

Settlement of border conflicts in post-colonial areas

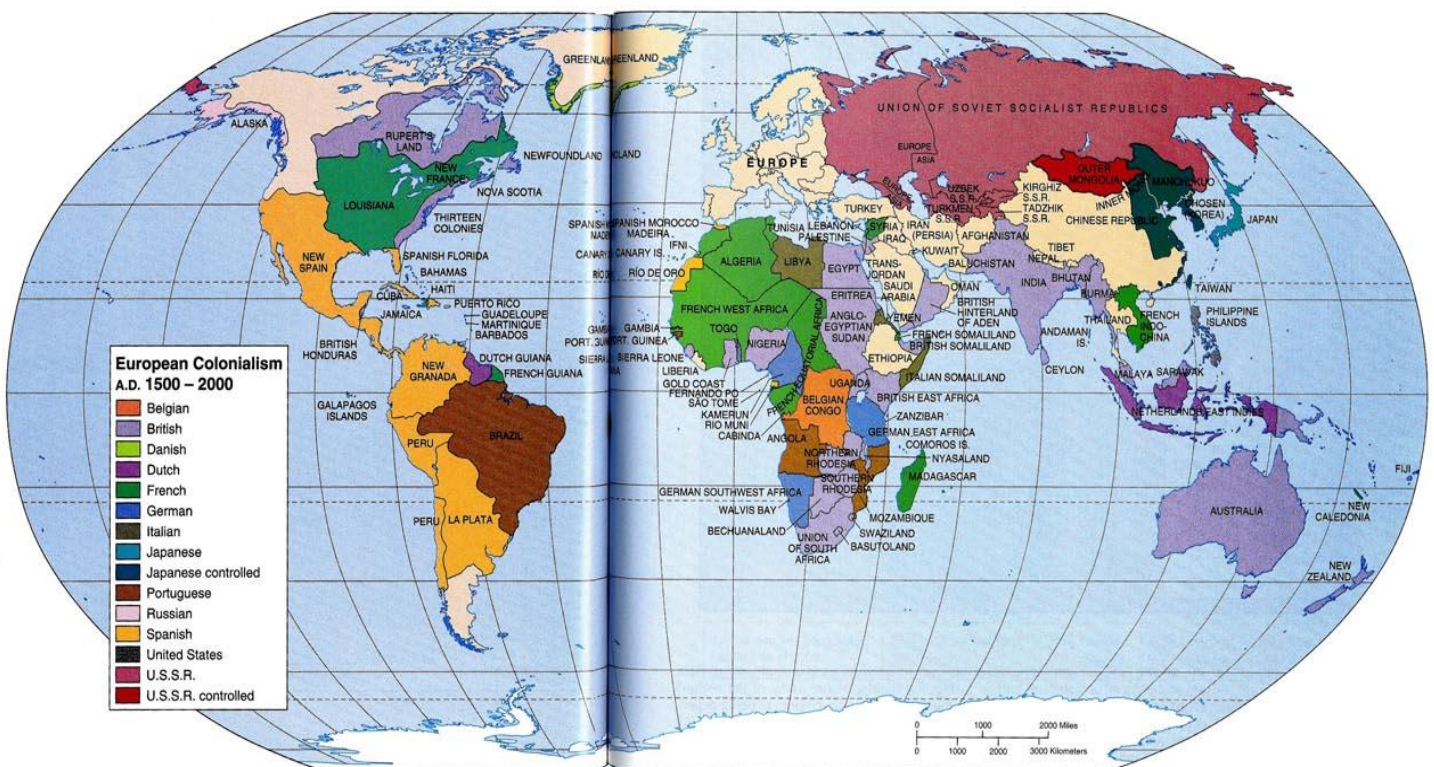
Description of the problem:

The impact of western colonialism on the back then called 'uncivilized world' was of dramatic nature and is still visible today. Conflicts in these areas seem very likely and states formed after having succeeded in the struggle for freedom often prove to be unstable and insecure. Disputes over borderlines even escalate to armed conflicts between nations. The innocent and mostly defenceless victims of these conflicts and civil wars are clearly the civilians. Decades of oppression by a colonial power are followed by further violence and suffering.

The times of colonialism and imperialism began in the 15th century. The leading nations advancing this development were several naval powers such as Britain, Spain, France, Portugal, Russia and the Netherlands. Their sphere of influence extended over the whole world especially on the African continent and in the so called 'new world', i.e. North and Latin America.

A map of the different colonies and their administrative powers can be studied here:

European Colonialism A.D. 1500–2000



Source: https://qed.princeton.edu/getfile.php?f=European_Colonialism_1500_AD_to_2000.jpg

The reasons of the instability of nations and warfare in post-colonial areas have to be examined individually and cannot be generalised. Yet a few factors as well as decisions made by the colonial powers have surely contributed to the most challenging condition in these regions. The lack of prudence in the process of setting up the borderlines in the areas to be colonised can be considered as decisive.

By disregarding the natural borders, which were established by the natives themselves decades before the first "whites" set their foot on American or African ground they laid the founding-stone for conflicts among the original inhabitants.

Moreover the new powers coming from the west disturbed the natural order in these regions either by oppressing the natives with their own administrative and if necessary military force or by giving a cooperating tribe the means to control other ethnic groups.

It is understandable that those friable structures undermined by envy and hatred declined soon after the supervising nation had lost its influence or interest.

This process applies to various post-colonial areas today for instance the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan or the dispute over the island of Cyprus concerning the nations Greece and Turkey.

Nevertheless there are more circumstances making the stabilization of a state more difficult. Of course the poverty of many post-colonial states as a result of the despicable exploitation of resources plays a major role in this case as well.

Without a functioning economic system which is equivalent to high rates of unemployment, great state indebtedness and in the end hopelessness in the minds of the people it is easy to understand that organized crime flourishes. Illegal arms trade, drug trafficking and corruption are the key terms in this case.

Keeping in mind the actuality of the issue and the fact, that many former colonies have gained their independence during the second half of the 20th century it is not surprising that the conditions there are not as stable as in Europe for example. The European people had centuries to create several forms of government and familiarize with them(and could only establish a time of peace after the devastating Second World War).

Looking at it from this aspect how can one expect the people of Somalia to establish a complete state on their own within only 50 years?

It becomes evident that the world's community must provide the appropriate aid to former colonies in order to overcome all the difficulties, especially since many of the industrialized nations of today are the ones to be held responsible.

Definition of key terms

Post-colonial area:

A post-colonial area is an area which was once explored and settled by a colonial power in order to extend its sphere of influence and to have access to the resources of the claimed land. Nowadays the state or nation has achieved independence from the colonial power and administers itself.

Often strong bonds between a former colony and its colonial power still exist today. One example is the nation of France and the francophone regions all over the world.

Background/ general information:

Here is a map of the African continent and its states:



Source: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/images/independence.jpg>

Key events:

You see here an overview of nations involved in border conflicts:

- India - Pakistan (1947-today)
- Algeria - Morocco (1963-1964)
- Peru - Ecuador (1995)
- Libya - Egypt (1977)
- Mauritania - Senegal (1989-1991)
- Ethiopia - Eritrea (1998-2000)

Important UN resolutions:

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples finally secures the rights of indigenous peoples concerning health, education, culture, language, etc., and as well addresses the issues of post-colonialism in this sense:

- <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html>

7. Useful Sources and Links:

The homepage of The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:

- <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index.html>

The homepage of the UN Disarmament, demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Resource Centre:

- <http://unddr.org/iddrs/01/20.php>

Information on Refugees:

- <http://www.unhcr.org>

General information:

- www.wikipedia.org