

Connecticut Debate Association

October 25, 2014

AITE, Farmington High School and Joel Barlow High School

Resolved: Nations should permit secession and self-determination.

"National aspirations must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase; it is an imperative principle of action. . . ."

—Woodrow Wilson with his famous self-determination speech on 11 February 1918[12] after he announced his Fourteen Points on 8 January 1918.

“Our federal Union. It must be preserved.”

Andrew Jackson, Jefferson Day Dinner

Let Scotland Go Free

Slate: The View from Chicago, September 11, 2014, By Eric Posner

Independence isn't crazy, irresponsible, or childish.

Next week, Scottish voters will decide whether to declare independence from the United Kingdom. Scottish secession once seemed like a bizarre lost cause, but polls have tightened, setting off alarms in England and throughout the world. Critics outside Scotland think that Scottish independence is a crazy idea for the Scots and a bad example for the world, encouraging other separatist movements in less peaceful regions, with turmoil and financial ruin the sure result. But the commentators are wrong. Scotland should go free if that's what the Scots want.

The brief against independence is, at first sight, strong. The Scots already enjoy a great deal of autonomy within the United Kingdom. Although the U.K. parliament is the supreme source of law throughout Great Britain, the Scottish legislature makes many of the laws that govern Scotland, and Scottish courts enforce them. Unlike many secessionists, Scottish nationalists can't complain that they're being forced to learn someone else's language or that they have no control over how their children are educated. Scotland receives more money from the U.K. than its citizens pay out in taxes. And a Scottish divorce would be a messy, lengthy process that would distract political leaders for years.

The benefits of a large country are of diminishing significance in a world of free trade and relative peace.

Moreover, independence for Scotland will leave lots of victims in its wake. The many Scots who oppose independence will be forced to live in an independent Scottish state they reject, or move to England. They won't be able to start their own state and secede from Scotland. The English population will also lose the benefits of living in a larger country. Larger countries tend to be richer and safer. Smaller countries get pushed around. Although the Scottish population is a small fraction of the current U.K. population, the Scottish economy is not negligible, and Scottish territory represents a large fraction of the U.K..

We in the U.S. could also be hurt by Scottish secession. The United Kingdom has been a loyal and powerful ally of the United States in many international conflicts—against Communists, Islamic terrorists, and other foreign ogres. A disunited kingdom, embroiled for years in negotiations over the division of the country, would be a weak and distracted ally.

In the face of such arguments, some commentators blame the secessionist impulse on childish resentment at England, which is widely if falsely perceived as a bully, and emotional appeals to nationalist sentiment by scheming politicians.

But while it's true that Scottish nationalists often make mystical arguments (as nationalists always do), the case for independence is based on serious policy considerations. Some Scots believe that independence would give Scotland sole ownership of valuable oil deposits off its coast in the North Sea. Although those resources may well be almost depleted, it is possible that advances in oil-extraction technology would enable Scotland to create an oil-financed welfare state like Norway's.

More importantly, if Scotland were independent, Scots would control the whole array of policy instruments that Scotland now shares with the rest of the U.K.—above all, taxing and spending. The Scots would be able to govern themselves however they want—and that includes putting into place the more generous welfare state that the more right-leaning English public has denied them.

Against the real benefit of greater autonomy, the costs of leaving the U.K. seem abstract. In general, bigger countries are safer than small countries, but there is no serious threat to states of comparable size, or smaller, to a new Scottish state—including Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, and tiny Iceland. Unlike Ukraine and Georgia, Scotland has nothing to fear from its neighbors. And because Scotland will continue to enjoy free trade with Britain, Europe, and the rest of the world, it—like Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland—will continue to prosper.

Both nationalists and their critics have obscured the stakes by presenting the question of Scottish independence as either/or when in fact it is a matter of degree. As noted, Scotland already enjoys a fair amount of autonomy within the United Kingdom. Recently, the British government offered Scotland more autonomy—more control over taxes and spending—if it remains in the United Kingdom. If Scotland declines this offer, it will almost certainly be allowed to join the European Union, and so remain a peer of the U.K. in that larger supra-national entity. Scotland will probably be able to remain in a currency union with the U.K. despite English threats to expel it; if not, Scotland could join the euro or, as Paul Krugman advises, go it alone.

No one plans to build a fence around Scotland. Trade and investment will continue as before. Very likely free movement across the border between England and Scotland will continue as it does among most of the sovereign states of Western Europe. There is a sense—an irony not lost among the anti-secessionists in light of the nationalist rhetoric—that Scotland is not so much declaring independence as abandoning its status as vassal to the U.K. so that it can become a vassal to the EU.

This might really seem crazy. Why exchange one overlord for another? The population of the EU is 13 times that of England and Wales, and so the influence of the Scots on EU policy will be commensurately smaller. But the move actually makes sense. In lying to the left of England, Scottish political sentiment is closer to the continent's. European policies will be closer to Scots' preferences than the English policies that they currently reject. Scotland and France have enjoyed a centuries-long dalliance that England repeatedly thwarted; perhaps the advance of communication and transportation technology finally will allow the two countries to consummate their relationship.

If independence is in the self-interest of the Scots, critics can argue that independence is selfish rather than crazy. Many people worry that Scottish independence would inspire other secessionist movements to redouble their efforts, and in other parts of the world national divorces are less pretty than what we are seeing in the U.K. Secessionist groups have a nasty habit of complaining that they are deprived of self-determination and then, once they have their own state, expelling or repressing their own ethnic minorities. The logic of secession seems to portend an unraveling of the state system until the world consists of a billion sovereign households that are constantly at war with each other.

But it is most unlikely that Scottish independence will plant an idea into the heads of nationalists that is not already there. Scotland's secessionist movement fits into a larger trend of state fragmentation that goes back more than a half century. Since World War II, the number of states worldwide has increased from about 70 to almost 200. Much of this was due to the collapse of empires, but in the last 20 years numerous states have hatched simply because people no longer wanted to live with each other. Five countries rose from the ashes of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, and 15 from the Soviet Union; since then, additions include Eritrea, East Timor, Kosovo, and South Sudan. The Czech Republic and Slovakia split, as did Serbia and Montenegro. Secessionist movements have also made headway in Spain, Italy, and Belgium, and can be found in numerous other countries throughout the world.

The explanation for this trend is that the benefits of a large country—mainly, security and a large internal market—are of diminishing significance in a world of free trade and relative peace. Under these conditions, nationalist movements based on ethnic and linguistic difference, and cultural values, are likely to flourish. Countries split apart but they remain relatively secure (unless your name is Ukraine or Georgia), and able to trade with each other and others.

The size of a state reflects an equilibrium between constantly shifting centrifugal and centripetal forces. People at once want the economic and security advantages of being part of a large country, and chafe at the loss of political control. How these forces play out in particular regions is too complex for outsiders to understand. Where national aspirations are heartfelt, you're not going to get far telling them that they can't start a new state because of the theoretical possibility that bad actors elsewhere in the world will imitate them. Let the Scots have their Scotland.

Eric Posner, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, is a co-author of *The Executive Unbound: After the Madisonian Republic and Climate Change Justice*.

Memo to Wannabe Bravehearts: William Wallace should stay in the 13th century.

The Wall Street Journal, Global View, By BRET STEPHENS, Sept. 15, 2014 7:12 p.m. ET

Not for nothing did Robert Lansing believe that the idea of the "self-determination of peoples" was "a phrase . . . simply loaded with dynamite." Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State, mostly forgotten today, was a man ahead both of his president and his time.

As chief of the U.S. delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Lansing had looked on uneasily as the peacemakers—Wilson most enthusiastically—cavalierly carved out new nations from the wreckage of fallen empires. National self-determination, in Wilson's optimistic view, would advance the cause of liberty, adding cultural, ethnic and linguistic freedoms to the civic freedoms of democratic states.

Or not. The creation of these states "would raise hopes which can never be realized," Lansing warned. "It will, I fear, cost thousands of lives. In the end, it is bound to be discredited, to be called the dream of an idealist who failed to realize the danger until too late to check those who attempt to put the principle into force. What a calamity that the phrase was ever uttered!"

In that paragraph is written the history of every thuggish national "liberation" movement that would follow, from Algeria and Vietnam to Zimbabwe and Gaza. Self-determination promises freedom in theory but exclusion in practice. It replaces the right of the individual with the right of the group, the faraway colonial power with the local despot. It substitutes myth for history, identity for individuality, "narratives" for facts. It is a doctrine of convenience for local elites who want to wrest power from distant elites.

And it sets a precedent.

In his 1993 book "Pandaemonium," the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan observed that nations are almost endlessly divisible into smaller entities. In 1919 Yugoslavia was conjured into a single nation; today, after several bloody wars, it is six. The cause of an independent South Sudan was dear to Western hearts for many years, but now that South Sudan is independent it is at war with itself. Will anyone there be better off should the competing Dinka and Nuer tribes form their own independent states? Don't count on it.

Nations are not the irreducible unit of political identity. Within a nation there are regions, provinces, tribes, faiths, factions, clans. And then it's every man for himself. "The central idea of secession is anarchy." That's Lincoln, in his first inaugural address.

Which brings me to Scotland.

No English army will march on Falkirk should the Scots vote "Yes" in Thursday's referendum. Both sides will be at pains to say whatever needs to be said to soothe financial markets and begin setting the terms for a Czechoslovak-style velvet divorce. If there are any coups, they will be of a strictly parliamentary kind—against the two Downing Street toffs, David Cameron and George Osborne, who lost Great Britain in a fit of absent-mindedness.

But note that even before Thursday's vote, Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond is already arguing that Wales, too, would be well-served by breaking up with England. The current Welsh first minister is against a referendum, but that could change at the next election. Northern Ireland already has been largely, if uneasily, self-governing since 1998. One secession encourages another. Once Britain has been reduced to its smaller parts, Flanders and Wallonia, Corsica, northern Italy, Catalonia, the Basque country and even Bavaria may follow. A European Union of 40-odd states? People will inevitably be tempted to ask, why not?

The better question to ask is: Why? Very occasionally, small countries can be great countries, boutique states with reputations for excellence like Switzerland, Singapore and Israel. More often, small countries are merely insignificant countries; petty in their politics and limited in their horizons. Think of Slovenia, Slovakia and soon, perhaps, Scotland. And sometimes small countries are dangerous countries, because they are militarily aggressive (Serbia), or financially irresponsible (Greece), or inviting targets for outside meddlers (Cyprus, Moldova or the Baltics) or consumed by

Scottish independence referendum, 2014

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Thursday, 18 September 2014

Should Scotland be an independent country?

	Votes	Percentage
Yes	1,617,989	44.7%
No	2,001,926	55.3%
Valid votes	3,619,915	99.91%
Invalid/blank	3,429	0.09%
Total votes	3,623,344	100.00%
Voter turnout	84.59%	
Electorate	4,283,392	

The turnout of 84.6% was unusually high for a ballot in the United Kingdom.

internal rivalries that overspill national borders (Bosnia) or in the grip of an illiberal leader (Hungary). It's no accident that World War I started where it did: The incomprehensible squabbles of the periphery quickly become the tragedies of the core.

A Scottish vote for independence doesn't necessarily portend all—or any—of this. And it would surely mean less if Europe were in a better way economically, and were it politically able to accommodate Scotland into an overarching European superstate of regions. But Europe is not in that kind of shape. Should the Scottish economy implode five or 10 years down the road, as Ireland's or Portugal's did, neither Brussels nor Berlin will be bailing it out. And London won't either.

Some Scots may imagine that by voting "Yes" they are redeeming the memory of William Wallace. Maybe. The other way of looking at it is as a vote for medievalism over modernity.

Memo to wannabe Bravehearts: The 13th century wasn't all that fun.

Secession / Self-determination

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

(CDA Editor's Note: This section combines selected material from the Wikipedia entries for Secession and Self-Determination, and a few other places.)

Secession (derived from the Latin term *secessio*) is the act of withdrawing from an organization, union, military alliance or especially a political entity. Threats of secession can also be a strategy for achieving more limited goals.[1]

The right of nations to **self-determination** (from German: *Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker*), or in short form, the right to self-determination is a cardinal principle in modern international law (*jus cogens*), binding, as such, on the United Nations as authoritative interpretation of the [UN] Charter's norms.[1][2] It states that nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and fair equality of opportunity have the right to freely choose their sovereignty and international political status with no external compulsion or interference[3] which can be traced back to the Atlantic Charter, signed on 14 August 1941, by Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, and Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom who pledged The Eight Principal points of the Charter.[4] The principle does not state how the decision is to be made, or what the outcome should be, whether it be independence, federation, protection, some form of autonomy or even full assimilation.[5] Neither does it state what the delimitation between nations should be — or even what constitutes a nation. In fact, there are conflicting definitions and legal criteria for determining which groups may legitimately claim the right to self-determination.[6]

Current issues [in self-determination]

Since the early 1990s, the legitimatization of the principle of national self-determination has led to an increase in the number of conflicts within states, as sub-groups seek greater self-determination and even full secession, and as their conflicts for leadership within groups and with other groups and with the dominant state become violent.[42] The international reaction to these new movements has been uneven and often dictated more by politics than principle. The year 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration failed to deal with these new demands, mentioning only "the right to self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation." [26][43]

Defining "peoples"

There is not yet a recognized legal definition of "peoples" in international law. Vita Gudeleviciute of Vytautas Magnus University Law School, reviewing international law and UN resolutions, finds in cases of non-self-governing peoples (colonized and/or indigenous) and foreign military occupation "a people" is the entire population of the occupied territorial unit, no matter their other differences. In cases where people lack representation by a state's government, the unrepresented become a separate people. Present international law does not recognize ethnic and other minorities as separate peoples, with the notable exception of cases in which such groups are systematically disenfranchised by the government of the state they live in.[26] Other definitions offered are "peoples" being self-evident (from ethnicity, language, history, etc.), or defined by "ties of mutual affection or sentiment", i.e. "loyalty", or by mutual obligations among peoples. Or the definition may be simply that a people is a group of individuals who unanimously choose a separate state. If the "people" are unanimous in their desire for self-determination, it strengthens their claim. For example, the populations of federal units of the Yugoslav federation were considered a people in the breakup of Yugoslavia, even though some of those units had very diverse populations.[44] Libertarians who argue for self-determination distinguish between the voluntary nation (the land, the culture, the terrain, the people) and the state, the coercive apparatus, which they have a right to choose or self-determine.[21]

Self-determination versus territorial integrity

National self-determination appears to challenge the principle of territorial integrity (or sovereignty) of states as it is the

will of the people that makes a state legitimate. This implies a people should be free to choose their own state and its territorial boundaries. However, there are far more self-identified nations than there are existing states and there is no legal process to redraw state boundaries according to the will of these peoples.[44] According to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the UN, ICJ and international law experts, there is no contradiction between the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity, with the latter taking precedence. [45][46][47][48]

Allen Buchanan, author of seven books on self-determination and secession, supports territorial integrity as a moral and legal aspect of constitutional democracy. However, he also advances a "Remedial Rights Only Theory" where a group has "a general right to secede if and only if it has suffered certain injustices, for which secession is the appropriate remedy of last resort." He also would recognize secession if the state grants, or the constitution includes, a right to secede.[26]

Vita Gudeleviciute holds that in cases of non-self-governing peoples and foreign military occupation the principle of self-determination trumps that of territorial integrity. In cases where people lack representation by a state's government, they also may be considered a separate people, but under current law cannot claim the right to self-determination. On the other hand, she finds that secession within a single state is a domestic matter not covered by international law. Thus there are no [standards/rules?] on what groups may constitute a seceding people.[26]

Methods of increasing minority rights

In order to accommodate demands for minority rights and avoid secession and the creation of a separate new state, many states decentralize or devolve greater decision-making power to new or existing subunits or even autonomous areas. More limited measures might include restricting demands to the maintenance of national cultures or granting non-territorial autonomy in the form of national associations which would assume control over cultural matters. This would be available only to groups that abandoned secessionist demands and the territorial state would retain political and judicial control, but only if would remain with the territorially organized state.[44]

Constitutional law

Most sovereign states do not recognize the right to self-determination through secession in their constitutions. Many expressly forbid it. However, there are several existing models of self-determination through greater autonomy and through secession.[54]

In liberal constitutional democracies the principle of majority rule has dictated whether a minority can secede. In the United States Abraham Lincoln acknowledged that secession might be possible through amending the United States Constitution. The Supreme Court in *Texas v. White*, held secession could occur "through revolution, or through consent of the States." [55][56] The British Parliament in 1933 held that Western Australia only could secede from Australia upon vote of a majority of the country as a whole; the previous two-thirds majority vote for secession via referendum in Western Australia was insufficient.[44]

The Chinese Communist Party followed the Soviet Union in including the right of secession in its 1931 constitution in order to entice ethnic nationalities and Tibet into joining. However, the Party eliminated the right to secession in later years, and had anti-secession clause written into the Constitution before and after the founding the People's Republic of China. The 1947 Constitution of the Union of Burma contained an express state right to secede from the union under a number of procedural conditions. It was eliminated in the 1974 constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (officially the "Union of Myanmar"). Burma still allows "local autonomy under central leadership." [54]

As of 1996 the constitutions of Austria, Ethiopia, France, Singapore, Saint Kitts and Nevis Republics have express or implied rights to secession. Switzerland allows for the secession from current and the creation of new cantons. In the case of proposed Quebec separation from Canada the Supreme Court of Canada in 1998 ruled that only both a clear majority of the province and a constitutional amendment confirmed by all participants in the Canadian federation could allow secession.[54]

The 2003 draft of the European Union Constitution allowed for the voluntary withdrawal of member states from the union, although the State wanted to leave could not be involved in the vote deciding whether or not they can leave the Union.[54] There was much discussion about such self-determination by minorities[57] before the final document underwent the unsuccessful ratification process in 2005.

Drawing new borders

In determining international borders between sovereign states, self-determination has yielded to a number of other principles.[58] Once groups exercise self-determination through secession, the issue of the proposed borders may prove more controversial than the fact of secession. The bloody Yugoslav wars in the 1990s were related mostly to borders issues because the international community applied a version of *uti possidetis juris* [Latin for "as you possess under law", is a principle of international law which provides that newly formed sovereign states should have the same

borders that their preceding dependent area had before their independence] in transforming existing internal borders of the various Yugoslav republics into international borders, despite the conflicts of ethnic groups within those boundaries. In the 1990s indigenous populations of the northern two-thirds of Quebec state opposed to being incorporated into a Quebec nation and even stated a determination to resist it by force.[44]

The border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State was based on the borders of existing counties and did not include all of historic Ulster. A Boundary Commission was established to consider re-drawing it. Its proposals, which amounted to a small net transfer to Northern Ireland, were leaked to the press and then not acted upon. In December 1925, the governments of the Irish Free State, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom agreed to accept the existing border. Most Irish Nationalists and Irish Republicans claim all of Northern Ireland and are not particularly interested in new borders.

Justifications for secession

Some theories of secession emphasize a general right of secession for any reason ("Choice Theory") while others emphasize that secession should be considered only to rectify grave injustices ("Just Cause Theory").[7] Some theories do both. A list of justifications may be presented supporting the right to secede includes:

- Economic enfranchisement of an economically oppressed class that is regionally concentrated within the scope of a larger national territory.
- The right to liberty, freedom of association and private property
- Consent as important democratic principle; will of majority to secede should be recognized
- Making it easier for states to join with others in an experimental union
- Dissolving such union when goals for which it was constituted are not achieved
- Self-defense when larger group presents lethal threat to minority or the government cannot adequately defend an area
- Self-determination of peoples
- Preserving culture, language, etc. from assimilation or destruction by a larger or more powerful group
- Furthering diversity by allowing diverse cultures to keep their identity
- Rectifying past injustices, especially past conquest by a larger power
- Escaping "discriminatory redistribution", i.e., tax schemes, regulatory policies, economic programs, etc. that distribute resources away to another area, especially in an undemocratic fashion
- Enhanced efficiency when the state or empire becomes too large to administer efficiently
- Preserving "liberal purity" (or "conservative purity") by allowing less (or more) liberal regions to secede
- Providing superior constitutional systems which allow flexibility of secession
- Keeping political entities small and human scale through right to secession

Arguments against secession

Allen Buchanan, who supports secession under limited circumstances, lists arguments that might be used against secession:[18]

- "Protecting Legitimate Expectations" of those who now occupy territory claimed by secessionists, even in cases where that land was stolen
- "Self Defense" if losing part of the state would make it difficult to defend the rest of it
- "Protecting Majority Rule" and the principle that minorities must abide by them
- "Minimization of Strategic Bargaining" by making it difficult to secede, such as by imposing an exit tax
- "Soft Paternalism" because secession will be bad for secessionists or others
- "Threat of Anarchy" because smaller and smaller entities may choose to secede until there is chaos, although this is not the true meaning of the political and philosophical concept.
- "Preventing Wrongful Taking" such as the state's previous investment in infrastructure
- "Distributive Justice" arguments that wealthier areas cannot secede from poorer ones

Types of secession

Secession theorists have described a number of ways in which a political entity (city, county, canton, state) can secede from the larger or original state:[1][16][17]

- Secession from federation or confederation (political entities with substantial reserved powers which have agreed to join together) versus secession from a unitary state (a state governed as a single unit with few powers reserved to sub-units)
- Colonial aka "wars of independence" from a "mother country" or imperial state

- National (seceding entirely from the national state) versus local (seceding from one entity of the national state into another entity of the same state)
- Central or enclave (seceding entity is completely surrounded by the original state) versus peripheral (along a border of the original state)
- Secession by contiguous units versus secession by non-contiguous units (exclaves)
- Separation or partition (although an entity secedes, the rest of the state retains its structure) versus dissolution (all political entities dissolve their ties and create several new states)
- Irredentism where secession is sought in order to annex the territory to another state because of common ethnicity or prior historical links
- Minority (a minority of the population or territory secedes) versus majority (a majority of the population or territory secedes)
- Secession of better off regions versus secession of worse off regions

Secession movements

Australia: Secession movements have surfaced several times in Western Australia (WA), where a 1933 referendum for secession from the Federation of Australia passed with a two-thirds majority. The referendum had to be ratified by the British Parliament, which declined to act, on the grounds that it would contravene the Australian Constitution.

Recently (2003 onwards), self-determination has become the topic of some debate in Australia in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the 1970s, the Indigenous community approached the Federal Government and requested the right to administer their own communities. This encompassed basic local government functions, ranging from land dealings and management of community centres to road maintenance and garbage collection, as well as setting education programmes and standards in their local schools.

Bangladesh (Pakistan): After the Awami League won the 1970 national elections, negotiations to form a new government floundered, resulting in the Bangladesh Liberation War by which the eastern wing of Pakistan seceded, to become Bangladesh. [Note: the 9 month war resulted in 100,000-300,000 casualties and 10 million refugees. It was only settled when India intervened on behalf of Bangladesh.]

Basque Country (Spain and France): The Basque Country (Basque: Euskal Herria, Spanish: País Vasco, French: Pays Basque) as a cultural region is a European region in the western Pyrenees that spans the border between France and Spain, on the Atlantic coast. It comprises the autonomous communities of the Basque Country and Navarre in Spain and the Northern Basque Country in France. Since the 19th century, Basque nationalism has demanded the right of some kind of self-determination. This desire for independence is particularly stressed among leftist Basque nationalists. The right of self-determination was asserted by the Basque Parliament in 1990, 2002 and 2006.[59] Since self-determination is not recognized in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, some Basques abstained and some even voted against it in the referendum of December 6 of that year. It was approved by a clear majority at the Spanish level, and with 74.6% of the votes in the Basque Country.[60] However, the overall turnout in the Basque Country was 45% when the Spanish overall turnover was 67,91%. The derived autonomous regime for the BAC was approved by Spanish Parliament and also by the Basque citizens in referendum. The autonomous statute of Navarre (Amejoramiento del Fuero: "improvement of the charter") was approved by the Spanish Parliament and, like the statutes of 13 out of 17 Spanish autonomous communities, it didn't need a referendum to enter into force.

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna or ETA (English: Basque Homeland and Freedom; pronounced ['eta]), is an armed Basque nationalist, separatist and terrorist organization. Founded in 1959, it evolved from a group advocating traditional cultural ways to a paramilitary group with the goal of Basque independence. Its ideology is Marxist-Leninist.[61][62] Since 1968, ETA has been held responsible for killing 829 people, injuring thousands and undertaking dozens of kidnappings.[6][7][8][9] The group is proscribed as a terrorist organization by the Spanish, British,[10] French[11] and American[12] authorities, and by the European Union as a whole.

Biafra (Nigeria): Between 1967 and 1970, the unrecognised state of Biafra (The Republic of Biafra) seceded from Nigeria, resulting in a civil war that ended with the state returning to Nigeria. [Note: military and civilian casualties are estimated at 1-3 million.]

From 1999 to the present day, the indigenous people of Biafra have been agitating for independence to revive their country. They have registered a human rights organization known as Bilie Human Rights Initiative both in Nigeria and in the United Nations to advocate for their right to self-determination and achieve independence by the rule of law.[63]

Catalonia (Spain): After the 2012 Catalan march for independence, in which more than 1.5 million citizens marched, the President of Catalonia, Artur Mas, called for new parliamentary elections on 25 November 2012 to elect a new parliament that would exercise the right of self-determination for Catalonia. The Parliament of Catalonia voted to hold a 'referendum or consultation' in the next four-year legislature in which the people of Catalonia would decide on

becoming a new independent and sovereign state. The parliamentary decision was approved by a large majority of MPs: 84 voted for, 21 voted against, and 25 abstained.[66] On December 2013 the President of the Generalitat Artur Mas and the governing coalition agreed to set the referendum for self-determination on 9 November 2014. [Note the Spanish government has declared the referendum illegal, and Artur Mas is now proposing a non-binding vote of some kind.]

Canada and Quebec: Throughout Canada's history, there has been tension between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians. Under the Constitutional Act of 1791, the Quebec colony (including parts of what is today Quebec, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador) was divided in two: Lower Canada (which retained French law and institutions and is now divided between the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador) and Upper Canada (a new colony intended to accommodate the many English-speaking settlers, including the United Empire Loyalists, and now part of Ontario). The intent was to provide each group with its own colony. In 1841, the two Canadas were merged into the Province of Canada. The union proved contentious, however, resulting in a legislative deadlock between English and French legislators. The difficulties of the union led to the adoption of a federal system in Canada, and the Canadian Confederation in 1867. The federal framework did not eliminate all tensions, however, leading to the Quebec sovereignty movement in the latter half of the 20th century.

In Canada, many in the province of Quebec have wanted the province to separate from Confederation. The Parti Québécois has asserted Quebec's "right to self-determination." There is debate on under which conditions would this right be realized.[64] French-speaking Quebec nationalism and support for maintaining Québécois culture would inspire Quebec nationalists, many of whom were supporters of the Quebec sovereignty movement during the late-20th century.[65] [Note: Quebec has rejected independence twice in referendums, by 60% to 40% in 1980 and by 51% to 49% in 1995.]

China: The Republic of China (ROC) government, which ruled mainland China from 1911 to 1949, administers Taiwan and a few surrounding islands, while the People's Republic of China (PRC) government administers mainland China. Both sides officially claim sovereignty over both mainland China and Taiwan. There is debate in Taiwan as to whether to create a new Republic of Taiwan to replace the current ROC government. At the Third session of the Tenth National People's Congress (March 14, 2005) the PRC government adopted the Anti-Secession Law of the People's Republic of China.

Within the PRC, the three northwestern regions of Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet, (and its accompanying regions) are also the focus of secessionist calls by the Tibetan Independence Movement and East Turkestan Islamic Movement.

Congo: In 1960 the State of Katanga declared independence from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. United Nations troops crushed it in Operation Grand Slam. [Note: estimated casualties approximately 100,000.]

Cyprus: In 1974, the Turkish Army invaded northern Cyprus to protect the interests of the ethnic Turkish minority, who in the following year formed the Turkish Federative State of Cyprus and in 1983 declared independence as the Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized only by Turkey.

Since Turkey's invasion and continued occupation of Cyprus in 1974, following ethnic clashes and turmoil on the island, an administration recognized by Turkey only was declared in 1983 – the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.[84] Turkish Cypriots and their former leader, Fazıl Küçük said that Turkish Cypriots had the right of self-determination, as well as Greek Cypriots.[85] The Turkish Cypriots prior to the invasion constituted an 18% minority and were not concentrated in a specific region of the island. Only after the forced removal of the Greek Cypriots from the North of Cyprus did they form a local majority.

Czechoslovakia: In 1992, because of growing nationalist tensions in the government, Czechoslovakia was peacefully dissolved by parliament. On 1 January 1993 it formally separated into two independent countries: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

East Timor: The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (also known as East Timor) has been described as having "seceded" from Indonesia.[19][20][21] After Portuguese sovereignty was terminated in 1975, East Timor was occupied by Indonesia. However the United Nations and the International Court of Justice refused to recognize this incorporation. Therefore the resulting civil war and eventual 2002 East Timorese vote for complete separation are better described as an independence movement.[22]

Ethiopia and Eritrea: Following the 1993 victory of opposition forces against the communist Derg regime during the Ethiopian Civil War, Eritrea (formerly known as "Bahri Negash" before being renamed to "Eritrea" by Italian colonizers from 1890–1941) seceded in a United Nations referendum with the blessing of the newly formed Ethiopian government.

European Union: Before the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on 1 December 2009 no provision in the treaties or law of the European Union outlined the ability of a state to voluntarily withdraw from the EU. The European Constitution did propose such a provision and, after the failure to ratify the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, that provision was then included in the Lisbon Treaty.

The treaty introduces an exit clause for members who wish to withdraw from the Union. This formalises the procedure by stating that a member state may notify the European Council that it wishes to withdraw, upon which withdrawal negotiations begin; if no other agreement is reached the treaty ceases to apply to the withdrawing state two years after such notification.

Finland: Finland successfully and peacefully seceded from the newly formed weak Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic in 1917 lead by Lenin who had certain goodwill towards the Finns due to having been helped in his revolutionary struggle by Finns. Unsuccessful attempts at greater autonomy or peaceful secession had already been done during the preceding Russian Empire but been denied by the Russian emperor.

Kurdistan: Kurdistan is a historical region primarily inhabited by the Kurdish people of the Middle East. The territory is currently part of 4 states Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. There are Kurdish self-determination movements in each of the 4 states. Iraqi Kurdistan has to date achieved the largest degree of self-determination through the formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government, an entity recognised by the Iraqi Federal Constitution.

Although the right of the creation of a Kurdish state was recognized following World War I in the Treaty of Sèvres, the treaty was then annulled by the Treaty of Lausanne. To date two separate Kurdish republics and one Kurdish Kingdom have declared sovereignty. The Republic of Ararat (Ağrı Province, Turkey), the Republic of Mehabad (West Azerbaijan Province, Iran) and the Kingdom of Kurdistan (Sulaymaniyah Province, Iraqi Kurdistan, Iraq), each of these fledgling states was crushed by military intervention. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan which currently holds the Iraqi presidency and the Kurdistan Democratic Party which governs the Kurdistan Regional Government both explicitly commit themselves to the development of Kurdish self-determination, but opinions vary as to the question of self-determination sought within the current borders and countries.

Mexico and Texas: Texas seceded from Mexico in 1836, after animosity between the Mexican government and the American settlers of the Coahuila y Tejas State. It was later annexed by the United States in 1845.

Norway and Sweden: Sweden, having left the Kalmar Union with Denmark and Norway in the 16th century, entered into a loose personal union with Norway in 1814. Following a constitutional crisis, on June 7, 1905 the Norwegian Parliament declared that King Oscar II had failed to fulfill his constitutional duties. He was therefore no longer King of Norway and because the union depended on the two countries sharing a king, it was thus dissolved. After negotiations Sweden agreed to this on October 26 and on April 14.

Puerto Rico: Since 1972, the U.N. Decolonization Committee has called for Puerto Rico's decolonization and for the U.S. to recognize the island's right to self-determination and independence. In 2007 the Decolonization Subcommittee called for the United Nations General Assembly to review the political status of Puerto Rico, a power reserved by the 1953 Resolution.[87] This follows the 1967 passage of a plebiscite act that provided for a vote on the status of Puerto Rico with three status options: continued commonwealth, statehood, and independence. In the first plebiscite the commonwealth option won with 60.4% of the votes but U.S. congressional committees failed to enact legislation to address the status issue. In subsequent plebiscites in 1993 and 1998, the status quo was upheld.[88] In a referendum that took place in November 2012, a majority Puerto Rican residents voted to change the territory's relationship with the United States, with the statehood option apparently being the preferred option, however a large number of ballots—one-third of all votes cast—were left blank on the question of preferred alternative status. When counted, the blank votes are viewed as anti-statehood votes, resulting that the statehood option would have received less than 50% of all ballots received.[89] As of January 2014, Washington has not taken action to address the results of this plebiscite.

Soviet Union: In 1990, after free elections, the Lithuanian SSR declared independence. Other SSRs followed leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Sri Lanka: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, operated a de facto independent state for Tamils called Tamil Eelam in eastern and northern Sri Lanka until 2009. [Note: the civil war was fought on and off for 26 years, from 1983 until 2009 when the Sri Lankan government defeated the liberation movement. Deaths are estimated at 80-100,000.]

Switzerland: In 1847, seven disaffected Catholic cantons formed a separate alliance because of moves to change the cantons of Switzerland from a confederation to a more centralized government federation. This effort was crushed in the Sonderbund war and a new Swiss Federal Constitution was created. [Note: the Sonderbund “war” lasted three days and had fewer than 100 casualties.]

Ukraine: After the successful toppling of the Yanukovych Government in the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014 numerous regions of Ukraine that were traditionally sympathetic to the policies of President Yanukovych declared independence. The governments of both the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol declared independence from Ukraine when its parliament removed the existing ministry, replacing them with pro-secessionists. Due to the presence of Russian forces in Crimea, since its referendum and unrecognised absorption into the Russian Federation, Ukrainian forces have not made a military effort to annex the republic back into Ukraine.

The Donetsk People's Republic was declared to be independent from Ukraine on 7 April 2014, comprising the territory of the former Donetsk Oblast. There have been military confrontations between the Ukrainian Army and the forces of the Donetsk People's Republic when the Ukrainian Government attempted to reassert control over the oblast, ultimately failing to do so.

The Luhansk Parliamentary Republic was proclaimed on 27 April.[36] before being succeeded by the Luhansk People's Republic. The Luhansk forces have successfully occupied vital buildings in Luhansk since 8 April, and controlled the City Council, prosecutor's office, and police station since 27 April.[37] The Government of the Luhansk Oblast announced its support for a referendum, and granted the governorship to independence leader Valeriy Bolotov.[38] Other areas in the Eastern part of the countries have also floated the idea of secession.

United Kingdom: Ireland is the only territory that has withdrawn from the United Kingdom proper. Ireland declared independence in 1916 and, as the Irish Free State, gained independence in 1922. Currently the United Kingdom has a number of secession movements:

In Northern Ireland, Irish Republicans and Nationalists in general, have long called for the secession of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom in order to join the Republic of Ireland. This is opposed by Unionists.

In Scotland the Scottish National Party (SNP) campaigns for Scottish independence and direct Scottish membership of the European Union. It has representation at all levels of Scottish politics and forms the devolved Scottish Government. A number of nascent pro-independence parties have enjoyed only limited electoral success. The Scottish Green Party, the Scottish Socialist Party and the Scottish Enterprise Party are most widely publicised. However all independence movements/parties are opposed by Unionists. A referendum on independence, in which voters were asked "Should Scotland be an independent country?", took place in September 2014, and resulted in a victory for the "no" campaign as 55.3 percent of voters voted against independence.[39]

In Wales, Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales) stands for Welsh independence within the European Union. It is also represented at all levels of Welsh politics and is the third largest party in the National Assembly of Wales.

In Cornwall, supporters of Mebyon Kernow call for the creation of a Cornish Assembly and separation from England, giving the county significant self-government, whilst remaining within the United Kingdom as a fifth home nation.

In England the now-disbanded Free England Party (FEP) campaigned for English independence.

United States: Discussions and threats of secession often surface in American politics, and secession was declared during the Civil War between the States. However in 1869 the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Texas v. White*, 74 U.S. 700 (1869) that unilateral secession was not permitted saying that the union between a state (Texas in the case before the bar) "was as complete, as perpetual, and as indissoluble as the union between the original States. There was no place for reconsideration or revocation, except through revolution or through consent of the States." [40][41]

The colonization of the North American continent and its Native American population has been the source of legal battles since the early 19th century. Surviving Native Americans have been resettled onto separate tracts of land (reservations), which have retained a certain degree of autonomy within the United States. The federal government recognizes Tribal Sovereignty and has established a number of laws attempting to clarify the relationship between the federal, state, and tribal governments. The Constitution and later federal laws recognize the local sovereignty of tribal nations, but do not recognize full sovereignty equivalent to that of foreign nations, hence the term "domestic dependent nations".

Yugoslavia: On June 25, 1991, Croatia and Slovenia seceded from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Also Bosnia and Hercegovina and Macedonia declared independence. Followed, the federation collapsed, Serbia and Montenegro, was renamed to Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Several wars ensued between FR Yugoslavia and seceding entities and among other ethnic groups in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later, Kosovo. Montenegro peacefully separated from its union with Serbia in 2006.

Kosovo declared de facto independence on February 17, 2008, and was recognized by several dozen countries, but officially remains under United Nations administration.

There is a strong tendency for secession of the Republic of Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina.