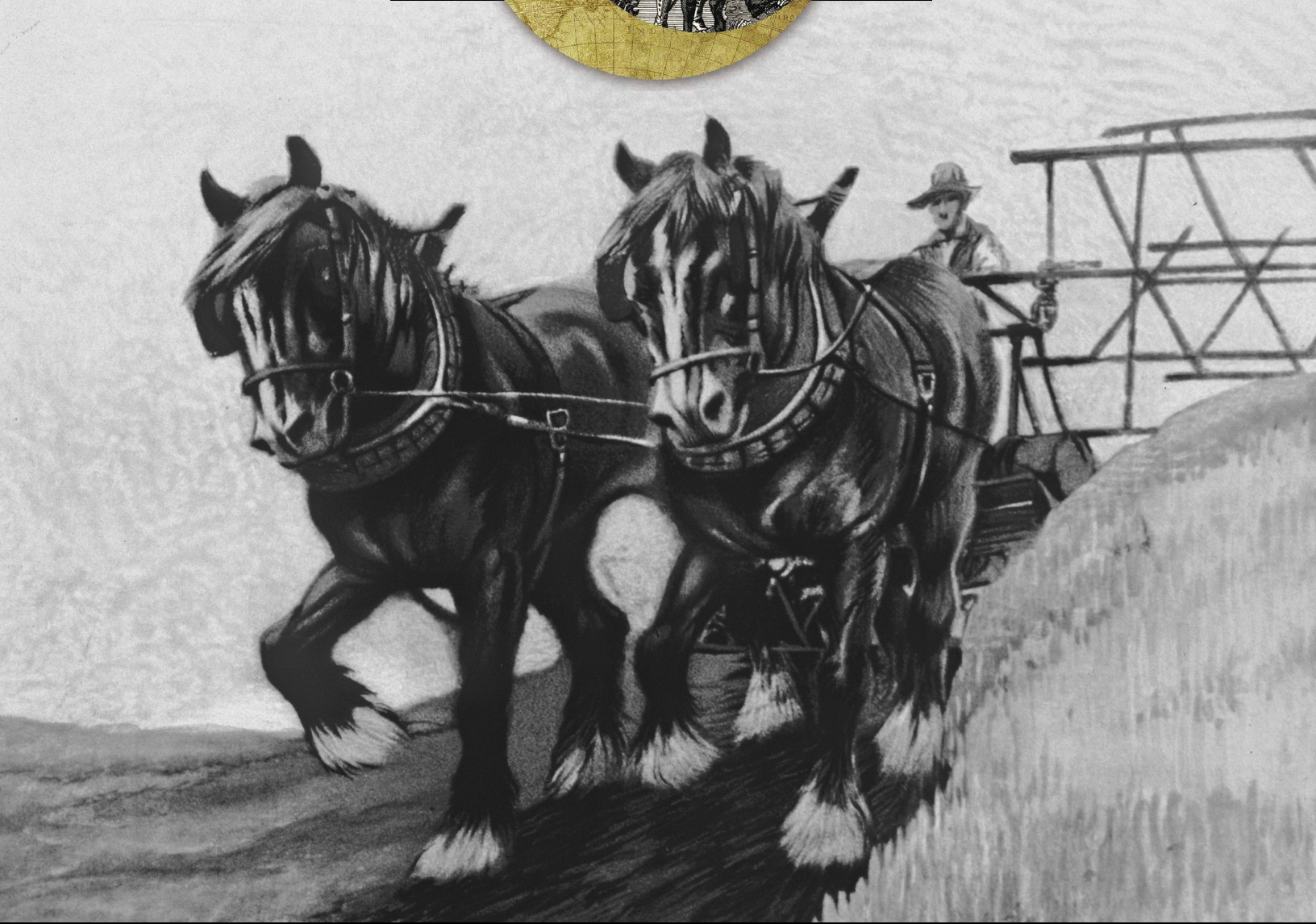
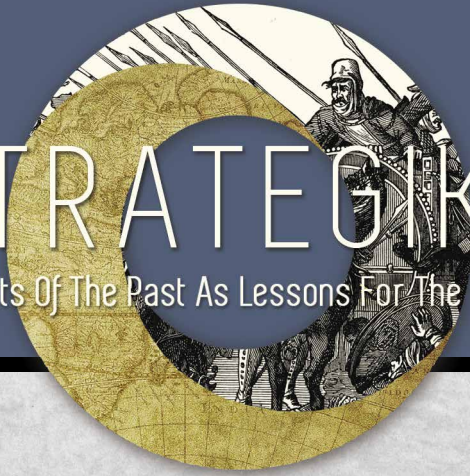


STRATEGIKA

ISSUE 79

Conflicts Of The Past As Lessons For The Present

JUNE 2022



BORDER SECURITY

IN THIS ISSUE

WILLIAMSON MURRAY • MARK MOYAR • NADIA SCHADLOW

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ABOUT THE POSTERS IN THIS ISSUE

Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.

Borders and National Security

By Williamson Murray

Borders and National Security

Attempts to address complex issues through an analysis of the past invariably run into the reality that history at best provides Delphic answers. Not surprisingly, an examination of the above question provides no simple answer or conclusion. In the end, it is also a matter of where one sits and the context of the time.

For the Roman Empire of the first and second centuries AD, it was relatively easy to separate the two issues. The legions on the frontier, supported by their auxiliaries, provided a clear marker of what was allowed in terms of immigration into the empire. Most historians today believe that the borders of the empire were quite porous, at least in terms of allowing considerable trade back and forth as well as the movement of individuals. But clearly immigration into the empire was carefully controlled, if not prevented.

Thus, for the most part, border security was almost entirely a matter of national security; it was one which worked astonishingly well, with the Romans in a position to dominate the areas on the other side of their frontier with minimal incursions from outside the empire. There were, of course, occasional internal troubles, such as the two Jewish uprisings and the revolt of the tribes in Britain under Nero, but they were only incidents in the larger period of peace. Only on occasion, such as the movement of large Germanic tribes into the empire during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, did internal and external merge into a single necessity of combining national security with internal political stability.

But in the third century AD, and thereafter, matters changed. The question of border security was crucial for both national security and internal political stability, as Germanic and other tribes battered their way into the empire. Despite a good deal of nonsense written by modern historians that the barbarians arrived largely in peaceful fashion, in fact they wrecked everything in the Western Empire and pushed the Eastern Empire to the edge of destruction. Moreover, the penchant of the legions to attempt to overthrow the current emperor exacerbated the internal difficulties and damage occasioned by the barbarian invasions. Thus, the empire failed in its task of providing external and internal security from the third century on.

From the tenth century, as the Europeans emerged from the Dark Ages, some dim conceptions of borders began to emerge. But they had little to do with language, culture, or, until the sixteenth century, religion. In the Middle Ages, wars were little more than conflicts of rapacious pillage and involved internal troubles as much as external threats. The invasions launched by the murderous kings of England against France in

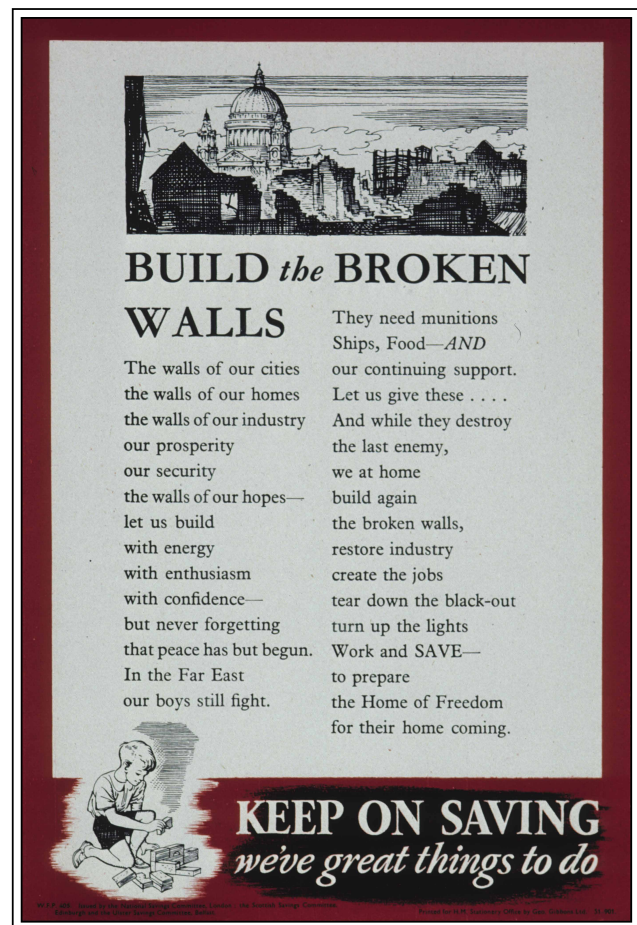


Image credit: Poster Collection, Poster UK 2401, Hoover Institution Archives.

the Hundred Years War typified such wars. At least the Hundred Years War did create a sense of nationality among the French and English. But one can hardly talk of borders as anything more than temporary lines drawn between territories ruled by the murderous and ruthless.

The other determinant of frontiers during the late Middle Ages was that of those entities that emerged through marriage connections, such as the weird conglomeration of territories the Hapsburgs hammered together under Charles V. But those territories, no matter how much under the control of the emperor, were a conglomeration of nationalities—the Spanish, the Dutch, the Austrians, the Czechs, and the Italians, among others—hardly represented a state which controlled its borders.

The casual movement of populations throughout the early modern period, was often a result of a desire to populate territories devastated by war and its sister, famine. The constant shifting of territory in the Balkans between the Ottoman Turks and various Christian entities over a number of centuries created an admixture of populations. The need to populate large areas depopulated by war led to the settlement of whoever was available. Thus, the Balkans became a strange mixture of Muslims, Germans, Serbs, Romanians, and Hungarians. The competition among them has lasted right up to the present with the disastrous collapse of Yugoslavia into ethnic warfare, a breakup that still is festering.

The result was a mixture of peoples who spoke different languages and possessed different cultures. The mixed population of the French-speaking and those whose language is *Plattdeutsch* is an excellent example. To the horror of the Wilhelmine Germans, and particularly the Nazis, a large number of *Plattdeutsch* speakers regarded themselves as Frenchmen rather than Germans. The result was that throughout the world wars, the two German regimes conscripted the *Plattdeutsch*, but with reason regarded them with considerable suspicion.

Borders in the modern sense only began to emerge in the eighteenth century with the rise of the European nation states. But border security in terms of anything other than the threat of the movement of large, disciplined armies simply was not a part of the equation. Adding to the lack of concern over frontiers was the fact that the various European states found themselves eager to encourage substantial immigration to their territories to increase their population and particularly attract skilled craftsmen to their industries. What the nationality of those populations was mattered not in the slightest.

There was also the attraction, at least in Scotland and England, of encouraging the outflow of criminals, the poor, and particularly the religiously disaffected, first to the New World on the other side of the Atlantic and then to Australia. For their part, the colonies were delighted to attract immigrants, given the fact that they were desperately short of labor, a factor that contributed to the burgeoning slave trade. But while there were small groups of Europeans who journeyed to the colonies to make their fortune, there were no border controls, only the loneliness of wilderness stretching out across a continent.

Moreover, there was even in the eighteenth century little sense of borders containing homogeneous populations. Catherine the Great simply plucked up large numbers of Germans and plunked them down along the Volga. Frederick the Great had no qualms about seizing the province of Silesia from Austria and incorporating it into his Prussian kingdom at the outset of the War of Austrian Succession. To kick off the next war, he was delighted to crush Saxony and incorporate its army into the Prussian Army under his officers.

The French Revolution served to alter much of the rather loose connection surrounding nationality and borders, although it would take a further eighty years to settle the German and Italian questions. What alleviated the population pressures of improving health and fewer wars in the nineteenth century was the economic explosion caused by the Industrial Revolution. There was also the fact that the United States, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand provided an outlet for the burgeoning populations of the European states. The new lands, whose indigenous populations disappeared in a welter of disease and military operations, were

desperate for immigrants from Europe to fill with the able-bodied the needs of industrial concerns, farms, and other portions of the work force.

There were, not surprisingly, considerable tensions. The Irish, fleeing the great famine, hardly found an enthusiastic welcome, except when they were on the job building railroads, digging canals, or working in the factories and mines of the Industrial Revolution. Tensions could at times explode, as they did in the New York City draft riots of July 1863, when Irish mobs, fearful of conscription, slaughtered blacks throughout the city in outrage that they might be called upon to die to free the slaves. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that while some Irish were posing a murderous threat in New York, more were placing their lives on the line at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

It is in the twentieth century that we see the emergence of borders that attempted to isolate nationalities into separate states. The results were often bizarre; attempts by the Second Reich to turn Poles and Alsations and Lorrainers into Germans failed utterly. Only the Americans seemed able to turn a horde of foreigners into Americans, but that was largely the result of the fact that the waves of immigrants were fleeing various forms of persecutions from religion, to their language, to the threat of conscription.

It would take the First World War to bring nationality, borders, and supposed security issues to the forefront. The collapse of the three great Eastern Empires, combined with the Wilsonian belief in national self-determination, created an explosive and in the end disastrous mixture of hatreds, national security concerns, and internal discords in the newly created wreckage left by the collapse of the old order. In spite of its trumpeting of self-determination, those who made the Treaty of Versailles found it impossible to square the circles of national security with the desire of various populations to live with those of the same nationality.

Bereft of their empire, the Austrians attempted to join the new German Republic, only to be told by the French that they were certainly not going to allow a strengthening of Germany which had lost the war after causing so much destruction. The Sudeten Germans claimed that they had no desire to live with the new Czechoslovakia—especially since they had overlorded the Czechs since the Battle of the White Mountain in the seventeenth century. Again, the response of those making the peace in Versailles was “no way.” The Poles and the Czechs quarreled over Teschen; the Romanians, as a member of the victorious coalition, grabbed virtually all of Transylvania, including districts inhabited by Hungarians and Germans. And finally, there was the abomination of Yugoslavia, an attempt to gather the Serbs, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, Montenegrins, and Macedonians into one happy family.

The twenties were to see an uneasy peace settle over Eastern Europe. The safety valve of immigration was no longer there. The Great Depression of the thirties served to exacerbate the divisions among the developed nations. For the first time in its history the United States drew a solid line against further immigration, which would have disastrous consequences when large numbers of Jews attempted to flee the holocaust. The leaders of the Third Reich believed they were not only fighting against external enemies in their effort to achieve the *Lebensraum* the Aryan peoples required. At the same time, they believed they were fighting against the internal enemies, personified by the Jews but including various national nationalities like the Poles, Czechs, and other Slavs. At times, the Nazi leaders gave priority to the destruction of the internal enemy over the battles they were fighting on their frontiers. By 1944 the Germans had almost as many internal enemies as those external enemies against whom they were fighting.

Stalin’s “workers and peasants paradise” spent almost as much time focused on the internal as on the external enemy as did the Nazis. In the Soviet case the enemy was usually defined as the bourgeoisie and other enemies of the state. The deliberate starvation of millions of Ukrainians and the mass slaughter of the purges in the 1930s set standards of murderous behavior that only Hitler and Mao equaled. The historian Timothy Snyder has described the slaughter that Hitler’s and Stalin’s war—ideological and national—left behind in Eastern Europe in his aptly titled *Bloodlands*.

And so, we are now in the civilized *twenty-first* century with Vladimir Putin's Russia attempting to crush Ukraine because of the danger it represents to the internal stability of his regime. As for the United States, we confront the large question mark of the tension between the external threats (Russia and China) and the internal threat, if it is that, of massive numbers of Spanish-speakers from Central America deluging our southern borders. On the latter internal threat, I am less worried that the border problems we are presently confronting represent an unmanageable threat than do the external threats posed by the hostility of Russia and China, particularly the latter.



WILLIAMSON MURRAY is presently the Marshall Professor at Marine Corps University in Quantico. He graduated from Yale University in 1963 with honors in history. He then served five years as an officer in the U.S. Air Force, including a tour in Southeast Asia with the 314th Tactical Airlift Wing (C-130s). He returned to Yale in spring 1969, where he received his PhD in military-diplomatic history under advisers Hans Gatzke and Donald Kagan. He taught two years in the Yale history department before moving on to Ohio State University in fall 1977 as a military and diplomatic historian; in 1987 he received the Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award. He retired from Ohio State in 1995 as a professor emeritus of history. His books include *A Savage War: A Military History of the Civil War* (Princeton, 2016) and *America and the Future of War: The Past as Prologue* (Hoover, 2017). His most recent books are *The Culture of Military Organizations*, edited with Peter Mansoor; and *Gods of War*, coauthored with Jim Lacey.

National Insecurity at the Border

By Mark Moyar

The blessings of geography, in the form of two vast oceans and two placid next-door neighbors, have shielded the American homeland from external attack for nearly the entirety of the past two centuries. For this reason, Americans have tended to view national security as something that takes place overseas. The major exception of the recent past, the 9/11 attacks, temporarily turned the American homeland into a top national security priority and spawned fears that terrorists would cross from Mexico into the United States to strike additional blows. When no further cataclysms materialized, the depiction of the homeland and the southern border as pressing national security issues lost steam, and the western hemisphere was once more excluded from the nation’s mental map of national security.

Omitting the southern border from national security priorities is incorrect today, and indeed it has been incorrect for at least half a century. Since the 1970s, transnational criminal organizations have shipped vast amounts of narcotics across the U.S.-Mexico border, and with them have come drug-induced deaths and violent crime. In 2021, the number of overdose fatalities in the United States exceeded 100,000 for the first time, driven primarily by a surge in fentanyl trafficking from Mexico. That tally exceeds the total number of Americans killed in the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq put together. Illegal immigrants may not commit crimes at higher rates than some segments of the legal population (if one excludes the crimes of entering and residing in the United States illicitly), but their crimes nonetheless increase the likelihood that the average American citizen will suffer harm.

America’s affluent classes have never considered these problems to be as serious as more distant foreign problems. Illegal immigrants do not commit many crimes in tony neighborhoods or overcrowd the emergency rooms of wealthy suburbia. Nor do they depress wages in high-paying fields as they do in working-class occupations. The mainstream media downplays the foreign origins of drug-related deaths and violent crimes to avert popular clamoring for stronger border security and immigration control, measures they construe as manifestations of racism and xenophobia. It should therefore come as no surprise that the mainstream media and much of the political class want the United States to shell out huge sums for Ukraine’s security but oppose increased spending for the security of their own southern border.

The same contempt for alleged nativism has caused the press to soft-peddle the impact of illegal immigration on the U.S. electorate. For a time, Americans were told that “demography is destiny,” but open celebration of demographic transformation faded after the Right began serious efforts to stem escalating rates of both legal and illegal immigration. Some proponents now advocate greater immigration by noting that the rising population of legal immigrants includes large numbers of talented and educated individuals with diverse political views.



Image credit: Poster Collection, UK 2561, Hoover Institution Archives.

Poll: Should border security be enforced in the passage of people between nations?

- We have evolved beyond nationalism and mere borders: all people deserve to travel and reside where they wish.
- In theory borders are important. But in our new interconnected global world, people ignore them.
- Passport control is necessary and border checks are important, but people should be free to come and go as they please.
- Without borders, nations have no idea who enters their country, and cannot reassure citizens of their safety.
- The United States needs to put both Ukraine and Taiwan formally under the U.S. nuclear umbrella.
- Nations are unique creations. They must have borders to maintain their identity, values, and civic traditions.

It is certainly true that Asians, who now account for the largest share of legal immigrants, have been demonstrating a strong distaste for the Democratic Party's policies on affirmative action, crime, and education. A trend more recent to emerge is declining support for Democrats among Hispanics. Polling has shown that President Biden's approval rating among Hispanic voters has fallen from 69 at the start of his presidency to 26 percent in April 2022, lower even than the current national average of 33 percent. Dissatisfaction with liberal policies on the economy, crime, and transgenderism has more than offset whatever goodwill Biden might have generated with his immigration policies and his outreach to Latino YouTube influencers. In fact, surging criminality along the nation's southern border has led a majority of Hispanic voters in border states to disapprove of the Biden administration's handling of the border.

Focusing on legal immigrants, however, obscures the very different political ramifications of illegal immigration. In recent times, illegal immigrants have given birth to approximately 300,000 children in the United States per year. Each of these "anchor babies" receives citizenship, based on a dubious interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Children born to illegals now account for more than 8% of all children born annually in this country—enough to swing elections if a substantial majority of them vote as a bloc. In addition, more than three million "Dreamers" who entered the United States illegally under the age of eighteen are still in the United States, thanks to politicians who have maintained that entering illegally as children gives them a right to stay, and those same politicians are now trying to give citizenship to the "Dreamers."

The Biden administration has precipitated the current spike in illegal immigration by allowing hundreds of thousands of illegally arriving families and children to stay in the United States in return for unenforceable

promises to attend future immigration hearings. The apprehension and processing of these arrivals have overtaxed the U.S. Border Patrol to the point that it can devote little effort to intercepting the drugs and adult male criminals that continue to stream across. Democrats as well as Republicans predict that Biden's plan to end deportations under Title 42, a Trump-era health order, will trigger a much larger flood. Soon we will be told that all these children deserve to stay too. And already the number of children born to illegal immigrants is soaring, though so far the government isn't telling us by how much.

As the children of illegal immigrants become a larger share of the electorate, they will likely add more Democrats than Republicans to the voting rolls. The Democratic Party has achieved success in pandering to this group by allowing their illegal immigrant relatives to stay in the country and by providing social services to those relatives. Some of these voters, it is true, may eventually join the ranks of Hispanics disillusioned with liberal policies, but Biden's recent tumble may be only temporary. Half a century of Californian history suggests that the Democrats will be able to weather the storm and retain the allegiance of many first- and second-generation immigrants through pandering.

Should illegal immigration continue to shift the political balance in the United States, further harm will come to American national security, if by security we mean the protection of the nation from foreign malefactors. The votes of anchor babies will yield more politicians who oppose interdiction of criminals and drugs at the southern border, who obstruct deportation of illegal immigrants no matter how serious the crimes they commit, and who diminish the wages and the safety of working-class Americans by promoting ever more illegal immigration. Millions of American voters have enough common sense and access to non-traditional media to understand this truth. Chances seem good that their votes in upcoming elections will close some of the wounds that current border policies have opened.



MARK MOYAR has worked for twenty years in and out of government on national security affairs, international development, foreign aid, and capacity building. From 2018 to 2019, he served as the director of the Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation at USAID, and previously served as the director of the Project on Military and Diplomatic History at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. He is author of six books, of which the most recent is *Oppose Any Foe: The Rise of America's Special Operations Forces* (Basic Books, 2017), the first comprehensive history of U.S. special operations forces. He is currently writing the sequel to his book *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965*. He holds a BA summa cum laude from Harvard and a PhD from Cambridge.



Image credit: Poster Collection, UK 2562, Hoover Institution Archives.

The Erosion of Border Control and Its Threat to National Sovereignty

By Nadia Schadlow

The disaster unfolding on America's southern border since 2020 is both a humanitarian tragedy and a threat to our national security. Hundreds of migrants have died while trying to cross the border, and federal agents have apprehended tens of thousands of unaccompanied children. Fentanyl trafficking has skyrocketed, with agents confiscating some 11,000 pounds of the drug (each pound of which can kill over 200,000 people). More than 1.7 million migrants were detained in 2021.¹ Although border agents do not release how many of those are on terrorist watch lists,² they have noted that individuals come from more than 100 countries.³

Aside from these immediate considerations, Washington's failure to control the country's

southern border has longer-term implications: it erodes the principle of national sovereignty. And since sovereignty is central not only to the long-term security of the United States and its allies, but also to the liberal international order, the border crisis is a serious threat to national and international security.

International Order

Since the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the nation-state—a formal political entity occupying a set territory—has been the fundamental building-block in the international system. The Westphalian system is an order in which political authority is based on territory and autonomy. Describing the Westphalian peace, Henry Kissinger observed that “each state was assigned the attribute of sovereign power over its territory. Each would acknowledge the domestic structures and religious vocations of its fellow states as realities and refrain from challenging their existence.”⁴

Sovereign states are foundational to international order. In his classic text, *The Anarchical Society*, the political scientist Hedley Bull pointed out that it was sovereign states that, through their interactions and regular contacts with one another, formed the *international* system. The starting point for international relations, he argued, was “the existence of states or independent political communities.”⁵

After World War II—the most destructive war in modern history—key institutions of what would become the liberal international order acknowledged that state sovereignty was essential to the preservation of peace and the promotion of prosperity. The founding charter of the United Nations is based “on the principle of the *sovereign* equality of all its Members.” The Bretton Woods system (the International Monetary

Fund and the World Bank), is comprised of individual countries, though its goal is to regulate and coordinate economic relations between states. Even the European Union was originally founded on a series of treaties between states, beginning with the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Sovereignty remains a foundational pillar of the liberal international order; it is a starting point for the institutions and agreements that formally comprise this order.

Balance of Power and Stability

Sovereignty is also fundamental to maintaining a balance of power in the international system, and thus, stability and order. Because no global sovereign exists, states compete with one another to enjoy the benefits of security, freedom, and prosperity. But if competing states are *balanced* against one another, competition can actually produce order and stability. As Henry Kissinger observed, a balance of power system is based on the principle “that each state, in pursuing its own selfish interests, would . . . contribute to the safety and progress of all the others.”⁶

It is noteworthy that over the past few years, the most significant stresses to the European Union have centered on the erosion of sovereignty of its member states. As one expert observed, “crises have emerged in the EU in proportion to how much it has moved away from its founding template of state sovereignty.”⁷ It has been the efforts to erase borders in Europe that have caused the most stress.

The migration crisis of 2015 generated instability in Europe, challenging the EU’s capacity to provide the most basic competency of a state—control of its borders. Former German Prime Minister Angela Merkel’s decision to grant asylum to over one million refugees in Europe, essentially overrode the sovereignty of all EU members physically located between Germany and the Mediterranean. Merkel’s decision reflected a failure to grasp that this huge immigration influx was a national security issue for many of Germany’s neighbors. (Ironically, migration issues are particularly susceptible to the problems associated with weakened sovereignty since it is the state that provides the first line of protection to the most vulnerable.)

Alliances

The erosion of the principle of sovereignty also has negative implications for alliances. If the United States does not prioritize the security of its own borders, it will be hard to convince Americans to defend the sovereignty of other nations.

The foundational alliances that constitute key pillars of the liberal international order and contribute to American power are built explicitly and implicitly around the concept of sovereignty. It is the sovereign states of NATO that form the basis of the agreements and obligations of the treaty, and who provide the military capabilities necessary for the alliance to function. Moreover, it is threats to the “territorial integrity” of states—their borders—that would trigger a response by alliance members.

Adversaries and rivals recognize the importance of borders. That is why Russia and Belarus have weaponized migrants to undermine the European Union as well as individual states. For example, since December 2020, the Belarusian government has pressured neighboring states by pushing migrants to the borders of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, which led those states to reinforce their borders. Former German Chancellor Merkel referred to the actions as a “hybrid attack.” Turkey, too, has extorted billions of dollars from the European Union with the threat of flooding Europe with migrants and refugees fleeing the Syrian Civil War.

Conclusions

Control over borders, and the power of sovereignty that such control represents, have always served as a central element of state power. And a central element of a state’s power—as well as *perceptions* of its power—have always been tied to a state’s ability to control and defend its territorial integrity. America’s failure to control its southern border has direct national security implications, and not only for the

U.S. homeland. It also contributes to the broader erosion of an international order built upon the principle of sovereignty. It is that principle—and Washington’s role in upholding it, in its commitments around the world—that is at risk.

- 1 https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/border-arrests-record-levels-2021/2021/10/19/289dce64-3115-11ec-a880-a9d8c009a0b1_story.html
- 2 See letter from U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) to U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on August 24, 2021:
<https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?id=3F49EE6D-BE6A-4D99-94C8-A1CA3DE51F9E>
- 3 <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/local-media-release/del-rio-sector-encountering-migrants-around-world#wcm-survey-target-id>
- 4 Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin, 2014), p. 3.
- 5 Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. xxii.
- 6 Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 58.
- 7 Conversation between author and Dr. Wess Mitchell, former Assistant Secretary of State for Europe.



NADIA SCHADLOW is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a visiting fellow at MITRE. Previously she served as Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy on the National Security Council (NSC). She joined the NSC in February 2017 to serve as the lead drafter for the National Security Strategy, which was published in December 2017. Prior to joining the NSC, Dr. Schadlow was a Senior Program Officer in the International Security and Foreign Policy Program of the Smith Richardson Foundation. There, she focused on cultivating and investing in research and policy solutions to improve the security and strategic competitiveness of the United States. Dr. Schadlow received a B.A. degree in Government and Soviet Studies from Cornell University and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from The Johns Hopkins University SAIS. Her book, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory*, was published in February 2017.

Related Commentary

- Bing West, “Borders and Accelerating Change in National Culture,” <https://www.hoover.org/research/borders-and-accelerating-change-national-culture>

Discussion Questions

1. How does the U.S. southern border differ or emulate the challenges that European Union countries face?
2. Do border walls work? If so, how, and under what conditions?
3. Did a fortified border help or injure Israel, and can it offer a model for other countries?
4. How can “rich” countries afford the costs of allowing millions of “poor” people to swarm their border and then receive entitlements?
5. Are border security and enforcement critical issues of national security, or mostly internal political matters?



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

How the War in Ukraine Ends

Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

Strategika

Strategika is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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Hoover Institution, Stanford University
434 Galvez Mall
Stanford, CA 94305-6003
650-723-1754

Hoover Institution in Washington
1399 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-760-3200

