 134 (2002). The Pashtuns “accept no law but their own.” JAMES W. SPAIN, THE PATHAN BORDERLAND 68 (1963). The absence of modern structures of governance should not be conflated with the absence of governance. Complex and sophisticated dispute-resolution mechanisms, legal codes, and alternative systems of social control have developed in the region over a millennia. Pashtunwali (the way of the Pastun) is the keystone of Pashtun identity, social structure and behavior. Many stereotypes of the Pashtun flourished during colonialism. See, e.g., Paul Titus, Honor the Baloch, Buy the Pashtun: Stereotypes, Social Organization and History in Western Pakistan, 32:3 MODERN ASIAN STUDIES 657, 1998).


139 CHAPMAN, supra note __ at 90-1.
“purely accidental.” The Durrani dynasty came to an end only in 1974, when Afghanistan became a republic.

Just as Afghanistan was emerging as a unified political entity, the British East India Company established political control over the fertile delta of Bengal in 1757, and began the process of colonizing India. Over the next century, British colonial rule in India expanded westward. At the time Russia’s sense of its eastern border was “vague and protean, shaped by the constellation of power on its frontiers at any given moment.” Imperial Russia started to expand southwards and eastwards through the Caucasus, just when British colonial rule was expanding westward and northward in India. Unavoidably, Central Asia, the zone of confluence of two expanding imperial empires, became the terrain of the Great Game. As the frontlines of two empires approached each other, the Great Game intensified. To check Russia’s growing presence in Central Asia in the early nineteenth century, the British aimed to turn Afghanistan into a “buffer state” governed by a compliant ruler. The “three fold frontier,” that Curzon was later to articulate, came into play.

An internal struggle for the throne of Kabul in the 1830s gave the British their first opening to play kingmakers in Afghanistan. In June 1838, the British signed a secret agreement with Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of Punjab, and Shah Shujah, a claimant to the Kabul throne.

141 For the chronology and pattern of spatial expansion of British colonial rule in India, see CHAPMAN, supra note __ at Fig. 4.1 at 74, Fig. 4.2 at 8.
143 By the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, Russia forced Persia to cede Transcaucasia, thus eliminating a barrier to Russian expansion into Turkistan. THE PATHANS, supra note __ at 317. See also, CHARLES BOULGER, ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA (1978[1879]).
144 For a detailed account, see KARL E. MEYER & SHAREEN BLAIR BRYSC, TOURNAMENT OF SHADOWS: THE GREAT GAME AND THE RACE FOR EMPIRE IN CENTRAL ASIA (1999).
145 See supra note, and accompanying text.
146 HOPKIRK, supra note __ at 188-201, and THE PATHANS, supra note __ at 319-30.
In return for their help in putting him in power, Shujah renounced Afghan claims to Kashmir, and substantial areas between the Indus river and the Khyber Pass in favor of Ranjit Singh, and agreed to become an ally of the British in their struggle with Russia. This agreement triggered what mainstream history styles the First Afghan War, when a 15,000-strong British “Army of the Indus” invaded Afghanistan in 1839 and installed Shujah as the Amir.\(^{147}\) The license to colonize and dominate granted by contemporaneous international law to the “Great Powers” of the day was proving useful. However, the initial British success proved short-lived - resistance against the occupation force and their puppet broke out, and in 1842 the deposed Amir was returned to power, and the British invasion force was decimated.

During the following twenty years, the British started to bring the region west of the Indus river under colonial rule. Occupation of the Punjab, at the time an independent state, in 1849 brought under British control traditionally Afghan areas up to the eastern end of the legendary Khyber Pass that Punjab had annexed before the First Afghan War.\(^{148}\) In 1857, India erupted in an anti-colonial revolt ignited by a mutiny of the Bengal Army, a revolt that proved to be a watershed moment in the history of colonial rule, and led to a reordering of the Punjab as the “sword arm of the Raj.”\(^{149}\) British forces finally suppressed the revolt, and the governance of colonial India passed from the East India Company to the Crown, but British fears of “rebellions,

\(^{147}\) See J. A. Norris, THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR 1838-1842 (1967). To facilitate the march of the invading army through the historic Bolan Pass in Baluchistan, the British set in place a process that later incorporated Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan into colonial India. See Vincent A. Smith, The Oxford History of India 599-619 (3rd ed. Percival Spear ed., 1958).

\(^{148}\) Upon incorporation into colonial India, the Punjab was declared a “non-regulation” province, combining executive, legislative, and judicial functions, in a form of government that “emphasized administrative flexibility over ‘rigid adherence to legislative regulations.’” This became the basis of “a paternalistic despotism that was to characterize the famed Punjab school of administration.” Tan Tai Yong, The Garrison State: The Military Government & Society in Colonial Punjab 1849-1947, 17 (2005).

\(^{149}\) The Garrison State, supra note __ at 27. For the 1857 revolt, see The Peasant Armed: The Indian Rebellion of 1857 (C. A. Bayly ed., 1986); The Penguin 1857 Reader (Pramod K. Nayar ed., 2007); 1 Archives of Empire, supra note__ at 391-551.
conspiracies, whole wars and possible foreign provocations heightened.”

Through innovative colonial legal regimes, “military-fiscal state” was turned into a “military state,” the Bengal Army was disbanded, and a reconstituted Punjab began to serve as “the military bulwark of the Raj.”

The British deployed a racist recruiting doctrine known as the “martial race theory,” to raise a new “Indian Army,” with over half of it recruited from the Punjab, to serve as the “Empire’s ‘fire brigade.’”

This army was to be “the iron fist in the velvet glove of Victorian expansionism … the major coercive force behind the internationalization of industrial capitalism.”

As the pace of Russian eastward expansion picked up after the Crimean War (1854-56), the British “became obsessed with the Great Game,” and the Punjab as “the garrison province of the Raj … [was] reoriented … to meet[] the challenge of an external danger.”

The rapid transformation of the Punjab into a “garrison state” involved novel colonial legal orders of land tenure, revenue extraction, military recruitment, resettlement of indigenous communities, rural social control, and political governance.

Colonial social engineering included refashioning of

150 TOURNAMENT OF SHADOWS, supra note __ at 152.
154 THE GARRISON STATE, supra note __ at 20, 57, 58.
155 For details, see Id.; IMRAN ALI, THE PUNJAB UNDER IMPERIALISM, 1885-1947 (1988); MUSTAPHA KAMAL PASHA, COLONIAL POLITICAL ECONOMY (1998); HIMADRI BANERJEE, AGRARIAN SOCIETY OF THE PUNJAB, 1849-1901 (1982); Richard G. Fox, British Colonialism and Punjabi labor, in LABOR IN THE
religious affiliations, identities and practices.\textsuperscript{156} To orchestrate this enterprise, a suitable administrative system was fashioned for the Punjab had a “strong military flavor … in both form and spirit.”\textsuperscript{157} A century later, this reconstruction of the Punjab became the grounds of “Punjabisation of the state”\textsuperscript{158} of Pakistan, its praetorian tenor, and the source of its “post-independence propensity towards a military-dominated state.”\textsuperscript{159}

British occupation and reordering of the Punjab in the middle of the nineteenth century produced “the northwest border problem” in the territories to the west of the river Indus that remains a source of conflict to this day. The northwest edge of this region, a great belt of mountains stretching over 1200 miles from Pamir to Persia, was home of scores of Pashtun tribes that had a long history of effective armed resistance against encroachers and of retaining their autonomy from the political orders around them.\textsuperscript{160} Fierce resistance by these tribes started as soon as colonial rule came to their vicinity.\textsuperscript{161} It was then that the British policy of creating a frontier zone between Afghanistan and colonial directly-administered areas came into force.\textsuperscript{162} This so-called “close border” policy, also know as “masterly inactivity,” provided that no further westward expansion of direct colonial rule was possible or warranted, and therefore British


\textsuperscript{157} Andrew J. Major, Return to Empire: Punjab Under the Sikhs and British in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (1996).


\textsuperscript{160} See supra note __.

\textsuperscript{161} See H. T. Lambrick, Sir Charles Napier and Sind 275-98 (1952).

\textsuperscript{162} See Ainslie T. Embree, Pakistan’s Imperial Legacy, in Pakistans Western Borderlands, supra note __ at 33-37.
sovereignty should not extend to areas and tribes that could not be subdued and governed effectively. First implemented in Baluchistan and later further north, this created a peculiar frontier zone – a narrow stretch of territory inhabited by Pashtun tribes maintaining their modes of self-governance, dotted with colonial military outposts, absent direct colonial administration, with the tribes discouraged from maintaining their traditional political relations with Afghanistan. Foothills at the edge of directly-administered “settled” areas were fortified to keep out the tribes, who in exchange for monetary subsidies were to keep access to military outposts open, and in contravention to their tribal code were to deny sanctuary to fugitives from the settled areas. The system did not work well. The Pashtun tribes of the frontier zone remained restive, resulting in 23 British military operations between 1857 and 1881 to subdue them.

A new British policy, initiated by the Disraeli government to build a new strategic line of defense against Russian pressure in Central Asia, led in 1876 to the abandonment of the “close border” policy in favor of the so-called “forward policy.” The new policy called for aggressive expansion into and control over the frontier regions. Strong points in the tribal belt were to be captured, fortified, garrisoned, and connected with protected roads. This “forward policy,” in its extreme, envisaged pushing the boundary as far west as the Hindu Kush mountain range in the middle of Afghanistan, with the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar arc forming the first line of

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163 *The Pathans*, supra note ___ at 346-359.
164 Mehmastia (hospitality and protection), and Nanawati (asylum and sanctuary) are central to Pashtunwali (the way of the Pashtun), the tribal code. See *The Pathans*, supra note ___ at 349-352.
165 *The Pathans*, supra note ___ at 348. For a table of record of “pacification” expeditions against the frontier tribes, see *Chapman*, supra note ___ at 104-107.
166 *The Pathan*, supra note, at 370-389, and *Hopkirk*, supra note ___ at 359-364. The “forward policy” aimed at “pushing the international boundary as far westward and northward as physically possible and by dint of changing existing conditions in the extended area through both education and force of arms exercising full sovereignty over the whole.” James W. Spain, *Political Problems of A Borderland, in Pakistan’s Western Borderlands*, supra note ___ at 13.
defense for colonial India. As the new policy unfolded, British meddling in Afghan and Persian affairs increased. This, combined with decisions of a British Commission demarcating the disputed border between Afghanistan and Persia and permanent stationing of British garrisons nearby, heightened Afghan concerns about hostile encirclement. The Afghans made overtures towards the Russians to counter-balance the growing British influence. The result was the Second Afghan War, when in November 1878 the British launched a three-pronged attack on Afghan territory. The Amir abdicated in favor of his son. The son then ceded control over the Khyber Pass and agreed to become a vassal of the British, who were to control the external relations of his country. After some pacification campaigns around the country, the British troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1881. One result of the Second Afghan War was the institution of a joint Russo-British commission to determine the border between Russia and Afghanistan, with the latter to serve as a buffer between the two imperial empires.

Confronted with increasing demands for more concessions by the colonial government of India, in 1892 the Afghan Amir sought to visit Britain to negotiate directly with the British government. The algebra of differentiated sovereignties came into play - British authorities

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167 Omrani, supra note _ at 183. See also Fig. 2 Contemplated Northwest Frontiers of India, supra note, and accompanying map. The policy was first implemented in Baluchistan known as the “Sandeman system.” THE PATHANS, supra note __ at 354. See also, SIMANTI DUTTA, IMPERIAL MAPPING IN SAVAGE SPACES: BALUCHISTAN AND BRITISH INDIA (2002).

168 To counter Russia’s growing influence in Persia, and the latter’s renewed designs to retake Afghanistan’s western province of Heart, Britain went to war with Persia in 1856. A year later the two sign a peace treaty and Afghan-Persian border was determined as part of this treaty. Amin Saikal, The Afghanistan-Pakistan Border and Afghanistan’s Long-Term Stability, in BUILDING STATE AND SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN 216 (Wolfgang Danspeckgruber ed., 2007).

169 THE FRONTIER, supra note __ at 34-5, and HOPKIRK, supra note__ at 384-401. Some scholars date the emergence of Afghanistan as a modern state with the 1880 installation of the new Amir orchestrated by imperial forces. See OLIVER ROY, ISLAM AND RESISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN 13-15 (2nd ed. 1990).

170 After many disputes and disagreements, a commission completed its work to demarcate the boundary in 1895. THE FRONTIER, supra note, at 46-7, and HOPKIRK, supra note __ at 430-438. The border was demarcated along the Oxus River from Pamir to today’s Turkmenistan, and the Oxus Line was linked westward to Persia’s northern boundary. Some adjustments were made soon after, and the demarcation was finalized in an Afghan-Soviet agreement in 1946 with further adjustments to compensate for changes in the flow of the Oxus River. ALASTAIR LAMB, ASIAN FRONTIERS: STUDIES IN A CONTINUING PROBLEM 86-89 (1968).
refused his request, forcing him to negotiate with British colonial authorities in India.\textsuperscript{171} The Amir “reluctantly gave way to British pressure for delimitation of his eastern boundary.”\textsuperscript{172} The British proceeded to “dictate a boundary settlement,”\textsuperscript{173} signed by the Amir and Henry Mortimer Durand, foreign secretary of British India, on 12 November 1893. This agreement adjusted the "the eastern and southern \textit{frontier} of His Highness's [the Amir’s] dominions, from Wakhan to the Persian border."\textsuperscript{174} The result was the Durand Line, which pushed colonial India’s border with Afghanistan from the eastern foot of the frontier hills to their crest.\textsuperscript{175} Curzon’s dream of “\textit{scientific frontiers}” demarcated under “European pressure and by the intervention of European agents,” appeared to be coming true.\textsuperscript{176}

The Durand Line proved more difficult to delineate on the ground than to draw on paper.\textsuperscript{177} Initially surveyed in 1894-5, most of the demarcation was completed by 1896, while the section around the Khyber Pass was demarcated after the Third Afghan War in 1921.\textsuperscript{178} While some inaccessible sections remained unmarked, the line created a strategic frontier that “did not correspond to any ethnic or historical boundary.”\textsuperscript{179} Slicing through tribes, villages, and clans, it

\textsuperscript{171} \textbf{The Frontier, supra note }\textsuperscript{ __ } at 47.
\textsuperscript{172} Spain, supra note \textsuperscript{ __ } at 14.
\textsuperscript{173} Spain, supra note \textsuperscript{ __ } at 11.
\textsuperscript{174} For pertinent text of the treaty, see \textbf{The Pathans, supra note }, Appendix B at 463-466. Emphasis added. For an account of the negotiations leading to the agreement, see \textbf{Percy Sykes, Mortimer Durant 200-217 (1956)}.
\textsuperscript{175} James W. Spain, supra note \textsuperscript{ __ } at 11.
\textsuperscript{176} See supra note, and accompanying text.
\textsuperscript{177} Particular care was taken to create and allocate to Afghanistan the narrow Wakhan strip to avoid any territorial contiguity between Russia and colonial India. See Omrani, supra note \textsuperscript{ __ } at 185. Some call it “one of the best defined and most clearly recognized frontiers in the world.” \textbf{Mujtaba Razvi, The Frontiers of Pakistan 143 (1971)}. Others state that some sectors were never demarcated. Difficulties cited are that in some sectors “the fact that geographical watersheds and tribal boundaries do not coincide,” in others “the failure to demarcate is of no consequence, for the range summit is unmistakable,” in yet others tribal resistance. \textbf{The Pathans, supra note }\textsuperscript{ __ } at 382-389.
\textsuperscript{179} \textbf{Oliver Roy, supra note }\textsuperscript{ __ } at 17. The Durand Line has been characterized “illogical from the point of view of ethnography, strategy and geography.” \textbf{W. K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia 188 (1967)}. Others call it “a classic example of an artificial political boundary cutting through a culture area.” \textbf{L. Dupree, Afghanistan 425 (1980).}
“cut the Pukhtoon people in two.”\textsuperscript{180} The Pashtun tribes resisted attempts at demarcation, including, in some cases, burning down camps of the Boundary Commission. The British response was to station substantial permanent garrisons.\textsuperscript{181} The Pashtuns remained restive, with religious leaders often playing leading roles in the insurgencies.\textsuperscript{182}

In tune with the colonial project of reordering colonized bodies and spaces, in 1901, British authorities severed the “settled areas” of the northwest region under British control from the Punjab to form an evocatively named North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), though with a status not on par with other provinces.\textsuperscript{183} Control over the tribal belt between the “settled areas” and the Durand Line remained with the central government. The belt, now designated Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), was to serve as a “buffer to a buffer.”\textsuperscript{184} The legal order of colonial India did not extend to this zone and the tribes, on the grounds that “[r]igor is inseparable from the government of such a people. We cannot rein wild horses with silken braids.”\textsuperscript{185} Tribes were to conduct their internal affairs under their customary norms. However, to supervise matters that touched the security interests of the British, a unique set of rules and procedures, draconian even by colonial standards, were enforced under the Frontier Crimes Regulation.\textsuperscript{186} This created an anomalous situation where FATA’s Pashtun tribes, “though not fully-fledged British subject in the legal sense of the term, lived within the territorial boundaries of India.”\textsuperscript{187} Tribes on both sides of the Durand Line continued to disregard it, and incessant tribal resistance prompted successive punitive expeditions. Even the semblance of order broke

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  \item \textsuperscript{180} Owen Bennett Jones, Pakistan: Eye of the Storm 23 (3rd ed. 2009).
  \item \textsuperscript{181} James W. Spain, supra note \_ \_ at 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{182} See David B. Edwards, Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier 144, 169-70 (1996).
  \item \textsuperscript{183} The Pathans, supra note \_ \_ at 413-420.
  \item \textsuperscript{184} The Frontier, supra note \_ \_ at 53. Emphasis added.
  \item \textsuperscript{185} John W. Kaye, 1 The Afghan Wars 120 (1851). Emphasis added.
  \item \textsuperscript{186} The FCR was first designed in 1858, and amended in 1872 and 1901. For a detailed discussion of FCR, see infra \_ \_.
  \item \textsuperscript{187} The Frontier, supra note \_ \_ at 113.
\end{itemize}
down with the Third Afghan War of 1919, when Afghanistan declared war, an effort joined by FATA tribes and Pashtun troops who deserted the colonial forces.\textsuperscript{188} This short war resulted in Afghanistan regaining control over its foreign affairs. However, the FATA tribes remained restive, and colonial efforts to quell incessant revolts included the first use of aerial bombardment in the history of India, “laying waste to the country where local tribes had supported the invasion.”\textsuperscript{189} The tribes maintained their traditional connections with Afghanistan while negotiating the new FATA dispensation.

When the Indian struggle for decolonization gained momentum in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Pashtuns of “settled areas” quickly gravitated towards it.\textsuperscript{190} The struggle forced the British to take initial steps towards participation of natives in political governance in 1920 under the Montagu-Chelmsford “reforms,” which envisaged an “advance towards self-government in stages.”\textsuperscript{191} The NWFP and FATA, however, were left out of the scheme on the grounds that, as the chief colonial administrator of the region put it, the Pashtuns “w[ere] not ready for …responsible government.”\textsuperscript{192} In response, Pashtuns gave their anti-colonial movement an organized form aimed at braiding “factors of history, geography, culture, and language to transform the relatively backward, divided and disorganized Pukhtuns into a national community.”\textsuperscript{193} This movement, which came to be known as \textit{Surkhposh} (Red-shirts), expressly adopted non-violence as a foundational principle of social and political action and became

\textsuperscript{188} CHAPMAN, supra note …, at 108. \textit{See also}, James W. Spain, \textit{supra} note __ at 116-17, and THE PATHANS, \textit{supra} note __ at 397.
\textsuperscript{189} THE FRONTIER, \textit{supra} note __ at 118-9. \textit{See also}, THE PATHANS, \textit{supra} note __ at 405-409. The first aerial bombardment of the area took place in 1915. SVEN LINDQVIST, \textit{THE HISTORY OF BOMBING} 42 (2001). It is noted that “unlike other wars, Afghan wars become serious only when they are over; in the British times at least, they were apt to produce an after-crop of tribal unrest.” THE PATHANS, \textit{supra} note __ at 397.
\textsuperscript{190} \textit{See} Stephen Rittenberg, \textit{Continuities in Borderland Politics, in PAKISTAN’S WESTERN BORDERLANDS, \textit{supra} note __ at 67.
\textsuperscript{191} REPORT ON INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, \textit{quoted in} YOUNG, \textit{supra} note __ at 243.
\textsuperscript{192} Chief Secretary George Roos-Keppel, \textit{quoted in} THE PATHANS, \textit{supra} note __ at 425.
politically allied with the Indian National Congress, the spearhead of India’s independence movement.\textsuperscript{194}

When India’s anti-colonial struggle escalated into a civil-disobedience movement in the early 1930s, it had “only a marginal effect on the Punjab” thanks to the entrenched administrative, political, and social order in that “garrison province.”\textsuperscript{195} NWFP, on the other hand, proved receptive to the call, and in 1930 colonial authorities declared martial law in order to quell the civil-disobedience movement and to prevent armed tribes of FATA from making common cause with residents of the settled areas.\textsuperscript{196} In 1935, the British enacted the Government of India Act in response to the ascending independence movement in India. This Act provided for increased political participation through an enlarged franchise to elect provincial legislative assemblies with broadened powers. When the first-ever elections took place in NWFP in 1937, the Indian National Congress, the secular nationalist party, won handily and formed the provincial government.\textsuperscript{197} FATA, the “buffer to a buffer” was kept out and away from the constitutional reforms and the right to vote and representation. The result was a spike in armed resistance in FATA, triggering more campaigns of “‘pacification’ by British and Indian troops.”\textsuperscript{198}

In 1947, “the tectonic plates of South Asian politics shifted abruptly.”\textsuperscript{199} The British partitioned colonial India into two independent states - India and Pakistan - surgically dividing

\textsuperscript{194} The members of the movement called themselves \textit{Khudai Khidmargar} (servants of God). They wore red brick-dyed attire and acquired the designation \textit{Sarkhposh} (Red-shirts). The leader of the movement, Abdul Ghafar Khan, is also know as the “Frontier Gandhi” due to his philosophy of non-violence and his personal and political association with India’s nationalist leader M. K. Gandhi. \textit{THE PATHANS}, at 431. For a detailed account of politics in NWFP during this period, see \textit{ERLAND JANSON, INDIA, PAKISTAN OR PAKHTUNISTAN: THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS IN THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE 1937-47} (1981); \textit{MUKULIKA BANERJEE, THE PATHAN UNARMED: OPPOSITION AND MEMORY IN THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER} (2000).


\textsuperscript{196} Spain, \textit{supra} note at 19.

\textsuperscript{197} \textit{THE PATHANS, supra} note at 433.

\textsuperscript{198} \textit{CHAPMAN, supra} note at 109.

\textsuperscript{199} \textit{SCHEDEL, supra} note at 2.
“Hindi majority” areas from “Muslim majority” ones, substantiating once again the “wonderful artificiality of states,” and triggering “one of the great human convulsions of history.” That Pashtuns, while overwhelmingly Muslim, had consistently voted for the secular Indian National Congress and helped it form the provincial government in NWFP, struck the colonial Viceroy’s office, which presided over the religion-based partition, as “a bastard situation.” To bring NWFP in line with the designed partition, the colonial authorities bypassed the generally prescribed process of allowing elected representatives of provinces in their respective legislative assemblies to determine the future of the province. A referendum to choose between India and Pakistan was offered instead. Most Pashtuns, including both the “Red Shirts” and the governing political party of the province, boycotted the referendum in protest against NWFP having been made an exception to the exercise of choice process, and because the substitute process of referendum did not offer a third option, namely, separate independent statehood. This demand for a separate state for the Pashtuns, styled Pashtunistan, emerged as partition of India became inevitable. In the end, NWFP was awarded to Pakistan following a controversial


202 ALAN CAMPBELL-JOHNSON, MISSION WITH MOUNTBATTEN 54 (1986).


For FATA tribes, yet another mode to determine their fate was devised. In special tribal *jirgas* (tribal assemblies) orchestrated by the colonial administrators, hand-picked leaders of the FATA tribes were asked to signify their allegiance to Pakistan and received the assurance that monetary allowances and autonomous status of the tribes would continue undisturbed.

Decolonization and the partition of India drew into sharp relief the contested status of the Durand Line, which now became a disputed matter between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 1946, on the eve of the end of colonial rule in India, Afghanistan renewed claims to the area between the Durand Line and the Indus. In 1947, Afghanistan joined the demand for Pashtunistan, opposed Pakistan’s admission to the United Nations, and later conditioned its recognition upon granting the right of self determination to the people of NWFP and FATA, who were caught in between. In 1949, an Afghan *loya jirga* (grand tribal assembly) formally declared the Durand Line invalid. Thus, Pakistan started its postcolonial career as successor to a territorial dispute and with an ambivalent relationship with a section of the population located within its designated territorial bounds.

B. Great Game II: The Cold War and the *Frontline State*

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205 Out of a total of 292,118 votes cast, 289,244 went for Pakistan and 2,874 for Hindustan. Jalal, Sole Spokesman, *supra* note ___ at 290. Before the referendum the Muslim League leadership contemplated creating unrest among the Pashtun tribes against the Congress ministry in the NWFP. Hamayun Mirza, From Plassey to Pakistan 151-52 (1999).

206 The Pathans, *supra* note ___ at 435. The status of the tribes at the time of partition of India has been termed a “legal curiosity.” Omrani, *supra* note ___ at 188.


The partition of India and inclusion of NWFP and FATA in Pakistan was in no small measure connected with the next phase of the Great Game - the Cold War. The British colonial authorities saw the partition of colonial India as offering the possibility to remain in the northwest region “for an indefinite period…. [with] British control of the valuable North-Western … frontiers.” They envisaged the northwest region as “the most suitable area from which to conduct the defense” of oil supplies of the Middle East, and “the keystone of the strategic arc of the wide and vulnerable waters of the Indian Ocean.” As the importance of oil from the Persian Gulf increased, Western powers called for a “close accord between the States which surround this Muslim lake, an accord underwritten by the Great powers whose interests are engaged.” The Western world “went east in search of oil – and found Islam.” Pakistan, the only state in the modern world created in the name of Islam, was to now be turned into a frontline state of the Cold War, with the Durand Line to serve as the frontline.

After cultivating close military ties with Britain and the U.S., Pakistan formally entered a Mutual Defense Agreement with the US, and joined CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) in 1954, and SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) a year later. It is important to note here that British military officers had retained control of Pakistan’s military, seen as “the kingpin

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210 Field Marshal Wavell, Viceroy of India, quoted in THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT GAME, supra note __ at 220 and 235.
211 Id. at 29. Quoting a memorandum dated 19, May 1948, entitled “The Strategic and Political Importance of Pakistan in the Event of War with the USSR.”
212 OLAF CAROE, WELLS OF POWER 185 (1951). Emphasis added. The author had served as an influential colonial governor of NWFP towards the end of colonial rule.
213 DEVIL’S GAME, supra note __ at 7.
214 As early as 1947, Pakistan raised the specter of “Soviet threat on its Western frontier” to seek financial assistance from the U.S. TARIQ ALI, THE DUEL: PAKISTAN ON THE FLIGHT PATH OF AMERICAN POWER 195 (2008). In 1949, when Iranian nationalist government contemplated nationalizing Iran’s oil production, an effort was made to move Pakistani troops into Iranian oil fields to “lend a hand in case the British or Americans needed it.” THE STATE OF MARTIAL RULE, supra note, at 122, quoting British chief of Pakistan Army. For details of the consolidation of the military alliance between Pakistan and the US, see CROSSED SWORDS, supra note__ at 92-138.
of U.S. interests,” for many years after decolonization. The U.S. received military bases in the NWFP. All this helped Pakistan secure recognition of the Durand Line as a legitimate international border by Britain and the United States. As Pakistan consolidated its role in the anti-Communist military alliances of the Cold War, Afghanistan drew closer to the Soviet Union, hardened its position about the Durand Line, and again raised the issues of self-determination for the Pashtuns in Pakistan and the formation of Pashtunistan. In December, 1955, the Soviet Union declared support for the Afghan position regarding the Durand Line and Pashtunistan.

Pakistan’s assumption of the role as a frontline state in the Cold War had a profound impact on the political order within the country. This included ascendency of the military as a political force, derailment of constitutional governance, and centralization of political power in defiance of the federal architecture of the state. This turn to praetorianism had a direct impact on the NWFP and FATA. In 1954, the same year that Pakistan formalized its partisan role in the Cold War, a “gang of four” representing the military-bureaucracy combine overturned the constitutional order, a step validated by a docile judiciary under the doctrine of state necessity.

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215 Id. at 127.
216 CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT, A HISTORY OF PAKISTAN AND ITS ORIGINS 100 (Gillian Beaumont trans., 2002). The command of the army, navy and air force was transferred in 1951, 1953, and 1957, respectively. MOHAMMAD WAISEM, POLITICS AND THE STATE IN PAKISTAN 98 (1989).
217 CROSSED SWORDS, supra note __ at 130, 185-86.
218 In June 1950, Britain declared that “Pakistan is in international law the inheritor of the rights and duties of [British colonial India]… and that the Durand Line is the international frontier.” In March 1956, the British again stated that it “fully supports” Pakistan’s “sovereignty over the areas east of the Durand Line” and regards “this Line as the international frontier.” THE PATHANS, supra note __ at 465.
219 The SEATO Ministerial Council in March 1956 declared that “their governments recognized that the sovereignty of Pakistan extends up to the Durant Line” and that the SEATO Treaty “includes the area up to that Line.” Tariq Mahmood, The Durant Line: South Asia’s Next Trouble Spot, 24 (Masters Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2005).
220 For the Afghan position, see ALDUL RAHMAN PAZHWA, PAKHTUNISTAN: A NEW STATE IN CENTRAL ASIA (1960). For Afghan balancing between neutrality and closer ties with Soviet Union during this period, see AMIN SAIKAL, MODERN AFGHANISTAN: A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE AND SURVIVAL ch. 5 (2004).
221 AFGHANISTAN’S ENDLESS WAR, supra note __ at 49.
222 WAISEM, supra note __ at 145.
The new order then moved to erase the separate existence of NWFP in 1955, when the bureaucratic-military combine ruling Pakistan amalgamated all four provinces of the western wing of the country into the so-called “One Unit.” FATA, however, retained its status as a distinct federally administered zone. Afghanistan reacted sharply to the dissolution of NWFP and accelerated its demand for Pashtunistan, leading to a break in diplomatic relations. Trade blockades and border skirmishes followed. Relations remained seriously strained until 1963, when the King of Afghanistan removed his prime minister, Sardar Daud, a Pastun and an ardent advocate of Pashtunistan. In the meantime, strengthened and emboldened by its Cold War alliances, Pakistan’s military formally usurped political power by declaring martial law in 1958, a move validated by the courts through a misapplication of Kelsen’s theory of revolutionary legality. In 1969, a mass-protest movement forced the removal of Pakistan’s military dictator. The new government dissolved the “One Unit” and restored NWFP as a separate province. FATA, however, retained its distinct dispensation.

A serious downturn in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan came in 1973, when Afghanistan declared itself a republic, and Sardar Daud, now its new president, revived the issue of Pashtunistan. Pakistan immediately responded by giving sanctuary to Afghan dissidents and began training and arming disaffected Afghans to destabilize the new Afghan regime. From 1973-77, Pakistan trained an estimated 5,000 Afghan militants and channeled material support to groups inside Afghanistan. This was the beginning of Pakistan’s prolonged engagement in

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227 Jaffrelot, supra note ___ at 139. See also, William Maley, The Afghanistan Wars 66-76 (2002).
training and arming Afghan militants professing the establishment of an “Islamic order.”

This also ushered in an era when the FATA, the “buffer to a buffer,” became the staging ground for Pakistani military’s involvement in Afghan militants’ operation across the Durand Line with its intelligence agency Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) taking the lead. It is important to note that this engagement was choreographed by Pakistan’s Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto, a self-professed master of geopolitics, who held that “geography continues to remain the most important single factor in the formation of a country’s foreign policy….Territorial disputes … are the most important of all disputes.” This was by no means the first instance of the use of FATA by Pakistan in its military strategies. As early as 1948, Pakistan had used sections of the FATA tribes in its campaigns in Kashmir.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 accelerated this process dramatically. During the 1979-84 Afghan “jihad,” FATA served as a “launching pad for the mujahidin” and as a “base for their covert operations.” The U.S. and Saudi Arabia poured in $7.2 billion in covert aid for the jihad, channeled through the ISI, and given primarily to the most radical religious groupings, thus bypassing the moderate Afghan nationalists. The Afghan jihad furnished a justification for the tacit support by Western powers for the consolidation of military dictatorship in Pakistan under General Zia ul-Haq, a development that initiated and entrenched the process of

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230 For details for the involvement of Pakistan’s military, including raids into Soviet territory, see MOHAMMAD YUSUF & MARK ADKIN, THE BEAR TRAP: AFGHANISTAN’S UNTOLD STORY (1992). See also, SETH G. JONES, IN THE GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES: AMERICA’S WAR IN AFGHANISTAN 23-40 (2009).
232 See CROSSED SWORDS, supra note __ at 48-53.
233 FRONTLINE PAKISTAN, supra note __ at 143.
“Islamization” of Pakistan. After the Geneva Accord of 1984 to end the Afghan conflict, and subsequent withdrawal of Soviet forces, Afghanistan plunged into a civil war, with Pakistan and other regional powers supporting different factions. The relative disengagement of the U.S. during this period is now seen by the American policy makers as a “strategic mistake.”

FATA continued to be used by the ISI and Afghan Islamist groups for their engagements in the Afghan civil war. By now, Pakistan’s military had developed the so-called doctrine of “strategic depth” with regards to Afghanistan, because it regarded India to the east as the primary military threat to Pakistan’s interests. In order to counter India, Pakistan, given its significantly smaller territorial size, sought a compliant Afghanistan on its western border. It was against this backdrop that Pakistan in effect created the Taliban in the early 1990s, a development that dramatically affected the Afghan civil war and later on the whole region. Pakistan’s military saw continued support for the Taliban as a “strategic imperative.” Pakistan’s desire to open trade routes to former Soviet Central Asian republics contributed to its patronage of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Having helped the Taliban capture power in Afghanistan in 1996, Pakistan was among the handful of states that quickly recognized the new

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235 See KHAN, supra note __ at 647-667; RASHIDA PATEL, ISLAMIZATION OF LAWS IN PAKISTAN (1986). See also, AYESHA JALAL, PARTISANS OF ALLAH: JIHAD IN SOUTH ASIA 278-301 (2008).
236 For details of the Geneva Accord, see MALEY, supra note __ at 134-142. For the ethnic divides and post-1984 civil war in Afghanistan, see RARUL BAKHSH RAISS, RECOVERING THE FRONTIER STATE: WAR, ETHNICITY, AND STATE IN AFGHANISTAN 27-86 (2008).
239 See FRONTLINE PAKISTAN, supra note __ at 28-30; CROSSED SWORDS, supra note, 478-480, 534-7, 542-4; MALEY, supra note __ at 219-226; RASHID, TALIBAN, supra note __ at 17-40.
241 See CROSSED SWORDS, supra note at 479. During the Taliban regime 1996-2001, Pakistan refurbished Afghan telephone systems and linked it with Pakistan’s domestic phone system. Id. at 480. For Pakistan’s involvement in Central Asia via Afghanistan, see JAFFRELOT, supra note __ at 141-145.
regime, and for some time even paid the salaries of the Taliban administration in Kabul.\footnote{For planning, logistics, and military support of the Taliban by Pakistan including the use of air force, see Larry P. Goodson, Afghanistan’s Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and The Rise of the Taliban 111-15 (2001). For salaries of the Taliban administration, see Rashid, Taliban, supra note \_ at 183.} The Taliban government proceeded to set up a brutal social order.\footnote{See Maley, supra note \_ at 218-250. Even ancient carvings of the Buddha on a mountain-side proved not immune from the drive to enforce the Taliban’s version of Islam.} Pakistan’s search for “strategic depth,” however, remained elusive. While Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country, the Taliban were exclusively Pashtuns, who make up over 50\% of the country’s population.\footnote{Rais, supra note \_ at 29, 44-47.} Consequently, Pakistan’s patronage notwithstanding, the radical Islamic regime of the Taliban refused to accept the Durand Line or to drop Afghan claims over FATA and areas of NWFP east of the Line.\footnote{Rashid, Taliban, supra note \_ at 183 -195; Frontline Pakistan, supra note \_ at 30. The military dictator of Pakistan stated in 2000, “Afghanistan’s majority ethnic Pashtuns have to be on our side. This is our national interest…. The Taliban cannot be alienated by Pakistan. We have a national security interest there.” Quoted in Jones, supra note \_ at 308.}

Taliban’s brutal political and social order did not derail global geopolitics of energy supplies, when all neighboring states and many others, including the U.S., started “romancing the Taliban” during a “battle for pipelines” in the late 1990s.\footnote{Rashid, Taliban, supra note \_ at 157-182.} By the late twentieth century, global capital and its attendant state machinations had moved well beyond territorial colonialism to neo-imperial modes of exploitation and accumulation.\footnote{See David Harvey, The New Imperialism (2003).} The spatial dimension to the cycle of accumulation, however, had remained indispensible.\footnote{See David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism 87-119(2005); Susan Roberts, Anna Secor and Matthew Sparke, Neoliberal Geopolitics, 35 (5) Antipod 886 (2003); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Neoliberal Empire, 21:3 Theory, Culture & Society 119 (2004).} This is particularly true of the geopolitical imperatives of the global energy markets.\footnote{For emerging geo-politics of energy in the region, see Robert G. Wirsing, Baloch Nationalism & The Geopolitics of Energy Resources (2009).} The break-up of the Soviet Union triggered an intense competition between global oil companies and their sponsoring states, including the U.S. and Pakistan, to extract and transport oil and gas from Central Asia via
Afghanistan. In immediate contention were two plans for alternative gas pipelines from Turkmenistan to run through Afghanistan: one would go to Pakistan with a possible link to India, and the other would go to Iran and Turkey with a possible link to Europe. Alternatives to transport oil from Kazakhstan and the Caspian Sea further complicated the picture.

The events of September 11, 2001, dramatically transformed the geopolitical profile of the region. The very next day the U.S. demanded that Pakistan stop terrorist operatives in its border areas or “be prepared to be bombed back to the Stone Age.” Pakistan made its decision “swiftly … agreed to all … demands,” and made available airbases and transit facilities for supplies for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan’s military continued its special relations with the Taliban across the Durand Line. When the U.S. launched its attack on Afghanistan, the Taliban “escaped in droves into Pakistan, where they melted into their fellow tribesmen in the FATA.” After the now infamous “battle of Tora Bora,” Pakistani authorities “looked the other way as foreign fighters crossed over to the Pakistani side and many in the ISI arranged safe passages.” In collaboration with ISI, the borderlands became a “safe haven for the Taliban and other insurgent and terrorist elements.”

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250 U.S. Corporation UNICOL and Saudi corporation Delta signed an agreement with Turkmenistan that included construction of a gas pipeline through Afghanistan and Pakistan. UNICOL “went along with” Pakistan’s analysis of the Taliban, and termed the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul a “positive development.” Maley, supra note __ at 244-255. The Taliban were also in negotiations with the Argentinean Company Bridas. See RASHID, TALIBAN, supra note __ 155-182; CROSSSED SWORDS, supra note __ at 480.


253 For a list of the demands, see THE 9/11 REPORT: THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES 473-74 (2004).

254 CROSSSED SWORDS, supra note __ at 544. There are unconfirmed reports that after the fall of the Afghan city of Kunduz in November 2001, Pakistani transport planes evacuated hundreds of militants, mostly Arabs and Pakistanis, for two weeks in the dark of the night with US consent. MALEY, supra note __ at 266.

255 For an account of the battle of Tora Bora in the U.S. Army’s official history of the war in Afghanistan, see A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR, supra note __ at 122-24.

256 FRONTLINE PAKISTAN, supra note __ at 121. See also, GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES, supra note __ at 95-108; MALEY, supra note __ at 264-5.

257 Johnson & Mason, supra note __ at 58.
fugitives from state law, now became a sanctuary and staging ground for Afghan militants resisting the U.S.-led war effort in Afghanistan.

As Pakistan’s active support of U.S. war efforts increased, Afghan militants made common cause with religious militants among the Pashtun tribes of FATA. Pakistan’s military, designed for conventional warfare on its eastern border with India, was “ill-prepared to tackle this new kind of conflict that slipped across its western border.” As a result, Pakistan vacillated between military operations against the militants and peace deals with them. In the meantime, militants started to extend their area of influence beyond FATA, the “buffer to a buffer,” into NWFP and beyond. In the midst of all this, Pakistan stands firm that the Durand Line be recognized and respected as an international border, while its military considers Afghanistan “within Pakistan’s security perimeter.” On the other hand, Afghanistan maintains the position that it does not accept the Durand Line because “it has raised a wall between the two brothers.”

This story of the Durand Line is a more than century-long saga of predatory colonialism, postcolonial insecurities, and incessant conflict. This is a tale of colonial cartography bequeathed

259 CROSSED SWORDS, supra note ___ at 585.
260 CROSSED SWORDS, supra note ___ at 544.
264 Quoted in, Johnson & Mason, supra note ___ at 69.
to a postcolonial formation, bringing in its wake bitter fruits of oppression, violence, and war. I turn now to the broader questions of the challenges colonial borders present to postcolonial states and the role of international law.

IV. Colonial Borders and Postcolonial Insecurities

Every established order tends to produce … the naturalization of its own arbitrariness.265

A. Inherited Borders and Postcolonial State-nations

Forged on the anvil of modern European history and enshrined in modern international law, modern statehood and sovereignty are deemed the preserve of differentiated “nations” existing within exclusive and defined territories. While “the struggle to produce citizens out of recalcitrant people accounts for much of what passes for history in modern times,”266 the prototype of the “nation-state” combines a singular national identity with state sovereignty, understood as the territorial organization of unshared political authority. “The territoriality of the nation-state” seeks to “impose supreme epistemic control in creating the citizen-subject out of individuals.”267 “Inventing boundaries”268 and “imagining communities”269 work together “to naturalize the fiction of citizenship.”270 Modern international law underscores this schema. It

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267 KABIR, supra note __ at 8.
270 KABIR, supra note __ at 8. This project remains haued by the foundational irresolution of the very construct of the nation. As Renan “summed up” the dilemma in his celebrated 1882 lecture, “man is slave
extends recognition only to the national form, with acceptance attached to ability to hold territory in tune with “Western patterns of political organization.” As a result the “nation-state” is the dominant imaginary of organized sovereignty today. This spatially bounded imaginary, one that frames both the geography of actualizing self-determination and the order of the resulting political unit, put in circulation a “territorialist epistemology.” Postcolonial formations had to subscribe to this Eurocentric grammar of state-formation to secure eligibility in the inter-state legal order. This statist frame precludes imaginative flowerings of self-determination in tune with the interests and aspirations of diverse communities both within and beyond received colonial boundaries.

Across the global South, colonial demarcations of zones of control and influence left in their wake political units lacking correspondence between their territorial frame and the cohesion of culture and political identity. The colonial demarcations, with little regard for the history, culture, or geography of the region, often split cultural units or placed divergent cultural identities within a common boundary. As a consequence, the crisis of the postcolonial state

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neither of his race nor his language, nor of his religion, nor of the course of rivers nor of the direction taken by mountain chains.” Ernest Renan, What is a Nation? (trans. Martin ‘Thom) in NATION AND NARRATION 20 (Homi Bhabha ed., 1990). See also FITZPATRICK, MODERNISM, supra note ___ at 111-145.
272 See supra note ___ and accompanying text.
273 As Koskenniemi reminds us regarding the inclusion of non-Europeans into the international system, “everything depended upon … the degree to which aspirant communities were ready to play by European rule.” KOSKENNIIEMI, supra note ___ at 135. Tagore observed that the entire East was “attempting to take into itself a history, which is not the outcome of its own living.” RABINDERNATH TAGORE, NATIONALISM 64 (1985 [1917]).
274 See THOMAS PAKENHAM, SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA (1998); MALCOLM N. SHAW, TITLE TO TERRITORY IN AFRICA (1986); EDWARD HERTSLET, THE MAO OF AFRICA BY TREATY (1909); MARK FRANK LINDLEY, THE ACQUISITION AND GOVERNMENT OF BACKWARD TERRITORIES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW (1926).
stems from its artificial boundaries and “the specter of the colonial … [still] haunts the postcolonial nation,”276 and the “retrospective illusion”277 of nationalism remains “suspended forever in the space between the ex-colony and not-yet-nation.”278 Decolonization movements and postcolonial states adopted and retained the construct of a territorially bound “nation-state” even as they attempted to imagine the “nation” at variance from its European iterations.279 Imprisonment in inherited colonial territorial cartographies, postcolonial formations inverted this grammar to produce state-nations.

Building of state-nations procreates the problem of minorities, ethnicities, ethno-nationalism, separatism, and sub-state nationalism. “[T]he nation dreads dissent”280 and “the nation-state’s limits implicate its geographic peripheries as central to its self-fashioning.”281 In the process a co-constitutive role of “nation” and ethnicity develops as a “productive and dialectical dyad.”282 It is by the construction of ethnicity as a “problem” that the “nation” becomes the resolution and the state incarnates itself as the authoritative problem solver. In this


281 *KABIR, supra note ___ at 8-9.
way often “the very micropolitics of producing the nation are responsible for its unmaking or unraveling.” Incessant rhetoric of endangerment and discursive production of threats to the nation render “nation-building” a coercive enterprise and facilitate the overdevelopment of the coercive apparatuses of the state. While inherited boundaries represent the postcolonial state-nation’s “geo-body,” cultural and ethnic heterogeneity within induces “geo-piety.” It is no surprise, then, that most postcolonial states have as their raison d’etre the production, maintenance, and reproduction of the discourses and apparatuses of national security. The career of Pakistan as a postcolonial state circumscribed within an inherited territorial frame substantiates this political grammar.

283 Id.
284 This phenomenon puts a postcolonial gloss over Weber’s classic definition of the state, namely that “a compulsory political organization with continuous operations will be called a ‘state’ insofar as its administrative staff successfully uphold the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical violence in the enforcement of its order.” Max Weber, Economy and Society: An Outline Of Interpretive Sociology 54 (1978). Emphasis added.
285 Winichakul, supra note __ at.
286 Yi-Fu Tuan, Geo-Piety: A Theme in Man’s Attachment to Nature and to Place, in Geographies Of The Mind: Essays In The Historical Geosophy In Honor Of John Kirtland Wright 11 (David Lowenthal & Martyn J. Bowden eds., 1976).
287 While the problem is accentuated in postcolonial formations, it is rooted in the very construct of modern nationalism. Nearly a century ago, Tagore identified “the spirit of conflict and conquest … at the origin and in the center of Western nationalism,” and cautioned that “[i]t is like the pack of predatory creatures that must have its victims.” Rabindranath Tagore, Nationalism 12 (1995 [1917]). He adds: “With all its heart it cannot bear to see its hunting grounds converted into cultivated fields.” Id.
Pakistan, hailed as “the triumph of ideology over geography,” is literally caught and exists between lines drawn by colonial powers - the Durand Line (1893) in the northwest, the Goldsmid Line (1872) to the west, the Radcliffe Line (1947) in the east, and the MacMahon Line (1904) to the north. For good measure, in the northeast, a Line of Control, “a sequence of ellipses...[d]rawn and redrawn by battles and treaties, ... identifiable by traces of blood, bullets,

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288 Titus, supra note ___ at 659.
289 ROSS MALLICK, DEVELOPMENT, ETHNICITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA 150 (1998).
watchtowers, and ghost settlements left from recurring wars,” provisionally divides Kashmir into areas held by India and Pakistan. The “state-building” and “nation-building” saga that unfolded between these lines since 1947 has produced what is variously characterized as the “viceregal model,” the “overdeveloped state,” the “hyper-extended state,” and the “praetorian state.” In efforts to constitute a state-nation, coercion always outweighed persuasion in claims of domination, in tune with a political grammar set in place by colonial rule. The project of “conjuring Pakistan,” that would envelop ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences within inherited borders, necessitated deployment of “security as hegemony.” Festering territorial disputes with neighboring states furnished the primary justification for the military to consume a disproportionate share of resources and to play a leading ideological and political role. Denial of representation, suppression of federalism, and destruction of alterity are the hallmarks of the state since its inception. As successor to the colonial “garrison state” in the Punjab, a Punjab-centered military-bureaucracy oligarchy has retained a dominant position in

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292 Representing the unfinished business of the 1947 Partition of India, this Line was drawn in 1949 at the end of the first India-Pakistan war in Kashmir and was styled the Cease Fire Line. Following the 1971 India-Pakistan war, it was readjusted and renamed the Line of Control through the Simla Accord of 1972. See Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Territory Of Desire: Representing The Valley Of Kashmir* 7 (2009).
299 Pasha, *supra* note __ at 283.
300 It has been observed that “[t]he story of Pakistan is the story of ambitious and adventurist generals denying the people their rights. Owen, *supra* note __ at 257, quoting a former chief of Pakistan’s air force, Mohammad Asghar Khan.
the ruling bloc. Denial of equal citizenship to the people of the provinces of Balochistan, East Bengal, NWFP, and Sind, even when they constituted the majority of the population, remains a defining feature of the state. Dissent and resistance were squelched by unbridled state violence, including repeated military actions – the most infamous being the one in 1971 that prompted the eastern wing of Pakistan to break off and establish a separate state of Bangladesh. Phases of coups d’etat, martial laws, abrogation of constitutions, and declarations of emergency rule constitute the “constitutional” history of the country. A docile judiciary serially deployed doctrines of “state necessity,” “revolutionary legality,” “constitutional deviation,” and “de facto power” to furnish legitimacy to repressive orders.

In building a postcolonial state-nation, the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), the colonial “buffer to a buffer,” has retained its special status - approximating a “space of exception” invoked by Giorgio Agamben. Today, FATA is “a Massachusetts-sized wedge”

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301 See HASAN ASKARI RIZVI, MILITARY, STATE AND SOCIETY IN PAKISTAN (2002); AYESHA SIDDQIA, MILITARY INC: INSIDE PAKISTAN’S MILITARY ECONOMY (2007).
302 See WASEEM, supra note, at 266-96, and CROSSED SWORDS, supra note __ at 249-281.
304 GIORGIO AGAMBEN, HOMO SACER: SOVEREIGN POWER AND BARE LIFE (Daniel Heller-Roaxen trans., 1998). Agamben takes as his point of departure, Schmitt’s claim that “[s]overeign is he who decides upon the exception.” CARL SCHMITT, POLITICAL THEOLOGY: FOUR CHAPTERS ON THE CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY 5 (1985). Agamben argues that the formation of a political community is based not on inclusion but on exclusion. He deploys the figure of homo sacer from Roman law to identify a zone where law suspends itself, rendering the zone not merely of exclusion but also of abandonment – the space of the exception. Under Roman law homo sacer could not be sacrificed because being outside divine law their death was of no value to the gods. However, they could be killed with impunity because being outside juridical law their lives were of no value to the community. For a lucid introduction to Agamben, see Jenny Edkins, Sovereign Power, Zones of Indistinction and the Camp, 25 ALTERNATIVES 3 (2000). For a critical reading, see Peter Fitzpatrick, Bare Sovereignty: Homo Sacer and the Insistence of Law, in POLITICS, METAPHYSICS, AND DEATH: ESSAYS ON GEORGIO AGAMBEN’S HOMO SACER 49 (Andrew Norris ed., 2005). See also Giorgio Agamben, State of Exception (Keven Atell trans. 2005). Creation of a space on exception is a question of the boundaries and borders of law, in that, the sovereign decision and the exception are “never decisively placed within or without the legal system as they are precisely the moving border between the two.” Andrew Norris, The Exemplary Exception, 119 RADICAL PHILOSOPHY 6, 10 (2003).
between Afghanistan and NWFP of Pakistan, with a population of about 4 million, virtually all of whom are Pashtuns. Since 1901, this zone has been governed by a unique colonial-era administrative and judicial order – an indirect rule that combines modern technologies of power with instrumental use of customary norms and traditional power structures. The colonial design aimed to “govern” through selected tribal notables who would be loyal to the British in exchange for fixed monetary allowances. No taxes would be levied on the tribes, who would be left alone to manage their internal affairs through the customary Pakhtunwali code in their tribal jirgas, which has been characterized as “probably the closest thing to Athenian democracy that has existed since the original.” However, any matter that implicated the security interests of colonial authorities was to be handled by a parallel system - a hybrid construct that retains the name jirga, and empties it of any semblance to “Athenian democracy” to make room for a process and a set of sanctions designed for harsh control and violent discipline to facilitate the critical result is that those placed in the zones of exception are included as objects of power but excluded from being subjects.

305 Johnson & Mason, supra note ___ at 45.

A jirga in its simplest form is merely an assembly. Practically all community business both public and private, is subject to its jurisdiction…It exercises executive, judicial, and legislative function, and yet frequently acts as an instrument for arbitration or conciliation…. The jirga, as it operates today, has three main functions. In its broadest and purest form, it regulates life at all levels within a tribal society requiring community attention, e.g., the choice of a site for a new mosque, punishment for domestic infidelity, settlement of a blood feud, or a decision to take up arms against a neighboring tribe. Secondly, the jirga provides a mechanism by which the decisions or opinions of the tribe are communicated to the government and the decisions of the government passed to the tribe. In this sense, the jirga handles the foreign relations of the tribe and has the authority to commit it to a course of action. A third form, the so-called ‘official’ jirga, composed of men appointed by an officer of the Government of Pakistan, has little to do with Pakhtunwali in the traditional sense. It acts as an advisory jury to an officer in trying crimes under the Frontier Crimes Regulations….

Id. at 143.
external domination.  This system took the shape of the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR),
originally formulated in 1858, and amended in 1872 and 1901, turning FATA into a
constitutional and legal anomaly. Decolonization did not bring any change. Since 1947, FATA
is formally a part of Pakistan. However FCR remains entrenched, and sets the FATA tribes apart
from and unequal to other citizens of the country.

To enable this state and space of exception, Pakistan’s constitution reposes all executive
and legislative authority for FATA in the President of the Pakistan, who is given the authority to
exercise his powers regarding FATA “as he may deem necessary.” Parliamentary enactments
do not apply to FATA, unless the President so directs. FATA is placed outside the jurisdiction
of the Supreme Court and High Courts that otherwise have extensive powers to guarantee
fundamental rights. The Supreme Court has recognized these “special provisions” for the area
“so that their inhabitants are governed by laws and customs with which they are familiar and
which suit their genius.”

The FATA itself stands divided into 7 administrative units styled “agencies.” An
evocatively titled “Political Agent” (PA), appointed in each agency by the federal government
and backed by a para-military militia, is the locus of Pakistan’s authority. Besides exercising

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311 PAK. CONST. of 1973, art. 247(3).
312 Id.
313 Id. art. 247(7). For fundamental rights enumerated by the constitution, see Id. arts. 8-28. For jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and High Courts, see id. arts. 184(3), 185, and 199.
314 Chaudhari Manzoor Elahi v. Federation of Pakistan, 1975 PLD 66 (S. C.), at 133, per Anwarul Haq, J. Emphasis added. For a detailed account of the judicial treatment of questions related to FATA, see Tanguay-Renaud, supra note __ at 549-555.
extensive executive, judicial, and revenue powers, the PA is also each agency’s development administrator. He is assisted by *maliks*, paid intermediaries from among tribal elders, who are appointed and removed at his discretion. Maintenance of order and suppression of crime are deemed the PA’s primary responsibilities. The PA is authorized to dispose of any civil or criminal matter at his discretion. The PA may decide the matter himself, or refer it to a tribal *jirga*, consisted of tribal *maliks* chosen by the PA. The PA initiates cases, appoints the *jirga*, presides over trials, and the final decision is subject to his discretion. The *jirga* is supposed to decide the matter under FCR, supplemented by customary tribal norms. The PA retains the discretion to sentence the accused as determined by the *jirga*, refer the matter back to the *jirga*, or appoint a new *jirga*. The determinations of the PA are not subject to review by any court of law. The process is that of an inquiry rather than presentation of evidence and cross examination. Assistance of counsel is prohibited. It is no wonder that the “*jirga* lost its credibility among the tribesmen the day it became a tool in the hands of political authorities.”

Draconian sanctions under the FCR executed at the discretion of the PA, include:

detention and imprisonment to prevent crime or sedition, requiring “a person to execute a bond for good behavior or for keeping the peace,” expulsion from the agency of “dangerous fanatics” and those involved in blood feuds, removal or prevention of settlements close to the border, demolition of buildings used for “criminal purposes,” collective punishment of fines and blockade, and the “right to cause the death of a person” on suspicion of intent to use arms to

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315 The Constitution contemplates separation of judicial and executive powers. PAK. CONST. art. 175 (3).
316 The Supreme Court of Pakistan rejected the application of the FCR “justice” system in Balochistan in 1993, stating that “mere existence of a tribal society or a tribal culture does not by itself create a stumbling block in the way of enforcing ordinary procedures of criminal law, trial and detention which is enforceable in the entire country.” *Government of Balochistan v. Azizullah Memon*, PLD 1993 Supreme Court 341, 361. In this case, the Supreme Court could rule on FCR as the issue arose about its use in Balochistan, where it was outlawed by this judgment. FATA, however, remains beyond any court’s jurisdiction.
evade arrest. The federal agency charged with overseeing FATA considers FCR an “effective ‘iron-hand’” whose withdrawal would create an “administrative vacuum.”

In 1962, under a design of limited franchise, an electoral college of 35,000 tribal **maliks**, appointed by the PA, selected representatives to the national parliament. In 1996, adult franchise was introduced, though “politics and political parties are curse words in official circles.” Because the law prohibits political parties from extending their activities in FATA, only “non-party/independent” representatives can be elected. This makes for a unique political anomaly: FATA residents elect representatives to a legislature whose legislation does not extend to FATA. Abysmal levels of poverty, illiteracy, and health care combine with political disenfranchisement and repression. Analysts find FATA “a virtual prison for public-spirited and reform-minded individuals. Dissenting voices are quickly dubbed anti-state and silenced by imprisonment.” State functionaries, however, claim that the system in place for over a hundred years, “suits the genius of the people and has stood the test of time.” It is more appropriate to characterize FATA as a zone where bodies and spaces are placed on the other side of universality, a “moral and legal no man’s land, where universality finds its spatial limit.”

FATA, admittedly an extreme case, is symptomatic of the problem of reconciling territorial straitjackets with the principle of self-determination. For the territorial state, self-

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318 International Crisis Group, *Pakistan’s Tribal areas: Appeasing the Militants*, ASIA REPORT, No. 125, December 2006, at 7. See also, Omrani, supra note __ at 187.
319 **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**, supra note __ at 50.
320 Bangash, supra note __ at 1.
321 Per capita income in FATA is $250 a year, half that of the rest of Pakistan. 71% men and 97% women are illiterate. There is one doctor for every 6,762 people, compared to one for every 1,359 in Pakistan. International Crisis Group, *Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants*, ASIA REPORT, no. 125, Dec. 2006, at 9.
322 Id. at 12.
323 Id. Emphasis added.
determination has always been a concept “loaded with dynamite.” In postcolonial formations, its explosive potential increases. The primary problem is not how to determine identities and desires of a people eligible for self-determination. The problem rather is how to reconcile realization of this right with existing territorial configurations. The unresolved questions surrounding the Durand Line, FATA, and Pashtun political identity persist because their resolution is sought within a territorial “nation-state.” Nesiah terms the imprisonment of postcolonial polities within modern territorial constructs of statehood “failures of imagination.” A major hurdle in breaking free of this imprisonment is international law itself.

B. International Law and the Territorial Straitjacket

For many a postcolonial “contrived state” its crisis of identity and security “lies in its ‘artificiality,’” International law enforces the territorially-bound grammar of the “nation-state” upon postcolonial formations plagued by “cartographic anxiety inscribed into [their] very genetic code,” through the doctrine of *uti possidetis*. Based on a maxim of Roman law, *uti possidetis ita possidetis* (as you possess, so you possess), this doctrine treats the acquisition and possession of a state’s territory as given, with no territorial adjustments allowable without the consent of the

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328 Vasuki Nesiah, Placing International Law: White Spaces on a Map, 16 LEIDEN J. INT’L L. 1, 29 (2003). She builds here on Appadurai’s position that territorial nationalism is in itself a failure of imagination. APPADURAI, supra note __ at 161-65.
331 Krishna, supra note __ at 196.
Currently occupying parties. Applied to international borders, it favors actual possession irrespective of how it was achieved, assumes that valid title belongs to current possessor, and does not seek to differentiate between the de facto and de jure possession. By recognizing legitimate title to de facto territorial holdings, it becomes an instrument to maintain the status quo and impedes imaginative resolutions of territorial conflicts.

The doctrine of uti possidetis was formulated in connection with colonialism in Latin America in early nineteenth century when Spanish colonies agreed to apply the principle both in their frontier disputes with each other and in those with Brazil. During the decolonization era of the twentieth century, this norm was extended to the withdrawal of colonial powers from Asia and Africa. The principle mandated that “new states will come to independence with the same boundaries they had when they were administrative units within the territory or territories of a colonial power.” This froze colonial boundaries and presented a challenge to postcolonial formations to imagine and manage a “nation” and “national identity” in the heterogeneity contained within inherited boundaries. In some instances, particularly in Africa, this attempt failed completely and ended in genocide and/or fracturing of the state.

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333 The concept of *uto possidetis de facto* emerged in international law after the war of 1801 fought by Spain and France against Portugal to recognize the territorial results of the war. See *The Minquiers and Ecrehos Case (France v. United Kingdom)*, Sep. Op. ICJ Reports 47, 96-97 (1953).
The International Court of Justice (ICJ)\textsuperscript{339} and international tribunals\textsuperscript{340} were quick to put their imprimatur on the doctrine and its application to postcolonial states. The ICJ has designated it a “general principle, which is logically connected with the phenomenon of obtaining independence, whenever it occurs.”\textsuperscript{341} The ICJ went on to state that “[i]ts obvious purpose is to prevent the independence and stability of new States being endangered by fratricidal struggles provoked by the challenging of frontiers following the withdrawal of administrative power.”\textsuperscript{342} The bottom line is that through “application of the principle of \textit{uti possidetis},” colonial “administrative boundaries” are “upgraded” and “transformed into international frontiers in the full sense of the term.”\textsuperscript{343}

The ICJ has acknowledged that by giving fixity and legitimacy to colonial boundaries, the principle \textit{uti possidetis} “at first sight … conflicts outright with another one, the right of

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\textsuperscript{341} \textit{Frontier Dispute Case, supra note __ at 565.}

\textsuperscript{342} Id. at 565.

\textsuperscript{343} \textit{Frontier Dispute Case,} at 566.
peoples to self-determination.” In the face of this dilemma, the ICJ fell back on pragmatism to claim that “maintenance of the territorial status quo” is essential to “preserve what has been achieved by people who have struggled for their independence.” The Court sought support for this claim with a gesture toward the practice of post-colonial states: “[t]he essential requirement of stability in order to survive, to develop and gradually to consolidate their independence in all fields, has induced African states judiciously to consent to the respecting of colonial frontiers, and to take account of it in the interpretation of the principle of self-determination.” Here Nesiah rightly sees a “double bind” infecting the Court as it is committed to decolonization but “[t]erritorial integrity emerges here as a statist spatial representation intelligible to international law, and posited as indispensable to the self-determination of the postcolony.”

As the saga of the Durand Line shows, colonial frontiers, boundaries, and borders fluctuated over time. This raises the question of the exact territorial bounds of postcolonial states. The ICJ injected an unequivocal temporal cut-off in this historically ambivalent temporal and spatial issue, by holding that:

\[ \textit{uti possidetis} \] applies to the new State (as a State) not with retroactive effect, but immediately and from that moment onwards. It applies to the State as it is, i.e., to the photograph of the territorial situation then

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344 Id. at 567. The Court was mindful of the dilemma of how this principle “has been able to withstand the new approaches to international law … where the successive attainment of independence and the emergence of new States have been accompanied by a certain questioning of traditional international law.” Id. at 566-7. For an insightful analysis of the terms and the structure of the discourse of self-determination in international law, see Nathaniel Berman, Sovereignty in Abeyance: Self Determination and International Law, 7 WIS. INT’L L.J. 51 (1988).

345 Id. at 567.

346 Id. Emphasis added. The Court also noted that the OUS had pledged in 1964 “to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence.” Id. at 564-5, quoting OAU Res. 16(1). The OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government through Resolution 17(1) expressly affirmed the principle of \textit{uti possidetis} in 1964. A.C. MCEWEN, INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN EAST AFRICA 22 (1971). See generally, BENYAMIN NEUBERGER, NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION IN POST COLONIAL AFRICA 91986); Jeffry Herbst, The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa, 43 INT’L ORG. 673 (1989); Ravi Kapil, On the Conflict Potential of Inherited Boundaries in Africa, 18 WORLD POLITICS 656 (1966); JEFFEREY HERBST, STATES AND POWER IN AFRICA: COMPARATIVE LESSONS IN AUTHORITY AND CONTROL (2000).

347 Nesiah, supra note ___ at 20.
existing. The principle of uti posidetis freezes the territorial title; it stops the clock but does not put back the hands.348

As fashioned by the ICJ, “the critical date as a legal concept posits that there is a certain moment at which the rights of the parties crystallize, so that acts after that date cannot alter the legal position. It is this moment which is more decisive than any other for the purpose of the formulation of the rights of the parties in question.”349 This freeze-framing of boundaries on the date of decolonization by one definitive gesture renders the issue of the history of these boundaries moot. The rationale appears to be that “freezing the carved-up territory in the format it exhibited at the moment of independence”350 will deter territorial disputes among post-colonial states. Pervasive postcolonial territorial and self-determination conflicts, however, reveal that such a mandated spatial fixity and temporal clarity of boundaries does not keep these conflicts in check.351 Utí posidetis combined with critical date as a legal concept trumps conflicting post-colonial assertion and exercise of effective authorities as grounds for sovereign title under the doctrine of effectivités.352 Post-colonial effectivités has significance only if colonial practice fails to furnish definitive demarcation and thus trigger application of uti posidetis.353

348 Frontier Dispute Case, supra note ___ at 130. Emphasis added.
350 Frontier Dispute Case, supra note, at 565, separate opinion of Judge Abi-Saab.
351 For episodes of territorial conquest in the post-World War II era, see Eugene Kontorovich, International Responses to Territorial Conquest, 102 AM. SOC’Y INT’L L. PROC. (2009).
352 For detailed discussion of effectivités doctrine, see MALCOLM N. SHAW, INTERNATIONAL LAW 432-436 (5th ed. 2003); Island of Palmas Arbitration (Netherlands v. U.S.), 2 RIAA, 829 (1929); Clipperton Island Arbitration (France v. Mexico), 26 AJIL 390 (1932); Eastern Greenland (Denmark v. Norway), PCIJ, Series A/B, No. 53, p. 46 (1933).
The concern with order has been central to modern international law. Decolonization, coming on the heels of two World Wars, raised the specter of disorder. As a result, the norm of self-determination gave way to the caveat of order. Order trumped self-determination, deemed a concept “loaded with dynamite,” and the transition from colonialism to postcoloniality proceeded with the basic requirement that external boundaries remain in place. Managers of postcolonial formations were equally quick to subscribe to the doctrine, and international bodies like the United Nations were quick to give their imprimatur. The same 1960 UN resolution that affirmed that “all peoples have the right of self-determination,” also declared that “any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.” As a way out of this contradiction, the United Nations contemplates the possibility of non-state modes of actualizing self-determination, by holding that “[t]he establishment of a sovereign and independent State, the free association or integration with an independent State or the emergence into any other political status freely determined by a people constitutes modes of implementing the right of self-determination.” This contradiction points to the Janus-faced nature of the right of self-determination in a system of states with fixed and inviolable territorial bounds. The right has a “justifying, stabilizing, conserving effect and it has a criticizing, subversive, revolutionizing


358 UNGA Resolution 2625, quoted in Western Sahara Case, supra note at 36.
one.”359 International law and the practice of states have been content with the justifying, stabilizing, and conserving effect.360

This bias in favor of existing states is augmented by a doctrinal lacuna, with profound political implications, that remains at the heart of the *uti possidetis* doctrine as reformulated by modern international law and endorsed by the ICJ. In *jus civile*, rightful title via *de facto* possession could only be acquired by a prescriptive claim of *usucapio* established in good faith.361 Furthermore, in Roman law, *uti possidetis* is deemed an interim measure in contested vindication proceedings to determine title.362 A critical restrictive qualifier, *nec vi, nec clam, nec precario* (without force, without secrecy, without permission), limits the scope of the doctrine. Modern international law conveniently elides this critical limitation, perhaps because given the colonial modes of acquisition of territory, colonial boundaries run afoul of the limitation.363 This gloss over the spatial history of colonialism, now bequeathed to post-colonial formations, by treating *de facto* control as rightful title is a foundational reworking of the original construct.364

The doctrine of *uti possidetis*, far from being grounded in any sound legal principle, is thus more a political instrument to legitimate existing state boundaries. The precarious status of the norm was underscored by the *Beagle Channel Arbitration’s* observation that it is “possibly,

361 HERBERT FELIX JOLOWICZ & BARRY NICHOLAS, HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ROMAN LAW 151-55 (1972).
362 Id. at 259-70.
363 See, e.g., THOMAS PAKENHAM, THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA (1998); ALI MAZRUI, CULTURAL FORCES IN WORLD POLITICS 1-21 (1975).
364 As Schwarzenberger posits, “Even so ‘obvious’ a loan from Roman law as the use of *uti possidetis* in the Latin American practice since the early nineteenth century is more indicative of the differences between the remedy in Roman law and its application on the inter-state level than of any supposed likeness between these institutions.” George Schwarzenberger, Title to Territory: Response to a Challenge, 51 Am J. Int’l L. 308, 309 (1957). See also, A. C. MCEWEN, INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF EAST AFRICA 27-31 (1971).
at least at first, a political tenet rather than a true rule of law." Koskenniemi sees in the recognition of *uti possidetis* an acknowledgment that the ethical conception of international law cannot override the sociological. Demarcation of boundaries is essentially a political act. However, when reified by international law, these boundaries appear to have an identity separate from politics of the international system. The primary rationale for the adoption of the principle has been to avoid territorial conflict among post-colonial states, particularly in the light of international law’s primary role - preservation of order. While peace and order remain elusive in the global system, *uti possidetis* furnishes a cloak of legitimacy over colonial disposition of territories of the global South by eliding the questions of the origins of these dispositions. By forcing disparate people to circumscribe their political aspirations within predetermined territorial bounds, *uti possidetis* reverses the vision of self-determination that seeks to protect vulnerable populations by allowing them political and territorial arrangements of their own.

Ian Brownlie is unequivocal in stating that “it is *uti possidetis* which creates the ambit of the pertinent unit of self-determination, and which in that sense has logical priority over self-determination.” The problem is that this logical priority furnishes the grounds for actual priority of territory over people.

C. Colonial Boundaries, Unequal Treaties, and International Law

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366 In his words, “the strong support that the law gives to *uti possidetis* in the delineation of territorial rights seems a clear recognition of this reality.” Koskenniemi, *supra* note ___ at 24.
Treaties between imperial powers and a variety of agreements between colonizers and native authorities played a key role in determining the spatial scope of spheres of control and influence. The Durand Line, like borders of most postcolonial states, is a legacy of such treaties, particularly the 1893 agreement between the Afghan Amir and the British. As disputes arise about the validity of these borders, questions about the legal status of the treaties that determined these borders surface. Most salient among these is the issue of unequal treaties. However, in tune with its gloss on the doctrine of *uti possidetis* to protect the *status quo*, modern international law has resisted confronting the question of unequal treaties squarely so as not to disturb how things stand.

The Durand Line raises the question of the validity of the 1893 agreement dictated by the British to the reluctant Amir of Afghanistan, a vassal installed over a protectorate in all but name. While examining the validity of such arrangements, one is confronted with the fact that the question of unequal treaties appears to have “evaporated as an issue from the domain of

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369 Charles Henry Alexandrowicz, *The Role of Treaties in the European-African Confrontation in the Nineteenth Century*, in *AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL HISTORY* 27-68 (Kodwo Mensah-Brown ed., 1975); PROSSER GIFFORD & ROGER LOUIS, *FRANCE AND BRITAIN IN AFRICA: IMPERIAL RIVALRY AND COLONIAL RULE* 167-220 (1971). It is important to note that these agreement and treaties were between colonial powers and native power-holders, not native communities. This brings into relief the question about who consents to a treaty. Is it the state, a legal abstract, or the people and communities that exists within the bounds of a state? What are the implications of this choice for participatory democracy and for the emerging right to democratic governance? It has been argued that “international law must recognize that governments are agents of a part of the communities they purport to represent at international negotiating table.” E. Benvenisti, *Domestic Politics and International Resources: What Role for International Law? in THE ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: ESSAYS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW* 114 (M. Byers ed., 2000). See also, U. Kischel, *The State as a Non-unitary Actor: The Role of the Judicial Branch in International Negotiations* 39 ARCHIV DES VOLKERRECHTS 268 (2001); H. CHARLESWORTH & C. CHINKIN, *THE BOUNDARIES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS* (2003); STEPHEN KRANSER, *SOVEREIGNTY: ORGANIZED HYPOCRISY* (1999).

370 See supra notes ___ and accompanied text.

international law,” and stands “consigned to the dustbin of ‘redundant ideas,” and is deemed a mere “political” argument with scant legal valance. How does a question implicated in colonial territorial treaties that imprison the postcolonial world in arbitrary spatial cages become invisible to international law? It took a series of conceptual and institutional maneuvers to make it disappear from sight.

The status of unequal treaties in international law first arose in the nineteenth century in the context of treaties between Western powers and East Asian states, and was rehearsed in the early twentieth century by Soviet jurists. Drawing on extra-textual contexts that animated the texts of colonial treaties, Asian states and Soviet jurists argued that because imperial powers had used their dominant military position to gain concessions through treaties forced upon weaker states, such treaties were invalid. Because these agreements were the products of coercion, they implicated questions of status of parties, the context in which agreements were secured, and the nature of consent involved. The issue of inequality arises both in terms of

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372 M. CRAVEN & M. FITZMAURICE, INTERROGATING THE TREATY: ESSAYS IN THE CONTEMPORARY LAW OF TREATIES 43, 44 (2005). It is claimed that the question has never had any place in international law. See I. BROWNIE, PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW 620 (5th ed. 1998).


374 The treaties with Asian states typically involved opening of ports to foreign trade, fixing of import duties, cession or lease of territory, immunities from local jurisdiction, extraterritorial jurisdiction of Western powers, right of navigation in inland waters, concessions for mining, railways and shipping, and overt non-reciprocity. See, e.g., Q. WRIGHT, LEGAL PROBLEMS IN THE FAR EASTERN CONFLICT 69-73 (1941); W. Tieya, International Law in China: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, 195 HAGUE RECUEIL 232 (1990); S. Sucharitkul, Asian Perspectives Of the Evolution of International Law: Thailand’s Experience at the Threshold of the Third Millenium, 1 CHINESE J. INT’L L. 527 (2002); Douglas Howland, The Foreign and the the Sovereign: Extraterritoriality in East Asia, in HOELAND AND WHITE, supra note __ at 35-55. For similar treaties before the 19th century, see C. Alexandrowicz, Treaty and Diplomatic Relations between European and South Asian Powers in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century, 100 HAGUE RECUEIL 203 (1960).

unequal bargaining power of the parties and the substantive lack of equilibrium with respect to benefits and burdens allocated by these treaties. Note here that in some instances, the harsh and humiliating terms of unequal treaties were instrumental in the rise of anti-colonial resistance and nationalism in Asia and unprecedented collective military action by Western powers to quell this resistance.377 Indeed it was the coordinated military action in China by Western powers to put down the anti-Western Boxer Uprising of 1900 that fashioned a new and enduring stratagem of international politics – collective military action by the Western powers in the global South.378

Faced with questions about the validity of unequal treaties, the initial Western response was that these treaties were necessary given the “backwardness” of Asian societies and legal orders, and that once those “shortcomings” are remedied, the treaties will lose their force by the absence of their raison d’être.379 By the late nineteenth century, international law’s turn to positivism, with its recognition of differentiated sovereignties, stepped in to acknowledge and accommodate a diplomatic practice rooted in culture and history as the primary source of norms.380 The contemporary Concert of Europe rested upon the 1815 Treaty of Vienna, the peace treaty at the culmination of Napoleonic Wars, and related agreements. Preservation of the Concert of Europe and the attendant distribution of power became a primary preoccupation of international law.381 Since peace treaties are unavoidably unequal in nature, international law now framed the question of sovereign consent as a purely formal one subject to overarching

380 See supra notes __ and accompanied text.
381 See CARTY, supra note__ at 67.
norms of preservation of order in the international system.\textsuperscript{382} The classic notion that validity of treaties rests upon consent by formally equal and sovereign states gave way to a positivist recognition that “[t]he obligation of treaties, by whatever denomination they may be called, is founded, not merely upon the contract itself, but upon those mutual relations between the two states, which may have induced them to enter into certain engagements.”\textsuperscript{383} Political realities trumped formal legal categories now deemed quaint. In this frame, unequal treaties of yesterday, however secured, furnished the grounds of the prevailing international order. To question their validity retrospectively raised the specter of unraveling the fragile order of things. With the question of state consent rendered a formal one, today any arguments based on consent to explain validity of treaties become “deceptively simple ….[because their] theoretical power lies in the suggestion that perhaps nothing really needs to be justified.”\textsuperscript{384}

International lawyers deployed the same line of reasoning to defang the classic doctrine of \textit{ribus sic stantibus}, whereby a fundamental change of circumstances can justify unilateral termination of treaties. Unequal treaties are particularly vulnerable to this line of attack with the

\textsuperscript{382}The Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) was quick to jump on the positivist bandwagon: “The question whether a certain matter is or is not solely within the jurisdiction of a state is an essentially relative question; it depends upon the development of international relations.” \textit{Nationality Decrees in Tunis and Morocco Case}, PCIJ Rep., Series B., No. 4 (1923) at 24. Unequal peace treaties had to be honored because “welfare of society requires that the engagements entered into by a nation under such duress as is implied by the defeat of its military forces, the distress of its people, and the occupation of its territory by an enemy, should be held binding; for if they were not, wars could only be terminated by the utter subjugation and ruin of the weaker party.” H. Weaton, \textsc{Elements of International Law} 284 (1936[1866]). Now peace treaties “were respected in an almost metaphoric way: they embodied the Concert of Europe.” D. Bederman, \textit{The 1871 London Declaration, Ribus Sic Stantibus and a Primitivist View of the Law of Nations}, 82 AM. J. INT’L L. 1 (1988). As for the inequality of peace treaties, “[w]hile finding it morally outrageous that … a treaty should be legally binding even if imposed at the end of a war by a victorious ‘aggressor’ on the victim of ‘aggression’ [one has] seen no way of rescuing mankind by legal precepts from this particular kind of outrage…. [One can fine no modalities] whereby international law can summon sufficient power to defeat every victor at the moment of his victory.” J. Stone, \textit{De Victoribus Victis: The International Law Commission and Imposed Treaties of Peace}, 8 VA J. INT’L L. 356, 357, 358 (1967-8).

\textsuperscript{383}E. Weaton, \textsc{Elements of International Law} 39 (2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. 1880).

\textsuperscript{384}Lea, Brilmayer, \textsc{American Hegemony: Political Morality in a One-Superpower World} 75 (1996).
passage of time and changes in the post-Napoleonic European balances of power. When the issue arose within Europe in the late nineteenth century, international law’s response was that because sanctity of treaties is essential to the maintenance of order, even in the face of changed circumstances, termination or modification of treaty obligations requires the consent of other parties. As pressure for revision of treaty arrangements mounted in light of a changed balance of power within Europe in the early twentieth century, international law’s turn to institutions to deal with problems of order, now seen as essentially political in nature, provided an opening — signaling “a movement from a moment of law to politics.” The doctrine of ribus sic stantibus was now read as embracing two separate issues to be framed and resolved along two separate tracks. The political issue of accommodating changes in the interests and powers of states was to be dealt with by the League of Nations under article 19 of its Charter. The legal issue was to be narrowly construed as one of clausula — the relationship between underlying consent and changed circumstances — deemed suitable for judicial determination by the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ). As now enshrined in article 62 of the Vienna Convention, the doctrine of rebus sic stantibus stands confined within narrow limits as a legal question - a treaty is terminable only when unforeseen changes in the circumstances underlying the conclusion of

385 The nineteenth century diplomatic history of a volatile Europe “presents a tale of secret intrigues, entangling alliances, and monarchial imaginations frozen by rigid military plans, inflexible commitments, and ossified notions of national honor and sovereign prerogative.” David Kennedy, Move to Institutions 8 CARDOZO L. REV. 841, 855 (1987).
387 Kennedy, supra note __ at 871.
388 Some held the view that termination of unequal treaty was not a legal question at all but entirely a political question of what a party could secure through diplomacy and force. A. Putney, The Termination of Unequal Treaties, 21 AM. SOC’Y OF INT’L L. PROCEEDINGS 87, 90 (1927).
389 PCIJ did indeed construe the doctrine narrowly to hold that a change in circumstances would warrant lapse of a treaty only if the circumstances in question involved were central to the intent of the parties at the time the treaty was entered into. Free Zones of Upper Savoy and the District of Gex, PCIJ, Series A/B, No. 46 (1932), at 156-8.
the treaty transform radically the extent of the obligations still to be performed.\textsuperscript{390} In the end, *rebus sic stantibus* stands sacrificed at the altar of *pacta sunt servanda* (agreements must be kept).

International law dealt with the issue of coercion, duress, and unequal treaties with institutional and interpretive moves. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties addresses the issue through articles 51 and 52 - making coercion and threat or use of force “in violation of the principles of international law in the Charter of the United Nations” grounds for voiding a treaty.\textsuperscript{391} With this iteration of a classic rule, “the problem has been legislated away.”\textsuperscript{392} The repackaging of what coercion and threat or use of force is impermissible subtly altered the classic treaty law rule on duress that condemned all coercion. The prohibition on duress in the formation of a treaty now stands conditioned by the legal status of the coercion used. The qualifier “in violation of international law” on the prohibition against the threat or use of force is to be read in the light of the U.N. Charter that does not outlaw use of force, only *unlawful* use of force. Consequently, with unequal treaties of the past, the question becomes not the exercise of coercion and duress, but one of the legal status of threat or use of force in the eye of international norms then in place. The imperial bent of international law in the colonial age already stood recognized and legitimated by the positivist turn that international law took. The implication is that any alleged use of force in treaties of the past may well have been lawful under contemporaneous norms. For good measure, the ICJ has held that any accusation of coercion to

\textsuperscript{390} The ICJ has held that the changed conditions had to be “so closely linked to the object and purpose of the Treaty that they constitute an essential basis of the consent of the parties and, in changing, radically altered the extent of the obligations still to be performed.” *Case Concerning the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros Project*, ICJ Rep. 1997, at para 104.


\textsuperscript{392} INTERROGATING THE TREATY, *supra* note __ at 46.
dispute the validity of a treaty must be accompanied by “clear evidence” that goes beyond, e.g., the mere presence of naval forces off the coast of the complaining party.\textsuperscript{393} This narrow definition of coercion is particularly troubling in today’s global order where effective instruments of economic coercion increasingly complement weapons of physical coercion in relations between states.\textsuperscript{394} In the face of these conceptual and institutional moves, any continuing expectation that international law as it stands may interrogate unequal colonial treaties to rescue territorially imprisoned postcolonial formations is futile. To those who may still raise the question of unequal treaties, Brierly has an unequivocal response: “we must not invent a pseudo-legal principle to justify such action. The remedy has to be sought elsewhere, in political, not in juridical action.”\textsuperscript{395} While the question of colonial unequal treaties stands brushed aside, what about contemporary treaties that reflect existing international relations of domination? Here, it appears that it is sufficient to acknowledge that “bargaining frequently takes place in a world of uneven resources and opportunity costs,”\textsuperscript{396} and move on.

The history of unequal treaties underscores that “the history of the international system is a history of inequality \textit{par excellence}.”\textsuperscript{397} International law’s posture towards legacies of colonialism has created a “\textit{legalized hegemony}: the realization through legal forms of Great Power prerogatives.”\textsuperscript{398} The fleeting and ephemeral career of the unequal treaties doctrine in

\textsuperscript{393} \textit{Fisheries Jurisdiction Case (Jurisdiction)}, ICJ Rep. (1973) 3, at 14, para 24.
\textsuperscript{397} IAN BROWNLIE, \textit{PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW} 289 (5th ed. 1990).
\textsuperscript{398} GERRY SIMPSON, \textit{GREAT POWERS AND OUTLAW STATES: UNEQUAL SOVEREIGNS IN THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ORDER} x (2004).
international law underscores an apparently foundational canon of the law: the specter of disorder necessitates defense of order, even an unjust order. This is in tune with Kant, author of the celebrated foundational injunction of the Enlightenment – “dare to know” –, cautioned that:

The origin of supreme power, for all practical purposes, is not discoverable by the people who are subject to it. In other words, the subject ought not to indulge in speculations about its origin with a view to acting upon them, as if its right to be obeyed were open to doubt.…[W]hether the power came first, and the law only appeared after it, or whether they ought to have followed this order – these are completely futile arguments for a people which is already subject to civil law, and they constitute a menace to the state.\textsuperscript{399}

International law, like modern law itself, is not so daring after all. It turns out that its primary function is to enable “[s]tates to carry on their day-to-day intercourse along orderly and predictable lines.”\textsuperscript{400} It is of little concern to it that the lines within which states have to exist in order “to carry out their day-to-day intercourse” are unstable, contested, and fruits of the exercise of imperial domination.

V. Conclusion

Modern colonialism was nothing if not an exercise in audacity. The global reach of colonial rule reordered subjects and reconfigured space. Fixed territorial demarcations of colonial possessions played a pivotal role in this process. Issuing from imperatives of colonial rule and compulsions of rivalries between colonial powers, these demarcations often cut across age-old cultural and historical social units. Postcolonial states inherited these demarcations and, with them, a host of endemic political and security afflictions. The unmistakable spatiality of the so-called Great Games, both old and new, brings into relief the continuing salience of space and space.

\textsuperscript{399} KANT: POLITICAL WRITINGS 143 (Hans Reiss ed., 1991).
\textsuperscript{400} J. BRIERLY, THE LAW OF NATIONS 78 (6\textsuperscript{th} ed. 1963).
territory in an age when supposedly the forces and processes of globalization had rendered them irrelevant.

Modern international law, which in its incipient stage lent license to colonial rule, today legitimates colonial cartographies, thereby accentuating postcolonial dilemmas and conflicts. This accords with the larger affliction that plagues international law: its refusal to squarely face its complicity in the process of empire building combines with its inability to break free of the shadow of a sordid past. The career of the Durant Line highlights that when addressing many of today’s intractable conflicts, the law as it exists is more of a problem than a solution. As humanity struggles to imagine political communities beyond the straitjackets of territorial states, a primary challenge is to clear the conceptual and doctrinal hurdles that remain in the way. This necessitates breaking free of imperial geographies and economies of knowledge that undergird modern legal constructs and international regimes. Albert Einstein cautioned us that “it is theory which decides what can be observed.” The first step in that direction is to align our inquiries and sights with the other side of the lines drawn by international law.