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Has Sovereignty Eroded?

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This paper argues that globalization and interdependence has contributed to the “contingent maneuvering” of states with sovereignty from an economic perspective, whilst nuclear non-proliferation, security, survival, and rising nationalism established states as prominent actors on the global stage from a political perspective. The paper proceeds with an Introduction and Background Information of the State in part one. Part two gives a literature review of the state on the global political stage. In part three, the paper theorizes globalization and economic interdependence as the borderless source responsible for the decreasing power of states. Part four ponders how the contentious issues of nuclear proliferation, residual nationalism and non state actors contributed to the erosion of sovereignty for reasons of security and survival. And in part five, I ponder the theoretical implications and give concluding remarks.

Keywords: Globalization, Economic Interdependence, Nationalism, Information, Communication, Transnational Boundaries, Sovereignty, Security.

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Introduction and Background Information

From the historic continental United States of America to the savannah lands of Africa through the oil regions of the Middle East to the Asian and Russian peninsula, the European Westphalia state system has become one of the dominant political systems that have taken shape across international society. It has been a central model that that can accommodate only the 'real state; hierarchical, coercive, and sovereign' but not federal or decentralized states.¹ Peter Strick interpreted the Westphalia state system as a product of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century realpolitik and nationalism.

Historically, Jessica Shadian puts the Westphalia State system as the construction of a political system where political identification became subsumed under jurisdiction of the state and accompanying territorial boundaries, with national identity and national movements for self-determination as fundamental pillars of statehood.² The defeat of the British Empire in the American war of independence and the emergence of the United States of America (USA) as a sovereign state provides a parsimonious explanation along those paradigms. "The European expansion into the rest of the world, had by no means reached its climax when its second stage, decolonization, began in the second half of the eighteenth century, with the assertion of independence by European settler states in the Americas."³ Proliferation of independent states across Latin America and most of Africa in the 19th and 20th century was therefore no historical accident. The emergence of states across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East was evidence of the Westphalia state system epitomizing global governance. How that has strengthened the role of the state as primary actors across the international stage was therefore no hidden agenda. The future of the world has since then been shaped by the European state system across economical, political and social parables. By the end of the 19th century, it became clear that a reversal in the creation of the state system was unlikely.

With the proliferation of the state system, the principle of sovereignty took shape as a deeply rooted international doctrine calling for non-interference in the internal affairs of states. However, this doctrine has come under increasing scholarly debate, largely as a result of globalization and interdependence, nuclear-non-proliferation, security, survival and rising nationalism. These factors brought to light compelling realities of the changing nature of sovereignty across

1. Peter Stirk, "The West Phalian Model, Sovereignty and Law in Fin-de-siecle German International Theory," *International Relations* 2005 19: 153
2. Jessica Shadian, "From states to polities; Reconceptualizing sovereignty through unit governance," *European Journal of International Relations* 2010; 16: 485
3. Adam, Watson, "The Evolution of International Society – A Comparative Historical Analysis," *Routledge*, New York, 1999, pp, 266

the global political spectrum. The question has sovereignty eroded, therefore took shape as a contentious debate for modern scholars of international affairs.

This paper questions sovereignty in two broad perspectives. In the first perspective, I looked at how globalization and economic interdependence have become the borderless source responsible for the contingent maneuvering of states with sovereignty. This section looks at how the single global capitalist economic system, the free global market economy, non-governmental organizations and Multinational cooperation are forcing states to either retreat or sharing power in the contemporary world. In the second part of the paper, I look at a re-surgency state authority or prominence in the global political landscape with specific examples on nuclear proliferation and rising nationalism for reasons of security and survival. This section specifically looks at the United States (US) military interventions in Iraq, Iran's nuclear conundrum, and rising nationalism in Venezuela and the European Union (EU) with specific examples on the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden. I then introduced my findings in a theoretical and empirical implication on the contested doctrine of sovereignty. This gives a pathway for further scholarly research as international politics continues paddling along unknown horizons. I first start with a theoretical and literature review on the doctrine of sovereignty.

Theoretical and Literature Review

The relevant literature pondering the notion of sovereignty in modern international theory has in itself been conflicting. Whilst many scholars opine the erosion of sovereignty as a result of globalization and economic interdependence, numerous others compellingly argue that states are only contingently maneuvering with sovereignty and therefore remain the prominent actors across the global political and economic landscape. "In Hendrick Spruyt's (1994) account, the world is made up of independent actors who are drawn to each other for the purpose of making trades. Sovereignty emerges out of that because the state, rather than non-territorial and functionally organized alternatives (like city leagues) was able to facilitate the deals."⁴ In his analysis of the contemporary modern state, Adam Watson defined the extension of political sovereignty as the most important feature of modern international society.⁵ Watson's reasoning stems from the bases that all modern states are least nominally independent, juridical equal and most importantly the system has been further loosened by an increasing outlawry of the use of force.⁶

Similarly, Benno Teschke(2002) opine that "independent of theoretical premises, there is a broad consensus in the IR community that specifically modern principles or constitutive rules of international relations – state sovereignty, exclusive territoriality, legal equality, non-intervention, standing diplomacy and international law were codified at the Westphalia Peace Congress against the background of the demise of pre-modern institutions of political authority."⁷ Scholars, such as Huber, Jellinek and Triepel all recognized sovereignty as central characteristics of states. For Jellinek, sovereignty is defined as "the quality of the state by virtue of

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4. Christopher k. A and Steven. W, "Organizing International Politics: Sovereignty and Open Systems," *International Political Science Review* 1999 20 : 73
 5. Ibid, See Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, 2005, pp300
 6. Ibid, See Watson pp, 300
 7. Benno Teschke, "Theorizing the Westphalia System of States: International Relations from Absolutism to Capitalism; *European Journal of International Relations* 2002 8: 5



which it can only be legally bound by its own will.”⁸ Sovereignty is not the lack of limitations, but the capacity to impose limits, thus meaning such limits cannot be imposed on a state by other states.

In Krasner’s view, the contemporary international system is defined by sovereign states as the building blocks and the basic actors of the modern state system. Krasner defines sovereign states as territorial units with juridical independence; they are not formally subject to some external authority.⁹ Nonetheless, he noted sovereignty of the modern state to be best summed as “defacto autonomy,” because he argues that, “even though the power and preferences of foreign actors will limit the feasible options for any state, sovereign states are not constrained because external actors have penetrated or controlled the structure of their domestic authorities.”¹⁰ Whilst several scholars would disagree with Krasner, many others have theorized the contested doctrine of sovereignty along similar parallels.

Scholars such as Helen Thomson, for example, have argued that “since the early 1990’s cosmopolitans have redefined liberalism from what they deem the global age and urged a new kind of international politics that begins from a universal ethical commitment to the moral value and autonomy of individuals.”¹¹ In Thompson’s view, the doctrine of Sovereignty is in itself a complex one. Thompson’s argument was based on drawing the distinction between external and internal sovereignty. Using Allan Jame’s reasoning in both 1986 and 1999, Thomson assumed that Sovereignty means “constitutional independence; neither the internal nor the external half can exist without the other.”¹² Internally, sovereignty means the power of the state to make and enforce laws upon individuals and associations within its jurisdiction, and externally it is the independence from foreign control.¹³ Looking at modern international politics, it is evident that states continue to make and enforce laws; however the notion of interference from external forces has questioned the contemporary role of the state in the interdependent world of modern times.

Professor Richard Langhorne’s justification of anxiety on the contemporary role of the state could not have come at any better time. He noted that the erosion of state sovereignty lies in “the complex and often contradictory results of the global communications revolution,” the “conjunction of microchip computers and the orbiting satellite restructuring the global economy,” which has abolished state frontiers.¹⁴ This is evident today with the rapidly revolutionizing global information and communication technology infrastructure.

In her redefinition of sovereignty, Jellinek further made a compelling argument that there was no near congruence between state and society.¹⁵ She noted that the centralized state on whose reflection the ancient and modern science of the state almost exclusively grew up, no

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8. Ibid, See Benno Teschke
 9. Stephen. D. Krasner, “ Abiding Sovereignty,” *International Political Science Review* 2001 22: 229
 10. Ibid, See Stephen Krasner
 11. Helen Thompson, “The Case of External Sovereignty,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2006 12: 251
 12. Ibid, See Helen Thomson, “ The Case of External Sovereignty”
 13. Moye Godwin Bongyu, “ The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and the decline of Sovereignty,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 2009 44: 389
 14. Richard Langhorne, *The Essentials of Global Politics*, 2006, pp124
 15. Ibid, See Helen Thompson, “The Case of External Sovereignty”

longer forms the rule in the life of nations.¹⁶ Her reasoning was based on the fact that social groups and social interest transcends state boundaries. Looking at the interconnected world of our time, both Jellinek and Richard Langhorne made similar arguments on the gradual erosion of state sovereignty.

With an understanding of “the study of international regimes as the product of formal interpretations of the nature of politics and the behavior of agents and actors, the contribution of power, interest and identity cannot be neglected as the political passion, material interests and ethical perversions that gives form to international regimes.”¹⁷ Sovereignty in the Westphalia state system has therefore become evident and transcendental, even though “regime theorist’s lost sight of the regional coordinates of sovereignty, or the normative variables through which states, their agents and others have given form, substance and effect to sovereignty.”¹⁸ According to Grovogui, they erroneously predicated their analysis of sovereignty upon three common place assumptions, all derived from the Westphalia common sense.¹⁹ In Grovogui’s view these assumptions are supported by “the notion that, through the agency of the European empires and decolonization, a Westphalia-derived morality of state sovereignty gradually became the basis of the international system.”²⁰ Both (Bull, 1977), and (Watson, 1992), have characterized sovereignty, as a historical anecdote of the peace of Westphalia in 1648, thus postulating the modern international order of autonomous states.

Following an in-depth theoretical and literature review, three major questions come to mind. Firstly, how is globalization and economic interdependence revolutionizing and subsequently eroding sovereignty in the international system? Secondly, how are nuclear proliferation, nationalism, security and survival strengthening sovereignty in the international system? Thirdly, what are the theoretical and empirical implications on sovereignty in the international system? This brings us to the in-depth analysis of how globalization and economic interdependence is rapidly revolutionizing and consequently making states to maneuver with sovereign power in the international system.

Globalization, Economic Interdependence and Sovereignty

The argument that globalization and economic interdependence is rapidly forcing states to maneuver with sovereign power is not conflicting at all. In this particular section of the paper, I argue that globalization and economic interdependence is forcing states to share power with new actors on the global stage, thus posing challenges to national sovereignty. Power in this context ranges from the power of a state to provide economic, political and social security for the citizenry. “This reality is evident in every aspect of life – from sustaining the environment, to relieving poverty, to avoiding conflict and developing institutions that allow us to meet our responsibilities to others in today’s interdependent world.”²¹ This is based on the well founded progressive transformations of communications and information technology, the flow of capital

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16. Ibid
 17. Siba N. Grovogui, “ Regimes of Sovereignty; International Morality and the African Condition,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2002 8: 315
 18. Ibid , See Siba N. Grovogui
 19. Ibid, See Siba N. Grovogui
 20. Ibid, See Siba N. Grovogui
 21. Mike Fell, “ Is Human Security our Main Concern in the 21st Century,” *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Volume 4 Number 3 –September 2006 pp 12



and the proliferation of multinational and transnational corporations that are continually shrinking our world across economic parables.

From the end of the cold war marking the proliferation of western liberal democracies and its single global capitalist economic system driven by neo-liberal market principles, the world has been characterized by a surging economic interdependence, thus epitomizing the borderless vehicle shaping global communities, doorsteps across nation states defined by territory and a functioning authority. The evolution of the World Wide Web (the internet), the rise of multinational corporations and global financial institutions with well defined international legal mechanisms has in fact become the driving mechanism for this contentious phenomenon of economic liberalization and globalization. Several contemporary scholars of international relations have suggested the increase of such global institutions as a threat to sovereignty, noting the loss of control and authority of the state. Scholars such as Jessica Mathews for example argued that "national governments are not simply losing autonomy in a globalized world, but sharing power – including social, political and security roles with businesses, international organizations and with a multitude of citizens groups known as nongovernmental organizations."²²

The rise of international legal institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other ad hoc tribunals provide an explanation along those lines. "Today, customary international law allows for universal jurisdiction for a broad range of crimes. In addition, some international treaties explicitly require parties to prosecute perpetrators, or extradite them to another state where they will be prosecuted."²³ These include Conventions on Torture, Genocide, Refugees, Race, Children, Discrimination against Women, and International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²⁴ Carol Fehl wrote that:

"Multilateral human rights treaties, customary international human rights law – have created a norm of international legal protection of human rights that is at least as important as the norm protecting sovereignty and the norm of non-intervention. By virtue of the fact that this norm, of necessity, involves the limitation of state sovereignty, human rights can be seen as being given priority above sovereignty."²⁵

Such multilateral conventions, limit the range of permissible actions that states may take against vis-à-vis its own citizens, thus limiting its sovereignty.²⁶ The movement of capital across transnational boundaries falls along similar global trajectories. Richard Cooper (1968) was therefore justified to point out that "capital mobility has undermined the ability of states to control their own monetary policy."²⁷ Cooper's argument was supported by Noam (1987), and Rosenau (1990). Noam (1987) argued that "in the long run telecommunications will transcend the territorial concept and the notion of each country having territorial control over electronic communication will become archaic in the same sense that national control over the

22. Jessica T. Mathews, "Power Shift," *Foreign Affairs*, January/ February 1997

23. Carol Fehl, "Explaining the International Criminal Court: A 'Practice Test' for Rationalist and Constructivist Approaches" *European Journal of International Relations* 2004 10: 357

24. Justin Conlon, *Sovereignty vs. Human Rights or Sovereignty and Human Rights*, *Race Class* 2004 46: 75, pp 2 - 27

25. *Ibid*, See Carol Fehl

26. *Ibid*, See Justin Colin, pp 1- 12

27. Cooper, Richard N. 1998. "Should Capital Account Convertibility be a World Objective?" *Essays in International Finance* No. 207



spoken (and later the written) word became outmoded."²⁸ James Rosenau on the other hand argued that issues such as "atmospheric pollution," terrorism, the drug trade, currency crisis, and HIV/ AIDS are products of interdependence, or new technologies, and are transnational, thus states cannot provide solutions to them.²⁹ Both Noam and Rosenau's arguments are evident in today's interdependent world.

The proliferation of multinational cooperation's, foreign direct investment and capital flow across transnational boundaries of the modern world is no historical accident. The case of the developing worlds of Africa, Latin America and China provides a parsimonious explanation along those parables. In all these countries, deregulation and new rules defining the game has undermined state sovereignty. It was such compelling arguments made by Thomas G. Moore in 2008. He opined that:

"China's growing economic power should be understood not only in terms of state –to-state relations and conceptions based on national economic development, but also in terms of cross border networks of production and exchange that co-existed, often uncomfortably, with the territorially based national state system, thus manifesting a deepening global interdependence rather than incipient hegemony or creeping dependence."³⁰

This is evident in China's activities across several fronts of the global economic landscape. Today, China may flex its muscles, but her economic activities has forced the Asian dragon contingently maneuver with national sovereignty through its commitments and compliance obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO). Even if the economic dragon accumulates power as most realists would contend, globalization, interdependence and China's economic engagement with the rest of the world has shifted the dynamics of its sovereignty to some degree. China's commitments and obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) are forcing it to share power with Supra national Corporations such as the WTO.

The flow of finance is arguably another contentious globalized phenomenon posing daunting challenges to sovereignty over the years. As states are embedded in a network of international financial governance architectures, the flow of finance across transnational boundaries has concomitantly shifted the dynamics of state regulation on capital flow across national boundaries. Finance flow escaped the control of states in a market where firms, multinational cooperation's and people are empowered to easily transfer capital across transnational boundaries.

Although there exists scholarly arguments that states could exert some degree of control when national interest is threatened, control over the flow of capital in a world characterized by a revolutionary age of modern information and communications technology does not in the least hold water. Christopher K. Ansell and Steven Weber are justified that "states may struggle to retain control, but they are doomed to lose this battle for reasons parallel to why state sover-

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28. Eli M. Noam, " The Public Communications Networks: A Concept in Transition, *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 37 (Winter 1987), pp. 30 -48
 29. Rosenau JN (1990). *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 5 – 13,
 30. Thomas G. Moore, " China as an Economic Power in the Contemporary Era of Globalization," *Journal of Asian and African Affairs Studies* 2008 43: 4970



eighty came to characterize the international system several hundred years earlier – the logic of exchange.”³¹ Today, the world is characterized by an economic landscape that has finance and capital flow transgressing transnational boundaries across all facets of modern international relations.

No one can deny some of the benefits states have gained from the revolutionizing forces of globalization and interdependence. Such benefits may not be limited to strengthening state efforts to empower citizens economically and socially through its interaction with transnational actors such as Inter-Governmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations, but also provide opportunities for citizens, develop infrastructure, strengthened state institutions, and make states restore meaning to borders in response to globalization.

Nonetheless, with the “internal dimension of sovereignty derived from a state’s monopoly of legitimate forces within its borders,” (Thsuma, 2000) and the relationship between the state and civil society (Reinicke, 1997), state regulation of finance flow in the globalized world has been one of the greatest challenges to sovereignty. This is evident with inter-linkages amongst multinationals, financial institutions such as banks, communications and information systems architectures, international non-governmental organizations and other small businesses as the bedrock of global interdependent mechanisms posing daunting challenges to national sovereignty across the rapidly changing world of modern times.

In hindsight, the notion that sovereignty remains to be a tool for states can be questioned in several other fronts. The emergence of supra national organizations calling for more state cooperation across the global economic landscape itself speaks quite some volume. Organizations such as the World Trade organization (WTO), the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB), just to name a few, constitute examples of global governance evolutionary mechanisms manifesting a compromise of sovereignty. The membership of all these organizations is built around the well founded evident of states giving up some elements of national sovereignty. The case of the World Trade Organization for example provides a parsimonious example along those parallels- The World Trade Organization is founded on a principle of deregulation, thus facilitating an amicable business and trading interaction between member states. The organization has well defined trading tariffs that emerged from an international consensus between states.

States have since then been obligated to define their national trading regulations around doctrines codified under agreements of the World Trade Organization. For example China’s evolution to become the newest member of the organization indeed raised some international eyebrows among scholars of international relations. This was largely due to China’s long standing foreign policy evolving around protecting national sovereignty. However China’s membership of the World Trade Organization, has questioned its sovereignty in several fronts. The mass movements of goods and services, the flow of capital and finance, and the revolutionizing of business through modern information and communications technologies is a testament of the contingent maneuvering of states with sovereignty across global economic and political horizons. The pace of globalization and interdependence has indeed shaped our world. Thus it

31. Christopher K. Ansell and Steven Weber, ‘Organizing International Politics; Sovereignty and Open Systems;’ *International Political Science Review* 1999 20: 73



further explains why nuclear proliferation, residual nationalism, security and survival are dynamic factors strengthening sovereignty and the prominence of states across the global political spectrum.

Nuclear Proliferation, Nationalism, Security and Sovereignty

With the changing pace of the global governance architecture, the pace of globalization has propelled the contentious political conundrums of nuclear proliferation, nationalism and security to a debate on the state of national sovereignty. The questions, has nuclear proliferation, nationalism and security revived the prominence of the state on the global stage, has sovereignty been strengthened by this impending rising global phenomena, therefore took shape across the global political landscape. Several theories have since then emerged with the rise of non-state actors, nationalism and nuclear proliferation. Some scholars have argued that, since the events of September 11th 2001, there has been a resurgence of sovereignty on the global stage.

In his book titled *Surprise, Security and the American experience*, John Caddis Lewis for example argued that American foreign policy to act unilaterally in pursuit of terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq was a demonstration of America's resolve to act unilaterally at the expense of sovereignty on one aspect and the defense of its national sovereignty and interest from another perspective.³² By making such reasoning, Caddis made a compelling argument of a reviving national sovereignty. A careful consideration of US policy in the aftermath of the September 11th 2001 attacks in New York demonstrated the resolve of nation states to act alone under situations undermining national sovereignty, survival and security. US military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq fall along similar trajectories.

In Glyn Morgan's view, "the Westphalia sovereignty has fallen out of favor among many in the U.S international relations community in the wake of 9/11, thus reduced to a conditional right, with military interventions justified in preventing human rights and nuclear proliferation, when approved by the United States and her allies."³³ Morgan's theoretical contributions toward the literature on Sovereignty indeed raised the alarm for all those scholars interested in global security. Whilst many have raised serious issues with her theoretical concerns, it only befits to argue that sovereignty in the aftermath of 9/11 have taken a paradigmatic shift from its traditional definitions.

It must be noted that even though the United Nations Security Council was not in approval of a United States Resolution for a unanimous authorization of military intervention against the Baghdad regime, the United States was determined enough to pursue it all alone. Arguably, the United States use of "arbitrary power" (Thompson, 2006) and attack on the external sovereignty of Iraq, was a political machination geared towards defending national interest and sovereignty. This was evident in both the two speeches given by President George W Bush (JR) shortly after the 2001 attacks in New York and before military interventions in Iraq.

32. John Caddis Lewis, *Surprise Security and The American Experience*, Harvard University Press, October 31, 2005

33. Glyn Morgan, " Security, Stability and International Order," *American Behavioral Scientist* 2008; 51 : 1322



In both his speeches, the President's messages were clear to the nation and the world at large. He cited America's resolve to pursue national enemies anywhere and at anytime as a national policy mechanism that must never be compromised. Citing North Korea, Iran and Libya as "an axis of evil,"³⁴ President Bush's shifting of US foreign policy stemmed from a resolve to defend national sovereignty and security. Historically, John Caddis Lewis made similar compelling arguments about America's resolve to defend its sovereignty dating back to the 18th century. In his book Caddis wrote that:

"In 1817, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, reacting to the burning of Washington, D.C., by British forces during the War of 1812, inaugurated three policies to secure the nation as it grew: *preemption*--the U.S. would react swiftly and forcibly to attacks; *unilateralism*--the U.S. would reject alliances requiring response to unforeseeable developments involving other nations; *hegemony*--the U.S. would predominate in the Western Hemisphere."³⁵

American foreign policy following the tragic September 11th 2001 incident was therefore no historical accident. The policies were a testament of America's resolve to protect its sovereignty at any time.

Nonetheless, US policy of pursuing non-state actors has also had a parallel shifting dynamics of sovereignty from another perspective. In a nutshell it has become a driving mechanism of raising the bars of sovereignty across global political horizons. With the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, a heat wave alarming other nations began spreading like wild fire. Other nations since then felt that the US unilateral policy of pursuing terrorists anywhere and at anytime in defense of national sovereignty and security was a threat in itself to their security survival and sovereignty. Countries such as Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, Syria and several small developing nations began a global campaign against what was regarded as a hostile US policy.

This policy could largely be argued to stem from reasons of survival, security and defense of national sovereignty. Countries such as Venezuela were alarmed that only by raising the alarm on the global stage could they succeed in their soft power politicking. This was evident with President Hugo Chavez's global campaign against US foreign policy, his pursuit of modernizing Venezuelan armed forces, the strengthening of military and economic ties with Russia, and nationalization of foreign oil and communications companies in Venezuela. Richard Lapper puts it this way:

In order to better defend Venezuelan sovereignty and ensure domestic security, the National Armed Forces are working to upgrade their outdated weapons, communications, and surveillance systems, primarily with new equipment purchased from Russia, China, Spain, and Brazil to arm and equip up to one million troops and reserves. According to government officials, the thrust of this military buildup is defensive. Chavez

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34. This is an excerpt from the 2001 speech of President George. W. Bush Jr. after the September 11, 2001 attacks of the twin towers, New York and the Pentagon, Washington D.C.
 35. John Caddis Lewis, *Surprise Security and The American Experience*, Harvard University Press, October 31, 2005

has pointed to the need for greater vigilance on Venezuela's borders, especially with Colombia, where paramilitary and guerrilla forces retain a long-standing presence.³⁶

Apart from the case of Venezuela, residual nationalism in the European Union (EU) presents scholars with a compelling argument of state prominence in modern international relations. With an understanding that the European Union (EU) was founded under principles of integration geared towards both economic and political development to meet challenges of the 21st century, the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden's failure to adopt the European Currency provides one with a parsimonious example of a residual nationalism in the quest of protecting national sovereignty. Since its inception as a model for regional integration, euro-skepticism grew to be a major obstacle to the European Union. "The growth in euro-skepticism can be traced back to a variety of anxieties: the prospect of EU enlargement by 10 new member states bringing with it fear of the displacement of companies and of immigration, with both factors seen as leading to increasing unemployment in a Europe where the economic upswing is a long time in coming."³⁷

This is evident with "the difficulties (or the lack of determination) of the member states, political parties and electoral alliances, even the pro-European ones, in putting Europe at the center of public debate and in informing and organizing extensive discussion on the important issues (such as the constitution, enlargement, and European identity), thus paving the way for protest votes and, by avoiding the issue of European integration."³⁸ Today, European integration continues to be threatened by a proliferation of right wing nationalist opposition movements across several EU member states- a paradigmatic shift seen by many as a strengthening of sovereignty across the European peninsula.

Apart from the residual nationalism, Iran's nuclear policy further provides scholars with a litmus test on the question of sovereignty. With the invasion of Iraq and the presence of thousands of US forces in her backyard, Iran has strengthened efforts in the quest of pursuing nuclear technology. It has defied international legal mechanisms and made it clear that the pursuit of nuclear technology was a sovereign right that it would not compromise. Amidst series of international sanctions, Iran has enriched more uranium than at any other time. It has tested long range missiles capable of carrying nuclear war heads in a show of international defiance. Despite several years of negotiations, Tehran maintained that pursuing nuclear technology was a sovereign right. Iran's behavior in this context could be attributed to hegemony of the political discourse as argued by (Larsen, 1997: 22). In retrospective, Iran's nuclear policy in terms of an objective situation that all states would respond are due to the main discourses of sovereignty and independence (Kubalkova, 2001), and security seeking behavior based on objective conditions (Waltz, 1979).

Although scholars differ in their views of Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology, what is interesting is that, the doctrine of national sovereignty has been tested. In a world continually evol-

36. Richard Lapper, *Living with Hugo Chavez; US Policy Towards Hugo Chavez's Venezuela*, Council on Foreign Relations, CRS. 20, November, 2006, pp 15 - 17

37. Michael Minkenberg and Pascal Perrineau, "The Radical Right in the European Elections 2004," *International Political Science Review* 2007 28: 29

38. Ibid, See Michael Minkenberg and Pascal Perrineau



ing around unknown trajectories, it came to light that nations still have the resolve to adopt or pursue policies in defense of national sovereignty. "It was the culmination of the George Bush preemptive doctrine and promotion of freedom that contributed in steering a global diplomatic tension in which developing nations were left with no choice but to challenge hegemonic machinations poised to transgress sovereignty and possibly steer instability and insecurity across porous national borders."³⁹

Iran's nuclear policy and Venezuela's foreign policy have therefore brought to light the reviving prominence of the state and national sovereignty across the global political stage. Thus, the theoretical and empirical implications are evident of the contingent maneuvering of states with sovereignty as a result of globalization and economic interdependence, and prominent actors on the global stage for reasons of survival, security and residual nationalism.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

This paper largely gave a theoretical and empirical analysis of the question and debate on national sovereignty in the literature of contemporary international affairs. In the midst of several theories brought forward by modern scholars, the paper provided two different perspectives of sovereignty – an economic perspective supporting a notion of states maneuvering with sovereignty as a result of interdependence, globalization, communications and information technology, and a political perspective on the other hand supporting the prominent role of the state, and strengthening of sovereignty as a result of nuclear proliferation, security and a rising nationalism across the global political landscape.

Amidst several scholarly arguments on the state of globalization, the paper found that economic interdependence as a result of innovations by communications and information technology has progressively transgressed national boundaries, thus raising a scholarly question on the role of the state in contemporary economics. Even though scholars remain divided on the notion that the state remain relevant in modern international economic affairs, the paper found the maneuvering of state power to be contingent. Thus, our contemporary world is characterized by states sharing power with other actors on the global stage.

The paper found both theoretical and empirical evidence suggesting the flow of capital and the proliferation of multinational cooperation as bedrocks to the borderless source forcing states to share power with non-state actors such as Supra national and transnational corporations. This is evident with the proliferation of multinational banks and foreign development investments across territorial boundaries of the developing countries of South East Asia, Africa and Latin America. By using the World Trade Organization to support argument, the paper showed that states have defined their trading regulations around doctrines codified under the international mechanisms of the organization, thus compromising sovereign principles. The paper has persuasively used China's membership of the World Trade Organization as a fitting example of the retreat of the state around those economic parables.

Nonetheless, the paper found an interesting political variable strengthening national sovereignty across the global political landscape. The notion that nuclear proliferation, a rising na-

39. Ibid, See The Global Balance of Power, pp 11-20



tionalism and security has strengthened sovereignty was made around compelling arguments of US military interventions in Iraq, the Iranian nuclear conundrum, and the residual nationalism in Venezuelan and the European Union (EU). Using these global events, the paper found these nations to have acted for reasons of survival, security and the quest of strengthening national sovereignty.

Even though scholars differ in their views on sovereignty, it is interesting to see how the paper found the two different perspectives – one using economic parallels supporting arguments on the “contingent maneuvering” of states with sovereignty, and the other using political variables showing the prominence of the state for reasons of security, survival, rising nationalism and the quest to protect national sovereignty. The paper found that along the evolving nature of our world across political, economic and social trajectories, the debate on sovereignty will continue to be based on globalization, economic interdependence, communications and information technology, survival, security and a residual nationalism on the global political landscape.

Conclusion

In the modern debate on sovereignty across the global political landscape, traditional arguments found power and legitimacy to reside within the state, whilst contemporary arguments found the state to be struggling with sovereignty from one perspective and strengthening territoriality from another. Nonetheless this paper theorized that states are “not passive actors, neither in retreat, or the sole power player in contemporary politics, but their room for maneuver is always contingent.”⁴⁰ In sum questions around the state and sovereignty in the contemporary era could be concluded in two major parameters.

Firstly, globalization and interdependence have forced states to share power with new actors in terms of states responsibility in the provision of socio-economic and socio-political opportunities to citizens. Similarly, states are also sharing responsibilities in its obligations of strengthening state institutions and developments in infrastructure and modern communications technology through its interaction with transnational organizations. Secondly, despite a compromise of sovereignty across economic horizons, reasons of security, survival and a rise of residual nationalism brought to light the prominence of the state on the world stage as a compelling contemporary reality. This means that the response of the state to new realities through an evolving global corporation has restored some degree of meaning to borders in a globalized era. Whilst it is descriptive, theoretical and conceptual, evidences provided are real, suggestive and comprehensive.

40. Richard Higgot and Simon Reich, *Globalization and Sites of Conflict: Towards Definition and Taxonomy*, Center for the Study of Globalization and Regionalization, CSGR Working Paper No 01/98, March, 1998, pp 43



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