

Sovereignty

The concept of sovereignty is very ephemeral. So its exercise and protection are similarly ephemeral. I have wanted a clear-cut resolution about sovereignty for a long time. We've finally gotten one.

Governments derive their just powers from consent of the governed, as Thomas Jefferson put it. For that matter, governments also derive their unjust powers, if any, from the consent of the governed. In other words, you can torture this concept quite a bit to explain that even dismal totalitarian governments with brutal dictators acting as overlords of a police state are deriving their powers from the consent of the governed, although in these cases that consent may be coerced. At the point where there is no consent, yet the government remains empowered, we could actually have a situation where overthrow of the government by outside agency is justified, but that's a big question that requires strong analysis that I'm not going to go into. The point at the moment is that the power of a government is derived from the people governed, regardless of the form of the government. If you stick to the concept of just powers in the Jeffersonian (and of course Lockean) sense, or of just government, period, questions of legitimacy are removed, and we have a fairly acceptable proposition.

According to this logic, any group of people with an accepted leadership is some sort of government. True enough. Any sizeable group of people tends to have some sort of governing body: school districts have school boards, towns have town councils, corporations have boards of directors, clubs have presidents. Maintaining order usually requires some sense of governance, of rules being made and enforced. Anarchy has never been proven to be an effective mode of production of much of anything: it is, in effect, a human version of Brownian motion, and it is hardly likely to make the trains run on time.

As you can see, the concept of "nation" is not inherent in the concept of governance. If all sorts of groups can have governing bodies, which are the groups, then,

that we would consider nations? Web 11 gives a most question-begging definition, by citing nationality as number 1. Thanks a lot. After that, they hedge so much you wouldn't want to bet that the sun is rising in the east tomorrow according to their explanations. I think there are a number of factors that make a group of people into a nation. The existence of a government is, indeed, one of those things. If, say, Australia had no government, and all the Aussies ran around in total anarchy doing whatever they pleased, you would be hard-pressed to consider them a nation, despite the fact that they inhabit a clearly delineated territory. This would mean, then, that territory alone does not define a nation. But territory does seem to be something of a requirement. Some territories are clearly defined due to geographical details (mountains and rivers and oceans make nice delineators from one nation to another, for instance); other territories are simply agreed to (e.g., the 49th Parallel between the US and Canada), and many are fought over regardless of how clear the boundaries might be. In any case, a nation needs, at least, both a government and territory to be perceived as a nation.

What else? What other factors make a group of governed people in a delineated space a nation and not just an organized accident of geography? Well, I for one would throw in culture, and all the things that comprise culture. A culture need not be homogeneous—certainly the USA is both a nation and culturally diverse—but there do have to be strong commonalities. A shared value set. Shared history. Probably shared language (Brussels may be a nation but it's language split makes it also a fairly anomalous headache). For the sake of arguments in Mar-Apr, that area of shared value set may be the most important.

So now we begin to see a well-rounded concept of nation, with territory, government, and a shared "psyche," if you will, with variants from nation to nation of the literal elements of the psyche, just as there are variants in the size and shape of the territories and the nature of the governments. Holding it all together is the belief among the people in this territory, with this government and with this shared psyche, that they are, indeed, a nation. They could think of themselves as something else, which need not concern us, but at the point at which they con-

sider themselves a nation, they declare their sovereignty—that is, they are a nation—and that sovereignty is the power of that nation over itself, and the connection of that nation with the other nations in the world. If the Colonies wish to declare their independence from Great Britain, they'd better be ready to conduct themselves as members of the global community. But additionally, the other members of the global community must be ready to accept the Colonies' nationhood, or any group's nationhood. That is, half of the deal is claiming to be a nation. The other half is being recognized as a nation by the preexisting nations. Much of the history we study in schools is the conflict of sovereignties either within their borders or establishing their existence. Who's in charge here? And, why are you where I want to be? Remove this study from history and there's nothing left except what Louis XIV was wearing the night he learned the tango from Milton Berle's mother-in-law.

Establishing a nation's sovereignty is tantamount to empowering it to exist. A nation's sovereignty is its inherent power. A nation's power is its sovereignty. Sovereignty for a nation is the same as autonomy for a nation, and is certainly analogous to autonomy for an individual. 'We wish to have autonomy' means that we wish to have sovereignty over ourselves. A nation's claim of sovereignty is a claim of its autonomy. Which leads to the obvious conclusion that any abridgement of a nation's sovereignty is an attack on its autonomy—an attack which may or may not be justified, of course...

Where does the UN come in, or, literally, how is this applied to Mar-Apr? By my count, at about 428 different places in this essay. This is not the expression of an argument, but merely a very long explanation of sovereignty. You may demur from a point or two here or there, and I'd be happy to incorporate any improvements to the description, but this is pretty close. Not understanding the general sense of the above means that you should be doing anything in March and April other than debating LD. You might want to take up baby farming. (Or, at the very least, you could add that particular new phrase to your everyday vocabulary and use it at every opportunity. FYI, I'm sure LPW will be running Baby Farms as a

part of his Mar-Apr case. In fact, I have it on good authority that he's running Apache Baby Farms. On both sides.)