
RESTLESS POWERS: HOW RUSSIAN AND ARMENIAN IRREDENTISM IS DESTABILIZING EURASIA

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Two restless powers in Eurasia [Russia and Armenia] united by their inability to accept that their imagined communities are coterminous with their former Soviet republics.

For most of the post-war era, the principle of the territorial integrity of states was sacrosanct. In the 1950s and 1960s, the United Nations (UN) definition of the right to self-determination was only applied to colonies of European empires. Separatist drives were only successful in two cases: Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 and Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1991. Irredentism surfaced in the mid-1970s when Morocco invaded Western Sahara, and Indonesia invaded East Timor.

In the post-Cold War era, the Russian Federation threatened the principle of the territorial integrity of states when it manufactured frozen conflicts in Moldovas Transnistria, Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia's South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Ukraine's Crimea. These territories do not fall under the UN definition of the right to self-determination because they are part of existing states. Separatist drives, such as Biafra from Nigeria in 1967 to 1970, have never been supported by the United Nations.

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